

Knowledge Organiser: Elizabethan England, c1568-1603

(10) English sailors and voyages

Key terms	
Circumnavigate	To travel all the way around something, for example, the world.
Privateer	A ship's captain with royal permission to attack foreign ships.
Lateen	A triangular sail that was invented in the sixteenth century; it allowed ships to move much more quickly.
Astrolabe	A navigation tool that allowed for much more accuracy at sea.
Colony	Land controlled by another country.

Key figures	
Francis Drake (c1540-96)	He became an English hero although the Spanish saw him as a pirate. He circumnavigated the globe, although he didn't set out to do so. When he returned he carried a huge amount of gold. In 1588, he led the successful defeat of the Spanish Armada.
John Hawkins (1532-95)	He was a key figure in Elizabeth's court and was responsible for building up the Royal Navy. He played a major role in defeating the Spanish Armada. He was also a successful privateer. From 1562, he became involved in the African slave trade.
Sir Walter Raleigh (1552-1618)	He was very loyal to Elizabeth and spent years in Ireland fighting Catholic rebels. He embarked on voyages to South America in search of the legendary city of gold: El Dorado. He funded an attempt to establish a colony in North America.

Exam questions:

1. Explain what was important about voyages of discovery in the reign of Elizabeth I. (8 marks)
2. Write an account of Francis Drake's achievements during his circumnavigation. (8 marks)

What was the impact of voyages?	
Wealth	<p>Exploration allowed England to gain wealth in several ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raiding Spanish ships and ports allowed riches to be stolen and brought back to England. • Trading systems were established from which England's wealth grew. For example, trade with the East in spices and the East India Company was established in 1600 to oversee trade in India and the Far East. • Trade in African slaves brought significant wealth to individuals and England as a whole.
Power	Naval power had been growing under Elizabeth and was able to hold its own in any sea battle. Improved weapons and tactics, and the skilled command of men like Francis Drake, played a key role. English victory over the Spanish Armada showed the dominant position of England.
Territory	England was not the first country to build colonies in newly discovered lands, and there were several failed attempts. But perseverance led to increasing numbers of colonies, particularly in North America, being established in the name of Elizabeth and her successors.
Slave trade	Hawkins was responsible for building up the navy and in 1564, he kidnapped several hundred West Africans and sold them in South America. This was not the first example of the European slave trade, but it was the first time the process had been carried out by an Englishman.



Francis Drake



John Hawkins



Sir Walter Raleigh

Key questions
<p><u>Why is the Elizabethan period referred to as the 'age of discovery'?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Elizabethan period was a time of great discovery and exploration. • At the forefront of exploration was Francis Drake, who circumnavigated the world between 1577 and 1580. • The main reason for this increase in exploration was new technology. Ships built at this time were of higher quality, with new lateen sails making them faster and easier to steer. • Improved defences and weapons made sailing through hostile waters much safer and advances in navigation played a significant role. The astrolabe allowed sailors to judge how far north or south they were.
<p><u>How did voyages make England rich and powerful?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before Elizabeth's reign, the majority of trade was with European countries. • The English were keen to find direct routes to India and the Far East in order to raise their own profits. • Companies began to be established with the purpose of trading in particular areas. For example, the Muscovy Company was created in 1555 and given the monopoly of trade with the city of Moscow in Russia. • In 1582, the queen sent Ralph Fitch to India and he returned saying profitable trade was more possible. In 1600 the East India Company was established to oversee this trade. • England's involvement in the slave trade also grew. Demand grew for slaves to work the land in the Americas and produce materials to be returned to England.
<p><u>Raleigh's New World: what was this?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raleigh was given royal permission to explore the Americas—the New World—in 1584. He would be allowed to colonise any land that was not ruled by a Christian. • In return, he had to give the queen one fifth of all the gold and silver he found there. • He did not sail himself, but sent others to explore and establish colonies. • A colony was established in Roanoke but did not last. In 1587, a second was created but also failed.

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