

Five Reasons for Colonization and Exploration

In 1492, Columbus sailed west, hoping to find a sea route to Asia.

Columbus claimed the land – the Caribbean islands and South America – for Spain

Queen Isabella and Columbus were very religious. Afterward, Catholic missionaries tried to convert the Native Americans.

In 1497, John Cabot made the first English voyage to North America. He was searching for the Northwest Passage. A sea route to Asia.

John Cabot claimed the mainland of North America for England.

In 1513, Ponce de Leon sailed to Florida. While he was searching for the “fountain of youth,” his men were searching for gold.

Ponce de Leon claimed Florida for Spain

In 1513, Balboa sailed to Panama. He walked across Panama and saw the Pacific Ocean. This led to Magellan's voyage around the world – to Asia.

In 1519, Magellan became the first to circumnavigate the world. He sailed around South America and across the Pacific Ocean in order to reach Asia.

In 1519, Cortez sailed to Mexico and conquered the Aztecs. His victory opened North America to Spanish rule.

Cortez and his men went hunting for gold.

After Cortez conquered the Aztecs, Catholic missionaries converted the Aztecs to Christianity.

In 1527, Estevanico walked across Texas, joined up with Coronado, and went hunting for gold.

In 1540, Coronado claimed the U.S. Southwest for Spain.

In 1532, Pizarro conquered the Inca and discovered lots of gold and silver in Peru.

Pizarro claimed Peru for Spain. Eventually, most of South America fell under Spanish rule.

In 1535, Cartier sailed to Canada, looking for the Northwest Passage – a sea route to Asia.

Cartier sailed up the St. Lawrence River and set up a trading post in Montreal.

Cartier claimed Canada for France.

In 1540, de Soto led an expedition through the U.S. Southeast. They hunted for gold in places like the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi.

In 1577, Sir Francis Drake was the first Englishman to sail around the world. He took the same route as Magellan and ended up in Asia.

In 1610, Henry Hudson sailed into Hudson Bay (Canada) and up the Hudson River. He was searching for the Northwest Passage – a mythical waterway to get from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean.

Henry Hudson claimed New York for the Dutch.

The Dutch set up a trading post and New York City