

The Discovery of a new continent



The European exploration

In the XV century, Spain, England and France were very powerful countries in Europe. They had a lot of colonies in Asia and Africa. Colonies were very important because they were a source of money. Explorers found spices, gold, silk and silver in these faraway countries.

Because they wanted to become even richer, these European nations explored the world, looking for new territories to exploit.

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At the end of the 15th century, Christopher Columbus left Europe on his ship. He wanted to find a new route to go to Asia, a distant but rich continent. After a very long journey, he was happy because he saw land. It was in 1492. Christopher Columbus didn't realise that he had just discovered a new continent. He thought he was in the West Indies. This is the reason why, he called "Indians" the first people he met.

At the beginning of the 16th century, Amerigo Vespucci, an Italian explorer, identified America as a new continent. He realised it was not part of Asia. When the first map of the area was made, the new continent was called "Americhland," after Amerigo Vespucci. (This translated to "America.").

