Portugal and Spain
Explore

Searching the Seas
In the 1400s, European merchants made a profit by selling spices shipped overland from Asia. Europeans hoped to find a new sea route to Asia to trade for spices. Prince Henry of Portugal worked to improve navigation. His shipbuilders created the caravel, and in 1488 a Portuguese ship was the first to sail around the southern tip of Africa. Working for the queen of Spain, Christopher Columbus sailed west from Europe in 1492, on an expedition to reach Asia. After two months at sea, he landed in the Americas.

Dividing New Lands
The rulers of Spain and Portugal both wanted to rule the new lands. The Pope settled their argument by drawing the Line of Demarcation, which was later changed by treaty. Pedro Alvarez Cabral explored and claimed the Atlantic coast of South America for Portugal. Spanish explorer Vasco Núñez de Balboa sailed to Central America and later crossed Panama to reach the Pacific Ocean. Ferdinand Magellan tried to sail around the world for Spain. He died on the voyage, but one of his ships returned to Spain becoming the first ship to circle the globe. Other Spanish explorers included Juan Ponce de León who claimed Florida, and Hernando de Soto who explored the southeastern United States.

Before You Read
Find and underline a form of each vocabulary word.
profit noun, the money made in a business after all the expenses are met
navigation noun, the science of planning sailing routes
caravel noun, a small, light sailing ship that was easy to control and good for exploring
expedition noun, a journey made by a group of people to achieve a purpose

After You Read
Which nation was the first to have a ship sail around the southern tip of Africa? Circle the sentence that tells the answer.
What did explorer Vasco Núñez de Balboa do? Highlight the sentence that tells the answer.

SKILL Reading Maps
Did the Line of Demarcation move to the east or to the west in 1494? Circle the direction on the compass rose that shows the answer.