Contents
Great Zimbabwe ..................................................................................................................2
European explorer Marco Polo and his travels .................................................................3
Marco Polo’s influence on European traders and explorers .............................................3
Reasons for European exploration ...................................................................................4
The European Renaissance ..............................................................................................4
Leonardo da Vinci (1452 – 1519) .....................................................................................5
Galileo Galilei (1564 – 1642) ..........................................................................................7
New ideas and knowledge ...............................................................................................7
   Inventions ......................................................................................................................8
   Gunpowder ....................................................................................................................9
   The Magnetic Compass ...............................................................................................9
   The Caravel ..................................................................................................................9
Spreading the Christian Religion .....................................................................................10
The European trade route to the East via southern Africa .............................................10
The Journey of Bartholomeu Dias ...................................................................................11
Dias and his crew encounter the Khoikhoi in Mossel Bay (1488) ..................................12
The Journey of Vasco Da Gama .....................................................................................12
Journey of the VOC (Dutch East India Company) .......................................................13
The life of sailors on a VOC ship ...................................................................................14
Great Zimbabwe

When Mapungubwe was abandoned, it was to the benefit of Great Zimbabwe. The cultural, political and economic power in the area shifted to Great Zimbabwe and this area took control of the Indian Ocean trade routes in Southern Africa. All traders that went through Great Zimbabwe had to pay the rulers and the people of that region. This made the region very wealthy.

Great Zimbabwe’s settlement grew to approximately 18 000 people. The town was surrounded by an outer wall. Much like Mapungubwe, the commoners lived outside the main walls, while the royal family lived on the hill. The king lived in a magnificent palace on the top of the hill.

The buildings of great Zimbabwe show that the people who built them were highly skilled in stonework and construction. The main wall is 20 meters high and within these walls are several passageways and enclosures. One of the enclosures is a royal enclosure called the Great Enclosure. It is the largest structure in sub-Saharan Africa. About 900 000 stone blocks were used to build the outer wall of the enclosure.

Did You Know?

8 Soapstone birds were found in Religious areas of Great Zimbabwe. Historians believe that they represent the dead relatives of ancient kings and rulers. Each bird is different – they have humans features mixed with that of eagles. They all have 4 or 5 toes in place of talons and some have lips instead of a beak.
**European explorer Marco Polo and his travels**

At the same time that Mapungubwe was at its height, Marco Polo was a European explorer. Polo was born in Venice in Italy in 1254 and he died in 1324. He spent 24 years of his life travelling. Marco Polo wanted to make important contacts with people in the East so that he could trade for spices. He was also seeking adventure.

He travelled from Italy through Baghdad and the Gobi Desert to China. This route became known as the Silk Road. He returned via India, showing how India could be reached from China by sea. On his many travels Marco Polo was often a guest of the great and very wealthy ruler of China called Kublai Khan. Kublai Khan gave Polo a golden tablet that was a foot long. This was a ‘VIP’ (Very Important Person) passport which would ensure that Polo be given horses, food, guides, places to sleep and ensure his safety on his way back to Europe. The journey home took Marco Polo 3 years. He was not the first European to travel to China, but because he wrote a book about his adventures his travels became widely known.

**Vocabulary**

**Age of Discovery:** A period of exploration by European sailors from the early 15th century that lasted approximately 200 years.

**New World:** The name given to the Americans when it was ‘discovered by the European explorers. They were indigenous people who had lived in these lands for thousands of years.

**Marco Polo’s influence on European traders and explorers**

The writings about Marco Polo’s travels, and maps drawn from them, inspired hundreds of other European traders and explorers. The century after Marco Polo’s travels became known as the **Age of Discovery**. One of the most important of these explorers who were inspired by Marco Polo was...
Christopher Columbus. It is believed that Columbus read Marco Polo’s book about his travels. As a result of this, Columbus firmly believed that the world was round and that the East could be reached by the sea by sailing westwards. He convinced the queen of Spain, Queen Isabella to sponsor his trip. In 1492, he and his crew of 96 sailors reached an island that is part of what is today known as the Caribbean. He had reached what would become known as the **New World**. The world would never be the same again.

**Did you know?**

*When Columbus reached the Caribbean islands, he was convinced that he had reached India. So much so that he called the local people ‘Indians’. He believed that the world was much smaller than it actually is.*

**Reasons for European exploration**

The southern African society was at the height of its power at the same time as the Renaissance was taking place. Europeans knew very little about Africa at this stage in European history but were always very curious about Africa. There were a number of reasons that made them want to explore and helped them to do this. These attempts to explore the world are known as the ‘**voyages of exploration**’.

**The European Renaissance**

During the 15th and 16th centuries (1600-1700) The European Renaissance was at a turning point in a **conservative** time. People did not look further than their own towns or villages, and they didn’t like new ideas about things. The Renaissance was a time when people were encouraged to look outwards for new and better ideas as well as new places to trade. It involved the development and advancement of literature, art, politics, religion
and science. A growing interest in the world and curiosity was an important part of the Renaissance and one of the key reasons for European exploration.

The Renaissance resulted in a number of inventions. Some of these inventions changed the world forever. Two of the most important inventions were the printing press and the telescope. The printing press allowed people to print pamphlets, news sheets and books, in large numbers. Because written language was more freely available, more people learnt how to read and write and because of this, people’s knowledge of the world increased.

The Renaissance produced a number of great scientists and mathematicians. The two we will learn more about are Leonardo Da Vinci and Galileo Galilei.

**Activity 1**

Look at the two inventions above and discuss these questions with your partner. Now write down the answers.

1. Explain how each of these inventions would be used.
2. Explain how you think each of these inventions changed the world.

**Leonardo da Vinci (1452 – 1519)**

Leonardo da Vinci is one of the most famous Renaissance figures. He was born in Italy and is most famous for painting many great works of art like the Mona Lisa and The Last Supper. Leonardo is also famous for an amazing variety of other talents: He was a sculptor; He was involved in architecture (design of buildings) and; He was involved in geology, engineering and the military arts.
Due to the fact that Leonardo had so many skills in different areas, he was considered to be a genius. In his spare time, he did drawings of parachutes and flying machines that looked like inventions of the 19th and 20th centuries. He also made detailed drawings of the human body which are still highly regarded today.

If you would like to learn more about Leonardo Da Vinci then follow this hyperlink: http://www.ducksters.com/biography/leonardo_da_vinci.php

**Vocabulary**

*Engineering:* is the study and practice of using mathematics and science to do practical things such as designing and building structures, tools and machines.

*Geology:* is the study of the physical structure of the earth and how it has changed over time. Geologists gain this knowledge by studying rocks.

*Pendulum:* is an object that is hung so that it can swing freely.

*Astronomy:* is the study of the stars and the planets in the universe.

*Astrologer:* is a person who studies the movements of the sun, planets and moon and then links them to human behaviour and activity.

*Merchant:* is another word for a trader.

*Missionaries:* are people sent out to do work of the church or religious group, especially in the Christian religion.
Galileo Galilei (1564 – 1642)

Galileo Galilei was born in 1564 and was an Italian scientist and mathematician. Galileo worked on a number of different experiments. These included experiments on the speed at which different objects fall, mechanics and work around pendulums.

Galileo is also famous for building a powerful telescope. With this telescope, he made many discoveries in the field of astronomy. He discovered mountains and valleys on the surface of the moon, sunspots and the four largest moons of the planet Jupiter. This work on astronomy is what made him famous and he was appointed court mathematician in the city of Florence.

Galileo made the church very angry in 1614 by saying that the sun was at the centre of the solar system. This was revolutionary at the time as most people, especially the churchmen, believed that the earth was in this central position. He was forbidden by the church in 1616 from teaching or telling anyone about his theories. For more information about Galileo, visit the following site:

http://www.sciencekids.co.nz/sciencefacts/scientists/galileogalilei.html

**Activity 2**

1. List all the things that Leonardo was good at.
2. Why was Leonardo considered to be a genius?
3. What work of Leonardo is still used and highly regarded today?
4. What experiments did Galileo Galilei do?
5. What discoveries did Galileo make with his telescope?
6. Why did the church stop Galileo from teaching or telling anyone about his ideas?

**New ideas and knowledge**

Stories of Leonardo and Galileo are examples of how people’s view of the world was changing. They showed the great possibilities that existed for discovery. One of the most important reasons for European exploration was the new ideas and knowledge of the time. It could be said that the most important of these was the new approach of the Renaissance. This was the desire to find out more about the world and the people who
lived in it. This also led to many discoveries in literature, art and science and it was a reason for the voyages of exploration. Many other ideas also came from outside of Europe namely the Arab Muslim world. An example of this is the Astrolabe, which was a device that helped people to navigate on land. This was used by Arab traders and astrologers for many years. It was later adapted by the Portuguese to be used on the seas.

The most famous of European traders who travelled to the East and shared their knowledge of what they saw was Marco Polo. Marco was a merchant who travelled to the East and China. Stories of his travels became best sellers as they inspired others because of these stories were of great wealth and opportunity in the East. He also came back with many ideas.

The improvement in maps also led to more exploration. This is because more people were travelling and the Arabian maps were being used by Europeans. These new maps made it easier and safer for people to sail off the coast of Africa.

**Activity 3**

1. Compile a list of all the new ideas and knowledge that made people want to explore the world.
2. Which of these ideas do you think was the most important? Give a reason for your answer.
3. What new ideas and knowledge did the Europeans learn from elsewhere? How did this influence them?
4. What was the significance of Marco Polo?

**Inventions**

A number of inventions were very important reasons for European exploration. These inventions included the following:

- the magnetic compass
- the caravel
- gunpowder
**Gunpowder**
The Chinese invented gunpowder. In the 13th Century knowledge of gunpowder spread to Europe. By the time of the voyages of discovery in the 15th Century, Europeans had developed canons and firearms using gunpowder, which they put on ships. They then used these weapons to attack and conquer the people that they met on their voyages.

**The Magnetic Compass**
The Europeans used the magnetic compass to help them find their way on their voyages of exploration. The magnetic compass was first invented by the Chinese. The compass and the astrolabe helped sailors to figure out where they were and where they were going so that they could stay on the right course. They did not have to stay in sight of land to know where they were going. This meant that they could use the winds that blew far from land to go where they needed to go.

**The Caravel**
Until the 1400s (13th century), the Europeans did not have ships that were able to travel across oceans. To solve this problem, they started to build Caravels. These ships had two masts and two triangular sails. The Europeans copied the idea of the way the sails worked from the Arab trader's ships called the dhows. The sails made it possible for the sailors to make better use of wind to get their ship to move.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Think about the inventions outlined above and their importance. Complete the missing parts of the table:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gunpowder</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Which of the inventions do you think was the most important? Give a reason for your answer.
**Spreading the Christian Religion**

Religion played an important part in the growth of exploration. Religion was important to the Europeans, especially Christianity. They felt they needed to reform and convert every individual they came into contact with into Christianity. During this time, Christianity became the first religion to spread around the world.

European explorers had direction and navigation. They were very religious and relied on their faith to get them through their rough voyages. They spread their beliefs and religion. By the 1500s, Europeans were travelling by sea to almost every part of the world. Missionaries followed the European traders, colonists and conquerors.

**The European trade route to the East via southern Africa**

The Europeans had seen the valuable goods that came from the East namely the spices and silk. The trade of these spices and silk was controlled by the Arab traders. Once the spices and silk reached Europe, the Italian city states took over control. These Italian city states became incredibly rich from this trade. Other European nations also wanted to find a way to the East so that they could also benefit from the spice trade. The Portuguese nation was one of these. With new knowledge and ideas as well as new inventions this was possible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spice</th>
<th>Used for</th>
<th>Best food to put it in</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salt</td>
<td>Flavouring food, making it taste better.</td>
<td>Chips</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Activity 5**

1. When you get home today, ask the person who does the cooking in your house to help you find different spices. Write the names of these spices in your book.
2. Speak to that person and ask them what each spice is used for.
3. See if this person can tell you which spices go best with which food?
4. Copy the table into your workbook to help you record your answers. The first one has been done for you.
5. Bring an interesting spice to class so that everyone can smell and possibly even taste it. Report back to the class on the spices in your home.
The Journey of Bartholomeu Dias

Bartholomeu Dias is one of the most famous Portuguese explorers. He was the first European to sail around the Cape of Good Hope (today this is Cape Point, which is close to Cape Town). At the time, he did not even know that he had done it.

Dias set sail in the year 1487 from Portugal. He first landed in southern Africa in Namibia, at a place which is called Luderitz today. When he sailed from Luderitz his ships were blown off course by a massive gale. The gale blew for days and days. When the wind finally stopped, Dias steered northeast and landed in what is known as Mossel Bay today in the Western Cape in 1488. This is where he met the Khoikhoi people. He did not know that he had gone around the Cape! He sailed on and then stopped at Algoa Bay, which is known as Port Elizabeth. It was only here that he realised that he had rounded the southern point of Africa. Dias’s ships continued going north around the coast until the Keiskamma River mouth. Dias was eventually forced to turn back by his crew because they were tired and scared of the unknown. Their food supplies were also running out.

As they rounded the tip of Africa again on their way home, Dias named it the Cape of Good Hope. He called it this because he believed that there was hope of finding a route to India. After being at sea for 19 months, Dias returned home as a hero. He died on another journey when his ship was wrecked near the Cape in 1500.

Activity 6

1. Look at the picture of the statue of Dias on the previous page and you will see
   a. On his right is a pillar with a cross on the top.
   b. On his left is a ship.
   c. Hanging from his hand is an astrolabe.
   For each of these write a sentence in which you explain its importance. Use what you learnt in the previous unit to help you interpret the importance of each item.
2. What part of Dias’s story above tells you that the tools that they had to help them navigate were not accurate? Explain.
Dias and his crew encounter the Khoikhoi in Mossel Bay (1488)

In February 1488 Bartholomeu Dias and his sailors landed at Mossel Bay and they met the Khoikhoi people for the first time. This was the first time that the Khoikhoi people had seen Europeans.

The Portuguese and the Khoi clashed over the sailors’ need for fresh water. A Crossbow was fired killing one of the Khoikhoi people. Do you remember learning in Grade 5 that the Khoikhoi believed that water rights were owned by different groups? If others wanted to use their water, they had to get their permission. Dias and his sailors did not know this.

Activity 7

1. Why did the Portuguese and the Khoikhoi clash? What part of the Khoikhoi culture did the Europeans not understand?
2. “The Story of Dias and the Khoikhoi was a story that was going to be repeated for the next four hundred years.” Discuss with your partner, what you think this quotation means.

Vocabulary

**Scurvy:** A disease caused by not having enough vitamin C in the diet. A person with scurvy is usually very weak and has bleeding gums and can die if it is very bad.

**Viceroy:** This is a governor of a colony, country or province. The viceroy acts in the name of the king.

**Monsoon:** A wind system of the Indian Ocean that blows from the southwest in the summer and the northeast in the winter. The southwest monsoon brings with it a season of heavy rain.

The Journey of Vasco Da Gama

Ten years after Dias had sailed around the Cape another Portuguese explorer was given a fleet of ships by the Portuguese King. His name was Vasco da Gama. The king instructed him to find the trade route around Africa to India. Vasco da Gama left on his first voyage from Lisbon,
Portugal with four ships and 170 men on July 8, 1497. The expedition rounded the southern tip of Africa at the Cape of Good Hope on November 22. This was just over 4 months later.

He then headed north up the east coast of Africa. They stopped at trading ports on the way, including Mombasa and Malindi. These were separate city states then. Today they are cities in modern day Kenya.

In Malindi, they picked up a local navigator who knew the direction to India. With the help of a monsoon wind they were able to cross the Indian Ocean and arrive in Calicut in India which is now called Kozhikode in less than a month.

In Calicut, da Gama ran into serious trouble when trying to trade. The reason being he had brought items of very little value in his ships. This led the local traders to become suspicious of him and very soon he had to leave.

His voyage back was disastrous! Almost half of his crew died of scurvy as the trip back took much longer due to the winds not blowing in his favour. When he returned home, he was still a hero. He had found the much-needed trade route to India. On da Gama’s second trip he commanded two more fleets to India. The second tip was more of a military expedition. He managed to capture Arab ships and tried to show how mighty the Portuguese navy was. On his third voyage, he was going to take over as viceroy of Portuguese India. He died of malaria shortly after arriving.

**Journey of the VOC (Dutch East India Company)**

The spice trade was dominated by the Portuguese for about 100 years. They wanted to keep other European countries out of the East but this did last forever. The next European nation that came to dominate the spice trade was the Dutch.

This dominance was achieved through a private company called The Dutch East India Company or the VOC (Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie). The VOC was started in
1602 and was given the sole right to trade with Asia by the government of the Netherlands (Holland). This meant that they were the only company that could trade there.

Jan van Riebeeck landed at the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa in 1652 to establish a base there. He was sent by the VOC. The base was set up to resupply VOC ships with all they needed on their journey to East Asia. This was later made a conventional colony when Europeans started to settle there.

Hundreds of ships that belonged to the VOC were involved in thousands of very profitable trips. Millions and millions of dollars were made by the VOC over the years. This helped the Dutch to develop a colonial empire in the East. The local people in the colonial empire often suffered great hardships at the hands of the Dutch and the VOC.

Activity 8

1. What was the English name for the VOC?
2. Why was the VOC formed?
3. Why did the Dutch set up a base in the Cape?

The life of sailors on a VOC ship

Life for sailors on board a VOC ship was very hard. Their living quarters were very small. Officers had their own cabins, but the sailors just slept wherever they could find a space. If they were unlucky, they could end up spending a cold night up on deck. It often took many months to get to the East. Food on the ships was not very good and many sailors got scurvy because they did not eat enough fruit and vegetables.

Bibliography: K Angier, D Carr, J Cockburn and J Wallace – Our World, Our Society Grade 6