

## Explore More—Early Europeans in America

**Directions:** Listen to your teacher talk about the early Europeans who explored America. Circle any words you don't understand. Underline or highlight important ideas in the text. Write notes in the margins to help you understand key points. Then answer the questions in your own words.

### **Who were the major European explorers of the United States?**

Many Europeans were interested in exploring the interior of North America. Three of the most important inland explorers are Hernando de Soto, Francisco Vásquez de Coronado, and Alvár Núñez Cabeza de Vaca.

### **What routes did these explorers take to the United States?**

Hernando de Soto first arrived in the Americas in 1514 as part of a Spanish expedition. He returned in 1539 to lead his own expedition to the New World. He landed first in Cuba and then sailed north to present-day Florida. From there, his expedition explored what is now the southeastern United States. He and his men were the first Europeans to see the Mississippi River.

Francisco Vásquez de Coronado is famous for his search for the lost cities of gold—the Seven Cities of Cibola. He first arrived in the Americas on the western coast of Mexico in 1535. From there, he led his expedition north through present-day Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. He never found the lost cities of gold, but his scouts were the first Europeans to see the Colorado River and the Grand Canyon.

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Alvr Nnez Cabeza de Vaca arrived on the coast of present-day Florida in 1528. He and his expedition traveled by land up the western coast of Florida. Then they sailed across the Gulf of Mexico to Galveston (in present-day Texas). From there, they went south across the Rio Grande River and then northwest to present-day New Mexico and Arizona. They went as far west as the Gulf of California before heading south and then west to Mexico City.

All of these explorers provided information about the interior of the continent that Europeans and others would eventually settle.

**Spain, France, England, Portugal, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Russia all claimed land in North and South America. What areas did each country claim?**

Many European countries competed with each other for land and riches in the Americas. Each country claimed different land at different periods of time. In some cases, more than one country claimed the same land.

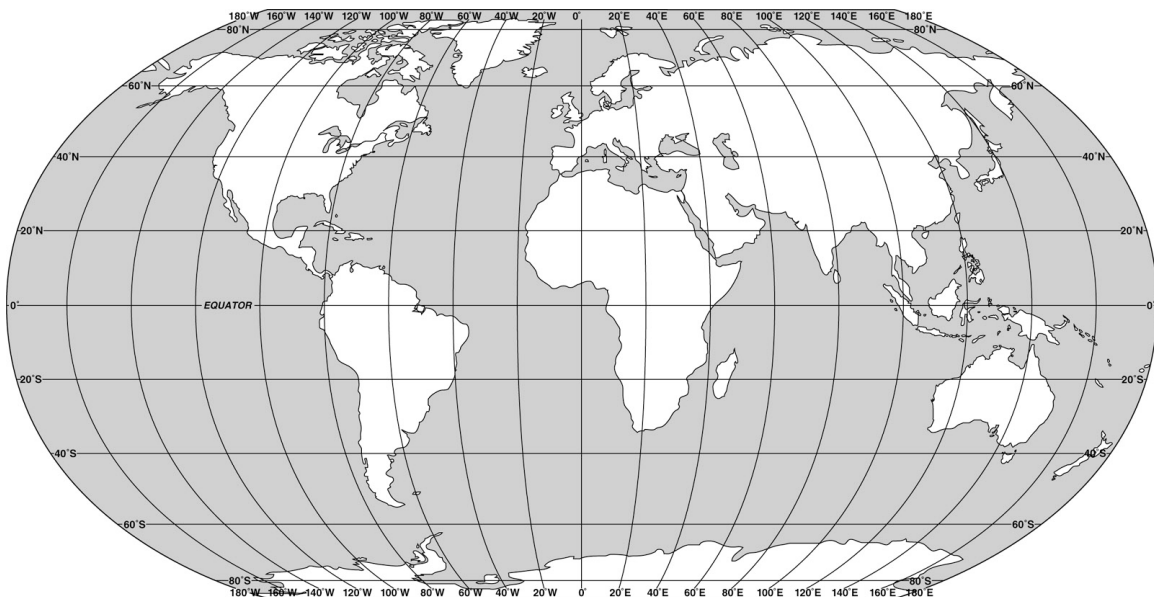
Spain claimed present-day Florida, Mexico, Central America, and a large part of eastern and central South America. England claimed most of the land in North America. Portugal claimed western South America, including a large part of present-day Brazil. The Dutch claimed land in the northeastern part of North America, including present-day New York. Sweden claimed land in Delaware. Russia claimed land that is present-day Alaska. ❖

## YOUR TURN!

- Complete the chart below about two European explorers of the United States. Use the historical anthology to help you.

Explorer	Route Taken	Area Explored

- Choose one of the explorers listed in the chart above. Do research to find out more about the exact route he took on one of his journeys. Draw the route on the map below. Calculate the distance he traveled.



3. On the map of North and South America, mark the land claims of each country listed below. Use a different color or pattern for each country and complete the legend. Remember that some countries claimed the same land.



<b>LEGEND</b>	
England	_____
France	_____
Spain	_____
Netherlands	_____
Portugal	_____
Sweden	_____
Russia	_____