

Captain James Cook	(1254-1324) was a Venetian who travelled with his father and uncle on a journey for trade through Asia. They reached China and met the Mongol emperor Kublai Khan. When Marco returned to Italy, Venice was at war with Genoa. He was taken prisoner by the Genoese and while in prison he dictated his famous book about his travels: The Travels of
Marco Polo	(1480-1521) was a Portuguese explorer who served King Charles I of Spain. He, too, attempted to find a western sea route to the Indies. He was the first great explorer to sail from the Atlantic to the Pacific via the Straits of Magellan and his expedition circumnavigated the globe. He himself did not complete the voyage, dying in the Philippines in 1521.
Ferdinand Magellan	(1451-1506) was born in Genoa, Italy. With the backing of King Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile he attempted to find a western sea route to the East, in search of valuable spices. Instead, in 1492, he landed in the Bahamas, and over the course of three more voyages, he claimed the Greater and Lesser Antilles and parts of the coast of Central America for the Spanish Empire.
Christopher Columbus	(1728-1779) was a British explorer, navigator and cartographer. He made three voyages to the Pacific Ocean and made the first European contact with the eastern coastline of Australia and the Hawaiian Islands. He also made the first recorded circumnavigation of New Zealand.

