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PREFACE

These short readings represent some of our best teaching moments as well as some of our most engaging studies, which we have used with readers who struggle to access text. Our students have both engaged with the topics and experienced success reading independently with the lower Lexile levels.

When we start writing these texts, we begin with the historical eras as an outline. From there, our tasks are to find (a) what is important and (b) what is engaging. We read broadly. Our reading leads us to ask pages and pages of questions. As our families, colleagues, and students can attest, we share many isolated facts. (For example, the largest denomination printed by the United States was the \$100,000 bill and showed an image of Woodrow Wilson.) Some of the questions we ask are of great importance, while others simply reflect a personal interest. For example, Dixie's interests demonstrate an ongoing study of how animals have been used in warfare, and this interest manifested in the Korean War story of Sergeant Reckless in this volume (page 131). That interest continues to spark questions about our responsibilities to animals in warfare.

Why use this text, and why now? What we find is that the topics that interest us and make us ask questions often engage our students more than topics that simply follow a pacing guide. Our inquiry and sense of curiosity is more likely to engross students and facilitate the development of their own questions in response. That is the crux of this text. We want to interest students. We want them to ask questions. We want them to be curious and wonder about many different things. Along the way, we want them to gain some content knowledge; we see content knowledge, however, as an outcome of inquiry, not inquiry as an outcome of content knowledge. We do not want to see students who know a lot of information but are not curious and fail to ask questions about it.

What is unfortunate is that multiple standards and goals sometimes obscure the simplicity of being curious and wondering. If we want to teach students to conduct inquiry, then we as teachers need to avoid giving students all of the questions to explore. We need to let them discover their own questions. Rather than quickly correcting inaccurate or incomplete knowledge, we need to allow time for students to continue to question the accuracy of their first answers. By offering stories about sometimes odd and quirky things and inviting students to be curious, we hope that students will gradually begin to ask their own questions and pursue their own interests. We hope to spark that kind of curiosity with these short texts.

► Era of Exploration

Short Text: WHO THEY WERE AND FOR WHOM THEY SAILED

Lexile Level: This text does not have a Lexile because the list format, as well as the repeated use of titles or names, makes it difficult to arrive at an accurate Lexile level. In this case, the visuals are used to support comprehension.

Background Essay

Lexile Level: 910

Questions

- Who were the explorers and for whom did they sail?
- What motivated the explorers' travels?
- What did the explorers want?

Teaching Notes

The fourth activity question may be quite difficult for students because it asks them to visualize. Even looking at maps may not be adequate. Students may need to spend some time learning more about explorers' routes and tracing them on a globe in order to understand how the explorers attempted to go west to find a quicker route to the east. European explorers credited with discoveries initiated radical change and significant population migrations that shifted power and control over the Americas. Their desire for fame and wealth should be emphasized when examining the list of what explorers wanted. In addition, explain that the diseases carried by the Europeans created a chain reaction that significantly reduced native populations. European brutality and exploitation also disrupted societies and the balance of power among native peoples. These are points to bring up as students consider alternative narratives that differ from the traditional historical narrative, which glorifies explorers without consideration of other perspectives.

Activity

- A. Ask students the following questions. Have them write down the answers, or use the questions as prompts for classroom discussion.
 1. Look at the map showing from where the explorers came. From what continents did most of them come?
Europe
 2. Which country is most represented?
Spain

3. Why would these countries be interested in exploring?

They were interested in trade routes, wealth, and new territory.

4. Look again at the maps showing where the explorers were going and for whom they were sailing. Though most of these explorers wanted to go to Asia, they *all* ended up exploring in North and South America. Explain how and why this might have happened.

Answers will vary but might mention that explorers had limited navigational equipment and poor maps, and they did not anticipate the distance it took to travel from the European continent westward toward Asia.

Extension Activities

- Have students read “Hold the Salt and Pass the Pepper” in *Seeds of Inquiry: Using Short Texts to Enhance Student Understanding of World History* (See below). It is a short story about spices.
- Have students choose one explorer, trace his or her exact route, and create a list of the explorer’s discoveries.
- Ask students to develop a time line of events using this passage, and have them include other key events that would have increased the need for travel. For example, ask students to consider when technological advances (such as better ships, mapmaking, and improved navigation) were made that allowed explorers to go to Asia, North America, and South America. When did a plague occur that led to the significant increase in the need for nutmeg?

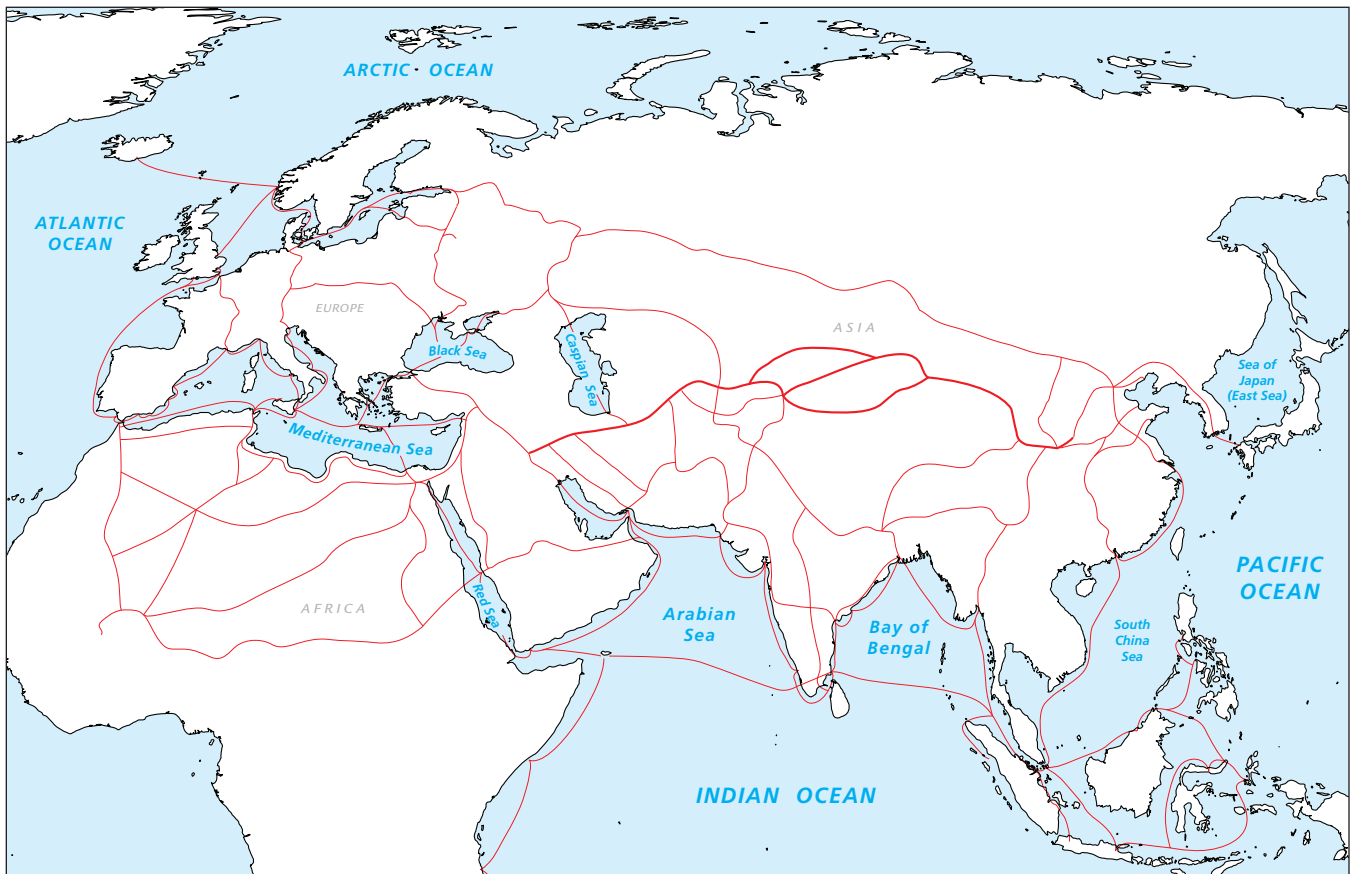
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Background Essay

ERA OF EXPLORATION

The Europeans wanted many things, but spices, gold, and power were at the top of the list. They also wanted to have more spices, more gold, and more power than their neighbors. These interests led to many of the European countries competing to find new treasures and new sea routes. Better and faster ships allowed the European explorers to go farther than ever before. Better maps allowed explorers to avoid some dangers. As a result, during the 1400s, 1500s, and 1600s, the Europeans discovered many places that they had never known existed. Prior to this time, people knew very little of the vast continents between Europe and Asia. Of course, these weren't really new lands. These lands were the homes of many native peoples. How the explorers treated these encounters with native (sometimes called indigenous) populations varied and often changed over time. The Europeans sometimes befriended the native peoples. Other Europeans enslaved them. The explorers used torture, such as cutting off hands and ears or cutting out tongues, to control the native peoples. Some explorers slaughtered them. These acts of brutality allowed Europeans to seek out treasures and exploit these new lands.



Map: © Nystrom Education

► Gilded Age

Short Text: CRIME THAT PAID

Lexile Level: 800

Background Essay

Lexile Level: 800

Question

- How did men like Al Capone and other mob leaders use Prohibition to become more powerful?

Activities

- A. Have students create a character table for Marm and George like the one below. Students should list everything that they learn about both Marm and George while they read.

Marm	George
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Immigrated to New York City	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “King of Bank Robbers”
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lived in Little Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wealthy
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Poor, but became rich	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Moved to New York City from Cincinnati
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sold stolen items	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Carefully planned bank heists
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Created a store to sell stolen items	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wanted to rob Manhattan Savings
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fled to Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Killed by one of his gang members

- B. Using the chart created in the first activity, and the background reading, have students describe why and how Marm and George are examples of the Gilded Age.

Answers will vary but should include some of the following information: The Gilded Age was a time when there were very rich people who spent money on extravagant items. At the same time, other people were very poor and lived in terrible conditions. Many times, the very rich and the very poor lived in the same area. Marm is an example of someone who was very poor. Marm came to this country as an immigrant. She lived in poverty, as many people did during the Gilded Age.

George is an example of the very rich. His family was wealthy enough that they could pay to keep him out of the Civil War. However, both Marm and George found that there was money to be made in criminal activity. Marm started committing crimes because it was a way to make money and move up in social status. George turned to crime because it was a challenge, not because he needed more money or status.

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