

## Tudor Exploration

The Tudor period (1485–1603) coincided with a remarkable era of European exploration, during which England began to compete with powerful seafaring nations such as Spain and Portugal. Monarchs including Henry VII, Henry VIII, and Elizabeth I understood that controlling trade routes and discovering new territories could bring enormous wealth and influence.

John Cabot, an Italian-born navigator sponsored by Henry VII, sailed from Bristol in 1497 and reached the coast of North America — the first known European contact since the Vikings. His voyage established England's early claim to territories in the New World.

Francis Drake remains the most celebrated Tudor sea captain. Between 1577 and 1580, he successfully circumnavigated the globe, returning with considerable treasure seized from Spanish ships. Elizabeth I rewarded him with a knighthood, presented personally on board his vessel, the *Golden Hind*.

Walter Raleigh was another significant figure. He organised expeditions to the eastern coast of North America and established a short-lived colony in Virginia. Though it ultimately failed, his ventures promoted the idea of permanent English settlement abroad.

Tudor navigators used instruments including the astrolabe, compass, and cross-staff to plot their positions at sea. Despite the dangers — disease, storms, and hostile encounters — these voyages transformed England's understanding of the wider world, fuelled the growth of overseas trade, and laid important groundwork for England's later emergence as a global empire.

## Questions

1. Which two European nations was England competing with during the Tudor age of exploration?
2. Who sponsored John Cabot's 1497 voyage?
3. Why was Cabot's voyage historically significant?
4. What did Francis Drake bring back after circumnavigating the globe?
5. Where did Elizabeth I knight Francis Drake?
6. Where did Walter Raleigh attempt to establish a colony?
7. What happened to Raleigh's Virginia colony?
8. Name three navigational instruments used by Tudor sailors.
9. Name three dangers that Tudor sailors faced on long voyages.
10. How might Tudor exploration have helped England become a powerful empire in later centuries?



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