Chapter 7

Sailing into Adventure!

Adventures are exciting. They give us challenges to meet and chances to learn new things.

One type of adventure people have had through the ages is exploring. When you explore, you go someplace you've never been before. You might have explored another place when you've been on vacation. To the people who live there, walking down the street isn't an adventure. But if you don't know anything about the place, there's something new around every corner!

Just before the year 1500, Europeans began to explore North America. Unlike Aboriginal peoples, they didn't know anything about this place. So for the Europeans, it was a great adventure. In this chapter, you can find out why they came.

Back in Time

In Newfoundland, there is evidence that sailors from northern Europe, known as the **Vikings**, had reached North America in the year 985. By the 1400s, though, no one in Europe remembered this.

Aboriginal lands became part of Canada. Later on, you'll see that this created problems for Aboriginal peoples. What do you think these problems were?

The **explorers** were people from Europe. We call them explorers because they were travelling in places they had never visited before. Most of the explorers came from the countries of France, England, and Spain.

When the explorers arrived, Aboriginal peoples guided them through their traditional territories. When they returned home, the explorers reported that North America was a land with many valuable resources. They made maps of their journeys so others could follow.

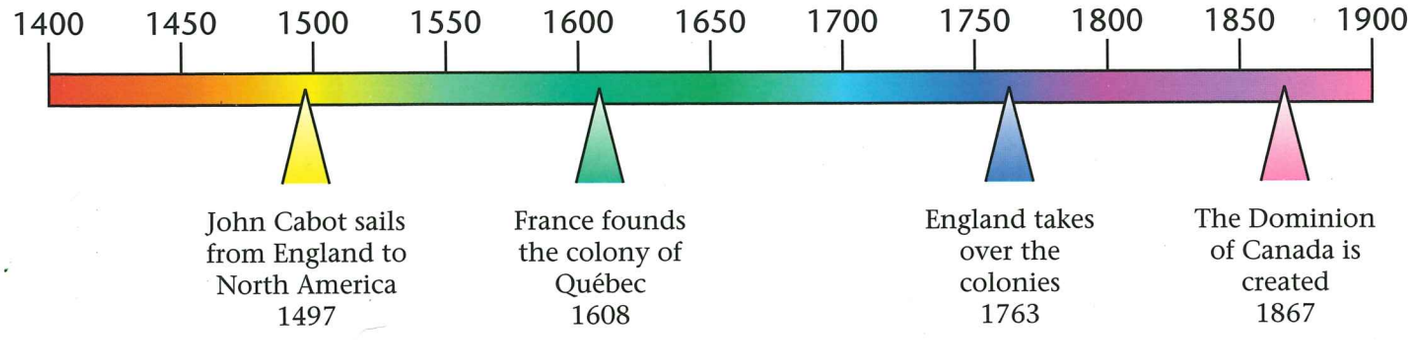
Creating Canada

In time, many Europeans came to North America. They didn't come to explore, though. They came to settle here. They set up communities all across the land.

These early communities were called **colonies**. The colonies belonged to countries in Europe. After awhile, though, the settlers created their own government—the country we call Canada.

This **timeline** shows four important events in the history of Canada. Notice that there is a marker for every 50 years. A **century** is 100 years. The first century is 1400 to 1500. What is the next century?

Creating Canada



HOW TO... Make a Timeline

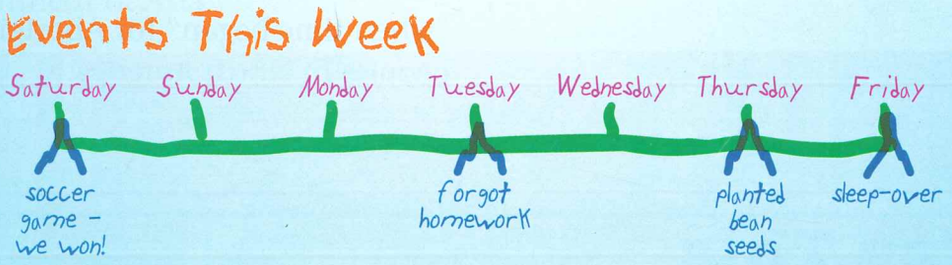
A timeline gives a picture of time passing. The markers on a timeline are like the scale on a map. The same distance on the timeline always shows the same amount of time. Here's how to make a timeline.

1. Decide what events you want to show on the timeline. You might start by making a list.
2. Use a ruler to make a scale that you think might work. Here's an example:



The scale for this timeline is: 1 day = 2 centimetres.

3. Try fitting your information onto the timeline. If it doesn't work, change the scale to make more time or less time pass between the markers.



Think For Yourself

Make a timeline that shows three to five important events in your life so far. You could describe these events in words or show them in pictures.

European Time

The explorers recorded the dates of events according to the European system. In this system, every year is made up of 12 months, and the years are numbered in order. This is the system we still use today.



You may have heard Elders tell stories about the first people and the creation of the world.

The Time Before the Europeans

In the past, Aboriginal peoples did not keep track of time in numbered years. Aboriginal stories talk about things that happened "in the time of my great-great-grandfather" or "at the time of the floods."

This means that there are no exact dates for when Aboriginal peoples first lived in North America. Most Aboriginal cultures have stories that explain that their people have been here since the beginning of time.

Archaeologists have found evidence that Aboriginal peoples have lived here for at least 10 000 years. That's 100 centuries. This is only an approximate date, though. Other people believe there is evidence that the date could be 20 000 or 30 000 years earlier. So nobody knows for sure "when time began" for Aboriginal peoples in North America.

Try This

The Creating Canada timeline shows five centuries. Using this scale, the timeline to show 100 centuries of Aboriginal history before the arrival of Europeans would have to be 20 times longer.

Use a piece of string to show this amount of time. First, measure out the length of the Creating Canada timeline on the string. Then have a friend hold the end of the string while you measure out the length 20 times.

Now figure out how much space your own life would take up on this timeline.

Curious Columbus

The first explorers didn't know exactly where they were going or how long it would take to get there. They only knew it would be a long, dangerous voyage by sea.

In this section, you can start investigating this BIG QUESTION: *Why did the explorers do it?*

The Indies

The first explorers were looking for an ocean route to a place they called *The Indies*. This is the area that today includes the countries of China, Japan, and India on the continent of Asia.

Europeans had been trading with The Indies since the 1300s. The two goods they wanted most were silk cloth and spices such as cloves and cinnamon.

The routes from Asia to Europe were controlled by traders who charged high prices for bringing goods to Europe. The Europeans hoped to find other routes so they could get the silks and spices themselves. Anyone who found such a route was sure to become rich and famous.



Only wealthy Europeans, like these women being served dinner in 15th century France, could afford silk clothing and foods made with spices. What are some of the goods we get from other parts of the world today?

A master mariner is a person who knows enough about sailing and **navigation** to be in charge of a ship.

An explorer needed someone to pay the cost of the trip. This was usually a king or queen, or a group of traders. The explorer and the people who paid for his trip shared the profits.

To find out what *navigation*, a *log*, the *North Star*, and a *quadrant* are, read "A Closer Look: Navigation" on page 120.

Christopher Columbus

In 1492, the king and queen of Spain were interested in the ideas of a **master mariner** named Christopher Columbus. Columbus had studied every map he could find. He believed it was possible to sail from Europe to Asia across the Atlantic Ocean. The king and queen agreed to pay for a voyage to find out.

To the Edge of the World

Christopher Columbus and his three ships, the *Santa Maria*, the *Niña*, and the *Pinta*, left Spain on 3 August 1492. We know quite a bit about the trip from Columbus's point of view because a copy of his **log** has survived to this day.

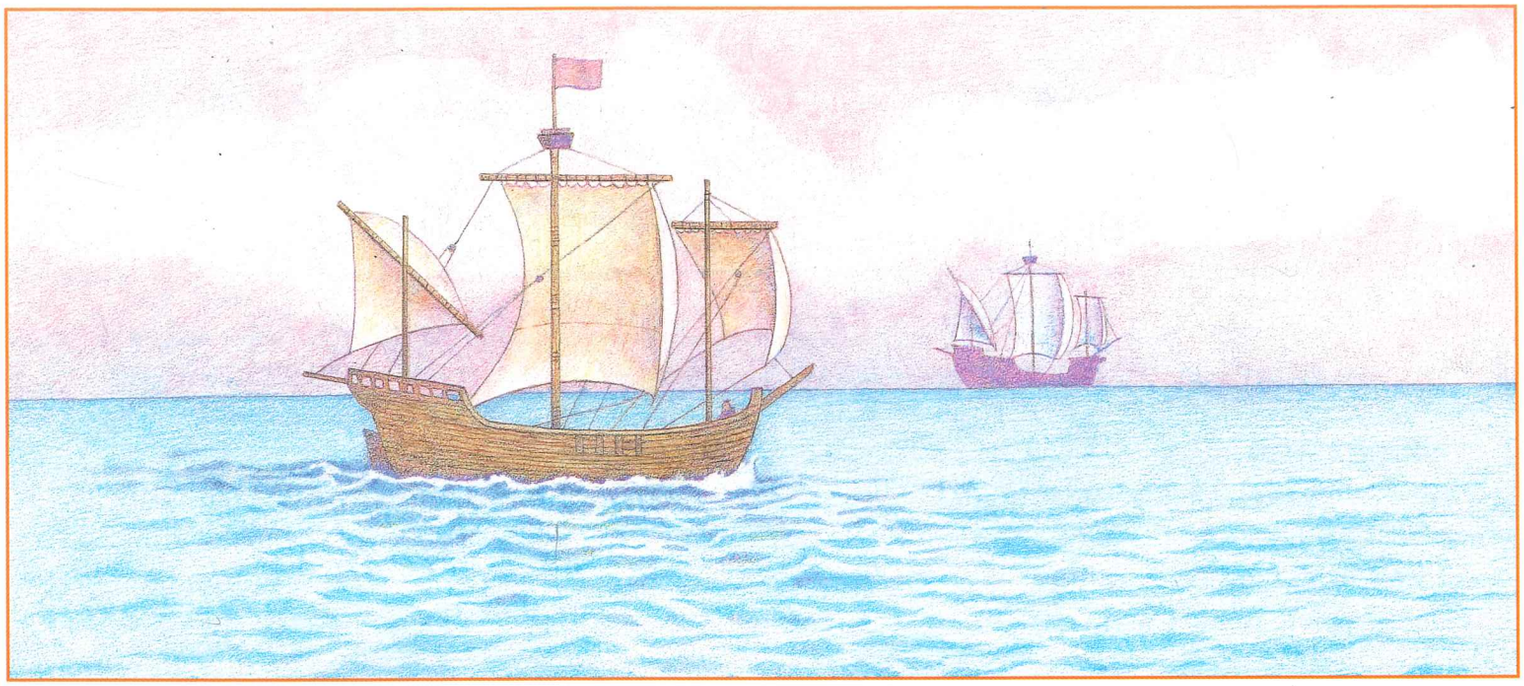
The ships sailed for two months, with no land in sight. In those days, many people believed that the earth was flat. The crew became afraid that if they kept sailing in one direction, they might fall off the edge of the world. So they threatened to **mutiny**—they were going to take over the ship!

Columbus found out that his crew planned to push him overboard. Then they were going to tell everyone back home that he had fallen into the ocean when he stood too close to the railing to take a reading of the **North Star** with his **quadrant**.

Luckily, Columbus was able to convince his crew to give him more time. Finally, on October 12th, they sighted land.



This is what Columbus and most people of the time thought the world was like. Can you see the shapes of Europe on the left and Asia on the right? Which continents are missing? Which are the wrong shapes?



This is how the *Santa Maria* and the *Niña* might have looked at sea. What information do you think an artist would use to create a picture of something that happened long ago?

Columbus Makes a Mistake

Columbus explored the new lands he had reached, then he returned to Spain early in 1493. He reported that he had reached an unknown part of The Indies.

But Columbus was wrong. He had actually reached the islands we now call the Caribbean. (See the map on page 122.) Columbus called the people he met on the islands Indians. This name was used to describe Aboriginal peoples of North America for many years. Today, Aboriginal peoples prefer to be called by the names of their groups, such as Dunne-za or Haida.

Think For Yourself

Imagine you are Christopher Columbus. Your crew wants you to end your journey and return to Spain. What reasons would you give to convince them to carry on?

Now imagine you are a member of the crew. What reasons would you give to convince Columbus to turn back?

You might want to act out this scene in a group. The picture on page 128 shows how people dressed at the time, if you'd like to make costumes.

After his first trip, Columbus crossed the Atlantic three more times. When he died in 1506, he still believed he had reached Asia.

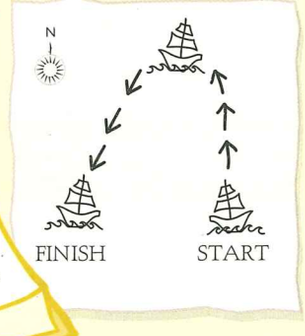
A Closer Look

Navigation

Navigation is the act of directing the course of a ship from one place to another. In the 1500s, there were only simple tools to help sailors navigate. It wasn't easy to be accurate.

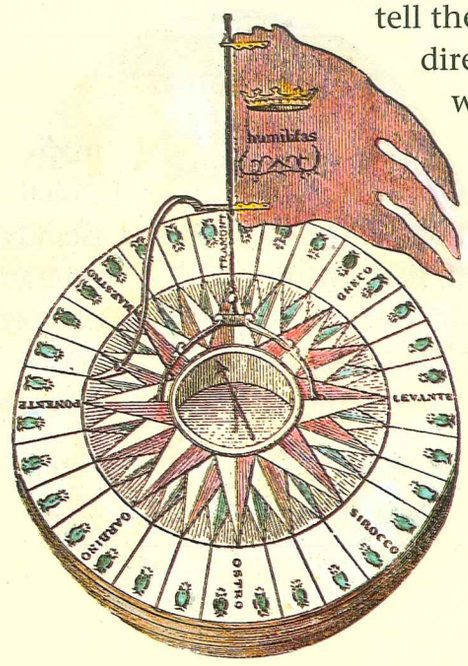
Sailors kept on course by keeping track of the direction they were travelling and the distance travelled. The captain of the ship kept a log to record these readings and other events on the ship each day.





Direction

By looking at a **compass** while facing the same direction as the **bow** (front) of the ship, a sailor could tell the direction in which the ship was sailing.



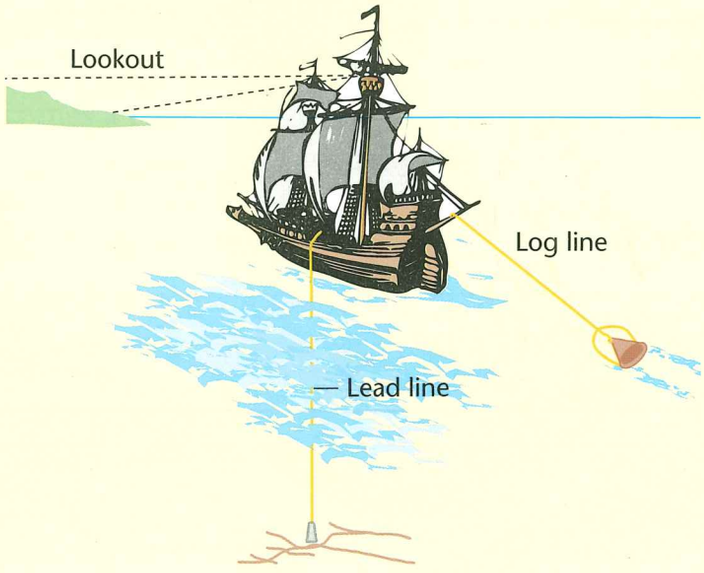
The needle in a compass is made of a metal that is attracted like a magnet to the North Pole. The needle always points to the north, so from this you can figure out south, east, and west.

Speed and Distance

If he knew the speed the ship had been travelling and how long it had been travelling at that speed, a sailor could figure out the distance travelled.

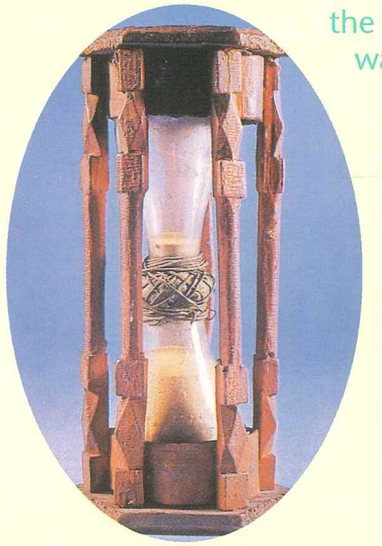
Speed: 5 kilometres per hour
Time at that speed: 2 hours
Distance travelled: 2 x 5 = 10 kilometres

In the days of Columbus, sailors probably estimated their speed based on experience. Later, in the 1500s, sailors used a **log line** to get a closer estimate.



Sailors dropped the end of a log line into the water. The faster the ship was going, the faster the rope unreeled. Knots were placed at even spaces along the line. Sailors then counted the knots to figure out the speed. The lead line was used to tell how deep the water was.

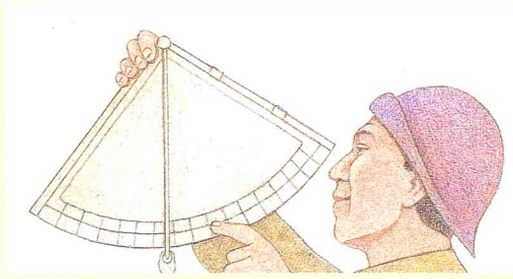
Sandglasses were used to keep time. It took half an hour for the sand to flow from one part of the glass to the other. Then the glass was turned over.

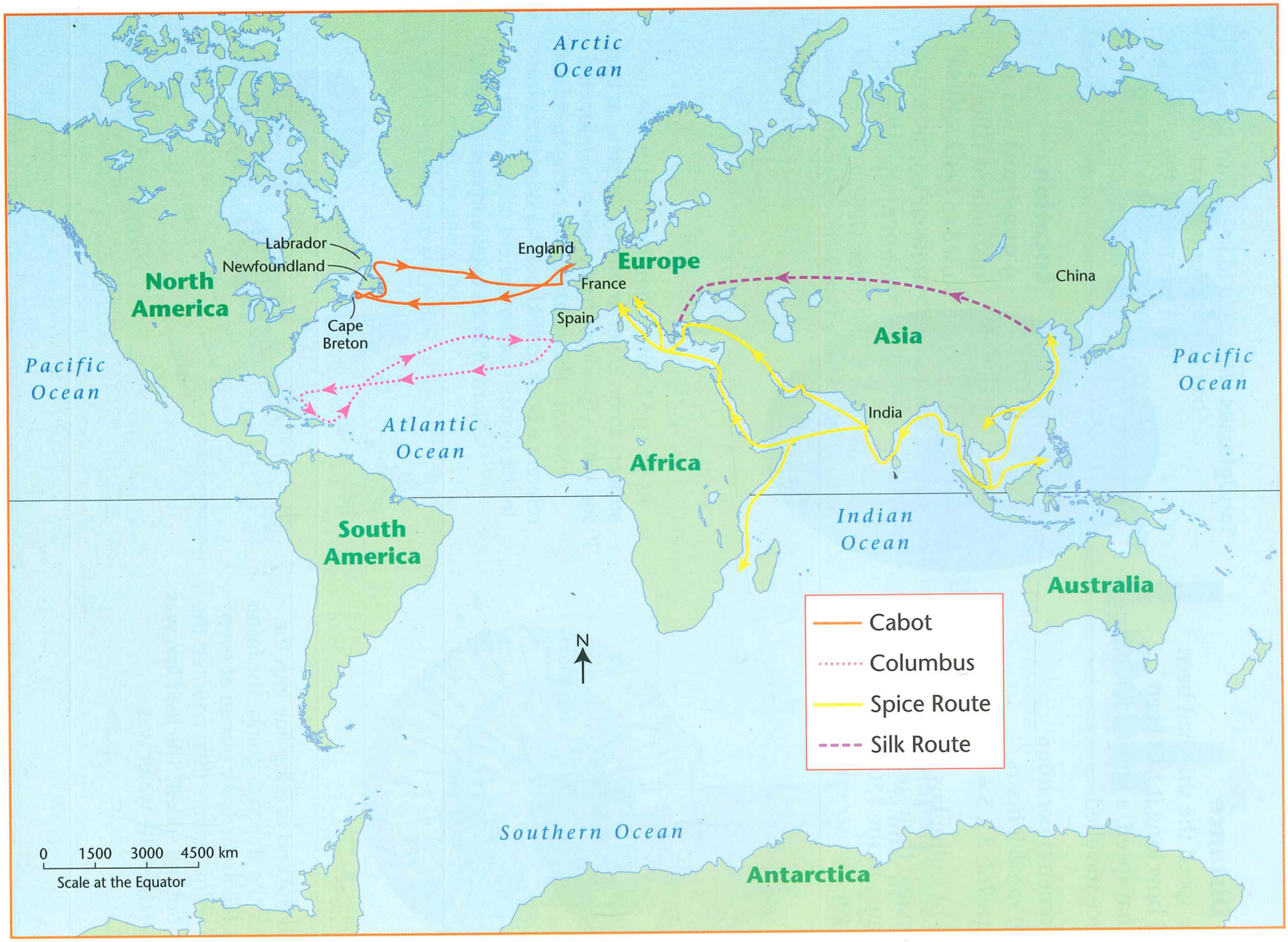


Location

A **quadrant** was an instrument sailors used to figure out how far north or south of the Equator they were.

As you go further from the Equator, the sun appears to be lower in the sky. Looking at the sun with a quadrant told a sailor how low the sun was. This reading was compared to a reference book to find out the ship's location. In the Northern Hemisphere, sailors used the North Star to take readings at night.





What information does this map give you? Use your finger to trace the routes. What do you think it means when one route has arrows going in two directions?

Cabot Sets Sail

Everyone in Europe was excited by Columbus's news that he had reached an unknown part of Asia—they still didn't know about North America. Now European countries had another reason to explore. Each wanted to be the first to find more new lands.

When a country takes over another land, the new land becomes a colony. European countries hoped to set up colonies that were rich in resources that could be sent back to Europe.

The English Join In

In 1497, King Henry VII of England gave the explorer John Cabot permission to claim lands for England. Henry VII was interested in Cabot's idea that he could reach Asia by sailing across the northern part of the Atlantic Ocean.

The **merchants** of an English town called Bristol paid for Cabot's trip. Merchants are people whose main job is trading. They hoped to make a lot of money if Cabot found a new route to The Indies.

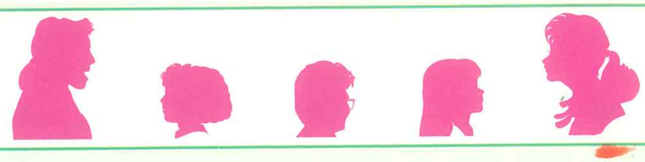
From the Europeans' point of view, North America was a "new" land waiting to be "discovered." What do you think Aboriginal people's point of view was?

Check the map on page 122 to compare Columbus's and Cabot's routes.



We don't know what Cabot or his ship looked like. This painting of Cabot setting sail from Bristol was painted by a Canadian artist, Harold Goodridge, in 1947. What can you tell about European culture from this painting?

In The Words Of...



Henry VII

King Henry VII of England gave John Cabot permission to:

seeke out, discover, and finde whatsoever isles, countries, regions or provinces of the heathens and infidels

Do you understand what Henry VII said? If you don't, it's because the English language has changed since 1497. One job of the historian is to read old documents like this and figure out what they mean. In today's English, Henry VII was saying something like "Find lands where heathens and infidels live."

This document tells us something about the English king's point of view. **Heathens and infidels** are people who do not follow the Christian belief system. Henry VII believed that people who were not Christians did not have **rights** to their lands. Rights are things that are fair for people to have or do.

Most Europeans of the time thought that taking over these lands and persuading the people to become Christians was a good thing. They believed they were helping the people. So persuading people to become Christians was another reason for exploring.

Watch out for spies! The best source of information on Cabot's voyage is a letter written to Columbus. Historians think the letter was from a Spanish spy at the English court who heard Cabot's report to the king.

Crossing the Atlantic

Cabot set sail from Bristol in a ship called the *Matthew* near the end of May 1497. He used his compass and quadrant to try to keep sailing straight west. He didn't really know if this would work, though.

Cabot was travelling further north than Columbus had. The weather was cold. There was the danger of hitting an iceberg. As the days passed, Cabot's crew became worried and frightened. Cabot tried to keep everyone calm. He encouraged them to keep going.

On 24 June 1497, they saw signs that they were nearing land—seagulls and other birds flying overhead and bits of plants and trees floating in the water. Soon the lookout shouted that land was in sight!

We don't know exactly where the *Matthew* landed. It might have been at what we now call Newfoundland, Labrador, or Cape Breton. (See the map on page 122.) Cabot believed he had reached another unknown part of The Indies.

When they landed, they saw snares and signs of a campfire. They didn't see any people, though. Cabot put up flags and a cross (an important symbol to Christians), and claimed the land for the king of England.



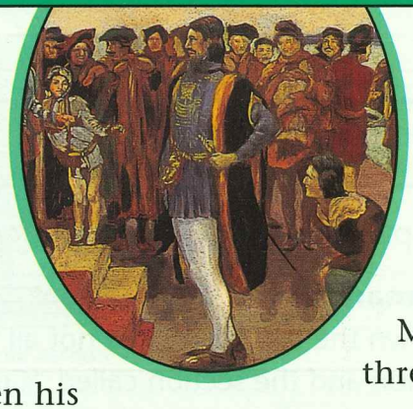
In 1997, this copy of the *Matthew* sailed from Bristol to Newfoundland to celebrate the 500th anniversary of Cabot's voyage. What could people learn from following an explorer's journey?

Buckets of Fish

Cabot sailed along the coast hoping to find people to trade with. Instead, he found shores lined with forests and oceans filled with cod fish. There were so many fish that the sailors could catch them just by dipping buckets into the water alongside the ship.

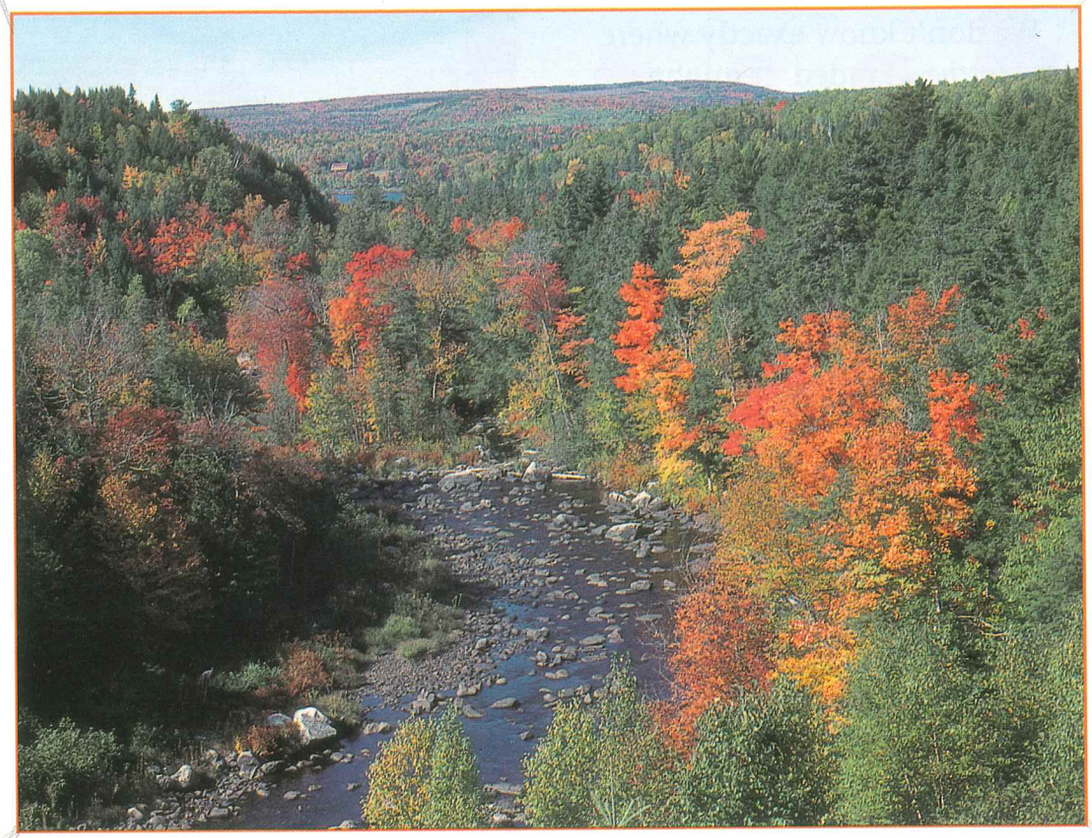
Eventually Cabot gave up finding people to trade with. He set sail back to England and arrived in Bristol on 6 August 1497. There, he told everyone that he had claimed a part of The Indies for England. He also told amazing tales about all the fish they had found!

REAL PEOPLE: JOHN CABOT (?–C. 1498)



John Cabot was a master mariner and a trader from Italy. His family made its money trading for spices and other goods from The Indies. Cabot was highly respected for his skill in using a quadrant and a similar instrument called an **astrolabe**. All his life it had been his dream to find a new route to The Indies.

We're not sure how old Cabot was when he travelled to North America. We do know that he had a wife named Mattea and that they had at least three sons.



Cabot had reached the Eastern Woodlands region. The land here is gently rolling, with many lakes and rivers. At the time, the area was covered in a mixed forest of trees such as oak, maple, elm, pine, hemlock, and spruce.

A Mystery at Sea

Even though Cabot didn't come back with any trade goods, the English were pleased with his news. In 1498, he left England to sail the Atlantic again. This time he had five ships. We don't know what happened, but none of the ships was ever seen again.

Do you have any ideas about what might have happened to John Cabot and his ships?

Try This

This chapter explains three reasons for the journeys of the early explorers.

Summarize these three reasons. When you summarize something, you write down the BIG IDEAS, but not all the *details*. You might need to skim this section and the section called "Curious Columbus" on pages 117 to 122 to get the information you need.

A Sailor's Life

At the time Europeans first began to explore North America, sailing ships were the main form of transportation for travelling across the oceans.

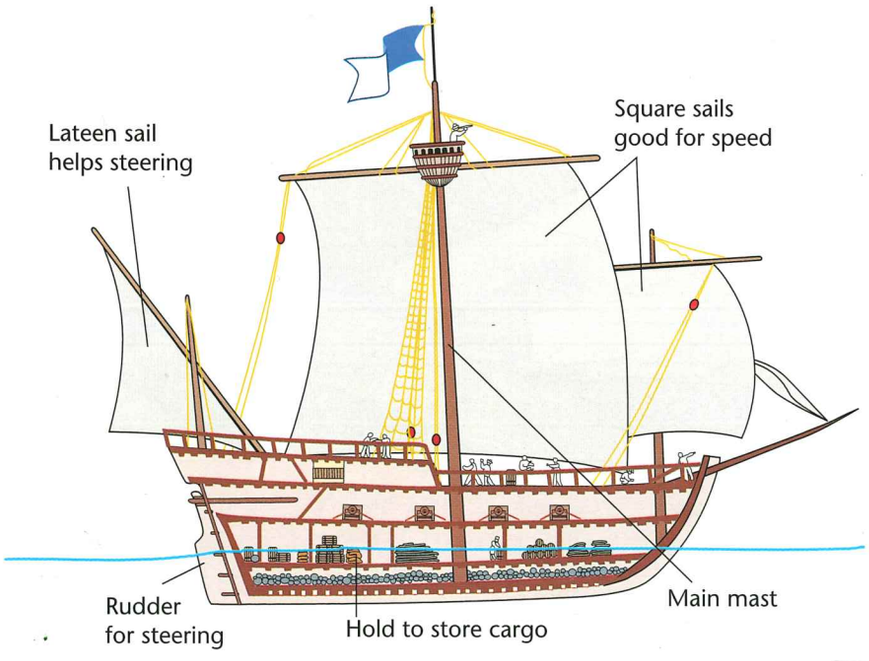
The Ships

Ships came in different shapes and sizes—just like cars do today. Over the centuries, shipbuilders kept designing better ships that could carry more goods and were easier to handle.

The captain was in charge of the ship. Most of the crew were regular sailors. Sailors often started out as **ship's boys** when they were as young as nine or ten years old.

There were also a few men who had special jobs, such as the navigator, the carpenter, and the sail-maker. One important crew member was the ship's cat—rats were a big problem on board ships!

Back in these days, women were not allowed to be sailors. The first woman we know to sail around the world was a French girl named Jean Baré. She made the trip in 1768 disguised as a ship's boy.



In the 1400s and 1500s, the **caravel** was a popular type of ship. Two of Columbus's ships, the *Pinta* and the *Niña*, and Cabot's *Matthew* were probably caravels. About 15 to 20 caravels would probably fit in one medium-sized ferry today.

You can see the crow's nest in the photograph of the *Matthew* on page 125. It is the round balcony near the top of the main mast. What do you think it would be like up there as the ship tossed and rolled through the waves?

The Work Day

Work on a ship went on 24 hours a day. Someone had to be steering and watching the course all the time. One sailor watched in the **crow's nest** to keep a lookout for danger, such as white water, which could mean rocks.

Other sailors climbed up and down masts to tend the sails. If the wind was strong, sails had to be rolled up or the wind might push the boat over. This was dangerous work in a storm!

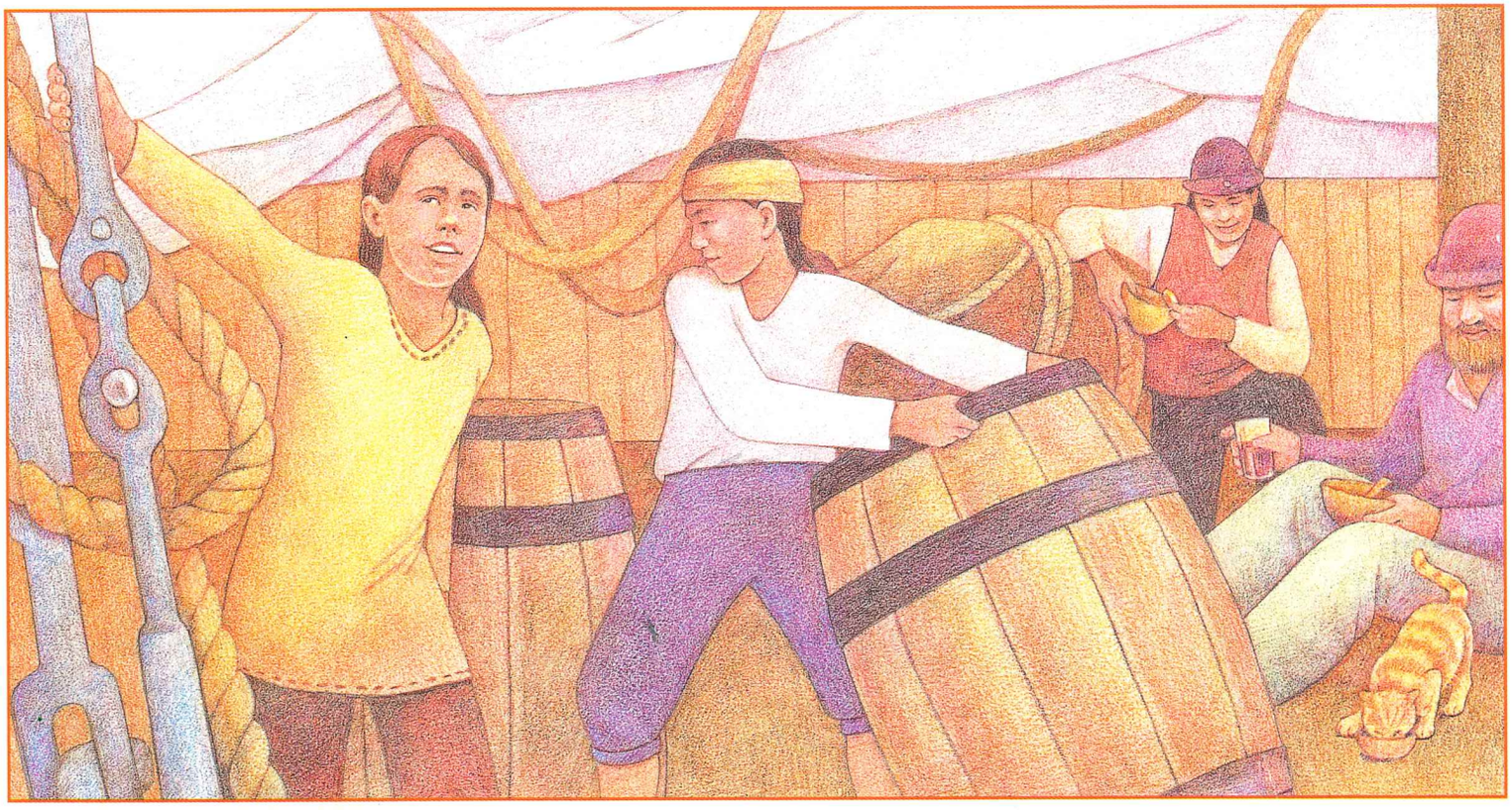
Sailors usually worked in **watches**—four hours working and four hours off. Ship's boys worked alongside the sailors. They helped with jobs such as scrubbing the decks, tending the sails, repairing ropes, and checking for leaks. There was always work to do.

Home at Sea

The captain had a cabin. Sailors, though, usually ate and slept on deck unless it was very cold. Below deck, it was crowded and dirty, and there wasn't any fresh air.

At the beginning of the voyage, the ship was stocked with fresh water and food that would keep, such as salted fish and meat, dried peas, and hard biscuits. Most meals were the same every day: biscuits and **pottage**, a soup or stew made of boiled fish and peas.

Unless it was very cold, sailors usually worked in bare feet. Bare feet don't slip on wet decks and make it easier to climb rope ladders. What else do you notice about the way these sailors are dressed?



After many days at sea, pale, wiggly beetles called **weevils** usually got into the biscuits. Sailors had to shake the bugs out before taking a bite! The drinking water smelled, and there were usually bugs floating in it. Sometimes the sailors were given beer to drink instead.

Fun and Games

If the weather was good, sailors played games, told stories, or sang and danced. One game was to see who could climb to the top of the tallest mast the fastest.

Of course, the best times happened when the ship arrived at an exciting new place. Sailors saw the world and had adventures that **landlubbers** only dreamed of.

A landlubber is someone who doesn't have any experience at sea.

Find Out

What do you think life was like for a ship's boy? Exciting? Boring? Dangerous? Fun? Was it some or all of these things? Write down your first idea.

Use information in this section to check your idea. Find one or two more facts at the library or on the Internet. You might use these headings for taking notes: Food, Clothing, Work, Fun.

A ship's boy's life was _____

Food	Clothing
Work	Fun

Looking Back

In this chapter, you found out something about why Europeans came to North America. You also saw that different cultures have different ways of recording time.

How do you think timelines can help you understand history?