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| 1. A series of events and conditions existed in the Old World at the dawn of the fifteenth century that made New World exploration not only possible but also desirable. Identify these events and conditions and explain how each helped set the stage for exploration.   |  |  | | --- | --- | | *ANSWER:* | *Answer would ideally include: Bubonic Plague:* The Black Death killed one-third of the European population, which made Europe's food supply more plentiful for survivors. Survivors inherited property, sought opportunities elsewhere, and had greater chances for advancement. Most fifteenth-century Europeans perceived the world as a place of alarming risks where the delicate balance of health, harvests, and peace could quickly be tipped toward disaster by epidemics, famine, and violence, as exemplified by the Black Death. This insecurity and uncertainty of the fifteenth century encouraged some people to take greater risks, such as embarking on dangerous sea voyages. *Scientific and Technological Advances:* The invention of movable type made printing easier and cheaper and stimulated the diffusion of information, including news of discoveries. The invention of new seafaring technology—including compasses, hourglasses, the astrolabe, and the quadrant—aided navigation in new journeys of exploration. *Monarchs' Ambitions:* European monarchs, who hoped to enlarge their realms, enrich their dynasties through trade and commerce involving Eastern goods, and divert unruly noblemen to distant lands, set on exploration as a possible way to achieve all of these things. *Religious Zeal:* Christianity propelled the Reconquest on the Iberian Peninsula and justified expansion into what the Spanish and Portuguese considered heathen lands, which gave explorers some of the theory and practice that would be useful in the process of New World exploration. | |

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| 2. Discuss how the Portuguese became the leaders in exploration during the fifteenth century. Be sure to include in your discussion the significant accomplishments of the Portuguese relating to exploration.   |  |  | | --- | --- | | *ANSWER:* | *Answer would ideally include:* *Prince Henry the Navigator:* Henry, son of the Portuguese king, collected the latest information about sailing techniques and geography, supported crusades against Muslims, and encouraged new sources of trade to fatten the Portuguese treasury. These efforts pushed Portuguese explorers to go farther than others had before. *Extension of the Reconquest to Africa:* Henry extended the Reconquest down the African coast for both religious and economic reasons. These incursions into Africa taught Portuguese sailors much about navigation, riding currents and winds, and surviving long sea journeys. *The caravel:* In the course of their African exploration and conquest, Portuguese sailors developed a new ship called the caravel that could stow the supplies necessary for long sea journeys and withstand the battering of waves in the open ocean. This ship became the mainstay of Portuguese exploration. | |

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| 3. Despite Columbus's lack of success in locating the Asian mainland by sailing west, his arrival in the Caribbean had a profound and lasting impact on both the Old and New Worlds. Discuss Columbus's voyages and Spanish claims to the new lands in the West. Explain how Europeans' understanding of world geography changed owing to Columbus's discoveries. Describe the Columbian exchange that resulted.   |  |  | | --- | --- | | *ANSWER:* | *Answer would ideally include*: *Columbus's Voyages:* Columbus won financing from Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand, who viewed the initial voyage as an inexpensive gamble. Columbus, with his three ships, landed in the Caribbean and assumed he was in the East Indies. Although he found little gold, he did take back to Spain seven native Tainos. *Spanish Claims:* Spain moved quickly to establish its claims to the new lands. The Portuguese and Spanish monarchs negotiated the Treaty of Tordesillas, and in 1493 Spain dispatched Columbus to the West once again. Despite Columbus's failure to find riches in two subsequent visits, Spain understood that entirely new lands and peoples lie across the Atlantic. *European Understanding:* European monarchs hurried to stake their claims to the newly discovered lands. For example, England sent John Cabot across the North Atlantic to find the Northwest Passage; a Spanish expedition accompanied by Amerigo Vespucci landed on the northern coast of South America; and Ferdinand Magellan led an expedition to circumnavigate the globe. Although some of these voyages ended in disaster, Europeans ultimately understood that a New World had been discovered. *Columbian Exchange:* Europe introduced Christianity, iron technology, sailing ships, firearms, wheeled vehicles, horses, and much else to the Americas. Most significantly, the Spanish brought with them European diseases, which devastated native populations. American foods such as corn and potatoes were introduced to Europe and became important staples in European diets. | |

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| 4. During the sixteenth century, Spain became the most powerful country in both Europe and the Americas. Explain how Spain rose to this position of power, including both victories and failures.   |  |  | | --- | --- | | *ANSWER:* | *Answer would ideally include: Spanish Exploration:* The success of Columbus's journey brought prestige and large land claims to Spain, but although Spain's initial efforts to settle and colonize the New World exploited many Native Americans, it did not bring much new wealth into the country. *Conquest of Mexico and Peru:* Hernán Cortés's conquest of the Mexica Empire in 1521 was successful for several reasons, including his exploitation of the Mexica concept of war, the Spanish advantage in terms of weapons, the use of Indian allies, and smallpox epidemics. The Incan Empire fell to Pizarro in 1532 after his army took the Incan emperor hostage. These conquests brought vast wealth for Spain in the form of gold, silver, and other treasures. *Other Regions:* Other Spanish explorers traveled farther north. For example, Juan Ponce de León sailed along the Florida coast but was killed in battle. Panfilo de Narvaez surveyed the Gulf coast but was shipwrecked near Galveston. Hernando de Soto slashed his way through much of southeastern North America, and Francisco Vasquez de Coronado searched the Southwest and the Great Plains. No other Mexican or Incan empires were found, although small Spanish outposts were established in Florida and New Mexico. | |

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| 5. In the decades after 1519, the Spaniards created the distinctive colonial society of New Spain. Discuss the features of this new society, how it benefited the Spanish, and its toll on the native populations.   |  |  | | --- | --- | | *ANSWER:* | *Answer would ideally include: Benefits for Spain:* The distribution of conquered towns institutionalized the system of *encomienda,* which empowered conquistadors to rule the Indians and lands in and around their towns. *Encomenderos* subjected Indians in their jurisdictions to chronic overwork, mistreatment, and abuse. *Missionaries*: While Catholic missionaries labored earnestly to convert Indians to Christianity, baptizing thousands, many Indians continued to worship their own gods. Missionaries believed that the cruelties of the *encomienda* system made true conversion impossible. Spain imposed a reform called the *repartimiento*, but real conditions for the natives changed little. *Society in New Spain:* The shortage of Spanish women, and the small numbers of Spanish settlers in general shaped the fundamental social features of New Spain. Spanish/Indian colonial society was sharply stratified by social origin and race. New categories in society included *peninsulares, creoles,* and *mestizos. Destruction of Indian people:* The major centers of Indian civilization had been conquered and demoralized by 1560. Owing to Spanish exploitation, mistreatment, and disease, the Indian population of New Spain had by 1570 fallen about 90 percent from what it was when Columbus arrived. | |