Exploring the New World

A Spicy Tale

There was a man named Marco Polo. He lived in Italy. He traveled to China. There, he saw many new things. In 1271, he wrote a book. This book had stories about the things he saw there. This made other people living in Europe want to explore, too.

The people of Europe liked Asian spices. Their food often went bad. Spices could cover up the bad taste. Men hoped to find a way to go to the East by sea. They wanted to bring back spices on ships. Instead, sailors found land in the West. The world would never be the same.

The Lure to Explore

Explorers took risks because they wanted to be rich. They often died. Some people thought that they would find gold. Rulers wanted gold, too. Kings and queens paid for most of the trips. They thought that the men would bring back gold.
Most people in the 1400s said that Earth was flat. But, some thought that it was round. They wanted to prove it. Other people wanted to share their faith. These men told rulers that they would teach their faith to people in the new lands. Then, the rulers paid for their trips.

Many places were found by mistake. Still, every find gave new information. After each trip, mapmakers made better maps.

**Risky Adventures**

Life on a ship was rough. Sailors died from hunger. They died from sickness and they died in shipwrecks. Even after reaching shore, the crew might find tribes waiting to kill them. On every trip, they sailed into the unknown!

Sometimes the crew would fight with the captain. This was called a mutiny. Another word for this is a revolt. Ferdinand Magellan (muh-JELL-uhn) stopped one fight when he left a man in Brazil. He had another man killed.

**Comprehension Question**

What was hard about being an explorer?
Exploring the New World

A Spicy Tale

There was a man named Marco Polo who lived in Italy. He traveled to China and saw many new things. He wrote a book in the year 1271. It had stories about the things that he had seen there. This made other Europeans (yur-uh-PEE-uhns) interested in exploration.

Europeans liked Asian spices. They had no way to keep food from spoiling. Spices covered up the bad taste. Merchants hoped to find a sea route to the East. They thought that it would be cheaper to move spices by ship than by land. While looking for a new sea route to Asia, explorers found land in the West. They had no idea how much this would change the world.

The Lure to Explore

Being an explorer meant risking death. Greed, science, and religion made men willing to take the risk. Some people thought that they would find gold in the New World. Kings and queens wanted gold, too. Rulers paid for most of the trips because they thought that their men would bring back lots of gold.
Most people in the 1400s believed that Earth was flat. But, some explorers thought that it was round. They wanted to prove it. Others wanted to spread their faith. Some men got their ships and crews by telling rulers that they would turn the people in new lands into Christians.

Many of the discoveries were made accidentally. Still, every find added new information. After each trip, mapmakers could make maps with more details about the New World.

**Risky Adventures**

Life on a ship was rough. Sailors died from hunger and sickness. Shipwrecks were common. After reaching shore, the crew sometimes found unfriendly tribes. On every trip, they sailed into the unknown!

Many captains faced mutinies, or revolts. This happened when a crew turned on its captain. The leaders of such revolts were in big trouble if they failed. Ferdinand Magellan (muh-JELL-uhn) stopped one revolt by leaving a man in Brazil. He had another man put to death.

**Comprehension Question**

What are at least three things that made exploring hard?
Exploring the New World

A Spicy Tale

The Europeans’ quest for adventure began after Marco Polo returned from China. He wrote a book in the year 1271 filled with stories about the amazing things that he had seen there. This sparked others’ imaginations and made them interested in exploration.

Europeans liked the taste of Asian spices. They had no way to keep their food from spoiling, and spices covered up the bad taste. Merchants wanted to find a sea route to the East. They thought that it would be cheaper to move spices by ship than by land. While seeking new sea routes to Asia, explorers found land in the West. They had no idea how much this would change the world.

The Lure to Explore

Being an explorer meant risking death. Greed, science, and religion made men willing to take such a risk. Some explorers thought they would find gold in the New World. The thought of such treasures also tempted kings and queens. Rulers funded most of the trips because they believed that large amounts of gold were located in faraway places.
Although most people in the 1400s believed that Earth was flat, some explorers believed that it was round, and they wanted to prove this theory. Others wanted to spread Christian beliefs. In fact, many explorers received their ships and crews by convincing rulers that they could make the people in new lands adopt Christianity.

Many of the explorers’ discoveries were accidental. Still, every discovery added new information. After each trip, new descriptions helped mapmakers create better maps.

**Risky Adventures**

Life on a ship was difficult. Sailors frequently died from hunger and sickness. Shipwrecks were common. And after reaching shore, the crew sometimes found hostile tribes. On every trip they sailed into the unknown!

Many captains faced mutiny. This is a revolt that happened when a crew turned on its captain. The leaders of such revolts were in big trouble if they failed. Ferdinand Magellan (muh-JELL-uh-n) stopped one revolt by leaving a man in Brazil. He had another man put to death.

**Comprehension Question**

Why did men risk their lives to explore? Explain in detail at least three reasons.
Exploring the New World

A Spicy Tale

The Europeans’ (yur-uh-PEE-uhns) quest for adventure began after Marco Polo wrote a book in the year 1271. His stories about his trip to China and the amazing things that he had seen there inspired others and generated great interest in exploration. Christopher Columbus even had a copy of Polo’s book.

Europeans enjoyed the taste of Asian spices. They had no way to keep their food from spoiling, and spices helped to cover up the bad taste. Merchants wanted to find a sea route to the East because they believed it would be less expensive to transport spices by ship than by land. While seeking new sea routes to Asia, explorers accidentally discovered land in the West. None of them could imagine the impact these discoveries would have on the world.

The Lure to Explore

Greed, science, and religion made men willing to risk their lives as explorers. Many dreamed of finding precious metals. The thought of such treasures tempted kings and queens as well. Believing that large amounts of gold were located in faraway places, rulers funded most of the trips.
Although most people in the 1400s believed that Earth was flat, some explorers thought that it was round, and they wanted to prove this theory. Others wanted to spread Christian beliefs. In fact, many explorers acquired their ships and crews after telling rulers that they could convince the natives in new lands to adopt Christianity.

Many of the explorers’ discoveries were accidental, yet they still brought new information to Europe. After every trip, the explorers’ descriptions helped cartographers create better maps.

**Risky Adventures**

Life aboard a ship was difficult. Sailors frequently died from disease and starvation. Shipwrecks were common. And after reaching shore, the crew sometimes found hostile native tribes. Every trip was an adventure into the unknown!

Many captains faced mutiny. Such a revolt happened when a crew thought its captain was doing a terrible job. The leaders of such revolts were in big trouble if the mutiny failed. Ferdinand Magellan (muh-JELL-uhn) stopped one revolt by leaving a man in Brazil, and he had another man put to death.

Comprehension Question

For what reasons were men willing to face the challenges and dangers of exploring?