**Reasons for European Exploration**

There are three main reasons for European Exploration. Them being for the sake of their economy, religion and glory. They wanted to improve their economy for instance by acquiring more spices, gold, and better and faster trading routes. Also, they really believed in the need to spread their religion, Christianity. Finally, they explored for their own personal interest like fame from discovering new land.

## England

Although, they all wanted to find the Northwest Passage the English were motivated by a desire to colonize as much of the Americas as possible. In order to add to the ever-increasing British Empire. England began sending explorers to the New World in the 1580's in search of exotic food, wealth, and mercantilism. The British wanted to create colonies that would help produce raw materials that would be imported into Great Britain. British companies would then refine these products and sell the finished product back to the colonies at a higher rate. Italian navigator and explorer Giovanni Caboto is credited with the discovery of continental North America on June 24, 1497, under the commission of Henry VII.

## Portugal

Portugal's geographical position helped to shape its course. Surrounded to the east and north by Spain and having no outlets on the Mediterranean, Portugal was compelled to regard the Atlantic Ocean as its main medium of travel. John I of Portugal led his people into a period of high achievement. The North African city of Ceuta fell in 1415, giving a European power its first toehold on the African continent. Prince Henry, a Navigator and son of John, organized Portuguese resources and information for the purposes of exploration. Voyages were made into the Atlantic to the Madeira Islands and the Azores.

## Spain

The motives for Spanish exploration was to find Northwest Passage, which they believed was a direct and efficient route to the Orient - home of spices, silks and wealth. The Spanish explorers were in search of mineral wealth, looking for El Dorado (the City of Gold) and they aspired to spread Christianity. Christopher Columbus was an Italian explorer who sailed across the Atlantic Ocean in 1492, hoping to find a route to India in order to trade for spices.

## France

They wanted to claim new land to expand their empires. France also wanted to spread Christianity and find a new route by water to the East through North America. The French were somewhat slow to develop an interest in the New World. It was only after a French privateer (armed ship) captured a Spanish ship with Mexican gold and silver that attentions were directed westward. Francis I then dispatched three navigators to the New World. In 1534, France’s King Francis I authorized the navigator Jacques Cartier to lead a voyage to the New World in order to seek gold and other riches, as well as a new route to Asia. Jacques Cartier was a French explorer who named Canada after "kanata," the Huron-Iroquois word for settlement.