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GEOGRAPHY, ECONOMICS & EARLY HISTORY

GRADE
3

Onward to the Spice Islands!

Below is a fictitious account from a sailor on Magellan's attempt to find a western passage to Asia. What can you learn about the journey? What were daily conditions like for these explorers? What were they looking for?

Ship's Log: October 1, 1520

We set sail over a year ago. No one thought the journey would be this long. Yet here we are. Our crew braved storms, mutinies and aggressive natives. Now we will soon round the horn of a continent and sail onward to the Spice Islands! It shouldn't be long now; maybe a week. Though I am from North Africa, I know the languages of the Spice Islands. I was supposed to be an interpreter but we have not encountered anyone I can speak to.

This journey is important for Spain. We are trying to locate our own route to Asia. In 1498, a Portuguese explorer, Vasco da Gama, discovered a path to sail around the horn of Africa to reach India. This made it so European merchants no longer had to rely on the Ottoman Turks for spices. However, the Portuguese have control of the route. Christopher Columbus's journey west inspired Ferdinand Magellan to attempt to find a western passage to Asia. Thirteen years after Columbus' death, we set out.

Exploration is a dangerous business. I have heard whispers of the exploits of Hernán Cortés and his battles in the New World. He is attempting to conquer and convert the natives. I believe he will be successful. Perhaps I should have cast my lot with his ...

Our journey started out well enough. We set off from Spain on August 10, 1519. We had five ships total with a crew of 270 men and enough food and water for a long journey. Magellan expected to find a crossing through the Americas closer to the equator. However, we found no such passage. Desperate, we sailed south, then sailed some more. The food stores ran low and harsh rationing commenced. We still did not find a passage. Many of the men were angry. I, too, was frustrated, but I kept my feelings to myself. We spent the winter in a temporary settlement called Puerto San Julián. While we were there, mutiny broke out. Our leader, Magellan, took quick action and the mutineers were killed.

This was not our only hardship. We lost another ship in a storm. It was sent to scout ahead but wrecked. All souls are alive, thankfully.

Now we wait and regroup. The men found briny water deep inland, and Magellan believes this must be the passage to the Spice Islands. Only God knows.

-Aban

Vasco da
GamaView of
Spices Island

Magellan

Connections

The Long Way Around

Early European explorers to the Americas faced risky conditions. They were also hindered by a lack of exact information. So why did so many people sail west? Kings and queens of Europe were looking for gold. More importantly, they wanted a new route to Asia. India and other Asian territories supplied exotic spices. Merchants had to sail all the way around the southern tip of Africa to reach these goods.

Even though they were looking for a shorter route, Magellan's path turned out to be much longer than sailing east around Africa. At the time, no one knew this would be the case. When an explorer named Amerigo Vespucci sailed to

South America, he thought it was a different continent from Asia. He was right! No one at that time knew how big South America was or how close it was to Asia. Everyone wanted a faster route to Asia, though. Explorers did not have the internet or even accurate maps. They had to travel and use the stars to guide them and hope they would reach their goal. They faced many challenges, which were talked about in the ship's log. These included mutinies, lack of food and delays. Many, including an entire ship in Magellan's own party, quit and went home. In the end, he and his crew reached the Spice Islands. However,

he died there. It took the crew much longer than they had planned to complete the trip.





Mar Pacifico

This week in Ms. Johnson's class, Natalia and Steven are learning about early explorers.

"You see these lines here," Natalia unrolled a map in front of Steven. She traced a dotted line with her finger. "This is the route Christopher Columbus took on his first journey to the Americas. He had three ships: the Niña, the Pinta and the Santa María. He originally thought he landed in India. He was actually bouncing around the Caribbean islands looking for gold, pearls and spices. He didn't find much, however. He did start a settlement on present-day Haiti and the Dominican Republic. The settlement kept failing from bad leadership. He never did bring back much material wealth to Europe. He did provide a lot of knowledge, however. On one journey, he passed the mouth of the Orinoco River. He decided that such a large amount of fresh water must be coming from a land 'of continental proportions.'" "Yeah I remember," Steven said. "We learned about it in class!"

"These lines here show Amerigo Vespucci's trips to South America. He landed in present-day Brazil on his third and most successful voyage. Christopher Columbus's belief that North America was a continent gave Vespucci the idea that South America was also its own continent. That's why he called it the New World."

"It's funny they named both North and South America after him when he only went to South America!" Steven said.

Natalia laughed. "Yeah, I know. His discoveries about South America were vital in helping Ferdinand Magellan find a route west to Asia."

"While all of this was going on, Hernán Cortés was conquering the Aztec people in Mexico," Steven added.

"Hernando De Soto explored Florida and eastern parts of North America as well," Natalia reminded Steven. "He even explored parts of Tennessee and crossed the Mississippi!"

"I think I would rather be exploring inland than stuck on a boat like Magellan," Steven decided.

Natalia rifled through the stack of maps and paper.

"Speaking of Magellan," she said and pulled out a piece of paper triumphantly, "look! This is a picture of the actual sextant he used." "Wow!" said Steven, "that's so cool! I can almost smell the ocean."

The two friends closed their eyes and took a deep breath. Then coughed and sputtered as a wave washed over them. They tumbled onto a hard wooden deck. Thunk! Thump!

"Where are we?" Steven murmured, rubbing his head.

"Shh!" Natalia hissed. "Look!"

Around them, several grim-faced men stood looking out into a cold and treacherous landscape. Large rocks jutted out from the water forming a narrow passage. The ship rocked and jerked as it squeezed through the last perilous part of the pass.

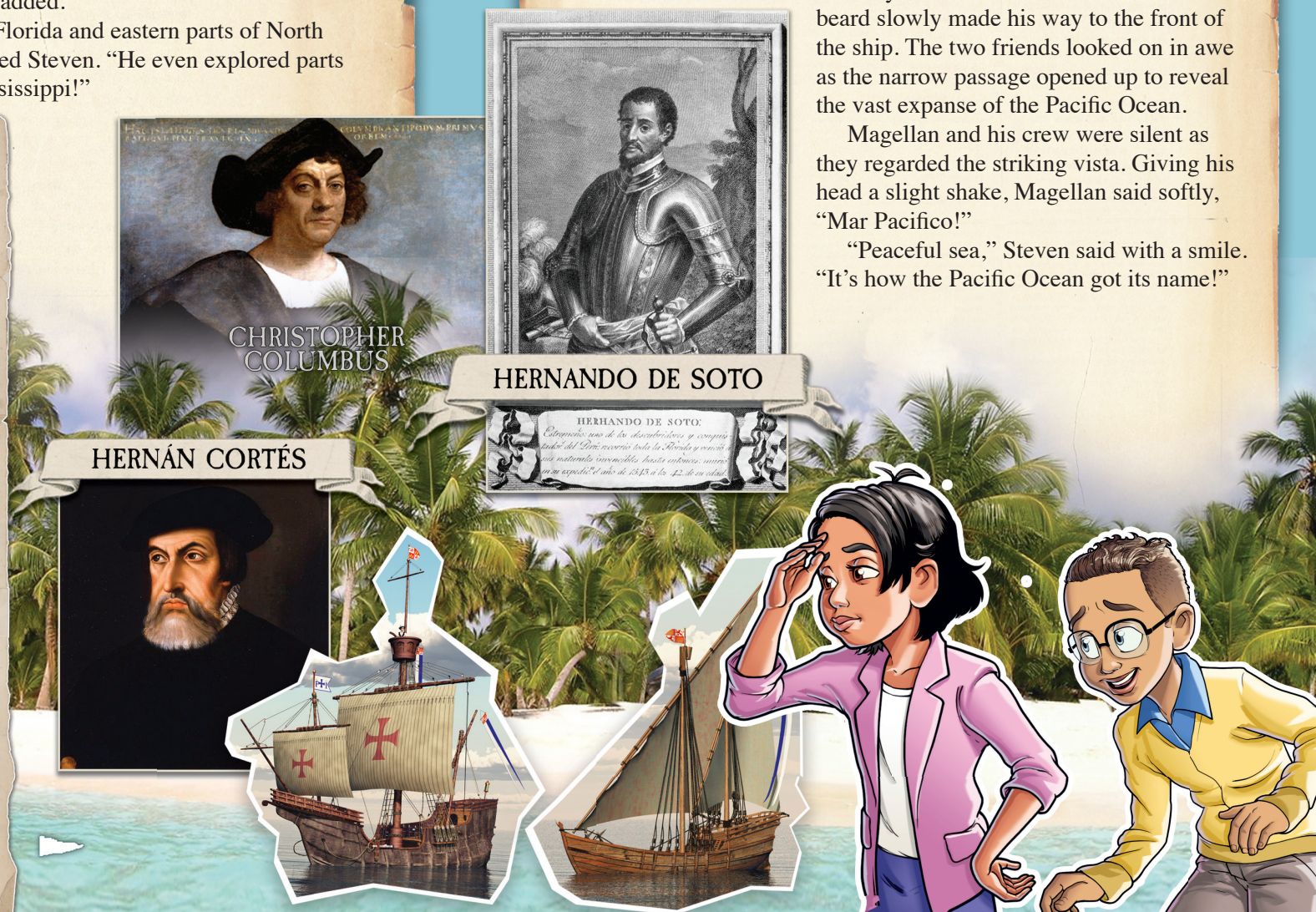
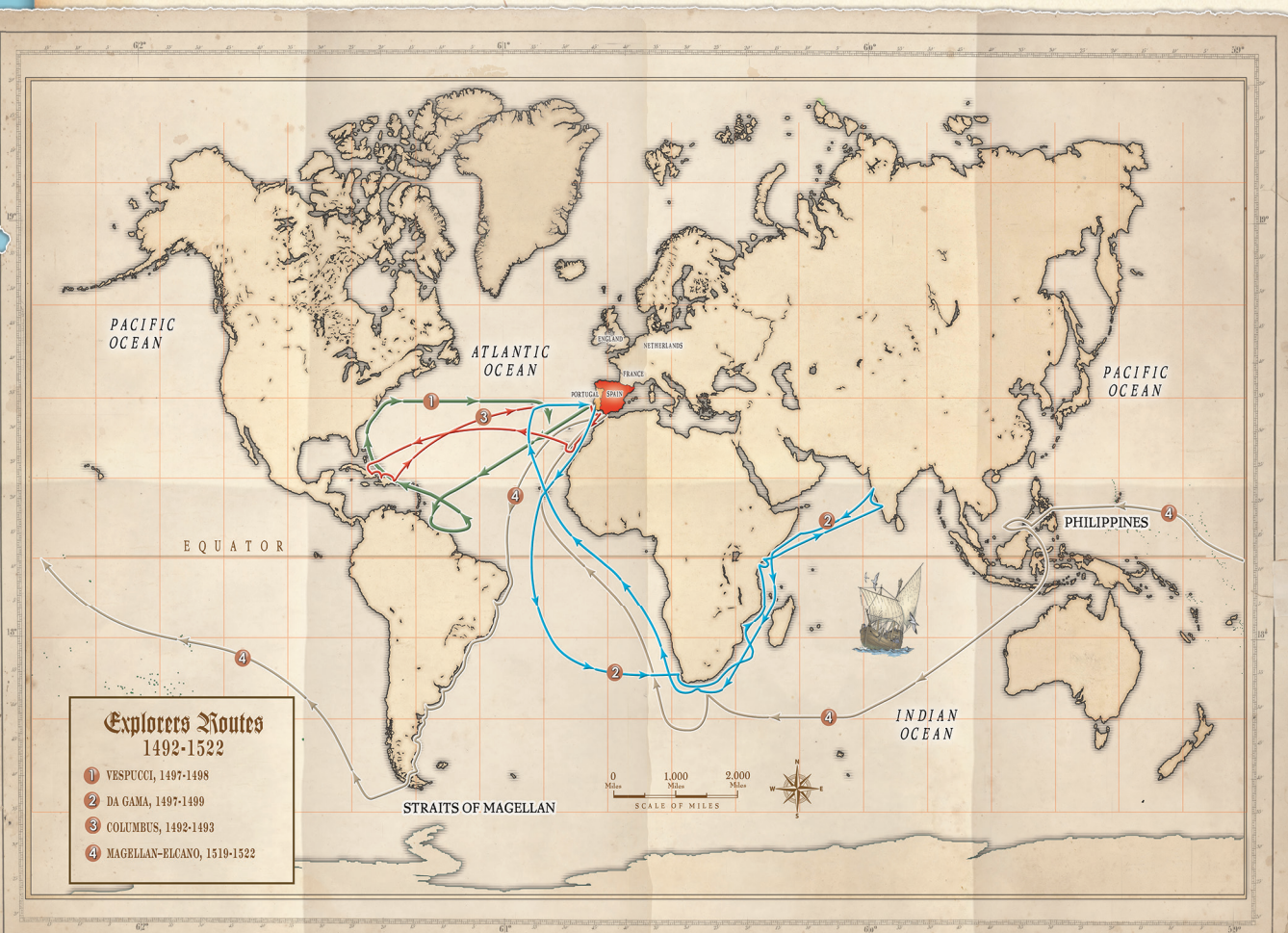
"We're in the Straits of Magellan!" Natalia whispered. "This is Magellan's ship!"

"Look!" Steven whispered back. "That's him!"

They watched as a short man with a full beard slowly made his way to the front of the ship. The two friends looked on in awe as the narrow passage opened up to reveal the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean.

Magellan and his crew were silent as they regarded the striking vista. Giving his head a slight shake, Magellan said softly, "Mar Pacifico!"

"Peaceful sea," Steven said with a smile. "It's how the Pacific Ocean got its name!"



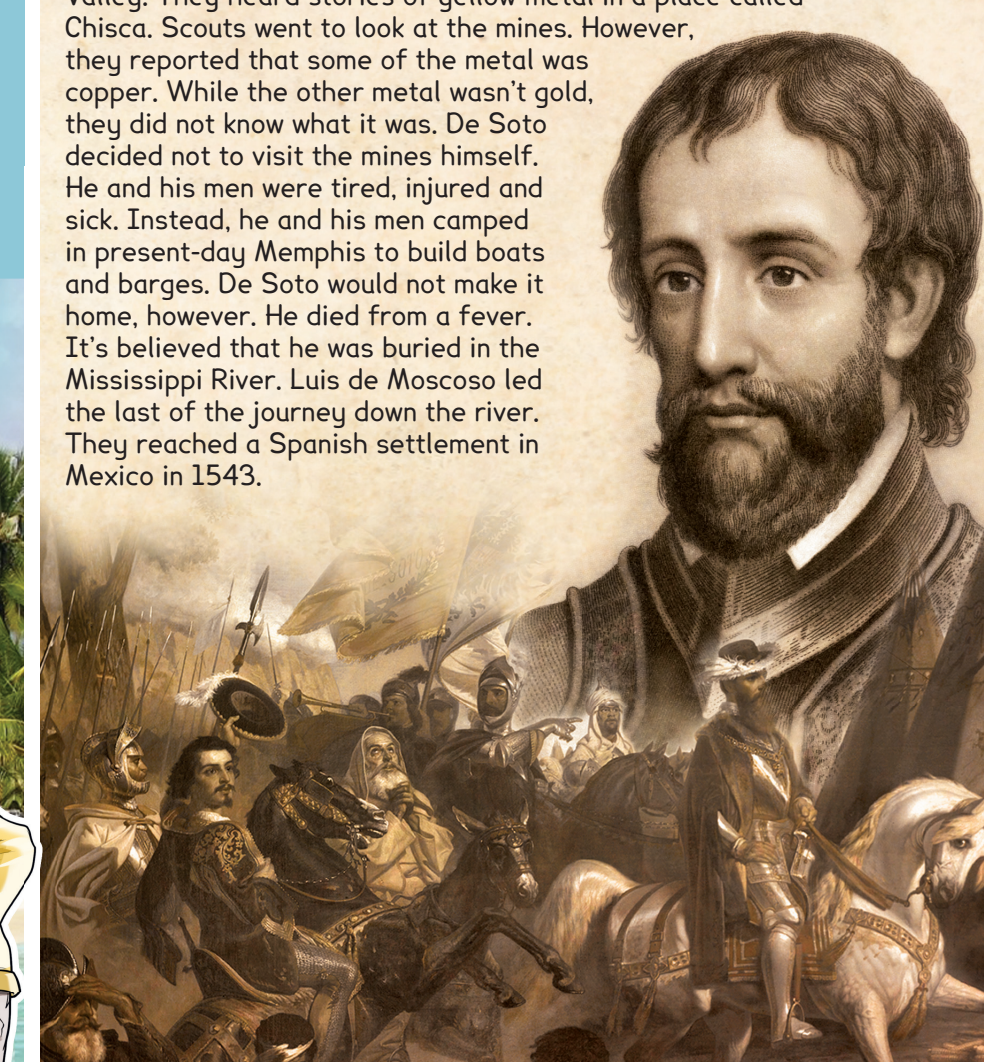
Discovering the other 'Yellow Metal' in Tennessee

We've heard a lot about early explorers. Did you know that some of them even made their way into Tennessee? Hernando de Soto began his journey inland in Florida in 1539. They traveled through several states including Tennessee!

He and his men had a negative effect on the native peoples in the area. They devastated the American Indian population. Disease spread out of control. De Soto and his men attacked many tribes and enslaved a number of the American Indians.

For a while, historians did not believe Hernando de Soto made it very far inland. However, there are many Cherokee stories and survivor accounts from members of the expedition that support his journey. There's also archeological evidence. De Soto was looking for gold but did not find it. However, he may have found Zinc, another yellow metal. Zinc is found in present-day Knoxville.

De Soto met with several Cherokee tribes as he and his men marched along the Smoky Mountains into the Little Tennessee Valley. They heard stories of yellow metal in a place called Chisca. Scouts went to look at the mines. However, they reported that some of the metal was copper. While the other metal wasn't gold, they did not know what it was. De Soto decided not to visit the mines himself. He and his men were tired, injured and sick. Instead, he and his men camped in present-day Memphis to build boats and barges. De Soto would not make it home, however. He died from a fever. It's believed that he was buried in the Mississippi River. Luis de Moscoso led the last of the journey down the river. They reached a Spanish settlement in Mexico in 1543.



Hard Times At Sea

Last time we saw Ferdinand Magellan, he was on his ship, the Victoria. He and his crew sailed across the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans looking for an easier route to the Spice Islands. Today, we know them as the Maluku Islands. Back then, ships making long journeys often lacked a variety of foods. Magellan originally made sure his ships were stocked with many different kinds of food and plenty of fresh water. However, he did not realize how long the journey across the Pacific Ocean would be. His crew was forced to ration the food. The water also went bad. Crew members got scurvy. This is caused by a lack of Vitamin C, found in citrus. While crossing the Pacific, the crew ate spoiled biscuits and were reported to have also eaten sawdust. They also ate leather from the ship's rigging to survive. During the crossing, rat meat was a luxury! Yikes!



Around the World and Back Home Again

We know that it took much longer to cross the Pacific Ocean than Magellan and his crew had thought. Once they finally landed in the Philippines, he and his men made friendly relations with the local people. But how did they get back home again? Magellan never made it back home. He was killed while helping fight in a tribal dispute. The crew had to make their way back to Europe, but it was difficult. After their long journey, they were left with just one ship.

Officially, Magellan, a Portuguese-born explorer, was sailing for Spain, not Portugal. Therefore, his remaining crew was forbidden to stop at any Portuguese ports. This meant the men had another long and hungry journey ahead of them. They had to sail all the way around the southern tip of Africa. Their ship was filled with expensive spices, which they could not eat. Three years after starting the journey, the ship, Victoria, limped back to Spain. Only 18 of the original 270 crew members returned with it.



A Challenging Decision

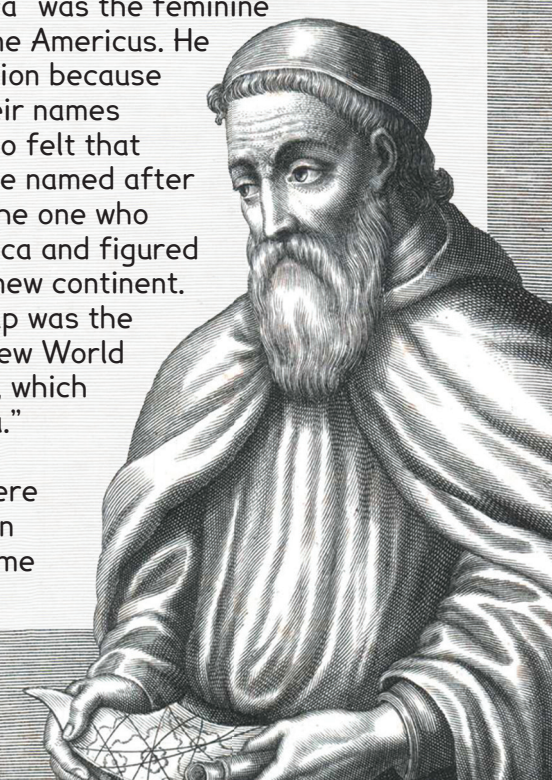
Imagine you had been faced with the challenges early explorers encountered. Would you have kept going or would you have gone home? Why did you make your decision?

Amerigo Vespucci

Have you ever wondered where America got its name from? You might be surprised to learn that America was named after an Italian merchant and explorer named Amerigo Vespucci.

The Latin name for Amerigo was "Americus." A German mapmaker named Martin Waldseemüller gave the New World the name of America on his world map in 1507. The word "America" was the feminine version of the Latin name Americus. He chose the feminine version because Europe and Asia got their names from women, too. He also felt that the New World should be named after Amerigo, since he was the one who discovered South America and figured out that it was a whole new continent.

Waldseemüller's map was the first map to show the New World as a separate continent, which was labeled as "America." When 1,000 copies of Waldseemüller's map were printed and sold, you can imagine how the new name started to stick!



Name _____

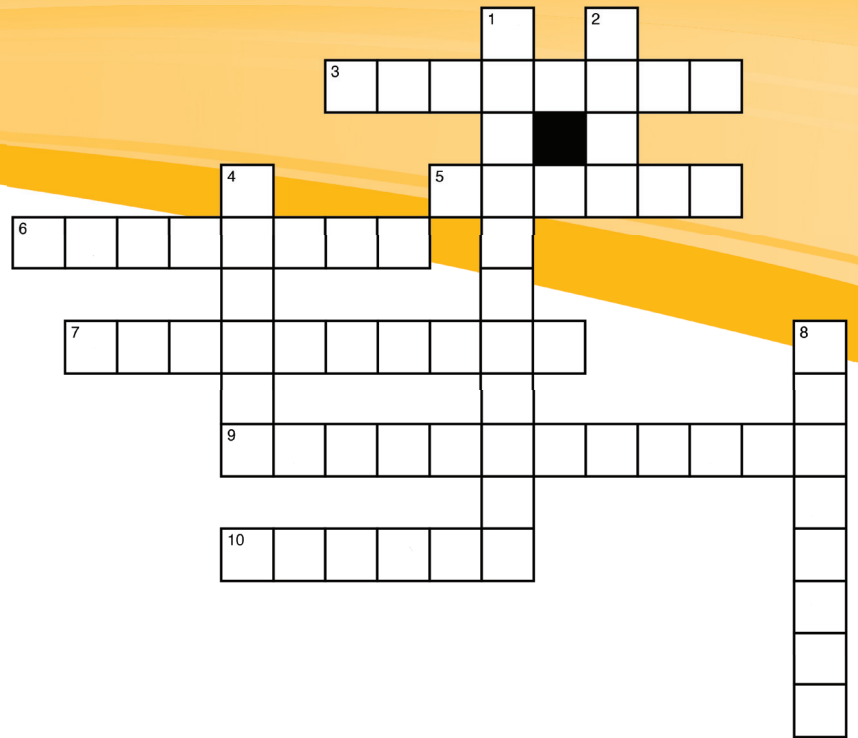
ACROSS

- 3. Scurvy is caused by a lack of _____.
- 5. What cargo did Magellan's only surviving ship return with?
- 6. What was the name of the only ship to return to Spain from Magellan's voyage?
- 7. Christopher Columbus' ships were the Niña, the Pinta and the _____.
- 9. Where was Magellan trying to go on his journey?

10. _____ explored inland North America.

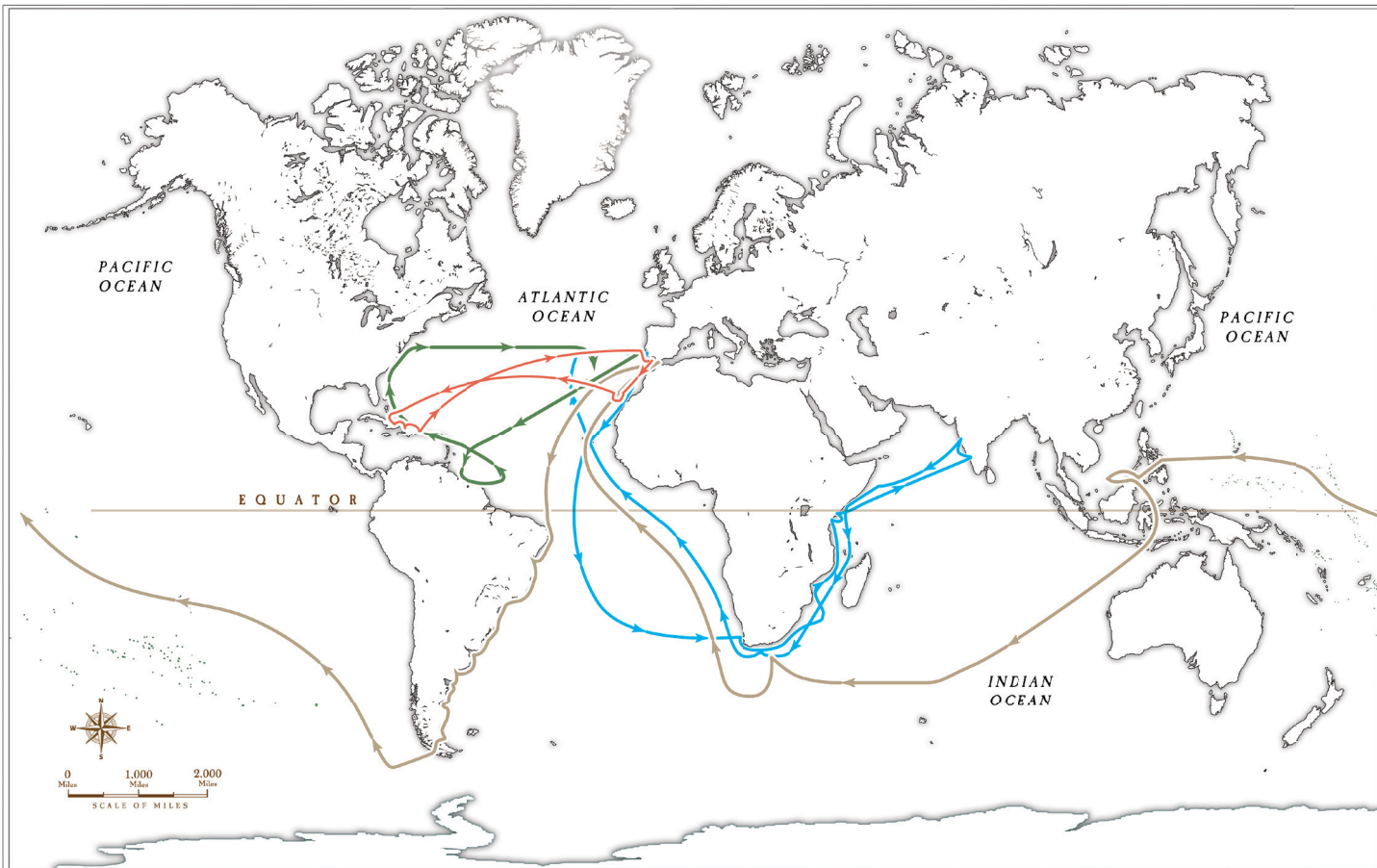
DOWN

- 1. Magellan said _____ when he saw the Pacific Ocean.
- 2. De Soto's exploration party probably found _____ in Tennessee, not gold.
- 4. Who was exploring Central America around the same time Magellan was sailing?
- 8. North and South America are named after Amerigo _____.



Early Explorers - Routes

The map shows routes taken by four early explorers. Using your Studies Weekly and the clues below, identify which route belongs to which explorer. Which explorer used which route? Write the correct color of the route that matches the clue below on the line following the clue.



- 1. 1492 Christopher Columbus sailed with the Niña, the Pinta and the Santa Maria from Spain to the Caribbean Islands. _____
- 2. 1498 Vasco da Gama sails from Europe around the southern tip of Africa to India. _____
- 3. 1499 Amerigo Vespucci sails from Spain to South America. _____
- 4. 1519 to 1522 Ferdinand Magellan leaves Spain to discover the Atlantic/Pacific Passage. _____

Let's Write

Imagine you sailed with Magellan on his voyage. How would you feel to return home after being away for three years? What is the first thing you would do once you got back? Write a journal entry exploring these and other thoughts on returning home.

Think & Review

- 1. Why did it take Magellan so long to sail around the world?
- 2. What difficulties did Magellan's crew face on their journey back to Europe?
- 3. What is different between Magellan's exploration and de Soto's exploration into inland North America? What things are similar?
- 4. What is the main idea of the article "Hard Times At Sea?"
- 5. Give one detail from "Hard Times At Sea" that supports your answer.