**Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Period: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Explorers**

Imagine being the first person, not just in your country, but in your continent, to set eyes on a new landmass. The horizon over the sea has receded for months in front of your ship. Maybe you and your crew have had navigational difficulties. Maybe at the start of the trip, you didn’t even know whether there would be a destination at the end of the trip. Supplies are getting scarce, the ship’s cat is listless. Morale is low. Illness and death have begun to thin the crew’s ranks. You’re held accountable to a private patron or perhaps a monarch back at home—someone would have had to provide funding for the journey. But at this point, so much more is at stake than just money. Of course your life is at stake, but so is your reputation. The idea of failing to discover new territory and having to return home empty-handed is terrifying.

Finally, after months, maybe even years, of nothing but the vast grey sea spread out in every direction, you spy a thin worm of land in the distance. Finally, you get to scream LAND HO!

But the ordeal isn’t over. Far from it. After another several days of traveling towards this tiny promise of land, seeing it appear to grow every day in size and detail, you have to land and assess the premises. Is there anyone there you need to subdue? Will locals be cooperative?

That is what the life of explorers, centuries ago, looked like. Explorers were motivated by the powerful desire to touch the other side of the world. One of them, Ferdinand Magellan, is still famous for attempting the first circumnavigation of the world. Although Magellan perished on the trip, he and his crew made it across the Atlantic and gained passage, for the first time, into the Pacific. Once in the Philippines, Magellan was speared to death by a native in a bloody confrontation. Magellan’s high-ranking crewmen aboard the ships offered a high ransom for his remains, but the body was kept by the king of their population as a war trophy.

Meanwhile, back in Magellan’s hometown of Seville, his wife and child had died of ailments. When Magellan’s crew returned to their port of origin, it was as though Ferdinand Magellan had never existed. Eerily, except for the massive circumnavigation project he had organized and led, all traces of his personal life had evaporated.

We can see from Magellan’s chilling example that the price of exploration was high. But even the threat of death didn’t deter early explorers, who were motivated by grand ambitions. They thought only of the riches they might reap after opening new trade routes or the celebrity they would enjoy.

There was so much that early explorers didn’t grasp before setting out to take hold of the world and everything it had to offer. For example, they couldn’t fully understand how long it would realistically take to travel around the world, because it hadn’t been done before. It seemed like a much more achievable goal than it actually was. This perhaps accounts for why so many of them were willing to tackle the challenge, seemingly without major concern for anything besides finding the money to buy supplies and pay a crew.

As explorers attempted to touch the other side of the world, their failures were often as grandiose as their successes.

**Vocabulary**

1. **Ambition:**
2. a strong desire to reach a goal, or the goal that someone wants to reach.

*He has a strong ambition to become a lawyer.*

*Her ambition was to become famous.*

1. **Motivate:**
2. to make someone want to do something.

*A good teacher motivates her students to learn.*

*Fear of cancer motivated him to quit smoking.*

1. **Stake:**
2. a share or interest in something.

*I have no stake in the family farm since I left home*

**Comprehension Questions**

**1.** What is Ferdinand Magellan famous for?

1. discovering North America
2. completing the most expeditions
3. attempting the first circumnavigation of the world
4. creating the first map of the world

**2.** What does the author describe at the beginning of the passage?

1. a failed sea voyage
2. the achievements of different explorers
3. navigational difficulties explorers faced
4. the challenges of a sea voyage

**3.** Early explorers were either brave or reckless. What evidence from the passage best supports this conclusion?

1. “But even the threat of death didn’t deter early explorers, who were motivated by grand ambitions.”
2. “Imagine being the first person, not just in your country, but in your *continent*, to set eyes on a new landmass.”
3. “The idea of failing to discover new territory and having to return home empty-handed is terrifying.”
4. “This perhaps accounts for why so many of them were willing to tackle the challenge.”

**4.** How can early explorers best be described?

1. hesitant
2. ambitious
3. intelligent
4. conservative

**5.** What is this text mostly about?

1. violent interactions between explorers and natives
2. Ferdinand Magellan and his successful explorations
3. reasons why early explorers were so reckless
4. the problems and dangers faced by early explorers

**6.** Read these sentences from the text.

There was so much that early explorers didn’t **grasp** before setting out to take hold of the world and everything it had to offer. For example, they couldn’t fully understand how long it would realistically take to travel around the world.

As used in this sentence, what does the word “**grasp**” mean?

1. recognize
2. physically hold on to
3. ignore
4. understand

**7.** Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ there were risks and dangers involved, explorers were eager to travel the world.

1. After
2. For example
3. Although
4. In particular

**8.** What happened to Magellan when he attempted to circumnavigate the globe?

**(complete sentence)**

**9.** According to the text, why did traveling around the world seem like a more achievable goal than it really was?

**(complete sentence)**

**10.** Explain why many explorers were eager to explore the world despite the dangers. Support your answer using information from the text.

**(complete sentence)**