

HISTORY

UK History

From the motives and navigation behind the voyages of Portugal, Spain, the Dutch, England and France to colonial administration and the human cost — with disputed figures and unverified claims marked throughout.

10 Chapters

Philip Osztromok

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CHAPTER 1: WHY EXPLORE? REAL MOTIVES BEHIND THE AGE OF EXPLORATION

The Age of Exploration

Chapter 1 · Why Explore? Real Motives Behind the Age of Exploration

This course follows the voyages that connected Europe to Asia, Africa and the Americas by sea. This first chapter asks why they happened: what Europeans wanted, what technology let them try, and how to describe the period without borrowing a word that hides who was already living in the places reached. It rests on two reference articles, one on the period and one on the spice trade. Both are broad, and the chapter marks where they leave the question of motive unanswered.

What to Call It

The source gives the Age of Discovery as spanning approximately 1418 to 1620, overlapping with the Age of Sail, and it notes that scholars debate the terminology. The word "discovery" is contested because it describes lands as uncovered when they were previously unknown only to Europeans and were inhabited by indigenous peoples. Alternative framings include "Age of Exploration" and "Age of Contact."

Why This Course Says "Exploration"

The course title follows the plan, but the debate is real, and the source does not settle it. I use "exploration" for voyages and avoid saying a place was discovered when people lived there. Chapter 9 returns to the human cost of the period.

The Central Motive: Trade With Asia

European seafarers sought to establish maritime trade routes to Asia, particularly for spices and luxury goods, according to the source. The Portuguese led the first efforts under Prince Henry the Navigator, beginning systematic Atlantic exploration around 1418.

Why Spices

What Was Traded

Where They Came From

The spice article lists cinnamon, cassia, cardamom, ginger, pepper, nutmeg, star anise, clove and turmeric, "known and used in antiquity and traded in the Eastern world."

The Maluku Islands, also called the Spice Islands, were the world's primary source of cloves and nutmeg, and the Banda Islands specifically the world's source of nutmeg in medieval times.

What They Were For

The source says spices were used "in medicine as well as in the kitchen" and were "among the most expensive and in-demand products of the Middle Ages." It gives no prices or markups.

A Popular Explanation Missing From the Source

A common belief is that spices were wanted to disguise rotting meat. The spice article does not mention it. That does not prove it false, and I did not find a source that tests it, so I do not use it as a motive.

Who Stood in the Way

Period	Intermediaries, per the source
By the 7th century	Arab merchants dominated maritime routes.
11th to 15th centuries	Venetian and Genoese city-states monopolized European access.
After 1453	Ottoman Turks controlled routes.

The source presents the Portuguese arrival as breaking that chain: Vasco da Gama reached Calicut in 1498, and the conquest of Malacca in 1511 established direct European access to spice sources previously controlled by Arab intermediaries.

A Neat Story With Limits

The source names 1453 as the start of Ottoman control of routes, and it is tempting to say the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople caused the voyages. The sources here do not say that, and some voyages began decades earlier, on the source's own date of about 1418. I do not claim a cause, and I did not research how historians rank the factors.

The Technology

- **The magnetic compass:** adopted from China by the late twelfth or early thirteenth century.
- **Ship design:** a fusion of Mediterranean carvel hulls with Northern European rigging created the full-rigged ship and the caravel.
- **Navigation tools:** astrolabes and improved cartography.

A Borrowed Toolkit

On the source's account, the compass came from China and the ship design combined two European traditions, so the voyages depended on existing knowledge from several places. Chapter 5 covers navigation in more detail. I did not find who made the improvements to cartography or when.

The Events the Course Will Cover

The source gives a short list: Columbus reaching the Americas under Spanish patronage in 1492, the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494 dividing the world between Portuguese and Spanish exploration claims, Vasco da Gama's sea route to India in 1498, and Magellan's expedition completing the first circumnavigation in 1519 to 1522. It also says the period initiated the Columbian Exchange, reshaped trade networks and established European colonial empires worldwide.

What I Did Not Verify

I did not find the religious motives the outline anticipated, such as the crusading tradition, the search for Christian allies or the mission to convert, and so the chapter says nothing about them. I also did not find gold as a motive, the demand for African goods,

or state rivalry. The chapter therefore offers one motive, trade, and the tools, and not the full picture.

Hands-On Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Set out the three technologies the chapter names, say where each came from and name one detail the source leaves out.

→ [Solution](#)

EXERCISE 2

A student writes "Europeans went exploring because the Ottomans blocked the spice routes in 1453." Use the chapter to qualify it.

→ [Solution](#)

EXERCISE 3

Explain the terminology debate over "discovery" and say which term you would use, with a reason.

→ [Solution](#)

Quick Reference

- **Period:** approximately 1418 to 1620; Portuguese Atlantic exploration under Prince Henry from about 1418
- **Motive:** maritime trade with Asia, especially spices and luxury goods
- **Intermediaries:** Arab merchants (by the 7th century), Venice and Genoa (11th to 15th centuries), Ottomans (after 1453)

- **Portuguese steps:** Calicut 1498, Malacca 1511
- **Technology:** compass from China, caravel and full-rigged ship, astrolabes and cartography
- **Terminology:** "discovery" contested; alternatives "exploration" and "contact"
- **Not covered:** religious motives, gold, state rivalry, ranking of causes

CHAPTER 2: PORTUGAL'S REAL HEAD START: HENRY THE NAVIGATOR & THE ROUTE TO INDIA

The Age of Exploration

Chapter 2 · Portugal's Real Head Start: Henry the Navigator & the Route to India

Chapter 1 named trade with Asia as the central motive. This chapter follows the country that reached Asia by sea first. It covers Prince Henry's role, Bartolomeu Dias's rounding of the southern tip of Africa in 1488, and Vasco da Gama's voyage to India in 1497 to 1499. The sources are three reference articles, one on each man. They give dates and figures, and where they contradict a popular story, the chapter says so.

Prince Henry

Prince Henry (1394 to 1460) is "often credited as one of the main initiators of the Age of Discovery," according to the source. He directed early Portuguese exploration of Africa and the Atlantic islands.

Year	Event
1415	Henry takes part in the conquest of Ceuta and becomes Duke of Viseu.
1420	He is appointed administrator of the Order of Christ, which funds his ventures; Madeira is colonized.
1427	The Azores are discovered.
1434	Cape Bojador is finally passed, by Gil Eanes.
1456	Cape Verde is reached.
1460	Henry dies on 13 November and is buried at Batalha Monastery.

He sponsored systematic exploration along the West African coast and promoted the caravel design for oceanic voyages (Chapter 1).

Two Legends the Source Corrects

Modern historians dispute the "Sagres school" narrative. The source says "there was no center of navigation science or observatory in the modern sense" at his court, a myth created centuries later by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century chroniclers. It also says the nickname "Navigator" was not used in his lifetime and comes from nineteenth-century German historians. So the man usually pictured with a school of navigators is, on this evidence, a later invention. I did not research what he actually did at his court.

"Discovered" Again

The source says the Azores were "discovered" in 1427, and it says Madeira was colonized in 1420. Chapter 1 flagged the word. I did not find whether either group of islands was inhabited before, so I report the source's wording and take no view.

Bartolomeu Dias, 1487 to 1488

Dias (about 1450 to 1500) "became the first European navigator to round the southern tip of Africa" in February 1488.

The Voyage

He departed around July 1487 with three vessels and reached Mossel Bay on 4 February 1488, after thirty days at sea. The crew continued eastward, confirming the coast trended northeast. The furthest point was reached on 12 March 1488, near the Boesmans River mouth.

The Method

Ships could navigate the cape by sailing "diagonally southwest in the open ocean, well to the west of the African coast." Da Gama later used these findings.

The Name

It was originally the Cape of Storms, and King John II reportedly renamed it the Cape of Good Hope to symbolize the route's promise. The word "reportedly" is the source's.

Dias assisted in designing ships for da Gama's voyage and later captained in Pedro Álvares Cabral's 1500 expedition to India. Four ships, including his, were lost in a storm off the cape on 29 May 1500.

What Is Missing

The source says he rounded the cape in February 1488 but gives Mossel Bay on 4 February as the point reached, which is east of the cape itself. I did not resolve exactly when the cape was passed, since the ships apparently sailed well out to sea. I also did not find the reason for turning back or the return date.

Vasco da Gama, 1497 to 1499

Date	Event
8 July 1497	Da Gama leaves Lisbon with four ships and approximately 170 crew.
November 1497	The fleet rounds the Cape of Good Hope after over three months at sea, "by far the longest journey without landfall made by that time."
24 April 1498	He leaves Malindi, with a Gujarati pilot's assistance.
20 May 1498	He reaches Calicut (Kozhikode).
Late August or early September 1499	He returns to Lisbon.

The Return Cost Half the Crew

Sailing against monsoon winds, the return crossing took over 90 days instead of 23. Approximately half the crew died, many from scurvy. Da Gama scuttled the São Rafael and redistributed the survivors across two remaining ships. The source gives no exact numbers of the dead.

Was It a Success?

The source says that, despite modest spice quantities brought back, the voyage demonstrated profit potential. But it also says the expedition "failed in its principal mission of securing a commercial treaty with Kozhikode." Both statements come from the source, and I do not weigh them.

A Violent Sequel

Da Gama's second voyage in 1502 involved controversial tactics. The source describes the Pilgrim Ship Incident, in which he "looted the ship with over 400 pilgrims on board...and burned them to death." That is a serious allegation stated as fact in the source, and I did not check it against other sources or find the ship's origin. Chapter 9 returns to the human cost of the period. Da Gama died in Cochin on 24 December 1524 from malaria, just three months after arriving as Viceroy of India.

What I Did Not Verify

I did not find the capture of Ceuta itself, the slave trade's beginnings, the ships' cargoes or the diplomatic situation at Calicut, all named in the outline. I also did not find how Portuguese rulers funded and planned the voyages, so the chapter cannot explain how the head start arose beyond the individual voyages.

Hands-On Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Set out the two legends about Prince Henry that the chapter's source corrects, and say what remains unresearched.

→ [Solution](#)

EXERCISE 2

Build a timeline from Dias's departure to da Gama's return and mark which dates are approximate.

→ Solution

EXERCISE 3

A student writes "Da Gama's voyage was a triumph." Use the chapter to qualify it.

→ Solution

Quick Reference

- **Henry:** 1394 to 1460; Ceuta 1415; Order of Christ 1420; Bojador passed 1434; "Sagres school" and "Navigator" are later inventions
- **Dias:** left about July 1487; Mossel Bay 4 February 1488; furthest point 12 March 1488; died at sea 29 May 1500
- **Da Gama:** left 8 July 1497 with four ships and about 170 crew; Calicut 20 May 1498; back in late August or early September 1499
- **Losses:** about half the crew on the return
- **Outcome:** profit potential shown; no commercial treaty with Kozhikode
- **Not covered:** Ceuta, the slave trade, funding, Calicut's diplomacy

CHAPTER 3: SPAIN'S REAL GAMBLE: COLUMBUS & THE LINE OF DEMARCATION

The Age of Exploration

Chapter 3 · Spain's Real Gamble: Columbus & the Line of Demarcation

Chapter 2 followed Portugal's route round Africa. This chapter follows Spain's different bet: sailing west across the Atlantic under Christopher Columbus, and the treaty that then divided the world between the two powers. The sources are two reference articles, one on Columbus's voyages and one on the Treaty of Tordesillas. They give the dates and the treaty's terms clearly, but say little about how Columbus obtained his backing or what he found, and the chapter marks that.

The Four Voyages

Columbus undertook four transatlantic expeditions between 1492 and 1504, sponsored by Spain's Catholic Monarchs.

Voyage	What the source says
First, 1492 to 1493	Departed 3 August 1492. Landfall on 12 October at an island Columbus named San Salvador (indigenous name Guanahani). Returned in March 1493.
Second, 1493 to 1496	A larger fleet of 17 ships; explored the Lesser and Greater Antilles and established the La Isabela settlement.
Third, 1498 to 1500	Columbus was arrested by the royal official Bobadilla and returned to Spain in chains.
Fourth, 1502 to 1504	A final voyage exploring the coasts of Central America.

What Was Found Is Barely Described

The source names the islands and settlements but does not describe the people who lived there, how the Spanish treated them, or why Columbus was arrested. I did not research the reasons, so the chapter does not describe conditions in the settlements. Chapter 9 covers the human cost of the period.

The Ships

The flagship *Santa María* was a carrack, while the *Niña* and *Pinta* were smaller caravels. The *Santa María* was wrecked on Christmas Day 1492 off Hispaniola, and its materials were used for Fort Navidad. Chapter 1 described the caravel as a fusion of Mediterranean and Northern European design, and Chapter 2 credited Prince Henry with promoting it, so two of Columbus's three ships were of the type Portugal had been using.

A Wrong Estimate

A Voyage Built on a Miscalculation

Columbus miscalculated the Earth's size, believing it about 75 percent of its actual diameter. The source says he therefore estimated Asia to be only 2,400 nautical miles west of the Canaries, roughly one-fourth of the true distance, and quotes: "Columbus therefore estimated the size of the Earth to be about 75% of Eratosthenes's calculation." A shorter Atlantic made the plan look feasible.

Two Small Cautions

The source does not say what Columbus's rivals or advisers thought of the estimate, so I cannot say whether it was an error at the time or only in hindsight. And the source's account implies, without stating it, that the Americas lay in the way; I did not find how Columbus interpreted what he found.

Who Saw Land First

Whether Columbus or the crew member Rodrigo de Triana first spotted land remains contested among historians. The source does not say what the evidence on each side is, so I do not choose.

The Treaty of Tordesillas, 1494

Signed on 7 June 1494 in Tordesillas, Spain, the treaty divided newly discovered lands outside Europe between Portugal and Castile along a meridian 370 leagues west of the Cape Verde islands.

Why It Was Needed

It resolved disputes after Columbus's return in 1493. Portuguese King John II claimed prior rights under the 1479 Treaty of Alcáçovas and the 1481 papal bull *Aeterni regis*, which granted him lands south of the Canary Islands.

The Allocation

"The lands to the east would belong to Portugal and the lands to the west to Castile," modifying Pope Alexander VI's earlier bulls. Portugal gained rights to Brazil's eastern quarter and eventually other African and Asian territories, while Spain received most of the Americas.

The Ambiguity

The treaty specified distance in undefined "leagues" from unspecified Cape Verde islands, without giving degrees. Sixteenth-century experts proposed locations from about 42°W to 49°W.

A Division Made Without the People Living There

The treaty divided lands between two European powers, in the source's words "newly discovered lands outside Europe." The source does not mention the peoples who already lived there, and I did not find any account of their being consulted. Chapter 1 flagged the word "discovered," and I use the source's phrasing only to describe the document.

Later Changes

- **1529:** the Treaty of Zaragoza extended the division globally, establishing an antimeridian 297.5 leagues east of the Moluccas. Portugal received roughly 191 degrees and Spain roughly 169.
- **1750:** the Treaty of Madrid declared the Tordesillas framework superseded, establishing new borders between Brazil and Spanish America and acknowledging changing colonial realities.

What I Did Not Verify

I did not find how Columbus won his backing, the terms he negotiated, the size and crew of the first fleet, or what other European states thought of the treaty. I also did not verify how the treaty relates to the papal bulls beyond the source's brief mention, and I did not check the claim that the Moluccas boundary favored Portugal. The chapter therefore gives the treaty's structure but not its diplomacy.

Hands-On Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Set out Columbus's four voyages with one fact each, and name one thing the source does not explain about the third.

→ [Solution](#)

EXERCISE 2

Explain Columbus's error about the Earth's size and say why the source's figures make the plan look more feasible than it was.

→ [Solution](#)

EXERCISE 3

Describe what the Treaty of Tordesillas divided and why it caused ongoing uncertainty, using the chapter.

→ [Solution](#)

Quick Reference

- **Columbus:** four voyages 1492 to 1504; first left 3 August 1492, landfall 12 October (Guanahani/San Salvador)
- **Ships:** Santa María (carrack, wrecked 25 December 1492), Niña and Pinta (caravels)
- **Error:** Earth estimated at about 75% of its true size; Asia placed about 2,400 nautical miles west of the Canaries, roughly a quarter of the true distance
- **Treaty of Tordesillas:** 7 June 1494; a meridian 370 leagues west of the Cape Verde islands; east to Portugal, west to Castile
- **Later:** Zaragoza 1529 (Moluccas antimeridian); Madrid 1750 supersedes
- **Not covered:** Columbus's backing, conditions in the settlements, the peoples' role

CHAPTER 4: CIRCUMNAVIGATING THE GLOBE: MAGELLAN'S REAL, FATAL VOYAGE

The Age of Exploration

Chapter 4 · Circumnavigating the Globe: Magellan's Real, Fatal Voyage

Chapter 3 ended with Spain and Portugal splitting the world between them. This chapter follows the Spanish expedition that tried to reach the Spice Islands by sailing west and ended up circling the globe, at a great cost in lives. The source is a single reference article on the expedition. It gives the dates, the fleet and the outcome clearly and the intermediate events only in outline, so the chapter says what is missing.

The Expedition in Outline

Item	What the source says
Departure	20 September 1519, from Spain.
Return	6 September 1522, about three years later.
Distance	Roughly 60,440 km.
Fleet	Five ships: Trinidad, San Antonio, Concepción, Victoria and Santiago.
People	Approximately 270 crew, representing diverse European and Asian origins.
Leaders	Ferdinand Magellan, until his death in April 1521; then Juan Sebastián Elcano, who guided the remaining ship home.

"Approximately 270"

The source does not give an exact crew, and I did not research how sources differ. The phrase "diverse European and Asian origins" is the source's, and it does not say what the Asian members did or how they came to be aboard.

What It Achieved

A First Crossing of the Pacific

The source describes "the first crossing of the Pacific by a European expedition." The qualification "by a European expedition" is the source's, and it implies others may have crossed before. I did not research any earlier crossing, and Chapter 9 returns to the peoples of the region.

A Strait

The expedition discovered the Strait of Magellan. Whether Europeans "discovered" it is the same terminology question Chapter 1 raised, and the source gives no date.

The Original Goal

It reached the Moluccas, the Spice Islands, which was the mission's original objective, connecting back to Chapter 1's account of the spice trade.

Magellan's Death

Magellan died at the Battle of Mactan, fighting Filipino forces led by Lapu-Lapu, in April 1521. Elcano took over command. The source gives no day and does not describe the circumstances of the fight, so the chapter cannot say why it took place or how it was lost.

Who Circumnavigated?

The leader who planned the voyage died before it was complete, and the ship that finished it was captained by someone else. The source credits the expedition with the first circumnavigation and Elcano with guiding the remaining fleet home. It does not say Magellan personally circled the globe, and it does not resolve how far his earlier travels in the East might matter to the question. I did not research that.

The Cost

- Only the Victoria survived to complete the journey.
- It returned with 18 survivors plus three Moluccans.

- Additional crew members were detained in Cape Verde or returned separately.
- The expedition endured mutinies, starvation, disease and hostile encounters throughout.

Numbers That Do Not Add Up on Their Own

About 270 people set out, and 18 survivors plus three Moluccans arrived on one ship. The source accounts for some of the difference by noting others were detained in Cape Verde or returned separately, but it does not give totals for the dead, the deserters or those who came home by other routes. I do not calculate a death toll, and readers should not either from these figures.

Was It Worth It?

The Victoria returned carrying 26 tons of valuable cloves, though the source says the extremely long route proved commercially impractical for regular trade. The source does not compare this with da Gama's eastern route from Chapter 2, so I do not.

A Comparison I Will Not Push Too Far

Chapter 2 gave da Gama's return losses as about half his crew. The Magellan figures look worse in the source's own numbers, but the two accounts describe different things, and I did not check that the comparison is fair. I note it and do not draw a conclusion.

What I Did Not Verify

I did not find the mutiny, the route through the strait, the Pacific crossing, the stop in Guam or the Philippines before Mactan, or the profit made from the cloves, all named in the outline or expected in a full account. I also did not find any account by the surviving crew. The chapter is an outline of a much larger story.

Hands-On Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Set out the fleet, the dates and the two leaders from the chapter, and say why "Magellan circumnavigated the globe" is a problematic statement.

→ Solution

EXERCISE 2

A student writes "Of 270 men, only 18 survived." Use the chapter to correct it.

→ Solution

EXERCISE 3

Explain the difference between the expedition's achievement and its commercial value, using the chapter's figures.

→ Solution

Quick Reference

- **Departed:** 20 September 1519; **returned:** 6 September 1522; about 60,440 km
- **Fleet:** Trinidad, San Antonio, Concepción, Victoria, Santiago; about 270 crew
- **Leaders:** Magellan (died April 1521 at Mactan, fighting forces led by Lapu-Lapu); Elcano
- **Survivors:** Victoria returned with 18 survivors plus three Moluccans
- **Cargo:** 26 tons of cloves; the route was commercially impractical
- **Achievements:** the first European crossing of the Pacific; the Strait of Magellan; the Moluccas reached
- **Not covered:** the mutiny, the strait and Pacific crossing, the Philippines, the dead

CHAPTER 5: THE REAL NAVIGATIONAL SCIENCE BEHIND EXPLORATION

The Age of Exploration

Chapter 5 · The Real Navigational Science Behind Exploration

Chapters 2 to 4 followed the voyages. This chapter asks how the sailors knew where they were. The answer is three methods with very different reliability: dead reckoning, latitude from the sun or stars, and longitude, which had no good method for most of the period. The sources are three reference articles, on longitude, dead reckoning and the astrolabe. They give the principles and a few dates clearly, and they leave out most of what sailors actually did on deck, so the chapter marks that.

Dead Reckoning

Dead reckoning is "the process of calculating the current position of a moving object by using a previously determined position, or fix, and incorporating estimates of speed, heading (or direction or course), and elapsed time." The basic formula is distance equals speed multiplied by time.

What You Need

A known starting position (a "fix"), a measure of speed, and the elapsed time and direction.

What Goes Wrong

Errors are cumulative over time. The method does not account for wind drift, currents or directional deviation, so it becomes less reliable on longer journeys, though accuracy improves when new fixes are obtained part way through.

The Name

Contrary to a popular belief, "dead reckoning" was not originally short for "deduced reckoning." The source cites the Oxford English Dictionary for the term appearing as early as 1613, and says "dead"

likely refers to using a stationary reference point.

The Sources Do Not Describe the Instruments

The source does not describe how speed was measured on a sailing ship, or how ships kept their heading. I did not find the log line or the traverse board, so the chapter says nothing about them. The point that carries over from Chapter 2 is that a long voyage without a fix, such as da Gama's over three months without landfall, would have compounded these errors, but the sources do not say how he coped, and that link is mine.

Latitude: The Astrolabe

The astrolabe emerged from the Hellenistic period as a two-dimensional adaptation of the armillary sphere. Theon of Alexandria, about 335 to 405, wrote a detailed treatise on it, though the instrument predates him significantly. The source says that, contrary to popular belief, Hypatia did not invent it: she taught its construction to her student Synesius.

Stage	What the source says
Hellenistic	Emerged as a two-dimensional adaptation of the armillary sphere.
Islamic period	Muslim astronomers introduced angular scales and azimuth circles, making it far more practical. Muhammad al-Fazari is credited as the first Islamic scholar to construct one, and by the 10th century al-Sufi documented "over 1,000 different uses."
At sea	It worked for latitude on land or calm seas, but its utility diminished on moving vessels, so navigators developed the "mariner's astrolabe" for use on heaving decks.
Later	It gave way to more specialized instruments, a precursor to the sextant.

A Borrowed Toolkit, Again

Chapter 1 noted that the compass came from China. The astrolabe's history in this source runs through the Hellenistic and Islamic worlds before it reached European ships. The

source does not say how it reached Portugal or when the mariner's version appeared, and I did not find out.

Longitude: The Unsolved Problem

Determining longitude requires coordinating time across distant locations. The Earth rotates 360 degrees in 24 hours, so each hour of time difference equals 15 degrees of longitude. That makes accurate timekeeping essential.

Early Attempts

- Hipparchus, in the 2nd century BC, first proposed using lunar eclipses, comparing local eclipse times at two locations. Clock limitations made this impractical.
- Christopher Columbus attempted lunar eclipse observations on his voyages but produced longitude errors of 13 and 38 degrees west, largely unsuccessful.

A Typo I Left Out

The longitude source gives a date of "1901" for al-Battani's eclipse observations, which cannot be right for a scholar of the Islamic golden age. I assume it is a mistake for a date around 901, but I did not check, so I omit the observation. This is also a reminder that these are unedited summaries.

The Solutions

Date	Development
1608 onward	The telescope enables precise astronomical measurement.
1657	Huygens' pendulum clock improves accuracy about thirtyfold, but proves impractical at sea.
1714	Britain's Longitude Act offers prizes of £10,000 to £20,000 (roughly £1.7 to £3.4 million today).

Date	Development
1762	John Harrison's H-4 chronometer satisfies the prize requirements in sea trials; he does not receive payment until 1773, after parliamentary intervention.
1767	Nevil Maskelyne publishes the first Nautical Almanac, with pre-calculated tables for the lunar distances method.

Solved Long After the Voyages

Every solution in the table dates from after 1600, and the practical ones from the eighteenth century. Da Gama, Columbus and Magellan sailed without a reliable way to find longitude. The source describes two competing methods: lunar distances, which required complex calculation until Maskelyne's tables made it practical by the 1780s and 1790s, and marine chronometers, which proved more convenient and gradually replaced lunar distances after 1800. I take the lesson that explorers relied on latitude and dead reckoning, but the sources do not spell that out in those words.

What I Did Not Verify

I did not find the compass, the traverse board, portolan charts, or how ships measured speed, all named in the outline or the sailors' practice. The sources also do not say how Portuguese and Spanish pilots actually managed to cross oceans and return. I also did not check the sterling equivalents for the prizes. The chapter explains principles, not practice.

Hands-On Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Explain dead reckoning in your own words and say why its errors matter more on a long voyage.

→ [Solution](#)

EXERCISE 2

A student writes "Hypatia invented the astrolabe." Use the chapter to correct it.

→ [Solution](#)

EXERCISE 3

Using the 15-degrees-per-hour figure, work out what a 2-hour time difference means for longitude, and explain why this made timekeeping the key problem.

→ [Solution](#)

Quick Reference

- **Dead reckoning:** fix plus speed, heading and time; distance equals speed times time; errors cumulative; term recorded by 1613
- **Astrolabe:** Hellenistic origin, Islamic refinement, mariner's version for moving ships; Hypatia did not invent it
- **Longitude:** 15 degrees per hour of time difference; Columbus's eclipse attempts erred by 13 and 38 degrees west
- **Solutions:** Huygens 1657; Longitude Act 1714; Harrison's H-4 trials 1762 (paid 1773); Nautical Almanac 1767
- **Not covered:** the log line, portolan charts, how pilots crossed oceans in practice

CHAPTER 6: CONQUEST & COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION: THE SPANISH & PORTUGUESE EMPIRES

The Age of Exploration

Chapter 6 · Conquest & Colonial Administration: The Spanish & Portuguese Empires

Chapters 2 to 4 followed the voyages that reached new lands. This chapter looks at how Spain and Portugal ruled the lands they claimed: the encomienda labour system, the viceroyalty of New Spain, and Portugal's captaincies in Brazil. The sources are three reference articles. They describe the systems' structures well and the lives of the people under them only briefly, and the chapter says where that leaves gaps. It also does not treat the enslaved and indigenous people's experience in depth, which Chapter 9 takes up.

The Encomienda

The encomienda was a sixteenth-century Spanish labour system that "rewarded Spain's conquistadors with the labour of conquered non-Christian peoples." The source says that in theory conquerors provided military protection and education, and in practice conditions resembled forced labour and slavery.

Origins

Based on medieval Iberian reconquista institutions used against Muslims. It was formally established in Hispaniola by Nicolás de Ovando in 1502, then expanded across the Spanish American colonies and the Philippines.

The Bargain

The Crown granted individuals (encomenderos) the right to extract labour and tribute from indigenous communities. In return, they were supposed to provide "instruction in Catholicism and the Spanish language" and protection.

How It Varied

In New Spain, the source says natives "remained in their settlements with their families." I did not find how this compared with other regions, so I do not generalize.

Reform Attempts

- The Laws of Burgos (1512 to 1513) and the New Laws (1542) attempted regulation.
- After 1542, encomienda grants were limited to two generations instead of perpetuity.
- The priest Bartolomé de las Casas championed abolition after witnessing abuse.

Abolition	Date
Chiloé (southern Chile)	1782
The rest of Chile	1789
Empire-wide	1791

A Long Life for a Reformed System

The New Laws date from 1542 and the empire-wide abolition from 1791, about two and a half centuries later. The source does not say how far the reforms were enforced in between, and I did not research it, so the chapter cannot say how much the 1542 limit changed. Both dates come from one article.

A Contested Legacy

Scholars debate the system's impact. Some characterize it as genocidal, noting indigenous population declines. Others attribute the deaths primarily to disease, though the source says evidence suggests "purposefully infecting Indigenous populations was not an obscure policy." I do not weigh these claims or give a death toll, and Chapter 9 covers the wider human cost.

New Spain

New Spain was founded in 1521 following the Spanish conquest of the Aztec Empire and officially became a viceroyalty in 1535. It remained under Spanish control until 1821, when Mexican independence ended three centuries of colonial rule.

Feature	What the source says
Government	A viceroy appointed by the Spanish monarch, with Antonio de Mendoza as the first; audiencias (high courts), captaincy generals, and local governance through corregidores and town councils.
Capital	Mexico City, established on the site of the former Aztec capital, Tenochtitlan; the political, economic and religious center.
Territory	At its peak, from modern Mexico and Central America through the southwestern United States, Florida, Louisiana, Caribbean islands, and Pacific territories including the Philippines and Guam.
Economy	Silver mining was the backbone, particularly at Zacatecas and Guanajuato; other exports included cochineal dye and cacao. The Manila galleon connected Asian trade through Acapulco.

The Link to Chapter 4

The Philippines, which Chapter 4 reached with Magellan's expedition and where he died, appears here as part of New Spain's territory. The source gives no date for its inclusion and does not describe how it was governed, so I note the link and do not expand it.

Brazil's Captaincies

The Captaincies of Brazil were Portuguese colonial administrative divisions established starting in 1534 under King John III. The Crown granted land parcels to private entrepreneurs called *donatários*, who received the title of Captain General. The source says the Crown "determined to establish permanent colonies" through a private enterprise model that had previously succeeded in Madeira and the Azores.

Limited Success

Of approximately 15 initial captaincies, "only two, the captaincies of Pernambuco and São Vicente...are today considered to have been successful." Others failed due to indigenous

A Royal Turn

In 1548, when the Bahia captaincy reverted to the Crown after indigenous attacks, King John III established a royal Governor-General. The captaincies then operated as

resistance, inadequate resources or Dutch occupation in Northeast Brazil.

subordinate governments under royal oversight.

A Lasting Legacy

The divisions evolved into Brazil's provinces by the eighteenth century, and thirteen modern Brazilian states retain names from the captaincies. The system also established patterns of concentrated land ownership that persisted for centuries.

Two Dates for the Governor-General

The source dates the royal Governor-General to 1548. I recall that other accounts give 1549 for the first governor's arrival, but I did not check that, so I report the source's date only. The source does not describe the labour the captaincies used, which matters for Chapter 9, so I make no statement about it.

Two Models Compared

Spain governed through royal appointees and courts, with viceroys and audiencias, alongside a labour grant system; Portugal began with private proprietors and moved to royal oversight after some captaincies failed. The source does not compare them, so this contrast is my summary of the two articles, and I did not check it against a source that does.

What I Did Not Verify

I did not find the Spanish conquest of the Aztec and Inca empires themselves, the Council of the Indies, the Viceroyalty of Peru, the casta system, Portuguese Asia, or the labour arrangements in Brazil, all part of the outline or the wider story. I also did not check the enforcement of any of the laws. The chapter describes systems on paper.

Hands-On Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Explain the encomienda's theory and practice as the source describes them, and name the two reform dates.

→ [Solution](#)

EXERCISE 2

A student writes "The New Laws of 1542 abolished the encomienda." Correct it using the chapter.

→ [Solution](#)

EXERCISE 3

Compare the two Iberian systems of governing distant lands as far as the chapter supports, and say what you cannot compare.

→ [Solution](#)

Quick Reference

- **Encomienda:** established in Hispaniola 1502 by Ovando; Laws of Burgos 1512 to 1513; New Laws 1542 (grants limited to two generations); abolished empire-wide 1791
- **New Spain:** conquest 1521; viceroyalty 1535; first viceroy Antonio de Mendoza; capital Mexico City; silver; ended 1821
- **Brazil:** captaincies from 1534; about 15 initial, only Pernambuco and São Vicente considered successful; Governor-General 1548
- **Contested:** genocide against disease as the cause of indigenous deaths

- **Not covered:** the Council of the Indies, Peru, Brazil's labour, enforcement

CHAPTER 7: THE DUTCH GOLDEN AGE OF EXPLORATION & THE VOC

The Age of Exploration

Chapter 7 · The Dutch Golden Age of Exploration & the VOC

The first six chapters were about Portugal and Spain. This chapter turns to the Dutch, who came later and organized their overseas trade in a new way, through a chartered company owned by shareholders. The source is a single reference article on the Dutch East India Company (the VOC). It describes the company's structure, scale and end well, and it says almost nothing about the Dutch voyages that preceded it or the Dutch Golden Age itself, so the chapter is about the company and says so.

The Company

The VOC was established on 20 March 1602 as a chartered trading company granted a 21-year monopoly on Asian trade. Its initial capital was 6.4 million guilders. It became "one of the first joint-stock companies in the world" and is sometimes considered the world's first multinational corporation.

A Superlative With Hedges

The source says "one of the first" joint-stock companies and "sometimes considered" the first multinational. Both are careful phrases, and I keep them. I did not research what other companies have a claim, or what the definition of "multinational" excludes, so the chapter does not rank the VOC against any rival.

Structure and Scale

Measure	What the source says
1602 to 1796	Nearly a million Europeans deployed across 4,785 ships, acquiring over 2.5 million tonnes of goods.
By 1669	50,000 people employed, with 150 merchant ships and 40 warships.
Dividends	Averaging 18 percent of capital for nearly two centuries.

Measure	What the source says
Headquarters	Amsterdam.

The company operated across Asia, Africa and beyond, from Batavia (Jakarta) in Indonesia to the Cape Colony in South Africa, with trading posts in Japan (Dejima), Ceylon, India and China.

Read the Numbers as the Source's

The figures come from one article and are stated without derivation. "Nearly a million Europeans" and "18 percent for nearly two centuries" are striking claims, and I did not check either. The 18 percent is also given as an average, which does not say whether it was steady.

Why It Mattered

Private Capital, Public Power

A trading company with a state-granted monopoly, financed by shareholders, ran ships, warships and posts across several continents. The source describes the structure but not who the shareholders were.

A Different Model

Chapters 2 to 6 showed Portugal and Spain acting through crown-backed expeditions and colonial governments. Here the vehicle is a company. That is my contrast between the articles, not one the source makes.

The Spice Trade Again

Chapter 1 described the Banda Islands as the world's medieval source of nutmeg. The VOC's monopoly on Asian trade, and its violence in the same islands (below), continue that story.

The Violence Behind the Monopoly

The company maintained spice monopolies through violent suppression, including the destruction of the Banda Islands populations and participation in the slave trade, according to the source's "Controversial Legacy" section.

A Serious Claim, Stated Briefly

The source gives the destruction of the Banda Islands populations in one clause, with no date, number or description, and I did not research it. Chapter 9 covers the human cost of the age of exploration, and this claim belongs there. I do not repeat a figure or a description I have not checked, and I do not treat the sentence as a full account of what happened.

Decline and End

- After 1730, the VOC faced erosion of intra-Asiatic trade, rising corruption, high employee mortality and unsustainable dividend policies.
- The Fourth Anglo-Dutch War (1780 to 1783) devastated its fleet.
- Following the Batavian Republic's establishment in 1795, the company's charter expired on 31 December 1799, and it was nationalized as the Dutch East Indies.

A Company That Became a Colony

The VOC's assets became a state colony, the Dutch East Indies. The source states this in one sentence. It does not say what the transfer involved, and I did not research it. Chapter 10 asks what followed from voyages of this kind.

What I Did Not Verify

I did not find the Dutch voyages before 1602, the Dutch Golden Age of exploration in the chapter title, the Amsterdam stock exchange, Batavia's founding, the Cape Colony's origin in 1652 or the Dejima arrangement, all in the outline or the fuller story. The source is about the company and not the wider Dutch expansion, so the title's "Golden Age" is not addressed here.

Hands-On Exercises

EXERCISE 1

List four figures the source gives about the VOC's scale and say which are the least certain.

→ [Solution](#)

EXERCISE 2

A student writes "The VOC was the world's first multinational corporation." Use the chapter to qualify it.

→ [Solution](#)

EXERCISE 3

List the causes of the VOC's decline that the source gives, and name one thing it does not say about the end.

→ [Solution](#)

Quick Reference

- **Founded:** 20 March 1602; 21-year monopoly on Asian trade; capital 6.4 million guilders
- **Scale:** 4,785 ships and nearly a million Europeans (1602 to 1796); 50,000 employees by 1669; dividends averaging 18 percent
- **Reach:** Batavia, the Cape Colony, Dejima, Ceylon, India, China
- **Legacy:** spice monopolies kept by violent suppression, including the Banda Islands; slave trade
- **End:** decline after 1730; Fourth Anglo-Dutch War 1780 to 1783; charter expired 31 December 1799; nationalized as the Dutch East Indies

- **Not covered:** pre-1602 Dutch voyages, the stock exchange, Banda details

CHAPTER 8: ENGLAND & FRANCE JOIN THE RACE

The Age of Exploration

Chapter 8 · England & France Join the Race

Portugal, Spain and the Dutch came first in Chapters 2 to 7. This chapter follows the two powers that reached North America later and struggled to settle it: John Cabot's 1497 voyage for England, Jacques Cartier's three voyages for France, and the English settlements at Roanoke and Jamestown. The sources are four reference articles. They give dates and some figures, and each one contains a disputed or unresolved point, which the chapter flags.

John Cabot, 1497

Giovanni Caboto (about 1450 to about 1499), known in English as John Cabot, was an Italian navigator sponsored by England's King Henry VII. He became a Venetian citizen in 1476 after living there from about 1461.

Date	Event
May 1497	Cabot leaves Bristol aboard the <i>Matthew</i> , a 50-ton vessel with approximately 18 to 20 crew.
24 June 1497	He makes landfall somewhere on North America's coast.
May 1498	He leaves Bristol again with five ships and vanishes.

Where He Landed Is Disputed

Proposed sites include Cape Bonavista, St. John's, Cape Breton Island, Labrador and Maine. The Canadian and British governments officially designated Cape Bonavista as the landing site for the 500th anniversary celebration, which is a decision about commemoration, not evidence. What happened to him after 1498 is unknown: whether he died at sea, returned and died shortly after, or remained in the Americas.

The source calls the expedition "the earliest known European exploration of coastal North America since the Norse visits to Vinland in the eleventh century." It says his voyages established England's claim to North American territories and inspired later Bristol expeditions. I did not find what the voyage was meant to achieve. Chapter 1's account of the search for a route to Asia would suggest a purpose, but the source does not state it, so I do not.

Jacques Cartier, France

Jacques Cartier (1491 to 1557) is described as "the first European to describe and map the Gulf of Saint Lawrence and the shores of the Saint Lawrence River."

1534

Exploration and territorial claim-making along the Gulf.

1535 to 1536

Wintering at Stadacona, and an encounter with scurvy that was cured through a native remedy.

1541 to 1542

An attempted permanent settlement at Charlesbourg-Royal, ultimately abandoned.

The Name "Canada"

Cartier documented the indigenous word for villages and applied it to the region. The source says the name derives from the Huron-Iroquois word *kanata*, meaning village, "incorrectly interpreted as the native term for the newly discovered land." A mistranslation gave the country its name. The source also notes the scurvy cure relied on indigenous knowledge, a small reminder that European survival often did.

Though he never established lasting settlements, the source says Cartier's explorations "consolidated France's claim of the territory that would later be colonized as New France." He completed three dangerous voyages without losing a ship, and his work predated more successful colonization efforts by about seventy years.

What Is Not Said

The source does not say what happened between the Europeans and the people they met, why the third-voyage settlement was abandoned, or how the "remedy" worked. I did not research these, and the summary says only "territorial claim-making." Chapter 9 covers the human cost.

Roanoke, 1585 to 1590

Year	Event
1585	Sir Walter Raleigh's first colony is established under Governor Ralph Lane on Roanoke Island. It faces food shortages and tensions with local Native American tribes.
1586	Lane's colony is evacuated with Sir Francis Drake after supply ships fail to arrive. Two weeks later Grenville's relief fleet finds the site abandoned and leaves 15 men to maintain England's claim.
1587	John White leads a second attempt with about 115 settlers, including women and children. On 18 August, his granddaughter Virginia Dare becomes "the first Christian born in Virginia."
1590	White returns to find the colony abandoned but fortified, with "CRO" on a tree and "CROATOAN" on a post.

An Unresolved Mystery

The fate of the 1587 colonists is unresolved. The source lists three theories: integration with Native tribes (John Lawson in 1701 encountered Hatteras people with European ancestry); an attack by the Powhatan, according to William Strachey's claim that survivors lived under Native protection before being attacked; and peaceful relocation, as White interpreted the carvings. Archaeological research continues with limited success because of shoreline erosion and scarce physical evidence. I do not choose among them.

Jamestown, 1607

Jamestown was established on 14 May 1607 (New Style dating) by the London Company on the James River in present-day Virginia. It became "the first permanent English settlement in the Americas."

- **Hardship:** drought, disease and starvation. In the "Starving Time" of 1609 to 1610 only 60 of 214 settlers survived the winter, and the source says historical evidence suggests some colonists may have turned to cannibalism.
- **Tobacco:** John Rolfe's successful cultivation beginning in 1612 transformed the colony's prospects.
- **Native relations:** relations with the Powhatan Confederacy deteriorated over time. A major attack in 1622 killed over 300 settlers, though Jamestown had advance warning and was spared.
- **Later:** the colonial capital moved to Williamsburg in 1699, and Jamestown became an archaeological site.

Three Events of 1619

The source lists the first representative assembly in the New World, "the first recorded strike in Colonial America" by Polish artisans over voting rights, and the arrival of the first documented Africans in English North America. The third leads into Chapter 9. The source gives no numbers or circumstances for the Africans' arrival, and I do not supply them.

What I Did Not Verify

I did not find why Roanoke's supply ships failed, whether the 1588 Armada delayed White's return (UK History 7 covers the Armada itself), the Virginia Company's finances, or John Smith. I also did not check the claim that Jamestown was the "first permanent" English settlement against other candidates, and the 214 and 60 figures are from one article. Each of these is part of the outline or a fuller story.

Hands-On Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Set out the three theories about Roanoke's colonists with the evidence the source gives for each, and say which the source favors.

→ [Solution](#)

EXERCISE 2

A student writes "Cartier founded the first French colony in Canada." Use the chapter to correct it.

→ [Solution](#)

EXERCISE 3

Compare the four English and French ventures in the chapter on one measure of your choice and say what the sources do not let you compare.

→ [Solution](#)

Quick Reference

- **Cabot:** left Bristol May 1497 in the Matthew (50 tons); landfall 24 June 1497 (site disputed); vanished on a 1498 voyage
- **Cartier:** voyages 1534, 1535 to 1536, 1541 to 1542; Stadacona; "Canada" from *kanata*; Charlesbourg-Royal abandoned
- **Roanoke:** 1585 colony; 1586 evacuated; 1587 about 115 settlers; 1590 "CROATOAN"; fate unresolved
- **Jamestown:** 14 May 1607; Starving Time 1609 to 1610 (60 of 214 survived); tobacco 1612; 1619 assembly and first Africans; 1622 attack
- **Not covered:** Cabot's purpose, Roanoke's supply failure, John Smith, the Virginia Company

CHAPTER 9: THE REAL HUMAN COST: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES & THE ORIGINS OF THE ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE

The Age of Exploration

Chapter 9 · The Real Human Cost: Indigenous Peoples & the Origins of the Atlantic Slave Trade

Earlier chapters mentioned this subject several times and deferred it to here: the *encomienda* (Chapter 6), the *Banda Islands* (Chapter 7), the first Africans at Jamestown (Chapter 8). This chapter looks at two connected human costs of the period, the collapse of indigenous populations in the Americas and the Atlantic slave trade. The sources are three reference articles. The figures are among the most disputed in the course, so the chapter gives ranges, says which are estimates and does not reduce a human catastrophe to a single number.

Indigenous Populations of the Americas

Scholars have debated the population before 1492 extensively. Estimates range from as low as 8 million to as high as 100 million, though "by the end of the 20th century, many scholars tended toward an estimate of around 50 million people."

Estimate	Figure
Denevan (1992)	Approximately 53.9 million
Dobyns (1966)	90 to 112 million, considered high
Recent studies	Mostly between 45 and 60 million

A Very Wide Range

The range of 8 to 100 million spans more than a factor of ten, and the source describes the debate as extensive. The estimates are reconstructions, since no census of the whole continent exists, and I did not find how any of them were made. I use "about 50 million" only as the source's own summary of a trend among scholars, not as a fact.

Causes of the Decline

Disease

"50-80 percent of the population died from waves of diseases brought by Europeans to places such as Mexico in the 16th century." Smallpox, influenza and pneumonic plague devastated populations lacking immunity.

Violence and Enslavement

Direct warfare, forced removal, enslavement and massacres contributed significantly to population loss.

Social Disruption

General societal collapse from colonization disrupted food systems and social structures.

The source gives one regional example: Mexico's population dropping to roughly one million by the late sixteenth century from an estimated 17.2 million in 1492.

A Precise Figure With a Large Uncertainty

"17.2 million" looks exact but is an estimate, and the source presents it as one. The drop is more than tenfold on these figures, and I did not check how either end was derived.

A Debate About Causes

Historians dispute the primary cause. The source says traditional scholars emphasize disease as incidental, while modern scholars argue deliberate European actions constituted genocide. It says the evidence supports both factors' importance and their relative weight remains contested. Chapter 6 gave the same disagreement for the encomienda. I do not settle it here, and I note that the two sides are not mutually exclusive.

Bartolomé de las Casas

Las Casas (1484 to 1566) was a Spanish clergyman who became a prominent advocate for indigenous peoples. Initially an encomendero, he underwent a change of conscience around

1514 after contemplating biblical passages about injustice. He renounced his slaves and his encomienda and spent the remaining fifty years of his life fighting the exploitation.

- He influenced the New Laws (1542), which the source says abolished Indian slavery.
- He served as Bishop of Chiapas and official Protector of the Indians.
- In the Valladolid debate (1550 to 1551) against Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda he argued that indigenous peoples were fully human and deserved peaceful treatment.
- His *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies* (1552) documented colonial atrocities.

Two Descriptions of the New Laws

Chapter 6 said the New Laws attempted regulation and limited grants to two generations. This source says they abolished Indian slavery. The two statements can both be true, and I did not check the laws' text or how far either provision was enforced.

A Contested Witness

The source says modern scholarship acknowledges his general depiction of colonial violence as historically accurate, though debates continue about his specific population figures and about his earlier, later-regretted suggestions about African slavery as an alternative labour source. That last point links to the next section, and I do not develop it.

The Atlantic Slave Trade

The trade began in the fifteenth century. Portuguese mariners initiated direct contact, and in 1444 "six caravels belonging to a consortium of seamen and merchants docked in Lagos with a cargo of 235 enslaved men, women, and children." It expanded dramatically after 1500 and peaked in the eighteenth century, before abolition efforts began in the early 1800s.

Measure	What the source says
Loaded onto slave ships for the Americas	Approximately 12.75 million Africans, by scholars' estimates.
Deaths during ocean transport	Up to 2 million.

Measure	What the source says
Enslaved but remaining on the continent	An additional 8 million.
Main destinations	Brazil and the Caribbean colonies received the majority.
Trading nations	Portugal dominated at first, followed by Britain, Spain, France, the Netherlands, the United States and Denmark.

Estimates and Phrasing

The source says "approximately" and "up to," and describes the figures as scholars' estimates. I did not find how they are derived or how far they differ between studies. Note also that these are people, and the figures cannot record what each person went through.

African Participation

The source says "Europeans usually bought enslaved people who had been captured in endemic warfare between African states." African merchants and kingdoms controlled coastal trading posts and profited from commerce, though the historian Anne Bailey notes that Africans lacked influence over European capital systems and plantation infrastructure. I did not find how large a role different kingdoms played, or the reasoning behind Bailey's point.

Connections Across the Course

Chapter 2 introduced the Portuguese along the African coast under Prince Henry, who died in 1460, so the 1444 cargo falls within his lifetime. The source does not link him to it, and I do not. Chapter 8 recorded the first documented Africans in English North America in 1619. The Atlantic trade the source describes, with Brazil and the Caribbean receiving the majority, explains why the Jamestown arrival is described only as "documented."

Abolition

Britain prohibited the slave trade in 1807, though illegal trafficking continued into the 1860s. UK History 9 mentions the same 1807 date.

What I Did Not Verify

I did not find the Middle Passage's conditions, the trade's economics, the role of the Banda Islands and the VOC's slave trade from Chapter 7, the Taíno of Hispaniola, or the experiences of the enslaved and of indigenous peoples in their own words. Any figure in this chapter should be treated as a range, and none of them counts the enslaved or the dead by name.

Hands-On Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Set out the causes of indigenous population decline that the chapter names, and explain why the range of pre-contact estimates matters for the size of the decline.

→ [Solution](#)

EXERCISE 2

A student writes "12.75 million Africans were enslaved by the Atlantic trade." Use the chapter to qualify it.

→ [Solution](#)

EXERCISE 3

Explain why Las Casas is described as a contested witness, and how you would use his work carefully.

→ [Solution](#)

Quick Reference

- **Pre-contact population:** estimates from 8 to 100 million; many scholars near 50 million; Denevan 53.9 million
- **Decline:** disease (50 to 80 percent in places such as Mexico), violence, enslavement, social disruption; Mexico about 17.2 million to about one million (estimates)
- **Debate:** disease as incidental against deliberate action as genocide; relative weight contested
- **Las Casas:** 1484 to 1566; change of conscience about 1514; Valladolid debate 1550 to 1551; 1552 *Short Account*
- **Atlantic trade:** began with 235 people at Lagos in 1444; about 12.75 million loaded; up to 2 million died in transit; peak in the 18th century; Britain prohibited it in 1807
- **Not covered:** conditions of the Middle Passage, the Taíno, first-person accounts

CHAPTER 10: CAPSTONE: TRACING ONE REAL VOYAGE'S FULL CONSEQUENCES

The Age of Exploration

Chapter 10 · Capstone: Tracing One Real Voyage's Full Consequences

The capstone follows one voyage, Columbus's first (1492 to 1493), through the consequences the earlier chapters recorded. It introduces no new sources. Every link below comes from a chapter you have already read, so each claim carries the caveats given there. Where two chapters are joined by an inference of mine, the text says so.

The Starting Point

Chapter 3: Columbus left on 3 August 1492 and made landfall on 12 October at an island he named San Salvador (Guanahani to its inhabitants). The plan rested on an underestimate of the Earth's size that made Asia look about a quarter of its true distance away. The Santa María was wrecked off Hispaniola on Christmas Day 1492 and its materials went into Fort Navidad.

Following the Consequences

Step	What followed	Where covered
1. Rival claims	The Treaty of Tordesillas (7 June 1494) divided newly discovered lands between Portugal and Castile along a meridian 370 leagues west of the Cape Verde islands, and it was needed because of disputes after Columbus's return.	Chapter 3
2. Settlement	The second voyage used 17 ships and established La Isabela. The third ended with Columbus arrested and returned to Spain in chains.	Chapter 3
3. A labour system	The encomienda was formally established in Hispaniola by Nicolás de Ovando in 1502 and spread across the Spanish American colonies and the Philippines.	Chapter 6

Step	What followed	Where covered
4. An empire	New Spain, founded 1521, became a viceroyalty in 1535, with silver mining as its backbone and the Manila galleon linking it to Asian trade.	Chapter 6
5. Population collapse	Estimates put the pre-contact population between 8 and 100 million, and the source gives 50 to 80 percent deaths from disease in places such as Mexico.	Chapter 9
6. Protest and reform	Las Casas renounced his encomienda around 1514, and the New Laws of 1542 followed. The encomienda was abolished empire-wide only in 1791.	Chapters 6 and 9
7. Other powers	Cabot sailed for England in 1497 and Cartier for France from 1534. Jamestown followed in 1607.	Chapter 8

A Chain Made of My Links

Each row is documented in its chapter, but the sources do not state that step 1 caused step 2, or that step 2 caused step 3. Treating them as one chain is my framing. The sources support only that these things happened, in these years, and that some are described as responses to others (the treaty to the voyage's return, Las Casas to the abuses he saw).

What the Voyage Did Not Cause

Portugal's Route

Da Gama's 1498 voyage (Chapter 2) followed decades of Portuguese exploration. It was not a consequence of Columbus's.

The Dutch Company

The VOC (Chapter 7) was founded in 1602 for Asian trade. Nothing in the source ties it to Columbus.

The Slave Trade's Start

Chapter 9 dates the Atlantic trade's beginning to 1444, decades before 1492. It expanded dramatically after 1500, but the source does not say the voyage caused that.

Attribution Is the Hard Part

A consequence traced from a single event is easy to overstate. The population collapse in Chapter 9 is a good example: its sources give disease, violence and social disruption, and say historians dispute their relative weight. Placing "Columbus" at the start of that row would add a claim of cause that the source does not make.

Reading Motives Against Outcomes

Chapter 1 gave the motives (trade, religion, technology). Set against the outcomes above, the sources show a mismatch. The plan in Chapter 3 aimed at Asia, and what followed was a new set of colonies. I stop at that observation. Whether the outcome would have surprised the people who sponsored the voyage is a question the sources do not address.

The Course in One Table

Chapter	Question	Its main caution
1	Why explore?	Motives are not all documented.
2	How did Portugal start?	Prince Henry's role is described briefly.
3	What did Spain gamble on?	The peoples already there are barely mentioned.
4	Who circled the globe?	Magellan died on the way; the voyage was completed without him.
5	How did they navigate?	Principles are given, the practice is not.
6	How was the empire governed?	Laws on paper, not enforcement.

Chapter	Question	Its main caution
7	What did a company add?	Violence in the Banda Islands is only mentioned.
8	Who came late?	Roanoke's fate is unresolved.
9	What was the human cost?	All figures are estimates.

What This Course Did Not Do

It drew on one to four short reference articles per chapter. It does not cover the Ottoman and Venetian side of the spice trade, Asian and African perspectives, the voyages of China (Chapter 1 mentions the compass came from there), Russian and Scandinavian expansion, or indigenous accounts. Each chapter's "What I Did Not Verify" box lists specific gaps. The honest summary is that this is an outline built from reference summaries, and a fuller study would start from the primary and scholarly sources those articles cite.

Course complete: The Age of Exploration, 10 chapters.

Hands-On Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Choose a different voyage (Da Gama's 1498 voyage, Magellan's, Cabot's or Cartier's) and build a consequences table like the one above using only what earlier chapters say. Mark each row with the chapter it comes from.

→ [Solution](#)

EXERCISE 2

A student writes "Columbus's voyage caused the Atlantic slave trade." Use Chapters 3 and 9 to answer it.

[→ Solution](#)

EXERCISE 3

Pick one link in the capstone table that the sources do not state as a cause, and say what evidence a historian would need to establish it.

[→ Solution](#)

Quick Reference

- **Voyage traced:** Columbus, 3 August 1492 to March 1493
- **Documented follow-ons:** Tordesillas 1494; La Isabela; encomienda in Hispaniola 1502; New Spain 1521 and 1535; Las Casas; the New Laws 1542
- **Not caused by it:** Portuguese route to India, the VOC, the start of the Atlantic slave trade (1444)
- **Method:** cite the chapter for each row, and separate what happened from what caused it