Fantastic Voyages

- Student Activity: Early Europeans Who Explored the Americas
- Word Study: Expedition – Discover the Roots of Explore and Adventure
- Map and Vocabulary: Fantastic Voyage
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Early Europeans Who Explored the Americas

Early explorers were motivated by many desires and the lure of adventure. Those listed below sailed to what became known as the Americas. Once most of these individuals secured patronage, they set sail seeking influence and power for European countries, wealth, new routes, opportunity for trade, scientific discoveries, the spread of the Christian religion, and personal acclaim.

Read about each of the individuals who explored the Americas. Discover the following:

- What is known about the life of the explorer?
- Who sponsored the exploration and under which country’s flag did the ships sail?
- What historic events motivated the sponsorship?
- What was the purpose of the initial voyage?
- What was actually discovered or found?
- In what ways did the expedition fulfill its goal?
- Do you consider the individual to be an explorer, adventurer, or conquistador?
- What was the impact of the voyage on the land and people discovered?
- What was the impact on the sponsoring country?

Above, from left: Christopher Columbus, Amerigo Vespucci, Vasco de Gama, Sebastian Cabot, Ferdinand Magellan, Sir Walter Raleigh, Henry Hudson
Expedition: Discover the Roots of Explore and Adventure

Oceanographers exploring some of the most remote deep-sea hot springs ever found have discovered what they say is a “riot of life” in a distinct biological zone that no one knew existed. They said the exploration, which occurred more than a mile down in the ocean just north of Antarctica, uncovered the most strikingly unique assemblage of life-forms found in decades, including thousands upon thousands of a species of crab never seen before, as well as new barnacle, anemone, snail and starfish species.

— “Far below, new species emerge”
January 4, 2010

Who are these explorers? They are not adventurers seeking danger and risk. Although full of surprises and the unexpected, their deep-sea exploration is not a game of chance. The geologists, deep-sea biologists and geo-chemists bring their expertise and knowledge into the preparation, observation and detection.

They are involved in an expedition. In the early 15th century, an expedition was a military campaign, based on the Middle French word expédition. Those who were on an expedition were on a journey with a purpose.

The adventurer is drawn to activities that have an edge of peril. The Old French root from the 11th century aventure conveyed the ideas of an accident, chance and event. The Latin root adventura (res) means “(a thing) about to happen,” which comes from adventurus, the future participle of advenire. The early word meant “reach” or “to arrive at,” from ad- “to” + venire “to come.” The doing is all important to the adventurer.

The explorer, first used in the 1580s, is there “to investigate or examine.” This term is derived from the Latin word explorare, meaning to “investigate, search out, examine and explore.” Can’t you hear a hunter’s loud cry (from plorare) when he had achieved his goal? Another etymological image of the explorer might be found in pluere, meaning “to flow.” Explorers in the 1600s literally flowed over land and sea to go to a country or place in quest of discoveries.

What a great word to describe what our early and modern explorers do — discover. The Latin prefix dis-means “opposite of.” Add it to the root cooperire, meaning “to cover up.” So explorers are doing the opposite of hiding — they are revealing what was hidden or unknown. They are obtaining knowledge and insight.
Fantastic Voyage

“This is such a mammoth undertaking, and to do it without stopping — alone — is mind boggling. It’s almost teetering on the edge of blood-insanity, frankly.”

Herb McCormick, veteran sailor on Matt Rutherford’s journey around the Americas.
We Explore

Name explorers who challenged themselves. They overcame physical boundaries, thought of new methods and discovered new species. They explored oceans, seas and outer space.

Who Explores

What We Explore

Where We Explore

When We Explore

How We Explore

Why We Explore
Explore Careers

Bachelor and post-graduate degree majors from an almost infinite diversity of disciplines ranging from the life, physical, and social sciences to communications, business and art will find opportunities involved in and contributing to science-focused expeditions. These individuals work with scientists to accomplish project goals and document findings.

Select an area of interest below. Visit modern explorations through Polar Trec: Teachers and Researchers Exploring and Collaborating (PolarTREC.com) or Ocean Explorer (http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/explorations/welcome.html) to discover how you can gain valuable work experience while still enrolled in school. The federal government has a site where you can explore opportunities for internships from the high school level through graduate school and beyond. Select USAJOBS: Working for America (http://www.usajobs.gov/). Choose “Students and Recent Graduates.” It will take you to a page called Pathways. There you can scroll down to find a paid Internship Program for students as well as Volunteer Service opportunities through which you can gain valuable experience as well as demonstrate your reliability, ability to work with a team, and passion.

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American Sea Writing

The listed works are just a sampling of the literature written about the sea. Many earlier works and authors from previous seafaring countries could be added to one’s reading experience. These American authors represent different time periods, genre, attitudes and emotions.

Owen Chase  
*Narrative of the Most Extraordinary and Distressing Shipwreck of the Whale-Ship Essex, of Nantucket* (1821)

Oliver Wendell Holmes  
“Old Ironsides” (September 16, 1830, first published in the *Boston Daily Advertiser*)

Edgar Allan Poe  
“MS. Found in a Bottle” (1833)

Nathaniel Hawthorne  
“Foot-prints on the Sea-shore” (1839, later collected in *Twice-Told Tales*)

Richard Henry Dana, Jr.  
*Two Years Before the Mast* (1840)

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow  
“The Wreck of the Hesperus” (1841)

Henry David Thoreau  
“Cape Cod” (1865)

Herman Melville  
*Typee* (1846), *Omoo* (1847), *Mardi* (1849), *Moby-Dick* (1851), “Billy Budd” (1924, posthumous)

Charles Warren Stoddard  
*South Sea Idyls* (1874)

Walt Whitman  
“As I Ebb’d with the Ocean of Life” (1860), “The World below the Brine,” “A Winter Day on the Sea-Beach” (1882, prose) “Sea- Shore Fancies” (reflection)

Samuel Dana Greene  
“In the Monitor’s Turret,” article written for *The Century Magazine* (1884), by the executive officer of the *Monitor*

Mark Twain  
*About All Kinds of Ships* (1893)

Stephen Crane  
“The Open Boat” (1897)

Jack London  
“A Royal Sport” (1911, from *The Cruise of the Snark*)

Marianne Moore  
“The Fish” (1918)

Langston Hughes  
*The Weary Blues* (1926), *The Big Sea* (1949)

James Agee  
“Havana Cruise” (June 1937, *Fortune* magazine)
John Steinbeck  
Sea of Cortez (1941)

Edward V. Rickenbacker  
Seven Came Through (1943)

Robert Lowell  
“The Quaker Graveyard in Nantucket” (1946)

Elizabeth Bishop  
“At the Fishhouse” (1947, New Yorker magazine)

Ernest Hemingway  
“The Old Man and the Sea” (1952), “After the Storm” (1933)

E. B. White  
“The Sea and the Wind That Blows” (1963)

Rachel Carson  
The Sea Around Us (1951), The Edge of the Sea (1956)

Peter Matthiessen  

Stephen J. Pyne  
The Ice: A Journey to Antarctica (1986)

John McPhee  
Looking for a Ship (1990)