

10

Voyages of conquest

Preparing for the session

SESSION AT A GLANCE

Recap

Group work
Voyages that changed the world

Information/ Discussion
Some win, some lose

Summing up
Calendar of the past

Distribution
Factsheet 5
Ships of discovery - then and now

Poem
Imagine

This session shows how the smaller and relatively poorer countries of Europe were able to increase their power and wealth, and establish their control over other lands.

The first activity is meant to give the class an idea of how European explorers of those times (about 500 years ago) went on voyages around the world in search of wealth. Familiarise yourself with this activity in advance, so you can help the groups in their work. There are four separate maps and cue cards for each group provided at the end of the session, which you have to photocopy on separate sheets. A map for teachers is also provided; make an A3 size photocopy of this map, which shows all four sea routes that the four groups have to plot. Please note the key given on the map and mark out the different routes in different colours. Then join the two ends of the map to form a cylinder.

The flipchart contains three stories to illustrate the ways in which Europeans established their power in different parts of the world. Do read the stories in advance, so that you can make the flipchart interesting; also remember to point out the relevant regions on the world map.

You will have to make photocopies of the poem provided at the end of the session, in advance.

Do remember to note down the key ideas of this session on a card in advance so that you can add it to the *Calendar of the past* at the end of the session.

Main ideas

- About 500 years ago, with better knowledge and inventions, Europeans began to travel to other parts of the world in search of new lands and wealth.
- Through the use of new weapons, through plunder and deceit, and through the slave trade, Europe became rich and powerful.

- While the Europeans prospered, many of the earlier civilisations of the Americas, Africa and Asia became impoverished or were wiped out during this period.

To conduct the session you will need

- Set of four cue cards (one card per group)
- A3 size photocopy of the map of the world for teachers with different sea routes marked on it
- Map of the world
- Flipchart : *Some win, some lose*
- *Calendar of the past*
- Copies of Factsheet 5 (one copy per child)
- Copies of the poem (one copy per child)



Conducting the session

Recap

Get the class to recall the main ideas of the previous session, and the changes that took place in Europe during the Renaissance. Spend a few minutes on this, then sum up by making the following points.

You saw in the last session that many changes took place in Europe about 500 to 600 years ago. The Renaissance brought about a change in the way people thought about the world around them. New inventions like the printing press, the compass and gunpowder also brought about many changes.

Better means of navigation, better ships and better weapons meant that Europeans could sail further in search of wealth, resources and new lands to settle in. These changes in Europe also affected people in other parts of the world. In this session, we will see how this happened.

Activity 1

Group work

Voyages that changed the world

Divide the class into four groups. Give each group a different map and cue card. Each card has some clues to trace a voyage; there are also some questions that the group has to answer.



Explain the activity in the following way.

About 500 years ago, many Europeans set out to explore the oceans. Building stronger ships, capable of longer voyages, they went in search of trade, newer lands and new treasures. They sailed to North and South America, Africa and India. Some of them even sailed around the world.

This activity will help you to understand how famous sailors of those days charted new routes, what adventures and difficulties they encountered and where they went. You will trace the routes of those voyages on your maps.

You may need to help the groups trace the voyages on the maps given to them. The routes are given on the teachers' map for your reference.

In some cases, children will have to put both ends of the maps together in order to trace the route. It would be a good idea to demonstrate this when you begin the activity. Since the maps children usually see are flat, they may tend to forget the fact that the earth is round so this activity is a good reminder. It will also help the class to understand geographical concepts better.



Allow about 15 minutes for the activity. Meanwhile, display the enlarged photocopy of the teacher's map of the world on which all four voyages have been marked. If you have not coloured the routes and joined the ends of the map to form a cylinder, you could do so while the class is engaged in the group activity.

Call the groups one by one, to present their work to the rest of the class. As each voyage is presented, help the class to follow it on the map you have displayed by moving it around.

Introduce the activity as follows.

You have just traced the routes followed by some of the early explorers. Earlier you had visited some of these places with Kabir, Saeeda and Nanaji and seen what life was like, before these explorers went there. (You could ask the class if they remember the tribes of North America, the Incas or the Ming period in China.) You had also learnt about some early voyages such as those of the Vikings, and European and Arab traders. You saw that with new inventions and better sailing techniques, more people travelled great distances in search of wealth. You are now going to hear three stories that will give you an idea of how the Europeans made their fortunes and what happened to the people who lived in the lands they conquered.

Put up the map of the world. While using the flipchart, point to the places referred to, on the map. The flipchart contains three stories. Pause at the end of each story to discuss it with the class.

Activity 2 Information/ Discussion

*Some win,
some lose*

Story 1 : The Richest Ransom in History !

Frame 1

The Supreme Inca Emperor, Son of the Sun, Atahualpa ruled over a magnificent empire in South America. Victorious from a recent battle, Atahualpa was moving with his large army to construct a new capital for his empire. He knew that there were some foreigners in his kingdom, but his spies had informed him that there was nothing to worry about, since they were only a small group of sickly people. He was resting one evening in his camp in the southern part of his kingdom, far away from his capital, when some of these men arrived on animals he had never seen before. **(Ask the class if they can guess what animals these were.)** They were horses. He received these men with warmth – they were guests after all ! He invited them to stay the night in town, and planned to meet their leader the next day.



These men were Spaniards. There were about 180 of them, including farmers, artisans, soldiers, sailors, tailors, salesmen and priests, led by a man called Francisco Pizarro. They had travelled a long way to this land whose wealth they had heard about. They had come to loot and plunder this vast empire.

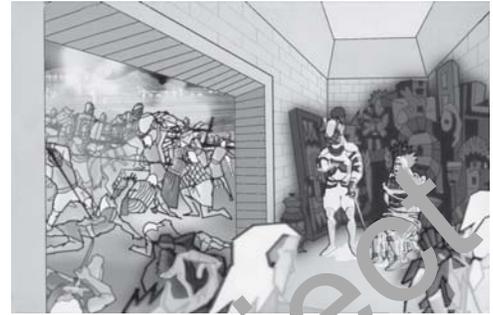
The next morning, the procession of Atahualpa entered the town square. Eighty lords carried him on a palanquin (*palkhi*). 80,000 Inca soldiers followed them, dressed and ready to meet the guests. They wore discs of gold and silver like crowns on their heads, but they carried no weapons. Some of the emperor's soldiers waited outside the town square.

But where were the guests ? The Spaniards were hiding in the nearby buildings. They had already placed their guns and cannons there during the night.

The emperor saw two men approach him. They had a brief conversation with him. Neither could understand the other. Then, suddenly, the Spaniard named Pizarro ordered his men to open fire.

Frame 2

The Inca soldiers were taken by surprise. They had never seen or heard a gun before. They were packed in the square, unarmed, here for a celebration to welcome guests. They fell over each other, dying of suffocation and sliced by the steel swords of the Spaniards. They tried to protect their king, and even when their hands were cut off, they supported the palanquin with their shoulders. But they kept dying. With horses, guns and swords the 180 foreigners killed more than 7000 Inca men in two hours; many more had their hands cut off. The Spaniards did not kill the king, but they kidnapped him.



The Inca king recognised the greed of these foreigners and therefore offered them a room full of gold and two huts filled with silver in exchange for his freedom. It took eight months for this treasure to be transported from his capital to the place where he was imprisoned. During these months, he ordered his men to allow the Spaniards to continue looting the temples and towns.

The Spaniards obtained the treasure, but did not keep their promise. They strangled the Supreme Emperor of the Incas after getting his wealth. More Spaniards came to this land to continue looting. The Incas fought back fiercely, but they were no match for the Spaniards. The Incas had battleaxes of stone, sticks, slings and wooden darts. For protection they had wooden helmets. The Spaniards had steel daggers and swords, crossbows and guns. But most important, they had horses. They plundered and killed thousands; they destroyed beautiful towns and finally conquered the capital of this grand empire to establish their own rule.

Stop here and ask the class the following questions.

- Do you think this is a true story ?
- How was it possible for 180 men to defeat thousands of soldiers ?
- What is your opinion about what the Spaniards did ?

After listening to their answers continue with the next story.

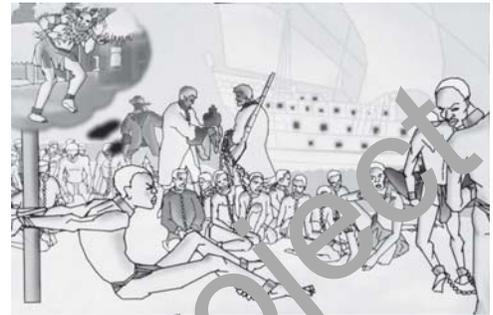
Story 2 : Living Treasure

Frame 3

Now let us see how Europeans increased their wealth in Africa.

The ship was loaded and ready to sail. She was a fine, well-built ship, with her polished deck and white sails fluttering in the wind.

She was ready to set sail across the Atlantic Ocean, from the west coast of Africa onward to America.



But every now and then the wind that blew towards the port carried a stench, a smell of human waste, disease and death. What was this beautiful ship taking away? She had 1400 African people on board though she was built to carry only 800. This cargo was too precious to leave behind.

These Africans had been bought by traders as slaves - they would be taken to America to work on plantations and in mines; they would be given only enough to keep them alive. If they had children, these children would be slaves as well. In this way many generations of Africans were born, lived their lives and died as slaves.

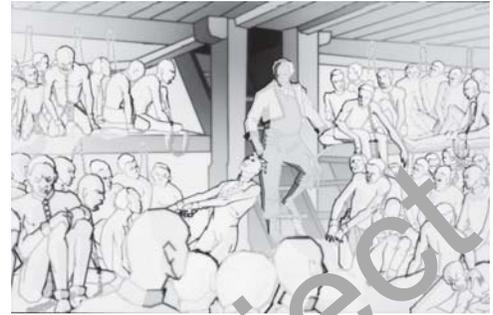
Owusu Mensa was on this ship. He was a strong and fierce warrior from Denkyira, not far from the coast. He had fought battles with enemy tribes ever since he was a child, but in the last fight, he was captured. The enemy chief did not kill him. He sold him to a white man. Owusu was 16 years old.

He had walked to the coast in a group of 20 or 30 men each tied to the other by a leather collar around his neck. On their heads they carried elephant tusks for their owners. Owusu had no idea where he was being taken. He would never see his parents or sisters and brothers again.

On the coast, they waited in a prison for the ship to arrive. She came after three weeks - carrying textiles, guns, alcohol, beads, mirrors and utensils. These were traded for slaves, gold and ivory. Owusu was sold to another white man and taken aboard the ship.

Frame 4

It would take about two months to cross the Atlantic Ocean. For this journey, the slaves were arranged neatly on wooden platforms like books on a shelf.



There were as many shelves as could fit, one above the other. There was no place in these neat rows for a person to stand up, or even lie down straight. They could barely turn and often they could hardly breathe. At the start of this journey, there was a battle among the slaves for air and Owusu saw 17 men being choked to death. Many more would die before the journey was over.

In fact, the Portuguese called their slave ships *tumbeiros*, meaning coffins, because they lost more than 30 per cent of the human cargo, that is, more than 400 slaves, during each voyage! The ships carried so many slaves that even though some of them died, the traders would still make profits. For over 300 years, African men, women and children were bought in Africa by European traders and sold in other parts of the world. During this time, European traders carried over 1.2 crore slaves to the Americas in this manner. At that time the entire population of North America was one crore.

Owusu crossed the ocean alive and reached Brazil where he worked on a cotton plantation. He was bent now, this proud warrior who had once loved to sing. He barely spoke for the next twenty-five years. He died like that - quiet, bent and tired. For over 200 years, his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren continued to be owned by the same family who had bought Owusu Mensa.

Stop here and ask the class the following questions.

- Do you think this is a true story ?
- Why do you think Africans were treated so badly ?
- Is it right to treat anyone so inhumanly because of their colour ?

After listening to their answers continue with the next story.

Story 3 : The Battle That Never Was

Frame 5

As you know, the Europeans came to India as well. This is a story of how some of them, the British, came as traders but slowly became rulers.



The battle of Plassey broke out on the morning of 23rd June 1757. The army of the Nawab of Bengal, Siraj-ud-daulah, led by his trusted Commander-in-Chief, Mir Jaffer, waited for the British army of Colonel Robert Clive. The Nawab's army was huge. They were here to protect their territory, Bengal, from the British. The British army, on the other hand, was very small; there was no chance of them winning.

But wait a minute ! Why was Mir Jaffer's army just standing there ? Most of the soldiers were not fighting at all ! They were waiting for a command from Mir Jaffer, which they never got.

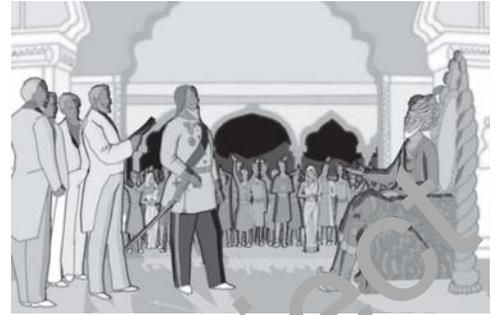
Only in one corner of the battlefield, a small band of soldiers, led by the fearless commander, Mir Madan, had been fighting the British. They were winning the battle, making an advance into the enemy's ranks. But just then, a stray bullet killed Mir Madan. Seeing this happen, the Nawab summoned Mir Jaffer for advice.

If the whole army had been fighting at this time, the British would have been defeated ! But Mir Jaffer suggested that the Nawab call back Mir Madan's fighting force. The nervous Nawab, trusting his commander completely, did so. The soldiers obediently left the battlefield, even though it was barely two hours since they had begun.

The rest of the Nawab's army, consisting of thousands of men, saw this and thought that they had lost the battle. Feeling demoralised, they fled the battlefield. When the Nawab heard that all his troops had deserted him, he became afraid, not only of the British, but also of the enemy within his army - the enemy that had stopped his men from fighting. He joined the fleeing soldiers and returned to his palace in the capital of Murshidabad.

Frame 6

The trusted Commander-in-Chief, Mir Jaffer, entered the capital two days later in a victory procession with the British by his side. Mir Jaffer was declared the ruler of Bengal by Colonel Clive. Nawab Siraj-ud-daulah tried to escape but was caught, brought to the capital and murdered.



This battle, the Battle of Plassey, turned out to be no battle at all but its result was more important than many other bigger wars. It made it possible for the British to establish their rule in Bengal and eventually in the whole of India.

The British had planned this deceit carefully. They had taken advantage of the weaknesses and greed of some people to grab their land. Their puppet, having deceived his king and his people, was now on the throne of Bengal. Mir Jaffer gave Robert Clive and his friends huge sums of money, land and free trading rights across Bengal in return for their help in securing the throne.

Bengal was a turning point for the British. Once they established complete trading control here, they turned their attention to the rest of the country. Many small kingdoms were at war with each other, and the British took advantage of this situation. They supported some of these kingdoms, and in return for their protection, they demanded money, trading rights and other privileges. Gradually, the British East India Company that had earlier come only to trade began to rule the whole of India.

Stop and ask the class what would have happened if Mir Jaffer had not agreed to help the British. Let them respond, then initiate a discussion on all three stories with the help of the following questions.

- What do you think of these stories ?
- Did you find anything common in them ?
- What were the different ways by which Europeans acquired control of other countries ? (*Loot and plunder, the slave trade, and deceit.*)

Sum up the activity by making the following points.

For many thousands of years, countries around the world had traded with each other. Their cultures had flourished, and while there had been many wars and many people had been killed, no one was all-powerful. But this changed after the Renaissance.

During the Renaissance, new inventions gave Europe a great advantage over other lands. In this session, we have seen how through various strategies, such as loot and plunder, enslaving people and deceiving them, Europeans gained control over different parts of the world. Within the next hundred years, other developments in Europe made them even more powerful and gave them even more control over the rest of the world.

Summing up
Calendar of the past

Display the *Calendar of the past* and add to it the card with some of the key ideas of this session.

About 500 years ago: New inventions and new sailing techniques help Europeans; European sailors on voyages around the world; Conquest of other countries through plunder, slave trade and deceit; Europe grows powerful.

About 500 years ago
New inventions and sailing techniques help
European sailors go on voyages around the world;
Conquest of other countries through plunder,
slave trade and deceit;
Europe grows powerful.

Distribution
Factsheet 5

Ships of discovery - then and now

Poem
Imagine

Distribute copies of Factsheet 5 and the poem. Ask the children to read them at home and file them in their personal folders.