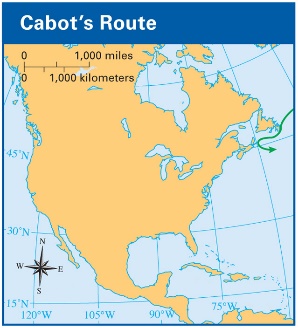
**2. John Cabot**

The opportunity for new trade interested many explorers in addition to Columbus. Giovanni Caboto, later called John Cabot, was a young merchant, or shopkeeper, in Venice, Italy. He was also a skilled navigator who wanted to explore the world. He had seen the spices and silks that traders brought from Asia and wanted to take part in this trade. Like Columbus, he thought the best way to get to Asia was to sail west.

In 1496, King Henry VII gave Cabot permission to explore any “unknown land.” Cabot set out to find a faster and safer route to the East Indies. When he left Bristol, England in May 1497, Cabot had only one small ship and 18 men. They traveled around the coast of Ireland and then west across the Atlantic. They sailed north of Columbus’s route to avoid land claimed by Spain.

On June 24, Cabot reached the eastern coast of present-day Canada. He claimed the land for England. He saw thick green forests and plenty of fish but no rich Asian cities. Cabot sailed back to England and told the king that he had reached Asia and would soon find its wealth.

The following year, Cabot sailed back to North America. On this try, he may have explored as far south as Chesapeake Bay, near present-day Maryland. Historians do not know what happened to Cabot. Some say he was killed in a shipwreck, and others say he returned to England and died soon after arriving.

Like Columbus, Cabot never knew that he had reached a continent unknown to Europeans. But his voyage helped open the way for English settlers to North America.

Personal Background – merchant

Sponsor – England

Motives – to find a route to Asia

Dates – 1497-1498

Route of Exploration – eastern coast of present-day Canada; as far south as Chesapeake Bay, near present-day Maryland

Impact – claimed lands for a European nation (England); provided new information for maps

HOT – Compare the route of John Cabot to the route of Christopher Columbus. Why did Cabot choose not to follow Columbus’s route of exploration? - They traveled around the coast of Ireland and then west across the Atlantic. They sailed north of Columbus’s route to avoid land claimed by Spain.

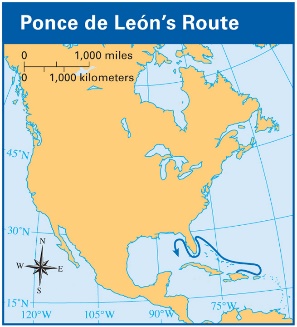
**3. Juan Ponce de León**

When Columbus made a second voyage to the Americas in 1493, many believe a young soldier named Juan Ponce de León (wahn pahnss duh lee-OHN) went with him. Once Ponce de León arrived in the New World, he settled on a Caribbean island named Hispaniola (today divided into the countries of Haiti and the Dominican Republic). There he became a military captain under the governor.

In 1506, Ponce de León explored an island named Borinquen (soon to be renamed Puerto Rico). There he heard many stories about gold. Hoping to discover this gold, Ponce de León led soldiers to conquer the island. He and his men killed many native people. Later, Spain’s King Ferdinand made him governor of the island.

Ponce de León soon heard of a magic fountain on another island. Stories told of a “fountain of youth” whose waters were said to make people young again. Ponce de León asked permission to search for this island. He wanted the glory of finding such a wonderful location.

In 1513, Ponce de León set sail. After a month, he reached a coast with palm trees, sweetsmelling flowers, and beautiful birds. He landed on the Catholic feast day called Easter of Flowers, or Pascua Florida in Spanish. Ponce de León named the land Florida and claimed it for Spain. He sailed up and down the coast but did not find the fountain of youth, so he went back to Puerto Rico.

In 1521, he returned to Florida to start a settlement with 200 men. The American Indians there resented the invasion. They attacked, and an arrow struck Ponce de León. Wounded, he sailed to Cuba and soon died. He never knew that Florida was not an island but part of a vast continent.

Personal Background – solider

Sponsor – Spain

Motives – to find gold and silver

Dates – 1506-1521

Route of Exploration – Haiti, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Florida

Impact – claimed lands for a European nation (Spain), provided new information for maps, mistreated or killed American Indians, established a settlement

HOT – Draw a conclusion as to why the American Indians resented Juan Ponce de Leon’s Florida invasion. – The Europeans were stealing their land and killing many of their people.

**4. Hernán Cortés**

The Spanish heard stories of a rich Mexican empire ruled by the Aztecs, a powerful American Indian group. In 1519, Hernán Cortés (hehr-NAHN kohr-TEHZ), a Spanish nobleman living in Cuba, sailed to Mexico in search of adventure and wealth.

Cortés arrived at a time when the Aztecs expected one of their gods, Quetzalcoatl (kwet-zul-kuh-WAH-tul), to return. Stories say that the Aztec emperor, Montezuma II, thought Cortés might be this god and sent him gifts of gold. This made Cortés eager to conquer the Aztecs.

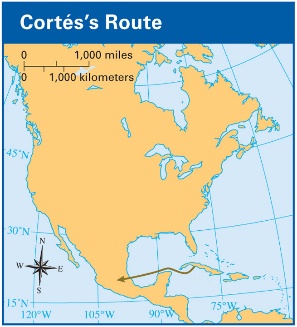
For months, the two men exchanged gifts and messages. Then Cortés and his men marched to the Aztec capital, which was on a series of islands in a lake where Mexico City is today. Many local American Indians joined them, hoping to overthrow the Aztec leaders. Montezuma welcomed Cortés, but after a week, Cortés took the emperor prisoner.

For six months, Cortés held Montezuma captive. Then Cortés took a short trip away from the Aztec capital. As he returned, the Aztecs attacked. Fierce warriors surrounded Cortés and his army. The Spanish fled. Before leaving, they stuffed their pockets with gold. Many soldiers were so weighed down by the treasure that they drowned as they crossed the canals that ran like roads through the city.

After their defeat, the Spanish rebuilt their army and surrounded the Aztec capital for three months. The Aztecs could not get supplies. Many of them had already been weakened or killed by smallpox, a **contagious disease** [contagious disease: Cortés marched to the Aztec capital. After a week, he took the Aztec emperor Montezuma II prisoner.] carried by Europeans. Contagious diseases are sicknesses that spread quickly. Finally, Cortés and his army attacked. Although the Aztecs put up a strong defense, they were defeated in 1521, and Cortés claimed their lands for Spain.

The Spanish now ruled Mexico. The Aztec Empire lay in ruins. An Aztec poet wrote a sad poem about his people:

*We are crushed to the ground; we lie in ruins.  
There is nothing but grief and suffering in Mexico and Tlatelolco, where once we saw beauty and valor.*

Personal Background – nobleman

Sponsor - Spain

Motives – to find gold and silver

Dates – 1519-1521

Route of Exploration – Mexico

Impact – claimed lands for a European nation (Spain), mistreated or killed American Indians, spread disease

HOT - Summarize the true story given in your section about European explorer Hernan Cortes and the Aztec emperor, Montezuma II.