

Summary: Explorers Arrive

Exploring the Americas

Many European countries depended on trade with Asia. It took a long time to sail east to Asia. An explorer named Christopher Columbus wanted to find a better route to Asia. In 1492, he sailed west from Spain and crossed the Atlantic. After many weeks, Columbus and his men finally reached land. They thought they were in Asia, but they were in North America! Columbus met American Indians who had gold. When Columbus returned to Spain, he told people about his trip. Soon, Spain and France sent explorers to the Americas. They wanted to find gold and the best route to Asia, too.

Exploring the Coasts

Spain sent an explorer named Juan Cabrillo. In 1542, Cabrillo and his men sailed north from Mexico. They explored the Pacific Coast. Cabrillo met American Indians while he was in North America. Some Indians welcomed him. They gave Cabrillo food and supplies. Other Indians did not. Cabrillo looked for a waterway that connected the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. He hoped this waterway would be a better trade route to Asia. Cabrillo did not find it, but he claimed new land for Spain.

France sent Samuel de Champlain. He explored the eastern coast. He did not find a route to Asia, but he found rich resources such as fish and beaver. Champlain told the French about these resources. Soon French settlers began to build communities.



Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

explorer *noun*, a person who travels to learn about new places

trade route *noun*, a road or waterway that people travel to buy, sell, or exchange goods



After You Read

REVIEW Why did Columbus want to sail to Asia? What did Columbus want to find on his trip to Asia? Highlight the words that tell you the answer.

REVIEW Why did Spain and France send explorers to North America? Draw a box around the sentence that tells why Spain and France sent explorers to the Americas after Columbus.