

Name: _____

Age of Exploration

Sir Francis Drake



Directions: Read the following passage then answer the questions.

Sir Francis Drake: The Sea Dog

Imagine a time when daring pirates ruled the seas. Among them was a legendary figure named Sir Francis Drake. Drake was an English sailor who became known as the "Sea Dog." In the late 16th century, Drake set sail on many bold voyages that would take him to the far reaches of the world.

Around the World!

In 1577 Drake set sail from England with a fleet of five ships on a mission that would take him around the world. Drake was driven by ambition and the thirst for adventure. He braved storms and bad weather, but he became the first Englishman to explore the western coast of North America.

His travels then took him through the dangerous waters of the Pacific Ocean. He faced many challenges. He lacked supplies and scurvy broke out among his crew. But in 1580, nearly three years after he had set out on his historic journey, Sir Francis Drake and his ship, the Golden Hind, returned to England. He had achieved what no other Englishman had done before – he had sailed around the world. His voyage made him a national hero. And his reputation only grew for there.

Raiding Spanish Treasure Ships

During Drake's time, Spain became rich from its colonies in the Americas. They were pulling mountains of gold and silver from these lands and bringing it home in big ships. Drake intercepted these ships and took the riches for himself and his queen, Elizabeth I.

With a fleet of nimble and fast ships, Drake prowled the Caribbean and the coast of South America. He ambushed Spanish galleons laden with treasure and took control of them. His swift strikes earned him a fearsome reputation among the Spanish. They considered him a notorious pirate. But to his fellow Englishmen, he was a heroic privateer.

Drake Visits Roanoke: The First English Colony

In 1586, Drake visited the first English colony in the New World. This colony was on Roanoke Island, off the coast of present-day North Carolina. While returning from a raid on Spanish settlements in the Caribbean, Drake stopped at Roanoke Island. He offered to take the struggling colonists back to England. Some accepted, but others chose to stay. They were never seen again.

In the Queen's Favor

Drake was not your usual pirate. He had a unique relationship with Queen Elizabeth. Most pirates faced the wrath of the law, but Drake enjoyed the queen's support. She recognized his value in England's ongoing rivalry with Spain. She personally funded some of his voyages. She even knighted him in 1581. And that's why we call him "Sir" Francis Drake. Today Drake's legacy reminds us that the pursuit of the unknown has the power to shape history and inspire others.

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Reading Questions

1. What challenges did Drake face on his voyage around the world? _____

2. Why do you think Drake's trip around the world made him a national hero? _____

3. How did the English view Drake and how did the Spanish view Drake? _____

4. Why did they view him differently?

5. Why did Queen Elizabeth I support Drake? _____

6. What are two or three traits that describe Sir Francis Drake? _____

7. Why do you think Drake demonstrates these traits?

8. Why do you think some of colonists at Roanoke Island didn't want to leave? _____

9. What happened to the colonists who didn't leave Roanoke with Drake? _____

10. How did the nickname "Sea Dog" reflect Sir Francis Drake during his lifetime? _____
