

Elizabeth I and Spain

Enquiry: Why was the world 'opening up' to Elizabeth I and her people?

Ms Apps



The Spanish Empire

In 1492 Christopher Columbus' set off across the Atlantic in search of the Indies on behalf of the Spanish King and Queen Ferdinand and Isabella. What Columbus found instead was the Caribbean.

Columbus and his men noted that many important **Indigenous** people (such as the Lucayan, Arawak and Carib) they encountered wore gold ornaments in their ears and around their necks. Columbus became convinced that these lands could therefore bring great wealth to Spain. He also noted that the **indigenous** peoples of the Caribbean appeared peaceable and therefore easy to conquer. The stage was set for the **colonisation** of the '**New World**' by Spain.



Expansion of the Spanish Empire

By Columbus' return to Spain in 1493 it became clear that the lands that Columbus had found were not Asia but instead a '**New World**'. In May 1493 **the Pope** gave the Spanish permission to seek out, conquer and take any lands belonging to those who weren't Christian. This has become known as the '**Doctrine of Discovery**'.

Waves of Spanish **Conquistadores** voyaged to the '**New World**'. Many **Conquistadors** were seeking the three 'Gs' of colonisation - gold, glory and God. The most famous of whom was **Hernàn Cortés** who conquered large parts of modern day Mexico. Using the knowledge of an indigenous woman named Malintzin, he used violence and divisions amongst to conquer the **Aztec** Empire's capital of Tenochtitlan in 1521.



English Jealousy and Privateering

The Spanish **Conquistadores** set up a system known as the **encomienda system**. The Spanish took control of areas of land, and expected **indigenous people** to work for them in return for knowledge of the Catholic faith. As **indigenous peoples** died of disease and overwork the labour force was boosted by the bringing of enslaved peoples from Africa to the '**New World**'.

The new Spanish **colonies** brought much wealth to the Spanish crown making it one of the most powerful nations in Europe and allowing for a 'Golden Age' of art and culture.



English Jealousies and Privateering

As the Reformation made England a Protestant nation, writers such as the 'Father of Geography' Richard Hakluyt began to criticise the Spanish domination of the '**New World**'. In his books *Discourse on Western Planting* and *The Principal Navigations* he argued the Pope had no authority to grant areas of the 'New World' to only Spain. English Privateers (pirates with permission from the Queen) began to raid Spanish shipping and port towns in south America and the Caribbean from the 1560s onwards.



Glossary

New World - the name given to America and the Caribbean.

Canary Islands - Spanish islands off the coast of Africa.

Atlantic Ocean - The ocean between America, Europe and Africa.

Indigenous - The original people.

Colonisation - When one nation/kingdom takes over another's land.

Conquistadors - Conquerors.

The Pope - Head of the Catholic Church.

Papal Bull - A document from the Pope with an official decision from him.

Aztec - The Aztecs were not a single people but different groups ruled over by one leader.



Comprehension Questions

1. Where did Columbus think he was headed to in 1492?
In 1492 Columbus believed he was sailing to...
2. Why did Columbus wish to take over the Caribbean islands?
3. What permission did the Pope give the Spanish?
4. Who was Hernan Cortes?
5. Challenge yourself: How did the Elizabethans feel about the Spanish Empire?



Extension Question

6. Why might the Spanish Empire have made the Elizabethans wish to develop their own Empire?

Use the sentence starters and key words below to answer this question

Sentence starters:	Key words
<p><i>One reason</i></p> <p><i>Another reason why....</i></p>	<p>Colonisation</p> <p><i>Ecomienda</i></p> <p>Wealth</p> <p>Catholicism</p> <p>Papal Bull</p>

