

Reading Test A

Many people think Christopher Columbus was the greatest explorer of all time because he was the first European to reach America in 1492. But there were many other great explorers who travelled to faraway places and brought back interesting new discoveries to their own countries.



Before Columbus, between 1405 and 1433, the Chinese explorer Zheng He went on seven voyages across the Indian Ocean. He visited Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Thailand, India and the east coast of Africa, bringing back treasures from every voyage.

Other explorers followed Columbus, including Hernán Cortés, who was actually a conquistador. Cortés was born in the Spanish town of Medellin and studied law. However, he didn't become a lawyer; he joined the army and he led a military expedition into Mexico. Spain wanted to conquer the country and rule it. The Aztec people, who lived in Mexico, had their own ancient religion and culture. Under their strong emperor they fought hard, but eventually Cortés won. After his expedition, Cortés returned to Spain and lived in the city of Seville until the end of his life.

Not all explorers went back home as heroes. One of the unlucky ones who didn't was the Scot, Mungo Park. After finishing university, he took a job as a ship's doctor and travelled to Africa. Later, he was chosen to lead an expedition and became famous because of his discovery of the River Niger in 1796. Unfortunately, on a second expedition to Africa, Park's team were attacked by local people and Park himself drowned in the African river that had made him famous.

Another earlier explorer who did not come home to fame was an Italian from Venice called Marco Polo. When he was fifteen, he went to Asia with his father and uncle. He travelled through a large part of Asia for the Mongol emperor Kublai Khan, taking the Khan's daughter to Persia to be married, and passing through Indonesia, Sri Lanka and India. Marco Polo wrote a book about his travels, but some people think he was only telling other travellers' stories and he was just pretending he had experienced them himself.

Read the text about great explorers. Are the sentences true, false or not mentioned? Choose the correct answer.

1. The Chinese explorer Zheng He used accurate sailing maps.
 - A. ☐ True
 - B. ☐ False
 - C. ☐ Not mentioned
2. Zheng He travelled all over India.
 - A. ☐ True
 - B. ☐ False
 - C. ☐ Not mentioned
3. Cortés was a Spanish military leader.
 - A. ☐ True
 - B. ☐ False
 - C. ☐ Not mentioned
4. Cortés fought the Aztecs in Mexico.
 - A. ☐ True
 - B. ☐ False
 - C. ☐ Not mentioned
5. Cortés was rich and famous when he returned to Spain.
 - A. ☐ True
 - B. ☐ False
 - C. ☐ Not mentioned
6. Mungo Park studied law at university.
 - A. ☐ True
 - B. ☐ False
 - C. ☐ Not mentioned
7. Park died in Scotland when he returned from his second expedition.
 - A. ☐ True
 - B. ☐ False
 - C. ☐ Not mentioned
8. Marco Polo married an emperor's daughter.
 - A. ☐ True
 - B. ☐ False
 - C. ☐ Not mentioned

Read the text about great explorers. Complete the sentences.

1. The Chinese explorer Zheng made _____ voyages between 1405 and 1433.
2. Cortés studied _____ before becoming a military leader.
3. Cortés fought the _____ who lived in Mexico.
4. Cortés spent the last years of his life in _____.
5. Mungo Park first travelled to Africa as a _____ on a ship.
6. Park drowned in the _____ on his second expedition.
7. Marco Polo first travelled to Asia at the age of _____.
8. Marco Polo wrote a book about _____.