

1: ENCOUNTERS

ESSENTIAL TERMS



PEOPLE AND GROUPS

Maya: Great pre-Columbian civilization centered in southern Mexico and Central America. They built cities such as Chichen Itza but their culture collapsed before the arrival of the Spanish.

Aztec: Major Mesoamerican culture that was centered around the city of Tenochtitlan (present Mexico City) when the Spanish arrived in the early 1500s.

Inca: Pre-Columbian empire that stretched along the Andes Mountains in south America.

Marco Polo: Italian explorer who travelled to China and published a popular book about his adventures. He inspired Columbus and other later European explorers.

Norse: A group of people who lived in Scandinavia. They were known as fearsome invaders and excellent sailors. They are also called Vikings and were the first Europeans to land in North America but did not establish lasting settlements.

Prince Henry the Navigator: Portuguese king who promoted exploration by sea.

Ferdinand and Isabella: King and Queen of Spain. Their marriage united the two largest kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula, thus created the modern nation of Spain. They also drove out the last Muslims from the Peninsula and funded Columbus.

Christopher Columbus: Italian explorer who sailed for Spain. He crossed the Atlantic in 1492 and “discovered” America.

Conquistadors: Spanish and Portuguese conquerors who led wars on Native Americans and created the colonies in the New World.

Hernan Cortés: Spanish conquistador who defeated the Aztec.

Montezuma: Last Aztec emperor who was defeated by Cortés.

Francisco Pizarro: Spanish conquistador who defeated the Inca empire.

Atahualpa: Inca emperor who was defeated by Pizarro and the Spanish.

Bartolomé de Las Casas: Spanish priest who wrote about the mistreatment of Native Americans.

Popé: Pueblo leader who led the Pueblo Revolt and successfully expelled the Spanish from Pueblo territory in 1680.

Jacques Cartier: French explorer who helped found New France.

Coureur des Bois: Literally “Runners of the Woods.” French trappers and traders who travelled the interior of North America trading for beaver fur and living with Native Americans.



KEY CONCEPTS

Encomiendas: Spanish system in which conquistadors were rewarded with land and the right to enslave Native Americans.

Columbian Exchange: Name given to the mixing of animals, plants, microbes, people and ideas between the Old World and New World after Columbus's first voyage in 1492.



TREATIES

Treaty of Tordesillas: Treaty between Spain and Portugal dividing the world. It was drafted by the Pope in an effort to avoid war between the two most powerful Catholic nations. Portugal was given Africa and Brazil. Spain received the rest of the Americas and the Philippines.



LOCATIONS

Bering Land Bridge: The name for the floor of the Bering Sea that was exposed dry land during the period of glaciation. It was crossed by nomads from Asia to North America who became the first Americans.

Mesoamerica: Region that includes the modern-day nations of Mexico and the smaller nations of Central America. It was home to the Olmec, Maya and Aztec cultures.

Tenochtitlan: Capital of the Aztec culture and site of present-day Mexico City.

Silk Road: Nickname for a collection of trade routes across Asia connecting China, India, and the East Indies with the Middle East and Europe.

New Spain: The northern Spanish colonies centered in Mexico and Central America.

New France: The French colony in North America.

Quebec: French colonial settlement in what is now Canada.



EVENTS

Middle Ages: A time period in European history between the fall of the Roman Empire and the Renaissance. It was characterized by a lack of centralized political authority and little emphasis on education.

Crusades: A series of military invasions of the Middle East during the Middle Ages led by Catholic kings from Europe who attempted to recapture the city of Jerusalem from Muslims.

Pueblo Revolt: Uprising led by Popé against the Spanish in 1680.