

- Considering the accomplishments of the French explorers Verrazano, Cartier, Champlain, Marquette, Joliet and La Salle, have students decide which explorer was the most successful in furthering the role of France in the New World.

Follow-up Activities

- There were several important French explorers who claimed much of North America for France. In their travels, these men covered many miles. Have the students prepare a large map of the United States with the routes and dates of these major French explorers traced out in selected colors for display.
- Research the different Native American groups that were integral to the story of French exploration, including the Huron, Algonquin and Iroquois. Present information about their traditions, language, economy, myths, government and religion. Students can then create a class chart that compares the different groups in these areas.
- Encourage students to imagine that they are French explorers like Cartier or Champlain. They can then write a letter to the king of France, describing the successes and problems of their expedition to the New World. In their letters, students can include descriptions of the local native groups, details about the lands being explored and adversities encountered on the trip. Students can also sketch a map to be included with the letter that provides a visual representation of the lands they have explored in the New World.
- Have students consult a present-day map of Canada and Louisiana. Encourage them to create a list of all the French language names in these places. To extend this activity, students can consult a French/English dictionary to translate the place names.

Suggested Internet Resources

Periodically, Internet Resources are updated on our web site at www.LibraryVideo.com

- www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1608champlain.html
This site from the Modern History Sourcebook provides an excerpt from the writings of Samuel de Champlain in 1608. The passage includes Champlain's description of the foundation of Quebec.
- www.civilisations.ca/vmnf/vmne.asp
"The Virtual Museum of New France" offers details of the travels of individual French explorers, including Cartier, Champlain, La Salle, Marquette and Joliet. One exhibition called "Living in Canada at the Time of Champlain" provides information about the historical context of the development of New France and discusses Champlain's writing and map-making during this time.

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- www.thc.state.tx.us/belle/
The Texas Historical Commission sponsors the "La Salle Shipwreck Project" Web page that details the excavation and conservation of the Belle, one of La Salle's ships that was destroyed in a storm in 1686. Pictures of artifacts and the process of excavation are provided on this site, in addition to facts about La Salle and his expeditions.

Suggested Print Resources

- de Champlain, Samuel. *Algonquians, Hurons, and Iroquois: Champlain Explores America, 1603-1616*. Brook House Press, Dartmouth, NH; 2000.
- Goodman, Joan Elizabeth. *Despite All Obstacles: La Salle and the Conquest of the Mississippi*. Mikaya Press, New York, NY; 2001.
- LeVert, Suzanne. *Quebec*. Chelsea House Publishers, New York, NY; 2000.
- Moore, Christopher. *Champlain*. Tundra, Toronto, Ontario; 2004.

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FRENCH EXPLORERS

Grades 5-8

This guide is a supplement designed for teachers to use when presenting programs in the video series *Explorers of the World*.

Before Viewing: Give students an introduction to the program by relaying aspects of the historical overview to them. Select pre-viewing discussion questions and vocabulary to provide a focus for students when they view the program.

After Viewing: Review the program and vocabulary, and use the follow-up questions and activities to inspire continued discussion. Encourage students to research the topic further with the Internet and print resources provided.

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Historical Overview

Several prominent explorers sailing under the flag of France traveled through the interior of North America and succeeded in establishing a flourishing fur trade, halting the expansion of the English and Spanish colonies in America, and proving that no Northwest Passage to the East existed. In their search for a passage to Asia, men like Giovanni da Verrazano, Jacques Cartier, Jacques Marquette and Louis Joliet explored and charted much of North America. France's goal of developing colonies in the New World and expanding its claim in North America was achieved through the efforts of Samuel de Champlain and René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle. As a result of the fearlessness and daring of these explorers, the French influence in North America continues today.

Time Line

- 1485** — Giovanni da Verrazano is born in Italy.
- 1491** — Jacques Cartier is born in France.
- 1524** — Verrazano sets off on his first voyage to the New World. He makes landfall on the coast of North Carolina and sails north along the coast of North America.
- 1527** — Verrazano sails to Brazil for France.
- 1528** — Verrazano sails to Florida and the Lesser Antilles where he dies.
- 1534** — Cartier sails for France to find the Northwest Passage. He reaches Canada and explores its eastern regions.
- 1535** — Cartier sails for a second time for France to find the Northwest Passage and discovers the St. Lawrence River.
- 1541** — Cartier makes his third trip to North America.
- 1557** — Cartier dies in France.
- 1567** — Samuel de Champlain is born in France.
- 1603** — Champlain comes to North America as a geographer for a French fur trading company.
- 1608** — Champlain establishes a French settlement at Quebec.
- 1629** — Champlain is captured in Quebec by the English and is taken to England.
- 1635** — Champlain dies in Quebec.
- 1637** — Jacques Marquette is born in France.
- 1643** — René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle, is born in France.
- 1645** — Louis Joliet is born in Quebec.
- 1673** — Marquette and Joliet begin their exploration of the Mississippi River Valley.
- 1675** — Marquette dies in New France.
- 1682** — La Salle reaches the mouth of the Mississippi and claims the land for France, naming it Louisiana for Louis XIV, the king of France.
- 1687** — La Salle is murdered by his own men while attempting to establish a colony at the mouth of the Mississippi River.
- 1700** — Joliet dies in New France.

Vocabulary

explorer — A person who travels in search of a goal, such as wealth, information or colonization.

New France — The name of France's claim to lands in North America. New France initially consisted of much of the land that today is considered Canada, in addition to land along the Mississippi River. Eventually, New France extended into the land west of the Appalachian Mountains and a majority of the Great Lakes region. France's claim to the New World began with Giovanni da Verrazano's expedition in 1524.

Spice Islands — Also known as the Moluccas, these islands located off the coast of Southeast Asia were the source of very valuable and rare spices during the Age of Exploration. These spices were in great demand in Europe for their flavor, in addition to their preservative and medicinal qualities.

Northwest Passage — A water route from Europe to Asia through the northern portion of the Americas. Many explorers sought the Northwest Passage as a shorter alternative to Ferdinand Magellan's route through the southern tip of South America.

Francis I — (1494-1547) The king of France from 1515 until his death; he supported the exploration of the New World in search of a Northwest Passage and land for France.

Huron — Iroquoian-speaking Native Americans who primarily lived in the territory along the St. Lawrence River when it was discovered by Jacques Cartier in 1535.

Canada — A Huron term, translated as "village" or "place of settlement," applied to the land that Jacques Cartier explored in the 16th century. Canada became the official name of the French settlements in North America.

Quebec — French version of the Huron term "kebec" for "place where the river narrows" along the St. Lawrence River. Today this term applies to both the city and a province of Canada.

Montreal — The French term for "royal mountain," an elevation that overlooked a Huron settlement that Cartier reached in his exploration of the St. Lawrence River.

scurvy — A disease that is caused by a lack of certain vitamins, particularly vitamin C. The disease is easily controlled by proper diet.

Iroquois — A confederation of tribes living in the Great Lakes region and Canada that became enemies of the French after Samuel de Champlain used firearms against them in a raid on their lands near today's Fort Ticonderoga on Lake Champlain.

Louis XIV — (1638-1715) The king of France from 1643 until his death; he supported the exploration of René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle, during the 17th century. La Salle claimed Louisiana and named it in honor of King Louis XIV in 1682.

Pre-viewing Discussion

- Explore a world map with your students and discuss the concept of a Northwest Passage. Based on the map, describe the difficulties that traveling from Europe to Asia through the northern part of North America might have presented. Why would finding this route have been so important to Europeans at this time?

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- Many of the French who explored and colonized the New World were fur trappers and traders. Discuss with your students what types of relationships these French frontiersmen might have had with the Native Americans. How would the French dependence on native groups as trading partners have influenced these relationships?
- A major goal of French exploration was to obtain a short, direct route to the trading lands of the East, especially to acquire wealth in the spice trade. However, many explorers lost their lives to this quest. Encourage students to speculate about what goals people might have today for which they would take similar risks.

Focus Questions

1. What commodity provided the French with wealth from their new colonies in North America?
2. Who was the first significant French explorer in the New World? What was the mission of this explorer?
3. Why did Verrazano think he saw the Pacific Ocean from the Atlantic Coast?
4. Which French explorer discovered the St. Lawrence River?
5. What caused scurvy to break out among Cartier's people?
6. How did Cartier care for his men and restore their health?
7. Why is Cartier known as the "Father of Canada"?
8. Who established the first permanent French colony in North America?
9. What did Champlain contribute to our knowledge of the New World?
10. Why were French priests so active in the exploration of New France?
11. Name the explorers who traveled the length of the Mississippi River, claiming lands for France.
12. Which French explorer named the land at the mouth of the Mississippi River for the king of France?

Follow-up Discussion

- In the course of their exploration, the French did not find much gold or silver or a Northwest Passage to the East. Have students discuss what the French did gain from their expeditions and whether or not this gain was worth the effort and lives it cost.
- During his exploration and colonization of New France, Champlain engaged in battles with local native groups, allying himself with some groups like the Huron and creating enemies with others, including the Iroquois. Encourage students to discuss the pros and cons of French involvement in Native American rivalry and fighting. Would students have become involved in skirmishes with the native people if they had been in Champlain's position?
- Many explorers from other parts of Europe, including England and Spain, had negative interactions with the native people they met on their expeditions. Discuss with your students why the French generally respected and cooperated with the Native Americans they encountered.

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