

Early Explorers – Educator Guide

The following activities and assessment ideas will help students address these guiding questions for this interactive.

- What common themes are intertwined in the stories of the early explorers?
- What were the causes and effects of the European exploration of the Americas?

Middle School

Learning Objective: Students will identify major themes in the reasons for and outcomes of European exploration of the Americas.

- Activate students' prior knowledge by asking them to brainstorm the question: *Why do people explore?* Prompt responses by asking students to think about times they have explored a new area and why they did it. Then, ask students why they think early explorers went on expeditions to the New World. Make a list of students' responses on a flip chart, whiteboard, or other place the class can refer back to later.
- Introduce the **Early Explorers interactive map** (<http://mapmaker.annenberg.org/dA7OwA771uOi1Hg1GLo4xv/>) and show students how to access the information found in the markers in the bookmarked maps. Tell students that they will be using the maps to find out more about why early explorers came to North America and what the outcomes of their explorations were. Give students time to read through the text in the markers either individually or in pairs.
- Divide students into small groups of three to four students each and provide each group with a sheet of flip chart paper. Ask students to draw three columns on the paper and label the columns Explorers, Reasons, Outcomes. Assign the roles of group leader, recorder, reporter, and for four-student groups, timekeeper. (Suggestions for increasing the effectiveness of group work can be found in the Annenberg Learner article "**Groups, Projects, and Presentations**" at <http://www.learner.org/libraries/socialstudies/issues/groups/index.html>).
- Assign the four sets of early explorers below to the small groups, dividing them equally among the groups. Ask students to write their assigned early explorers at the top of their three-column charts.
 - a. The Vikings and Amerigo Vespucci
 - b. Spanish Explorers
 - c. English Explorers and Dutch Explorers
 - d. French Explorers
- In advance of the group discussions, provide students with a discussion participation rubric. Information on preparing rubrics can be found at **Developing Writers: Build a Rubric** (<http://www.learner.org/workshops/hswriting/interactives/rubric/>). See examples to modify for this activity at **Group Work Rubrics and Checklists** (<http://www.nald.ca/library/learning/btg/ed/evaluation/groupwork.htm>). Tell students that they should use the rubric to see what is expected of them in the discussion and to evaluate their own participation in the group discussion.

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- Have students re-read the information provided in the markers for their assigned explorers, accessing the resources in the “For more information” links in each marker. Tell students as they read to note in the three-column tables the names of the explorers, what they find as the reasons for the expeditions, and any outcomes they uncover. Establish a time limit on this part of the activity, and charge the group timekeeper with keeping the group on track time-wise.
- When students have completed the columns in small groups, bring the class back together and have group reporters share their charts. After each group has reported out, post the charts around the classroom and ask students to walk around the room looking for common themes among the different explorer groups—themes about the reasons and outcomes of the expeditions. Have students take notes on themes they discover.
- Lead the class in a discussion around what they discovered about the early explorers reasons for expeditions to North America and the outcomes of their expeditions. Look for responses about reasons such as looking for trade routes to the East, seeking land for new settlements, and looking for gold, and for both positive and negatives outcomes reflecting unsuccessful efforts, founding of new colonies, and the impact on Native Americans, among others. Finally, ask students if any of the reasons for exploration match the reasons for exploration they listed at the beginning of the activity.
- Assessment
 - Individual assessment 1: Exit Ticket. Ask students to write a short description (or represent in some other medium) of two common themes in the early exploration of North America.
 - Individual assessment 2: Ask students to use the discussion participation rubric to evaluate their own participation in the small group and whole class discussions. Have students write a short paragraph describing areas where they met or exceeded expectations in group participation and where they might need to improve.

High School

Learning Objective: Students will answer the central question of why early explorers came to the New World, and support their answers with evidence from primary and secondary sources.

- Activate students’ prior knowledge by asking them to brainstorm as many reasons as they can for European exploration in the New World. Make a list of all the reasons students cite on flip chart paper or large poster board. Don’t evaluate or discuss students’ responses at this time.
- Introduce the **Early Explorers interactive map** (<http://mapmaker.annenberg.org/dA7OwA771uOi1Hg1GLo4xv/>) and show students how to

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access the information found in the markers in the bookmarked maps. Give students time to read through the text in the markers either individually or in pairs. Tell them to take notes as they read about the reasons for exploration described in the information.

- Ask students to share in a whole class discussion what they discovered from their “walk” though the maps. Compare their findings to the brainstormed reasons you listed in the beginning of this activity. Ask: *Were there any surprises in what you discovered? What are the main themes in the reasons for exploration to the New World?*
- Tell students that the information they’ve read from the interactive maps represented mostly secondary sources—written after the events occurred, providing secondhand accounts or summary information about the events or people. In this activity, students will analyze some primary source documents related to early explorers or exploration of North America, and they will find evidence to support their answer to the question: *Why did early explorers come to the New World?*
- Ask students to write the following on a sheet of paper or in a Word document. Tell them that they should write their answer where indicated, and then provide evidence to support their answer from the two documents, writing at least one quote from each document that supports their answer—that provides the evidence.
 1. Central Question: Why did early explorers come to the New World?
 2. My Answer:
 3. Evidence:
 - Document A: (title)
 - Quote:
 - Document B: (title)
 - Quote:
- Assign to students the documents listed below so that every student has two documents to use for this activity. You may wish to assign them yourself or let students choose two. *Note: These documents are written in old English styles that may be hard for students to read quickly. If students have trouble understanding the text, have them work in pairs or small groups on this activity—or add in time to work as a whole class to create “translations” of the text.*
 - a. Letter of Amerigo Vespucci to Pier Soderini 1497 <http://bit.ly/1PH7gLx>
 - b. The Letters Patents of King Henry the Seventh Granted unto John Cabot and his Three Sonnes, Lewis, Sebastian and Sancius for the Discouerie of New and Unknowen Lands http://avalon.law.yale.edu/15th_century/cabot01.asp
 - c. Privileges and Prerogatives Granted by Their Catholic Majesties to Christopher Columbus: 1492 http://avalon.law.yale.edu/15th_century/colum.asp
 - d. Charter to Sir Walter Raleigh, 1584 http://avalon.law.yale.edu/16th_century/raleigh.asp
 - e. Samuel de Champlain Voyages: Writings 1604 <http://bit.ly/1PH7vpU>

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- f. General Charter for Those who Discover Any New Passages, Havens, Countries, or Places: March 27, 1614 http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/charter_010.asp
- Have students present their findings to the class in short oral presentations. Remind students to provide evidence from the documents to support the answers.
- Assessment: Evaluate student work on completeness of their primary source document analysis and citing of evidence to support their answers.

Connections to National Standards

National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies (National Council for the Social Studies) - Middle school and high school

Theme #2: Time Continuity, and Change

Theme #3: People, Places, and Environments

National History Standards (National Center for History in the Schools)

U.S. History: Era 1: Standard 2A: The student understands the stages of European oceanic and overland exploration, amid international rivalries, from the 9th to 17th centuries. Therefore, the student is able to:

Grades 5-12:

- Compare English, French, and Dutch motives for exploration with those of the Spanish.

U.S. History: Era 1: Standard 2B: The student understands the Spanish and Portuguese conquest of the Americas. Therefore, the student is able to:

Grades 7-12:

- Describe the social composition of the early settlers and compare their various motives for exploration and colonization.

Historical Thinking Standard 4: The student conducts historical research. Therefore, the student is able to: Formulate historical questions from encounters with historical documents, eyewitness accounts, letters, diaries, artifacts, photos, historical sites, art, architecture, and other records from the past. Support interpretations with historical evidence in order to construct closely reasoned arguments rather than facile opinions.

National Geography Standards - Grades K-12

Geography Standard 12: The processes, patterns, and functions of human settlement.

Geography Standard 17: How to apply geography to interpret the past.

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Common Core State Standards—English Language Arts: Grades 6-12 Literacy in History/Social Studies

- Key Ideas and Details: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.PH.6-8.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- Key Ideas and Details: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.PH.9-10.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.
- Key Ideas and Details: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.PH.11-12.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text.

Common Core State Standards—English Language Arts

- Comprehension and Collaboration: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.2 Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source.
- Comprehension and Collaboration: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.2 Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.
- Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.
- Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.