European Exploration

Economic, Political, and Social Reasons
Economic Reasons for Exploration
Discovery of fine goods in the East

- Marco Polo – Spent 24 years in China, brought back fascinating tales.
- Eastern goods sought after by Europeans.
Italy dominated trade overland:

- Merchants became very wealthy
- Had good relationship w/ Muslims
- Controlled the Mediterranean sea
Trade Routes (Cont.)

- Portuguese wanted in on Eastern trade:
  - Goal = find water route to Asia
  - Best sailors – invented Caravel (triangular sails allowed ship to sail into the wind)
- Bartolomeu Dias – first sailor to reach the tip of Africa
- Vasco de Gama – followed Dias’s route, sailed to India
- Portugal found all water route & became rich
Spain (Portugal's neighbor) also wanted in on trade.

Queen Isabella & King Ferdinand took a risk and financed Columbus's voyage.

Columbus thought he would find a faster route to Asia by sailing directly West.

Found the Americas instead

Spain became very rich
Mercantilism

- European countries sought raw goods: gold, silver, sugar, etc.
- As colonies developed, provided a market for manufactured goods.
- Goal of Mercantilism = acquire colonies & make Mother Country very rich through favorable balance of trade.
Political Reasons for Exploration
Empire Building

- Spanish Conquistadors:
  - Sought Gold for Spain
  - Hernando Cortez conquered the Aztecs of Mexico.
  - Francisco Pizarro conquered the Incas of Peru.
European Rivalries

- **Fight over North America:**
  - Spain claimed the Americas
  - French & English sailors looking for Northwest passage claimed lands in N. America

- **Religious Conflicts:**
  - Spain = Catholic
  - England = Protestant
  - Protestant & Catholic = bad combination

Spain VS Britain (England)
Spain & England Clash:
- England’s Queen Elizabeth sent Sea Dogs like Francis Drake to steal Spanish treasure.
- Spanish King enraged; sent Spanish Armada to conquer England & restore Catholicism
- England defeats Spain
- Spain never as powerful
- Other nations started challenging Spain
Social Reasons for Exploration

Religion

Ideas
Spreading of Ideas & Beliefs

- Spain wanted to spread Christianity to the New World
- Set up missions to convert Native Americans

Spanish Mission in San Jose, California
Religious Freedom

- Later, Separatist groups fled Europe because of religious persecution.
- Wanted to develop colonies in the Americas.