

Age of Exploration

Lesson Map: <http://esriaustralia.com.au/education/SpatialActivity54>

Engage

How did trade traditionally occur in the Medieval period?

- Click on the map URL above to open the lesson map. A topographic map showing the world is evident. Under the 'Details' pane, click on 'Content' and turn on the *Traditional European overland trade routes* layer. Ensure all other layers are off.
- This layer shows the general land regions where European countries carried out trade.
- Click on the shaded area to enable a pop-up information box. Read the information next to the *Trade Route* heading.
- Although land routes were predominantly used to transport trade goods from one location to another, trade across bodies of water also occurred.
- ? From a scientific and technological viewpoint, why do you think trade ships and vessels only made short trips across open bodies of water or stayed in sight of land? *[Technology in transport was not advanced enough to cross open waters; navigation also often relied on mapped landmarks and coastlines to guide a voyage; compasses etc. had not yet been invented and the stars were not always visible in stormy / cloudy weather]*
- ? Are there any other reasons you can think of that may have contributed to ships avoiding open ocean waters? HINT: think of the *Pirates of the Caribbean* movies. *[People in the Medieval period were highly religious and superstitious; rough seas and dangerous storms could be considered the wrath of God; sea monsters like the Kraken were also thought to exist in the depths of the oceans. This fear limited open sea voyages]*

Explore

What forced a change to the traditional European method of trade using overland routes?

- Under the 'Details' pane, click on 'Content' and turn on the *Trade routes controlled by the Ottoman Empire after 1453* layer. Leave *Traditional European overland trade*

Download student worksheet [here](#).

Time

35 minutes

Activity

Investigate Spanish and Portuguese voyages of discovery during the Age of Exploration.

Learning Outcome

Students will be able to:

- Investigate how European trade traditionally occurred in the Medieval Period
- Investigate factors that led to developments in sea exploration and trade
- Examine motives that fueled the Age of Exploration
- Examine the role that geographic location played in Spain's and Portugal's ability to facilitate voyages of discovery

ACARA Curriculum Link

[Year 8 History: The ancient to the modern world](#)

[ACDSEH008](#) | [ACDSEH053](#) | [ACDSEH073](#) | [ACHHS148](#) | [ACHHS149](#)

Teacher Feedback:

To share your feedback on this, or any Spatial Activity, please contact education@esriaustralia.com.au

routes turned on.

- Click on the shaded orange area to enable a pop-up information box. Read the information next to the *Trade Route* heading. Toggle the pop-up box on and off as necessary.
- In 1453, Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Empire, which had consolidated its power and controlled access to key land routes in Asia Minor, the Middle East and Northern Africa. This control sometimes created problems for European countries accessing goods and services from countries in South East Asia and Indonesia.
- ? What problems may have arisen for European countries and merchants passing through trade routes controlled by the Ottoman Empire? [*Land routes were already a safety and security risk with highway burglars and robbers; Now that the land routes were controlled by a different cultural group, these safety and security risks likely increased; further, the Ottoman Empire could impose tariffs and taxes on European merchants and goods passing through their controlled areas; lastly, people of the Ottoman Empire had first opportunity to buy goods before these goods reached Europe*]
- Under the 'Details' pane, click on 'Content' and turn on *World Religions*. Leave the trade routes layers on.
- Under the 'Details' pane, click on 'Legend' to see what colour represents each religion.
- Note, that the *World Religions* layer represents the dominant religion in each country in modern times, not medieval times.
- ? What is the dominant religion for European countries? [*Christianity*]
- ? What is the dominant religion in the Middle East, Asia Minor and Northern Africa? [*Islam*]
- Although this map layer represents present-day dominant religions in each country, the dominant religion in Europe – Christianity – and the Middle East, Asia Minor and Northern Africa – Islam – is near-identical to the dominant religions in these areas during the Medieval period.
- ? Do you think differences in religious belief may have exacerbated the problems being experienced with the overland trade routes? Why/Why not? [*Yes. If students have also studied Medieval Europe as part of Year 8 History, they would have already covered religious conflicts like the Crusades and should also have an understanding of a Christian-Catholic perspective on pagan religions*]

Explain

How did voyages of discovery create new opportunities for European trade and wealth?

- ➔ The problems that arose over overland trade routes, along with significant developments in technology and navigation, led to a series of sea voyages and expeditions as European countries looked for new ways to access trade goods. We will look at some of Spain's and Portugal's major voyages.
- ➔ In the 'Details' pane, under the heading 'Content', turn off all layers. Turn on the *1418 – Prince Henry* layer. Adjust the scale of the map as necessary by using your scroll wheel or the '+' and '-' symbols.
- ➔ Click on the orange line that represents Prince Henry's voyage. This will enable a pop-up information box. Read the information next to the *Voyage* heading to learn about Prince Henry's voyage.
- ? Prince Henry did not take part of the voyages he sponsored but Portuguese and Spanish royalty often sponsored these expeditions. What motives may royals, like Prince Henry, have had in sponsoring these expeditions? *[Royals often sponsored these voyages as they were acting out of motives of obtaining glory and further wealth; if the voyages were successful and new and exotic trade goods were brought back, then they often received a percentage of the profits, as well as a range of exotic gifts that were the envy of others; further, they obtained glory and admiration for sponsoring these successful voyages that stimulated their economies and introduced new ideas to their country]*
- ➔ In the 'Details' pane, under the heading 'Content', turn on the *1488 – Bartolomeu Dias* layer. Keep the *1418 – Prince Henry* layer on. Adjust the scale of the map as necessary by using your scroll wheel or the '+' and '-' symbols.
- ➔ Click on the red line that represents Dias' voyage. This will enable a pop-up information box. Read the information next to the *Voyage* heading to learn about Dias' voyage.
- ➔ In the 'Details' pane, under the heading 'Content', turn on the *1492 – Christopher Columbus* layer. Keep each voyage layer on as you add the next one. Adjust the scale of the map as necessary by using your scroll wheel or the '+' and '-' symbols.
- ➔ Click on the blue line that represents Columbus' voyage. This will enable a pop-up information box. Read the information next to the *Voyage* heading to learn about Columbus' voyage.

- ? What is markedly different about Columbus' voyage compared to the previous two voyages? [*Columbus' voyage is significant because his voyage required his ships to cross the open waters of the Atlantic Ocean and rely solely on navigational tools to reach land to the West; the other two voyages relied on sight of land and maps to guide their voyages*]
- ? What else is significant about Columbus' journey? [*Columbus's journey discovered new lands that were previously undiscovered by European countries; Africa, the Middle East and South-East Asia were already known about due to their land connections; the Americas offered the possibility of new and unheard-of resources*]

Extend

Why were Spain and Portugal leaders in this Age of Exploration?

- In the 'Details' pane, under the heading 'Content', turn on the remaining voyages of discovery: 1498 – Vasco da Gama, 1513 – Vasco Nunez de Balboa and 1522 – Ferdinand Magellan. Leave the previous voyages on.
- Click on the heading 'Legend' to see each voyage represented by a certain colour. In the top right corner, click the 'Bookmarks' pane and select 'World' to readjust the map extent to include Magellan's full circumnavigation of the world.
- Click on each voyage line to enable a pop-up information box. Read the information next to the *Voyage* heading to learn about each voyage.
- ? Consider the geographic location of Spain and Portugal. Why do you think these countries had so many voyages of discovery? [*Spain and Portugal have plenty of coastlines and harbours; they act as the gateway to the Mediterranean Sea; they are also geographically closer in proximity to Africa, South America and South East Asia by sea travel.*]
- ? Note that many of Spain's and Portugal's voyages were to Africa, South-East Asia and Central and South America. Why were there no significant voyages to North America? [*Britain was also active in this Age of Exploration and many of its expeditions were directed to North America; a fierce rivalry existed between the different countries and they were very protective of the new colonies they would establish on these newly found continents*]

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