**Age of Discovery**

Just as European’s questioned art and religion, they soon began questioning other parts of life. **Christopher Columbus** believed that there was another way to get Asian spices. He believed that he could sail around the globe to India. This would allow the Spanish to buy spices directly and no longer have to go through Italian middle-men or the exhausting journey of the **Silk Road**. This is yet another example of how humankind’s achievements have been motivated by the desire to make money.

Another important factor during this modern advancement was technology. **Gutenberg’s** technological invention, **the printing press**, allowed for the Reformation to flourish. During the Age of Exploration better maps, the **astrolabe** (a compass for navigating at sea, and **caravels** (faster boats) were created. Without technology, most of the major changes in the history of humans would never have happened. You can go all the way back to cavemen inventing wheels, tools, or harnessing the power of fire.

**Magellan** circumnavigated the globe (he was killed in the process), and **Vasco De Gama** made the country of Portugal wealthy by sailing around Africa. De Gama’s new route allowed for an easier way to trade with India. This wasn’t good enough. **Christopher Columbus** knew the world was round (In fact, just about everyone did. The myth you have heard that “people believed the earth was flat in the Middle Ages,” that’s a lie. Everyone knew the world was round). What Columbus did not know was that Earth was much bigger than he thought and the continents of North and South America were in his path.

Columbus unwittingly discovered the Americas in 1492. The world would never be the same. This began what environmental historians call the **Columbian Exchange**. For thousands of years, the **Old World** (Europe, Asia, Africa) was separated from the **New World**. There were benefits and drawback to this event. Plants and Animals were exchanged between the continents, and for the most part this was a boon (good). Lives were made easier for the Old World and the New World. Food scarcity in the Old World would no longer be a problem. The potato came from the New World to the Old World. It was easy to grow and was very nutritious. In Europe, people would now live longer and the population grew. This increase in population would make the industrial revolution possible. More people means more workers. More workers means more people with money to spend. This can all be traced back to the Columbian Exchange.

The Columbian Exchange is not 100% good. Nothing in social studies is purely good. There are always two sides to everything. The most destructive part of the Columbian Exchange is the exchange of **communicable diseases**. The Europeans had built up immunities that helped their bodies fight **Smallpox**. The American Indians’ bodies had never encountered this disease. They did not have immunities to fight Smallpox. Ninety percent of the American Indian population died due to disease and war. American Indian culture nearly disappeared from the earth as well. The ideas of Europe (**Catholicism** and **Capitalism**) replaced the American Indians former way of life.

The Spanish and Portuguese would split up South America. These colonies were important parts of their empire. During this time the economic theory that all nations followed was **mercantilism**. First of all, the nations believed that wealth was finite (there was only so much). This means that the more gold that the Spanish had, then the less gold that England could have. More money means more businesses and more money to spend on the military. Spain basically robbed South America of its natural resources (mainly gold), and human resources (enslaving American Indians).

**Classwork 8 - Age of Discovery Non-Fiction**

1. Give an example from your life when you had to pay a high price to buy a product through a middle-man. (paragraph)
2. Explain how technology leads to change. Give specifics example from the text. (paragraph)
3. Which explorer is more significant-Magellan or De Gama? Defend your answer with rational thinking. (paragraph)
4. What is a synonym (similar word) for unwittingly? (hint: use your knowledge of Columbus and the text)
5. Did people used to believe the world was flat?
6. Give three examples of the Columbian Exchange.
7. What was the most significant thing exchanged during the Columbian Exchange. Explain why. (paragraph)
8. Think of something good that has happen to you. Analyze that moment. If it was 100% good and nothing negative was connected, then explain that. If it was not 100% good and something negative was connected, then explain that. (paragraph)
9. What does scarcity (*scare-city*) mean?
10. Is the spread of Catholicism (Christianity) throughout South America a good thing? Explain your answer. (paragraph)
11. Why did the European nations pursue colonies in the Americas?

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