## Age of Exploration ER Name:

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| **What is it?** The Age of Exploration refers to the period from about 1400 until about 1600. During this time, Europeans explored the rest of the world. | **What is the Age of Exploration?** |
| **Background:** starting around 1200, European sea trade began to grow for a number of political reasons.  However, it was able to grow because of the arrival of new naval technologies from China—diffusion facilitated by the Mongols. Technology such as the compass and new types of sail. | **Explain the two reasons European trade grew after 1200:** |
| **Henry the Navigator (1415-1460):** Prince Henry the Navigator of Portugal was the first to use this new naval power for exploring.  He wanted to take control of the gold trade that crossed the Sahara desert. Starting around 1415, he began to pay explorers to explore the coast of Africa.  To help with this work, his fortress became a world-center of maps and naval research. A new, faster ship called the Caravel was designed there. | **What was Henry’s motivation for exploring the African coast?**  **What was designed at his fortress?** |
| **De Gama (1497):** Vasco de Gama, a Portuguese explorer discovered that you could sail around Africa.  This gave Portugal a direct link to the Indian Ocean, along with all of the spices, tea, and silk that came from it. This allowed Europeans to take control of trade from that region, cutting off the last great economic strength of the declining Caliphate. | **What did de Gama discover?**  **What effect did that have?** |
| **Columbus (1492)** In 1492, Christopher Columbus discovered the Americas. Columbus was looking for gold, which he never found.  Desperate to make money from his voyages, he turned to slavery. The Taino were forced into mines and onto plantations, where they made enormous profits for the Spanish.  When the Taino were driven to extinction, Spain began using African slaves. Over the next few decades, most of the Caribbean is conquered and turned to slave plantations. | **What did Columbus do to make money?**  **What was Columbus’s impact on the Caribbean?** |
| **Conquest of Mexico (1520-1530):** In 1520, Hernán Cortés sailed an army of mercenary soldiers into what is now central Mexico and there challenged the Aztec Empire that ruled there.  The Aztec Empire lost a couple battles but it was really Eurasian diseases that destroyed the Aztecs.  The Spanish Empire had all of Central America under their control by 1530. These areas were, of course, also subject to slave plantations. The conquest of the Aztecs made Cortés fabulously wealthy. | **Why was Spain able to conquer the Aztecs?** |
| **Conquest of the Inca (1532-1572):** Other soldiers were inspired by Cortés to make money. One of them, named Francisco Pizarro, took a small army into the Inca Empire.  The Spanish forces defeated the Inca army at the Battle of Cajamarca and took the Emperor hostage. The Inca were briefly subdued but soon after rebelled and Spain needed decades before the empire was completely conquered. | **What drove Pizarro’s conquests?**  **Why did the emperor’s death not end the conquest of Inca?** |
| **The Columbian Exchange:** the interaction between Europe and the Americas started a wave of diffusion known as the Columbian Exchange.  Most notably, the Columbian Exchange diffused organisms—new food crops like tomatoes, garlic, avocados, chili peppers, wheat, corn—new animals like horses and cows and turkeys—and diseases like smallpox, influenza, the plague, and typhus. | **What is the Columbian Exchange?**  **What sorts of things were traded?** |
| **The Great Dying:** far more than any conquest, the Americas were devastated by diseases. In many places, 95% of the population died between 1500-1600. The cause of this massive death toll was European Diseases. Smallpox, Typhus, the Plague, Influenza, and others—all the great killers of Eurasian history—converged on the Americas more or less all at once.  Many people characterize the Americas as being “Empty” because of the diseases. This is not true. Populations recovered after the diseases and many parts of the Americas had large populations after the diseases had left—populations that would later be conquered, moved, or killed. | **What is the Great Dying?**  **How many died?**  **What diseases were exchanged?**  **Why is it incorrect to say America was “emptied?”** |