

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Age of Exploration**

### ***Europe in the 1400s***



**Directions:** Read the following passage then answer the questions.

#### **Once Upon a Time in Europe...**

Imagine Europe as a bustling beehive in the 1400s. Cities grew bigger. Kings and queens plotted in their palaces. And scholars scribbled away in candlelit rooms. This was a time when knights were out of style, and explorers became the new heroes!

#### **A World Changing Fast!**

In the 1400s, Europe was buzzing! Powerful countries like Spain, Portugal, and England were like siblings. They were always competing to be the best. They had big dreams, wanted more wealth, and were on the hunt for valuable things like gold and spices. Black pepper, cinnamon, and cloves made dishes tasty and were signs of wealth. But how did they get these spices?

#### **A Road Paved with Spices**

Enter the famous Silk Road! No, it wasn't made of silk, but it was a network of paths connecting the East to the West. Caravans with camels traveled this route. They didn't just carry silk. They also brought precious spices from Asia to Europe. But here's the catch: this journey was long, dangerous, and expensive. Bandits lurked, waiting to steal treasures, and desert storms were fierce!

Powerful kingdoms in the Middle East took control of parts of the Silk Road. These kingdoms were gatekeepers, deciding who could and couldn't pass. As these kingdoms grew in power, getting those beloved spices to Europe became challenging and pricey. Europe said, "We need to find another way!" And so they got an idea. What if they could sail around all the challenges and find a new route to the riches of Asia?

#### **New Tools for Big Journeys!**

But wait, how would they reach faraway places to find these treasures? Aha! They had some new gadgets. Sailors now had the compass, a nifty tool that pointed north, helping them not to get lost in the vast oceans. Then there was the astrolabe. No, it wasn't a magic wand, but it was close! It helped sailors look at the stars and figure out their position at sea. And let's not forget the quadrant. This was a quarter-circle tool, kind of like an ancient GPS. It guided sailors in the right direction.

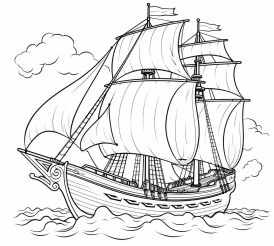
#### **So It Begins...**

And that's how the great Age of Exploration began!

Countries raced each other, not on tracks, but across oceans. With new tools and dreams of riches, they were ready to dive into the unknown. Hold tight; we're about to embark on a grand adventure through the high seas of history!

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## Age of Exploration *Europe in the 1400s*



**Directions:** Read the following passage then answer the questions.

### Reading Questions

1. Why were spices so important in the 1400s? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What was the Silk Road and why was it important? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. How did the kingdoms in the Middle East affect Europe's access to spices? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Why did Europe seek a new route to Asia?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. How did technology affect the spice trade? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Why might the astrolabe be compared to a "magic wand"? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Why do you think explorers became the new heroes, replacing knights? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. Why do you think the Age of Exploration was seen as a race between countries? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Why do you believe this?

\_\_\_\_\_

10. What dangers did the explorers face during their ocean voyages? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_