Exploration vs. Isolationism

Lecture notes

Class thoughts- why might a country practice exploration or isolationism?

Exploration: power, extend land holdings, spices/riches, religion, adventure,

trade routes

Isolationism: fear, avoid outside influences

Explorers: European countries- Spain, France, Portugal, Netherlands, England

Isolationists: China and Japan

Renaissance encouraged adventure

Technology allowed exploration: the caravel- triangular sails allowed sailing

against the wind.

Astrolabe, sextant and compass- could determine location

Portugal led the way

Prince Henry- spices, gold in Africa

Wanted route to Asia

Spread Christianity

Opened first navigation school

Diaz and Vasco da Gama- around tip of Africa

Spain

Columbus looked for sea route to Asia

Found Caribbean

Spain and Portugal thought Columbus had reached Asia

Fought over rights

Treaty of Tordesillas- divided claims between Spain and Portugal when Pope

did not get their cooperation

Spain-west of Atlantic

Portugal- east of Pacific and Brazil

Spain – Philippines

Netherlands- declared independence from Spain and sought own trade power

Dutch East India Company overpowered English East India Company

Then took some control from Portugal

Controlled Indian Ocean trade

French and English East India Companies got some of India

**Europe headed East to China and Japan**

China wanted Europe to pay tribute as recognition of China’s power

China feared Europeans would disrupt their lives- had explored prior

to 1933- then withdrew into isolationism

China wished to follow Confucianism

Country limited trade

Only with China’s government

Only through three coastal ports

Opposed Europeans bringing Christianity and technology

China went through period of collapse and rebuilding- continued isolation

policies through both

Dutch traded- willing to pay tribute

English didn’t like policies. King George III wrote letter to Qiang-Long

Japan:

North and south struggled against each other- Shoguns fought

European trade allowed during this Warring States period.

Portuguese brought muskets and cannons

Also started trying to convert Japanese to Christianity- welcomed at

first but eventually too many conversions. Attempt to

overthrow government linked to Christians.

1612- started to force out Christians

by 1637- Christians were actively persecuted

they wore out their welcome

Samurai gained control of feudal estates

Unification finally gained around 1600- Tokugawa ruled by law rather than sword

Plenty of food, culture flourished, Confucian values like China

By 1639- closed country policy- trade ended with Europe

Nagasaki- only port left open

Japanese not even allowed to leave country- did not want any more western ideas