

# Europeans Look Overseas

## Section 1

1. How did Europeans think of the world in the Middle Ages, and when were the Middle Ages?
2. What two things made Europeans begin to look beyond their borders?
3. What is feudalism, and who had their own armies? Who was more powerful, the lords or the kings?
4. What is a manor?
5. What is a serf, and could a serf go wherever they wanted to?  
(EXPLAIN)
6. What church did Christians belong to in the Middle Ages?
7. What were the Crusades? Who fought in them, and what were they about?
8. What were the effects of the Crusades?
9. What did Arab sailors teach Italian sailors? What two new instruments did they show them how to use?
10. What was the Renaissance? When did it occur? What types of discoveries were made?
11. What did Johannes Gutenberg invent, and what effect did it have?
12. Why did England, France, Spain, and Portugal have to find another trade route to Asia?
13. What Portuguese leader led the way for Portugal's exploration? How did he do this?
14. In 1498, what did Vasco da Gama do?
15. Which country first started trading African slaves, and when did it start?



# 1

## Europeans Look Overseas

### FIND OUT

- Why did Europeans look beyond their borders?
- How did attitudes toward learning change during the Renaissance?
- How did Portugal expand its trade?
- What lands did Columbus reach?

**VOCABULARY** feudalism, manor, serf, magnetic compass, astrolabe, caravel, colony

**D**uring the *Middle Ages*, a period from about 500 to 1350, many Europeans thought of the world as a disk floating on a great ocean. The disk was made up of three continents: Europe, Africa, and Asia.

Most Europeans knew little about the lands beyond their small villages. Even map-makers called the waters bordering Europe the Sea of Darkness. Sailors who strayed into these waters often returned with tales

of monsters. "One of these sea monsters," swore one sailor, "has terrible tusks. Another has horns, flames, and huge eyes 16 or 20 feet across."

Were such tales true? The few people who wondered had no way of finding out. Besides, for most Europeans, daily life was hard, and their main concern was survival.

### A Changing World

Toward the end of the Middle Ages, Europeans began to look beyond their borders. Religious wars and the lure of new products from faraway lands brought major changes in the way Europeans lived.

**The Middle Ages.** During the Middle Ages, weak European kings and queens divided their lands among powerful nobles. These nobles, or lords, had their own armies and courts but still owed loyalty to their king. This system of rule by lords who owe loyalty to a king is called feudalism (FYOOD 'l ihz uhm).

Most life in Europe revolved around manors of these powerful lords. The manor included the lord's castle, peasants' huts, and surrounding villages or fields. Most people on the manor were serfs, or peasants bound to the land for life. Serfs worked for



**BIOGRAPHY** Marco Polo in China In 1271, at age 17, Marco Polo set out with his father and uncle from Venice, Italy, for lands in the East. He returned 24 years later. His tales of his travels made other Europeans eager to explore the world. This illustration shows the ruler of China receiving the Polo family. **Geography** Why did most Europeans in the Middle Ages know little about lands outside Europe?

the lord and could not leave the manor without the lord's permission.

Under feudalism, there were few merchants and traders. Few roads or towns existed. The manor produced nearly everything people needed. Most manors even provided a place of worship, such as a church or small chapel. Here, serfs and lords heard teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

**Effects of the Crusades.** During the Middle Ages, Christians in Western Europe belonged to the Roman Catholic Church. The Church had great influence. In time, Church teachings led Europeans to look beyond their manors.

Christians in Western Europe referred to the Middle East as the Holy Land because Jesus had lived and died there. The region was also sacred to Muslims. Their prophet, Muhammad, had also lived in the Holy Land. From about 1100 to 1300, the Roman Catholic Church fought a series of religious wars to gain control of the Holy Land from Turkish Muslims. The wars were known as the **Crusades**.

Thousands of Christians from all across Europe joined the Crusades. Among them were kings and peasants, adults and children. Many Crusaders sewed a white cross on their shirts and on flags as a symbol of their cause.

The Crusaders did not regain the Holy Land. The Crusades did have lasting effects, however. For the first time, large numbers of Europeans traveled beyond their small towns. In the Middle East, they ate strange foods, such as rice, oranges, and dates. They tasted ginger, pepper, and other spices that both improved the taste of food and helped preserve it. From Arab traders, they bought shimmering silks and tightly woven, colorful rugs from lands to the east, known as Asia.

Italian merchants along the Mediterranean Sea saw that Europeans would pay handsome prices for these foreign goods.

They soon began a lively trade with Arab merchants in the Middle East.

Arabs taught Italian sailors how to use new instruments to navigate large bodies of water, such as the Mediterranean Sea. The **Magnetic Compass**, with a needle that always pointed north, helped ship captains sail a straight course. The **astrolabe** (AS troh layb) made it possible for sailors to measure the positions of stars and figure out latitude at sea. Both the magnetic compass and the astrolabe helped make sailing less frightening.

**The Renaissance spirit.** Increased trade and travel made Europeans curious about the wider world. Scholars translated the works of ancient Greeks, Romans, and Arabs. They then made discoveries of their own in fields such as medicine, astronomy, and chemistry. This burst of learning was called the **Renaissance** (REHN uh sahns), a French word meaning rebirth. It started in the late 1300s and continued until about 1600.

One invention that helped spread the spirit of the Renaissance was the printing press. It was invented during the mid-1400s by Johannes Gutenberg (GOOT uhn berg) of Germany. Before Gutenberg's invention, monks wrote out books by hand. As a result, only a few copies were available. With the printing press, large numbers of books could be printed at a low cost. As more books became available, more people learned to read. The more people read, the more they learned about the world.



#### **History and You**

*During the Renaissance, a new ideal person emerged. To meet the ideal, a person had to master every area of learning and be expert in a wide range of skills. Who do you know today who might be considered a "Renaissance person"?*

## European Explorers

Explorer	Achievements
<b>For Portugal</b>	
Bartolomeu Dias 1487–1488	Sailed around the southern tip of Africa
Vasco da Gama 1497–1498	Sailed around Africa to India
Pedro Álvares Cabral 1500	Reached Brazil
<b>For Spain</b>	
Christopher Columbus 1492–1504	Explored the West Indies and the Caribbean
Vasco Núñez de Balboa 1513	Sighted the Pacific Ocean
Juan Ponce de León 1508–1509, 1513	Explored Puerto Rico Explored Florida
Ferdinand Magellan 1519–1522	Led first expedition to sail around the world
Pánfilo de Narváez/Cabeza de Vaca/ Estevanico 1528–1536	Traveled in the Spanish borderlands
Francisco Coronado 1540–1542	Explored southwestern North America
Hernando De Soto 1516–1520, 1539–1542	Explored Central America Led expedition to the Mississippi River
Juan Cabrillo 1542–1543	Explored west coast of North America
<b>For England</b>	
John Cabot 1497–1501(?)	Explored east coast of North America
Henry Hudson 1610–1611	Explored Hudson Bay
<b>For the Netherlands</b>	
Henry Hudson 1609	Explored east coast of North America and the Hudson River
<b>For France</b>	
Giovanni da Verrazano 1524	Explored east coast of North America, including present-day New York harbor
Jacques Cartier 1534–1542	Explored St. Lawrence River
Samuel de Champlain 1603–1615	Explored St. Lawrence River valley Founded Quebec
Jacques Marquette/Louis Joliet 1673	Explored along the Mississippi River
Robert de La Salle 1679–1682	Explored Great Lakes Reached the mouth of the Mississippi River

**CHART SKILLS** Starting in the late 1400s, five major European nations sent out expeditions to explore the world. • Name two explorers who sailed for England. Which areas did they explore?

## Search for New Trade Routes

During the Renaissance, strong rulers slowly gained control over feudal lords. These kings and queens built the foundations of the nations we know today.

**European nations seek trade.** In England and France, rulers increased their power in a long series of wars. In Portugal and Spain, Christian rulers fought Arab Muslims who had conquered parts of those lands. By 1249, the Portuguese had captured the last Muslim stronghold in Portugal. In Spain, Arabs continued to control territory until 1492.

The new rulers of England, France, Portugal, and Spain all looked for ways to increase their wealth. They could make huge profits by trading with China and other lands in Asia. However, Arab and Italian merchants controlled the trade routes across the Mediterranean Sea. If they wanted a share of the trade, European rulers had to find another route to Asia.

**Portugal takes the lead.** The Portuguese turned to the Atlantic Ocean. In the early 1400s, Prince Henry, known as the Navigator, encouraged sea captains to sail south along the coast of West Africa. He founded

an informal school to help sailors in their explorations.

Using a new type of ship known as a caravel (KAR uh vehl), the Portuguese sailed farther and farther south. The caravel's triangular sails and its steering rudder allowed it to sail against the wind. By 1498, the Portuguese sailor Vasco da Gama passed the southern tip of Africa and continued north and east to India. Later, other Portuguese ships pressed on to the East Indies, the source of trade in spices.

Using their new route, the Portuguese built a successful trading empire in Asia. Along the way, they came into contact with great kingdoms in Africa.

## African Trading States

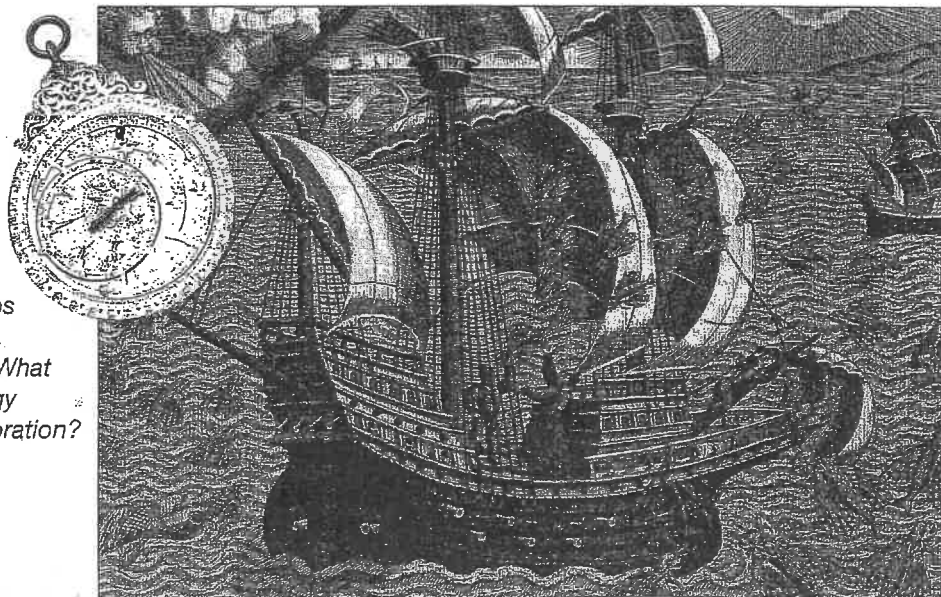
In the 1400s, Europeans knew little about Africa or the many peoples who lived there. A Spanish map, for example, showed an African ruler in the middle of the Sahara, a great desert. The caption read:

“This Negro lord is called Musa Mali. So abundant is the gold in his country that he is the richest and most noble king in all the land.”

### Advances in Technology

New sailing instruments, such as the astrolabe at left, allowed Europeans to take longer, more hazardous sea voyages. The illustration at right shows Portuguese ships crossing the Atlantic Ocean.

**Science and Technology** What other advances in technology encouraged European exploration?



In fact, Musa Mali's real name was Mansa Musa. He ruled Mali, a kingdom in West Africa. Mali reached its height between 1200 and 1400. In 1324, Mansa Musa traveled from Mali across North Africa to Egypt and the Middle East. He so dazzled the Egyptians with his wealth that news of his visit reached Europe.

**West Africa.** Mali was only one of several advanced states that rose in West Africa. (See the map below.) In the late 1400s, Songhai (SAWNG hi) became the most pow-

erful kingdom in West Africa. Timbuktu, located on the Niger River, was a thriving center of trade and learning.

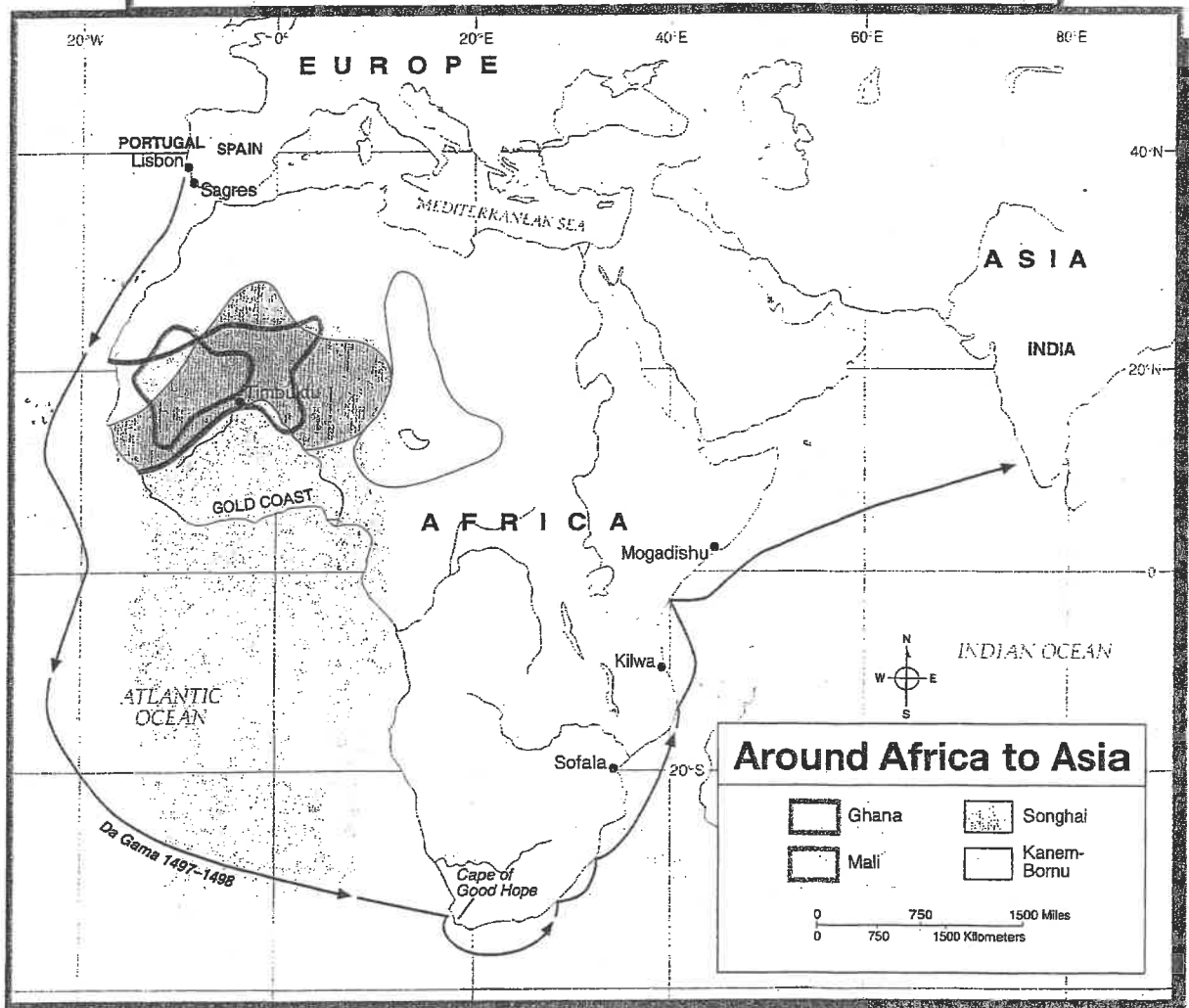
Portuguese explorers did not visit these kingdoms inside Africa. They did, however, trade with Africans along the coast. Africans exchanged gold, ivory, and statues of polished teak wood for European weapons and other goods.

**East Africa.** The Portuguese found well-developed kingdoms along Africa's eastern coast. There, states like Mogadishu and

## MAP STUDY

Portuguese sailors led the search for an all-water route to Asia.

1. Describe Da Gama's route from Portugal to India.
2. Which trading centers were on the east coast of Africa?
3. **Drawing Conclusions Based on the map,** why do you think Portugal was a leader in sea exploration?





Kilwa prospered from trade with other ports along the Indian Ocean. Gold from Zimbabwe, a powerful inland state, made its way to the coastal city of Sofala. From there, ships carried the gold up the African coast as well as to India.

**Portuguese slave trade.** In 1441, the Portuguese raided an African village. They captured about a dozen Africans and sold them as slaves in Europe. By 1460, about 1,000 Africans were sold each year in Portugal. As the trade in slaves increased, Africans from kingdoms along the coast made raids into the interior seeking captives to sell to the Portuguese.

The Portuguese did not introduce slavery. Since ancient times, Europeans, Africans, Arabs, and Asians in many different regions had enslaved and sold people. However, the trade along the West African coast marked a turning point. Over the next 400 years, as many as 11 million Africans would be enslaved and sent across the Atlantic to the Americas.

## Voyages of Columbus

As the Portuguese sailed east toward Asia, the Spanish watched with envy. They, too, wanted a share of the rich Asian trade. In 1492, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella agreed to finance a voyage by Christopher Columbus, a bold Italian sea captain. Columbus planned to reach the East Indies, off the coast of Asia, by sailing west across the Atlantic.



**Ivory Carving From West Africa** West African artists produced many fine carvings. This ivory salt cellar was probably carved to order for a European merchant. **Culture** What objects did the artist include to show that the man in the carving is European?

**The voyage west.** In August 1492, Columbus set sail with three vessels and a crew of 90 sailors. As captain, he commanded the largest ship, the *Santa Maria*. The other ships were the *Nina* and the *Pinta*.

Fair winds sped the ships along. The crew saw no land for a month. Some of the less experienced sailors began to grumble. They had never been beyond the sight of land for so long. Still, Columbus sailed on.

On October 7, sailors saw flocks of birds flying southwest. Columbus changed course to follow the birds. A few days later, crew members spotted tree branches and flowers floating in the water. On the night of October 11, the moon shone brightly. At 2 A.M. on October 12, the lookout on the *Pinta* spotted white cliffs shining in the moonlight. "Tierra! Tierra!" he shouted. "Land! Land!"

At dawn, Columbus rowed ashore. He planted the banner of Spain in what he believed was the East Indies. In fact, as you have read in Chapter 2, he had reached the island home of the Taínos, in what are now known as the West Indies. Convinced he had reached the East Indies, Columbus called the Taínos Indians.

For three months, Columbus explored the West Indies. To his delight, he found signs of gold on the islands. Eager to report his success, he returned home.

**From fame to disgrace.** In Spain, Columbus presented King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella with gifts of pink pearls and brilliantly colored parrots. The royal couple listened intently to his descriptions of tobacco leaves, pineapples, and hammocks used for sleeping. Impressed, they agreed to finance future voyages.