or, Portugal a stake in the Americas. Meanwhile, Portuguese fleets began to make annual voyages to India, returning with cargoes that made Lisbon the marketplace of Europe.

Reading Check Analyzing Why was Portugal interested in exploration?

Columbus Crosses the Atlantic
Christopher Columbus had a different plan for reaching Asia. He thought he could get there by sailing west. Born in Genoa, Italy, in 1451, Columbus became a sailor for Portugal. He had traveled as far north as the Arctic Circle and as far south as the Gold Coast.

In the 1400s most educated people believed the world was round. A more difficult matter was determining its size. Columbus was among those who based their estimates of the earth's size on the work of Ptolemy, an ancient Greek astronomer. Columbus believed Asia was about 2,760 miles (4,441 km) from Europe—a voyage of about two months by ship. Ptolemy, however, had underestimated the size of the world.

The Viking Voyages
Several centuries before Columbus, northern Europeans called Vikings had sailed west and reached North America. In the 800s and 900s, Viking ships visited Iceland and Greenland and established settlements. According to Norse
sagas, or traditional stories, a Viking sailor named Leif Eriksson explored a land west of Greenland—known as Vinland—about the year 1000. Other Norse sagas describe failed attempts by the Vikings to settle in Vinland. Historians think that Vinland was North America. Archaeologists have found the remains of a Viking settlement in Newfoundland. No one is sure what other parts of North America the Vikings explored.

The Viking voyages to other lands were not well known in the rest of Europe. Europeans did not “discover” the Americas until Columbus made his great voyage.

Spain Backs Columbus

For most of the 1400s, Spanish monarchs devoted their energy to driving the Muslims out of their country. With the fall of the last Muslim kingdom in southern Spain in 1492, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain could focus on other goals. The Spanish had been watching the seafaring and trading successes of neighboring Portugal with envy. They, too, wanted to share in the riches of Asian trade. Columbus needed a sponsor to finance his ambitious project of a westward voyage to Asia. He visited many European courts looking for support. After years of frustration, he finally found a sponsor in Spain.

Queen Isabella, a devout Christian, was finally persuaded by her husband’s minister of finance to support the expedition for two reasons. First, Columbus had promised to bring Christianity to any lands he found. Second, if he found a way to Asia, Spain would become very wealthy. She promised Columbus a share of any riches gained from lands he discovered on his way to Asia.

Columbus’s First Voyage

On August 3, 1492, Columbus set out from Palos, Spain. He had two small ships, the Nina and the Pinta, and a larger one, the Santa María, carrying a total of about 90 sailors. The small fleet stopped at the Canary Islands for repairs and to stock up on supplies, then sailed westward into the unknown.

The ships had good winds, but after a month at sea the sailors began to worry. Columbus wrote that he was "having trouble with the crew... I am told that if I persist in going onward, the best course of action will be to throw me into the sea."

Columbus, however, was determined. He told the men, “I made this voyage to go to the Indies, and [I] shall continue until I find them, with God’s help.” To convince the crew that they had not traveled too far from home, Columbus altered the distances in his ship’s log. (See page 593 of the Primary Sources Library for another log entry by Columbus.)

“Tierra! Tierra!”

On October 12, 1492, at 2:00 in the morning, a lookout shouted, “Tierra! Tierra!”—“Land! Land!” He had spotted a small island, part of the group now called the Bahamas. Columbus went ashore, claimed the island for Spain, and named it San Salvador. Although he did not know it, Columbus had reached the Americas.
Columbus explored the area for several months, convinced he had reached the East Indies, the islands off the coast of Asia. Today the Caribbean Islands are often referred to as the West Indies. Columbus called the local people Indians. He noted that they regarded the Europeans with wonder and often touched them to find out “if they were flesh and bones like themselves.”

When Columbus returned to Spain in triumph, Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand received him with great honor and agreed to finance his future voyages. Columbus had earned the title of Admiral of the Ocean Sea.

**Columbus's Later Voyages**

Columbus made three more voyages from Spain in 1493, 1498, and 1502. He explored the Caribbean Islands of Hispaniola (present-day Haiti and the Dominican Republic), Cuba, and Jamaica, and he sailed along the coasts of Central America and northern South America. He claimed the new lands for Spain and established settlements.

Columbus originally thought the lands he had found were in Asia. Later explorations made it clear that Columbus had not reached Asia at all. He had found a part of the globe unknown to Europeans, Asians, and Africans. In the following years, the Spanish explored most of the Caribbean region. In time their voyages led to the establishment of the Spanish Empire in the Americas.

**Dividing the World**

Both Spain and Portugal wanted to protect their claims, and they turned to Pope Alexander VI for help. In 1493 the pope drew a line of demarcation, an imaginary line running down the
middle of the Atlantic from the North Pole to the South Pole. Spain was to control all the lands to the west of the line. Portugal was to have control of all lands to the east of the line. Portugal, however, protested that the division favored Spain. As a result, in 1494 the two countries signed the Treaty of Tordesillas (tair-de-SILL-uh), an agreement to move the line farther west. The treaty divided the entire unexplored world between Spain and Portugal.

**Geography**

**Exploring America**

In 1492, explorer Amerigo Vespucci began mapping South America's coastline. Vespucci concluded that South America was a continent, not part of Asia. By the early 1500s, European geographers had begun to call the continent America, in honor of Amerigo Vespucci. While European geographers discussed Vespucci's findings, others continued to explore America.
Vasco Núñez de Balboa (bal-BOH-uh), governor of a Spanish town in present-day Panama, had heard stories of the “great waters” beyond the mountains. In 1513 he formed an exploring party and hiked through the steaming jungles. After many days of difficult travel, the Spaniard climbed a hill and saw a vast body of water. When he reached the water’s edge, Balboa waded in and claimed it and the adjoining lands for Spain. Balboa was the first European to see the Pacific Ocean from the Americas.

**Sailing Around the World**

The Spanish wanted to find a sea route through or around South America to Asia. In 1519 they hired Ferdinand Magellan, a Portuguese mariner, to lead an expedition of five ships. Sailing from Spain, Magellan headed west across the Atlantic Ocean and then south along the eastern coast of South America.

By late November 1520, Magellan had found and sailed through the narrow, twisting sea passage to the Pacific. This strait still bears his name. At the end of the strait, Magellan exclaimed: “We are about to stand [go] into an ocean where no ship has ever sailed before.” He named the ocean the Pacific, which means “peaceful.”

Magellan expected to reach Asia in just a few weeks after rounding South America, but the voyage across the Pacific lasted four months. The crew ran out of food and ate sawdust, rats, and leather to stay alive. Magellan was killed in a skirmish in the Philippines, but some of his crew continued. Their trip had taken almost three years. Only one of the five original ships and 18 of the more than 200 crew members completed the difficult journey. These men were the first to circumnavigate, or sail around, the world.

**Reading Check** Describing Why did Spain finance Columbus’s voyage?

**TAKS Practice**

**SECTION 2 ASSESSMENT**

### Checking for Understanding

1. **Key Terms** Write a short paragraph in which you use the following terms: line of demarcation, strait, circumnavigate.

2. **Reviewing Facts** Who were the first Europeans to reach the Americas and when did they arrive?

### Reviewing Themes

3. **Geography and History** What nations signed the Treaty of Tordesillas? What was the purpose of the line of demarcation? How did the treaty affect European exploration of the Americas?

### Critical Thinking

4. **Making Inferences** For years, many history books have claimed that “Columbus discovered America.” Why do you think Native Americans might disagree with the choice of the word “discovered” in this statement? What might be a better word?

5. **Organizing Information** Re-create the diagram below and identify the regions Columbus explored.

### Analyzing Visuals

6. **Geography Skills** Review the map of European voyages of exploration on page 48; then answer the questions that follow. When did Ver-razano make his voyage? For what country did he sail? How did Cabot’s route to the Americas differ from that of Columbus?

**Interdisciplinary Activity**

**Geography** Draw a map of the world as you think Columbus might have seen it in 1492. Remember his error in calculating distance.

**CHAPTER 2 Exploring the Americas**
Morning Girl

I swam closer to get a better look and had to stop myself from laughing. The strangers had wrapped every part of their bodies with colorful leaves and cotton. Some had decorated their faces with fur and wore shiny rocks on their heads. Compared to us, they were very round. Their canoe was short and square, and, in spite of all their dipping and pulling, it moved so slowly. What a backward, distant island they must have come from. But really, to laugh at guests, no matter how odd, would be impolite, especially since I was the first to meet them. If I was foolish, they would think they had arrived at a foolish place. . . .

I kicked toward the canoe and called out the simplest thing. “Hello” . . .

The man stared at me as though he’d never seen a girl before, then shouted something to his relatives. They all stopped paddling and looked in my direction.

“Hello,” I tried again. “Welcome to home. My name is Morning Girl. . . .”

All the fat people in the canoe began pointing at me and talking at once. In their excitement they almost turned themselves over, and I allowed my body to sink beneath the waves for a moment in order to hide my smile. . . .

When I came up they were still watching, the way babies do: wide eyed and with their mouths uncovered. They had much to learn about how to behave. . . . It was clear that they hadn’t traveled much before.


ANALYZING LITERATURE

1. Recall and Interpret How does Morning Girl describe the strangers’ appearance?

2. Evaluate and Connect Are Morning Girl’s impressions of the visitors positive or negative? Explain your reasoning.

Interdisciplinary Activity

Descriptive Writing Imagine that you are an explorer who arrived in America with Columbus. Describe the people and climate you encounter in America. Compare the way people live in America to your way of life in Europe.
Main Idea
In the sixteenth century, Spain established and governed a vast empire in the Americas.

Key Terms
conquistador, tribute, pueblo, mission, presidio, encomienda, plantation

Reading Strategy
Organizing Information. As you read the section, re-create the diagram below and identify Spanish conquistadors, along with the regions they explored.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conquistador</th>
<th>Region Explored</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hernán Cortés</td>
<td>lands in Mexico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francisco Pizarro</td>
<td>captures Atahualpa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De Soto</td>
<td>crosses the Mississippi River</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>establishes fort at St. Augustine, Florida</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Read to Learn
• how the great Aztec and Inca Empires came to an end.
• how Spain governed its empire in the Americas.

Section Theme
Culture and Traditions. The conquistadors conquered mighty empires in the Americas.

Spanish Conquistadors
Stories of gold, silver, and kingdoms wealthy beyond belief greeted the early Spanish explorers in the Americas. The reports led them far and wide in search of fabulous riches.

Known as conquistadors (kahn KEES tuh dawrs), these explorers received grants from the Spanish rulers. They had the right to explore and establish settlements in the Americas. In exchange they agreed to give the Spanish crown one-fifth of any gold or treasure discovered. This arrangement allowed Spanish rulers to launch expeditions with little risk. If a conquistador failed, he lost his own fortune. If he succeeded, both he and Spain gained wealth and glory.
Cortés Conquers the Aztec

When Hernán Cortés landed on the east coast of what we now know as Mexico in 1519, he was looking for gold and glory. He came with about 500 soldiers, some horses, and a few cannons. Cortés soon learned about the great Aztec Empire and its capital of Tenochtitlán.

In building their empire, the Aztec had conquered many cities in Mexico. These cities were forced to give crops, clothing, gold, and precious stones to the Aztec as tribute. Cortés formed alliances with nearby cities against the Aztec.

Cortés marched into Tenochtitlán in November with his small army and his Native American allies. The Aztec emperor Montezuma (MAHN • tuh • ZOO • muh)—also spelled Moctezuma—welcomed Cortés and his soldiers and provided them with food and a fine palace. However, Cortés took advantage of the Aztec's hospitality and made Montezuma his prisoner.

In the spring of 1520, the Aztec rebelled against the Spanish. During the fighting Montezuma was hit by stones and later died. The battle lasted for days. Eventually, the Spanish were forced to leave Tenochtitlán. Cortés, however, was determined to retake the city. He waited until more Spanish troops arrived, then attacked and destroyed the Aztec capital in 1521. An Aztec poem describes the awful scene:
Without roofs are the houses,
And red are their walls with blood....
Weep, my friends,
Know that with these disasters
We have lost our Mexican nation.

The Aztec Empire disintegrated, and Spain seized control of the region.

Pizarro Conquers Peru

The conquistador Francisco Pizarro sailed down the Pacific coast of South America with about 180 Spanish soldiers. Pizarro had heard tales of the incredibly wealthy Inca Empire in what is now Peru. In 1532 Pizarro captured the Inca ruler, Atahualpa (ah•ta•h•WAHL•pah), and destroyed much of the Incan army.

The following year, the Spanish falsely accused Atahualpa of crimes and executed him. The Inca were used to obeying commands from their rulers. Without leadership, they were not able to fight effectively. Within a few years, Pizarro had gained control of most of the vast Inca Empire.

Why Spain Succeeded

The conquistadors’ victories in Mexico and Peru were quick and lasting. How could Cortés and Pizarro, with only a few hundred Spanish soldiers, conquer such mighty empires?

First, the Spanish arrived with strange weapons—guns and cannons—and fearsome animals. They rode horses and had huge, ferocious dogs. To the Native Americans, the Spanish seemed almost like gods. Second, many Native Americans hated their Aztec overlords and assisted the conquistadors in overthrowing them.

Finally, disease played an extremely large role in the Spanish conquest. Native Americans had no immunity to the diseases the Europeans had, unknowingly, brought with them. Epidemics of smallpox and other diseases wiped out entire communities in the Americas and did much to weaken the resistance of the Aztec and Inca.

Reading Check Analyzing How were the Spanish able to defeat mighty Native American empires?

Spain in North America

Mexico and Peru were rich in silver and gold. Hoping to find similar wealth to the north, conquistadors explored the southeastern and southwestern parts of North America.

Juan Ponce de León made the first Spanish landing on the mainland of North America, arriving on the east coast of present-day Florida in 1513. According to legend, Ponce de León hoped to find not only gold, but the legendary fountain of youth, “a spring of running water of such marvelous virtue” that drinking it “makes old men young again.” Ponce de León’s exploration led to the first Spanish settlement in what is now the United States. In 1565 the Spanish established a fort at St. Augustine, Florida.

The Seven Cities of Cibola

Many other conquistadors searched for quick riches. None ever achieved this goal, and several lost their lives trying. Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca (cah•bAY•sah day VAH•kah) was part of a Spanish expedition to Florida in 1528.

After encountering troubles in Florida, the expedition, led by Pánfilo de Narváez, sailed along the coast toward Mexico. However, in November 1528, three of the five boats were lost in a storm. The two boats that survived went aground on an island near present-day Texas. Within a few months, only a handful of the shipwrecked explorers were still alive.

Who celebrated the first Thanksgiving? We all know that the Pilgrims celebrated the first Thanksgiving. Or did they? On April 30, 1598, long before the Pilgrims came to North America, Spanish colonists held a thanksgiving feast near present-day El Paso, Texas. Juan de Oñate had led 400 men and their families across the desert from Mexico. After they reached the Rio Grande, Oñate told them to feast and give thanks for the abundance of the new land.

CHAPTER 2 Exploring the Americas
A Mexican nun, Juana Inés de la Cruz, may have been the first woman in the Americas to write about women’s rights. What is remarkable about Sor Juana ("Sister" Juana) is that she was a famous writer at a time when most women were not taught to read. Her poems and stories were well known in Mexico; her plays were performed in the royal palace of Mexico, and her books were popular in Spain.

An archbishop of the Church, however, did not approve of women freely expressing their opinions. He threatened to put her on trial for violating Church rules unless she followed a strict vow of poverty and sold her books and belongings. Although she gave the appearance of obedience, an unfinished poem found in her belongings after her death showed that she continued to exercise her talent.

To survive, Cabeza de Vaca and an enslaved African named Estevanico became medicine men. Cabeza de Vaca later wrote that their method of healing was “to bless the sick, breathing on them” and to recite Latin prayers.

In 1533 the Spaniards set off on foot on a great 1,000-mile journey across the Southwest. Arriving in Mexico in 1536, Cabeza de Vaca related tales he had heard of seven cities with walls of emerald and streets of gold.

The stories inspired Hernando de Soto, who led an expedition to explore Florida and lands to the west. For three years De Soto and his troops wandered around the southeastern area of the present-day United States, following stories of gold. As the Spaniards traveled, they took advantage of the native peoples. Their usual method was to enter a village, take the chief hostage, and demand food and supplies.

De Soto crossed the Mississippi River in 1541, describing it as “swift, and very deep.” After traveling as far west as present-day Oklahoma, De Soto died of fever. His men buried him in the waters of the Mississippi.

Francisco Vásquez de Coronado also wanted to find the legendary “Seven Cities of Cibola.” After traveling through areas of northern Mexico and present-day Arizona and New Mexico, the expedition reached a town belonging to the Zuni people in early summer 1540. They realized at once that there was no gold. Members of the expedition traveled west to the Colorado River and east into what is now Kansas. They found nothing but “windswept plains” and strange “shaggy cows” (buffalo). Disappointed, Coronado returned to Mexico.

**Reading Check** Explaining How did stories of the “Seven Cities of Cibola” affect Spanish exploration?

**Spanish Rule**

Spanish law called for three kinds of settlements in the Americas—pueblos, missions, and presidios. Pueblos, or towns, were established as centers of trade. Missions were religious communities that usually included a small town, surrounding farmland, and a church. A presidio, or fort, was usually built near a mission.

Juan de Oñate (day ohn • YAH • tay) was sent from Mexico to gain control over lands to the north and to convert the inhabitants. In 1598 Oñate founded the province of New Mexico and introduced cattle and horses to the Pueblo people.
Social Classes

A class system developed in Spain’s empire. The upper class consisted of people who had been born in Spain, called *peninsulares*. The *peninsulares* owned the land, served in the Catholic Church, and ran the local government. Below them were the creoles, people born in the Americas to Spanish parents. Lower in the class structure were the mestizos (meht·STEY·zohs), people with Spanish and Native American parents. Still lower were the Native Americans, most of whom lived in great poverty. At the very bottom were enslaved Africans.

In the 1500s the Spanish government granted each conquistador who settled in the Americas an encomienda, the right to demand taxes or labor from Native Americans living on the land. This system turned the Native Americans into slaves. Grueling labor in the fields and in the gold and silver mines took its toll. Many Native Americans died from malnutrition and disease.

A Spanish priest, Bartolomé de Las Casas, condemned the cruel treatment of the Native Americans. He pleaded for laws to protect them. Las Casas claimed that millions had died because the Spanish “made gold their ultimate aim, seeking to load themselves with riches in the shortest possible time.”

Because of Las Casas’s reports, in 1542 the Spanish government passed the New Laws, which forbade making slaves of Native Americans. Although not always enforced, the laws did correct the worst abuses.

The Plantation System

Some Spanish settlers made large profits by exporting crops and raw materials back to Spain. In the West Indies, the main exports were tobacco and sugarcane. To raise these crops, the Spanish developed the plantation system. A plantation was a large estate. The Spanish used Native Americans to work their plantations.

Las Casas suggested replacing them with enslaved Africans—a suggestion he bitterly regretted later. He thought the Africans could endure the labor better than the Native Americans.

By the mid-1500s the Spanish were bringing thousands from West Africa to the Americas. The Portuguese did the same in Brazil. The Africans who survived the brutal ocean voyage were sold to plantation owners. By the late 1500s, plantation slave labor was an essential part of the economy of the colonies.

Critical Thinking

4. Analyzing Primary Sources One conquistador explained, “We came to serve God and the king, and also to get rich.” In what way do you think conquistadors planned to serve “God and the king”?

Reviewing Themes

3. Culture and Traditions What groups made up the class system in Spanish America?