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**Sample Task Set**  
**The Age of Exploration in the Americas**  
**Grade 5**

**Standard 2—Key Events, Ideas, and People:** Students investigate how key events, ideas, and people influenced the social, economic, and political development of the New World during the Age of Exploration.

**Standard 3—Key Events, Ideas, and People:** Students explain the reasons why different groups settled in North America and describe the effect of key people, ideas, and events on the growth of the thirteen colonies.

**GLE 5.2.2** Identify early explorers and their motivations, challenges, and achievements

**GLE 5.2.4** Explain the course and consequences of the Columbian Exchange, including its cultural, ecological, economic, and political impact on Europe, the Americas, and West Africa

**GLE 5.3.3** Identify the major European powers that colonized North America and explain their goals, challenges, and achievements

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Read and study the sources about the European Age of Exploration. As you read the four sources, think about the ways in which exploration during this time period impacted the Americas. After you read the sources, answer questions 1–4.

**Source 1**

***From Concerning the Islands Recently Discovered in the Indian Sea (1493)***

*by Christopher Columbus*

I promise this, that if I am supported by our most invincible<sup>1</sup> sovereigns<sup>2</sup> with a little of their help, as much gold can be supplied as they will need, indeed as much of spices, of cotton, of mastic gum<sup>3</sup>, also as much of aloes, wood, and as many slaves for the navy, as their Majesties will wish to demand.

<sup>1</sup>**invincible**: unbeatable

<sup>2</sup>**sovereigns**: rulers; queen and king

<sup>3</sup>**mastic gum**: a natural chewing gum from trees

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**Source 2**

**Adapted from *Cortés' Speech to His Troops (1519)***

by Francisco López de Gómara

It is certain that every good man desires to make himself the equal of the excellent men of his day and those of the past. So it is that I am embarking upon a great and beautiful enterprise<sup>1</sup>. This enterprise will be famous in times to come. I know in my heart that we shall take vast and wealthy lands. We'll take peoples such as have never before been seen, and kingdoms greater than those of our monarchs. It is also certain that the [desire] for glory extends beyond this . . . life. That taking a whole world will hardly satisfy it, much less one or two kingdoms.

<sup>1</sup>**enterprise**: undertaking

**Source 3**

**Portrait of Sir Francis Drake (1583)**

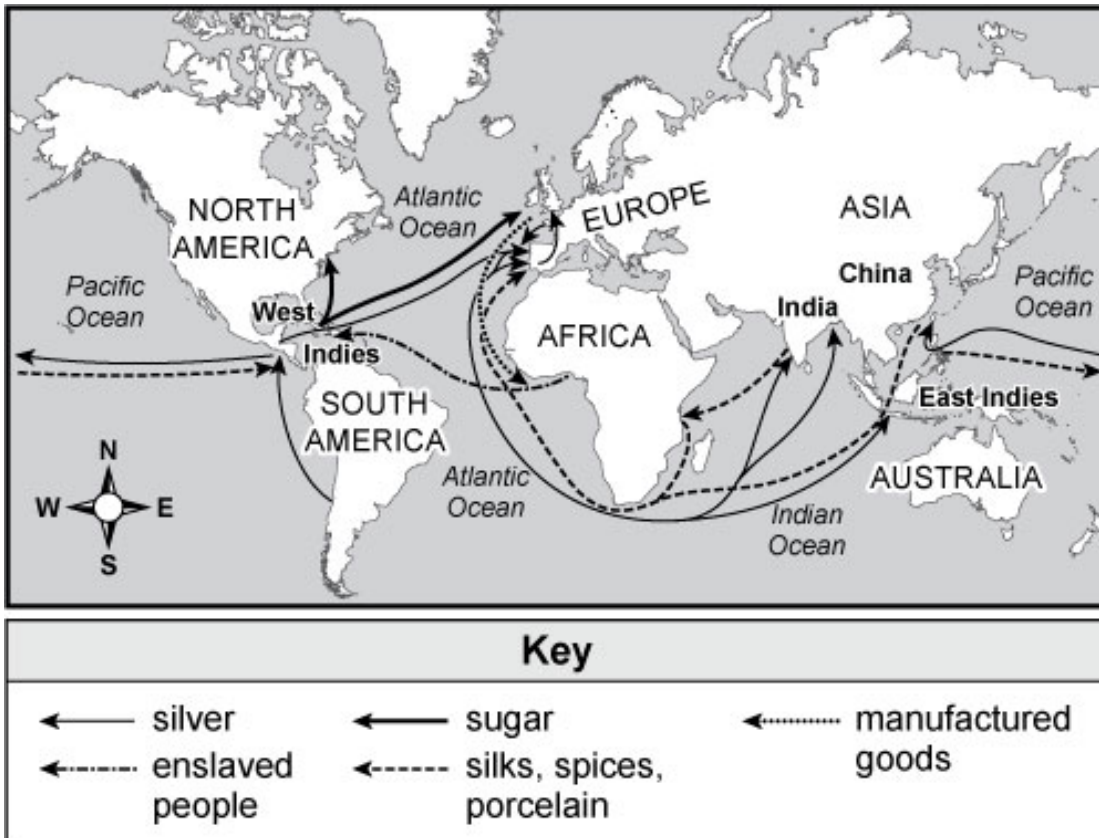
The portrait shows Francis Drake at the age of forty-three. He is shown with the coat of arms, on the top right of the image, given to him by Queen Elizabeth. In a 1581 ceremony on the deck of the Golden Hind, the first English ship to sail around the world, the queen rewarded Drake by knighting him for his success as a privateer.



Source: National Portrait Gallery, London.

Source 4

**World Trade Patterns, 1500s and 1600s**



Source: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Co.

**Item 1: Multiple Choice**

Based on Source 3 and Source 4, what attracted privateers like Sir Francis Drake to the New World during the sixteenth century?

- A. the promise of acquiring land for the English crown
- B. the desire to seize treasures being shipped back to Spain
- C. the hope of establishing trade opportunities with Spain
- D. the prospect of delivering spices to settlers in the West Indies

**Item 2: Multiple Select**

Based on all of the sources, how did Europeans view the New World in the 1400s and 1500s?

Select the **three** correct answers.

- A. a world filled with pollution and waste
- B. a world to be controlled by the Europeans
- C. a world occupied by unfamiliar civilizations
- D. a world filled with wealth
- E. a world with advanced laws and science
- F. a world with modern armies

**Item 3: Multiple Choice**

Which phrase identifies one major result of the Age of Exploration?

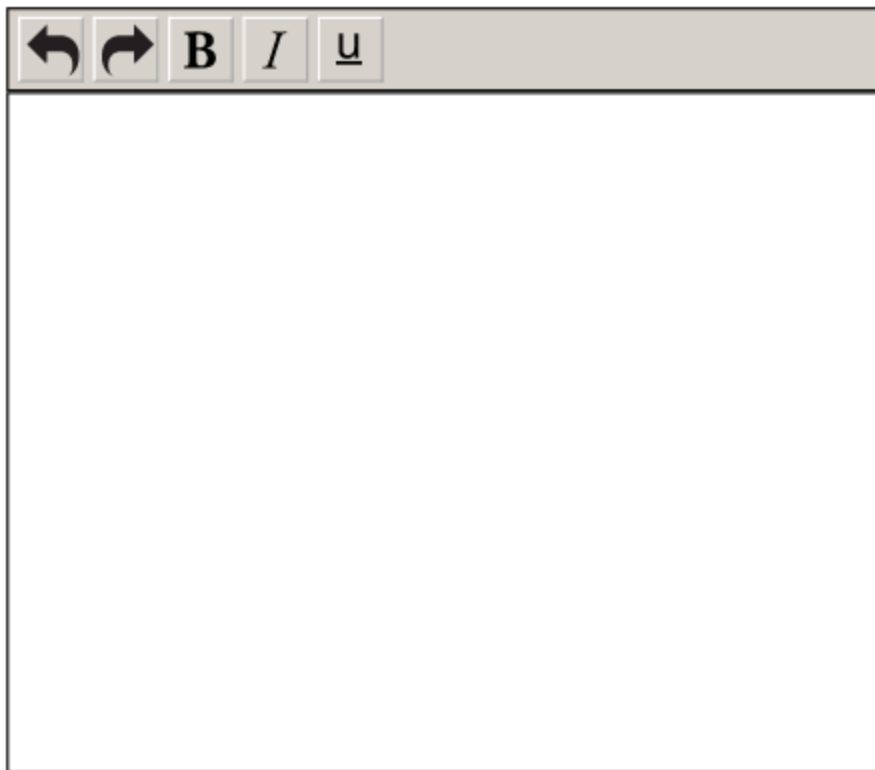
- A. a long period of peace and cooperation in the Americas
- B. a long period of democratic governments in the Americas
- C. a long period of industrial development in Europe and the Americas
- D. a long period of migration of people from Europe to the Americas

**Item 4: Extended Response**

Based on the sources and your knowledge of social studies, analyze how European explorers contributed to the trade that developed between the Americas and Europe.

As you write, follow the directions below.

- Address all parts of the prompt.
- Include information and examples from your own knowledge of social studies.
- Use evidence from the sources to support your response.
- Follow the steps on the Checklist as you write your response.



A text input box with a toolbar at the top. The toolbar contains five icons: a left-pointing arrow (undo), a right-pointing arrow (redo), a bold letter 'B', an italic letter 'I', and an underlined letter 'u'. The main area of the box is empty, intended for the student's response.



## Scoring

The response should be scored **holistically** on its adherence to two dimensions: Content and Claims. Each response should be given the score that corresponds to the set of bulleted descriptors that **best** describes the response.

Dimension: Content	
Score	Description
4	The student's response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflects <b>thorough</b> knowledge how European explorers contributed to the trade that developed between the Americas and Europe by incorporating ample, focused factual information from prior knowledge and the sources;</li> <li>• Contains accurate understandings with no errors significant enough to detract from the overall content of the response;</li> <li>• Fully addresses all parts of the prompt.</li> </ul>
3	The student's response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflects <b>general</b> knowledge how European explorers contributed to the trade that developed between the Americas and Europe by incorporating adequate factual information from prior knowledge and the sources;</li> <li>• Contains mostly accurate understandings with minimal errors that do not substantially detract from the overall content of the response;</li> <li>• Addresses all parts of the prompt.</li> </ul>
2	The student's response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflects <b>limited</b> knowledge how European explorers contributed to the trade that developed between the Americas and Europe by incorporating some factual information from prior knowledge and the sources;</li> <li>• Contains some accurate understandings with a few errors that detract from the overall content of the response;</li> <li>• Addresses part of the prompt.</li> </ul>
1	The student's response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflects <b>minimal</b> knowledge how European explorers contributed to the trade that developed between the Americas and Europe by incorporating little or no factual information from prior knowledge and the sources;</li> <li>• Contains few accurate understandings with several errors that detract from the overall content of the response;</li> <li>• Minimally addresses part of the prompt.</li> </ul>
0	The student's response is blank, incorrect, or does not address the prompt.

<b>Dimension: Claims</b>	
<b>Score</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>4</b>	The student's response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develops a <b>valid</b> claim that effectively expresses a solid understanding of the topic;</li> <li>• Thoroughly supports the claim with well-chosen evidence from the sources;</li> <li>• Provides a logically organized, cohesive, and in-depth explanation of the connections, patterns, and trends among ideas, people, events, and/or contexts within or across time and place.</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	The student's response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develops a <b>relevant</b> claim that expresses a general understanding of the topic;</li> <li>• Supports the claim with sufficient evidence from the sources;</li> <li>• Provides an organized explanation of the connections, patterns, and trends among ideas, people, events, and/or contexts within or across time and place.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	The student's response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presents an <b>inadequate</b> claim which expresses a limited understanding of the topic.</li> <li>• Includes insufficient support for the claim but does use some evidence from the sources;</li> <li>• Provides a weak explanation of the connections, patterns, and trends among ideas, people, events, and/or contexts within or across time and place.</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	The student's response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not develop a claim but provides evidence that relates to the topic; <b>OR</b> develops a substantially flawed claim with little or no evidence from the sources;</li> <li>• Provides a vague, unclear, or illogical explanation of the connections among ideas, people, events, and/or contexts within or across time and place.</li> </ul>
<b>0</b>	The student's response is blank, incorrect, or does not address the prompt.

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### Scoring Notes for Claims Rubric

A response that develops a **valid** claim expresses a **solid** understanding of the social studies topic. The response is supported by **ample and well-chosen** evidence from the sources. The explanation is logical, organized, and cohesive, as demonstrated by connections, patterns, or trends among ideas, people, events, and contexts within or across time and place. A **valid** claim shows a deep understanding of the complexity of social studies themes that is supported by convincing evidence. The analysis may include the ability to discuss cause-and-effect relationships; analyze the importance of and connection between source documents; classify patterns of continuity and change; evaluate differing perspectives; provide in-depth interpretations of historical events, etc.

A response that develops a **relevant** claim expresses a **general** understanding of the social studies topic. The response is supported by **sufficient** evidence from the sources. The explanation is organized and includes connections, patterns, or trends among ideas, people, events, and contexts within or across time and place but fails to reach the valid level. A **relevant** claim shows an accurate understanding of social studies themes but is less complex and includes more generalized evidence. The explanation may identify cause-and-effect relationships; describe patterns of continuity or change; recognize perspectives on a single topic or theme; identify the importance of or connection between source documents; provide general interpretations of historical events, etc.

A response that includes an **inadequate** claim expresses a **limited** understanding of the social studies topic and uses insufficient evidence from the sources to develop the claim. The explanation includes weak connections, patterns, or trends among ideas, people, events, and contexts within or across time and place. An **inadequate** claim shows some understanding of social studies themes but is limited in its analysis and evidence. The explanation may include insufficient understanding of cause and effect relationships; little recognition of patterns of continuity or change; limited knowledge of perspectives on a single topic or theme; misconceptions regarding the importance of or connections between source documents; limited interpretation of historical events, etc.

A response that develops a **substantially flawed** claim expresses **little** understanding of the social studies topic. The explanation, if present, may include vague or illogical connections, patterns, or trends among ideas, people, events, and contexts within or across time and place. It fails to reach the inadequate level for a variety of reasons. For example, the response may provide some evidence that relates to the topic, but is ineffective in supporting a claim, if one is made.

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### **Characteristics of a Strong Response**

A strong response is logically organized into several paragraphs. Any errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, or capitalization do not interfere with the ability of the reader to understand the ideas presented.

A strong response may develop one or more lines of reasoning to support the claim. Here are some examples.

- The prospect of acquiring silks, ceramics, and spices in Asia led European explorers to search for new trade routes rather than relying on the eastern trade routes over Central Asia or around Africa. Once Columbus and other European explorers discovered and charted the Americas, it became clear to European monarchs that they could exploit the vast mineral wealth and natural resources of North and South America. The Spanish conquered all of Central America, Florida, and most of South America. They exploited the local populations and forced them to work as slave laborers to send mineral wealth (silver and gold) and hardwoods to Europe.
- The explorations of Europeans in the New World led to the establishment of European empires in the Americas and resulted in what became known as the Columbian Exchange. It unleashed trade between the Americas, Europe, Africa, and Asia in natural resources and consumer goods. The Americas exported plants such as potatoes, tomatoes, tobacco, corn, peanuts, pineapples, vanilla, and cacao to Europe, Asia, and Africa. Europeans, Asians, and Africans became dependent on many of these agricultural products for their daily diets. From Europe, Asia, and Africa came horses, cattle, pigs, coffee beans, sugar cane, citrus fruits, and bananas. These became staples of the new cash crop economy that was worked by large numbers of enslaved Africans.
- Spanish explorers, also known as conquistadors, were motivated by the prospect of wealth and power. The chance of creating an empire in the Americas and becoming extremely wealthy was a major factor for conquistadors to attempt military expeditions. During the explorations, new diseases were introduced that decimated the native populations. Millions of Native Americans died, and the remaining were too weak to resist against European invaders. The conquistadors succeeded in conquering large empires in Central and South America. Hernán Cortés toppled the Aztec empire with a small number of Spanish soldiers. He then established Spanish rule over the region, exploiting its natural resources, particularly silver, and its economic wealth.
- English explorers inspired English adventurers and merchants to try to establish colonies in North America. Drake led English ships into the Caribbean to harass the Spanish gold fleet. This contributed to conflict between the Spanish and the English in the Americas. He also circumnavigated the globe (after Magellan). The English monarchs decided that they also needed to establish colonies in North America. First, they established settlements in Virginia, and later in Massachusetts. Similar to the Spanish and the Portuguese, they seized the land of the native populations, introduced diseases, and eventually imported enslaved Africans to use

as agricultural laborers. Increasing numbers of English colonists moved to the North American colonies to establish cities and plantations that became integrated into the mercantilist trade system established by England. The English colonies exported natural resources, such as timber, fish, grain, and tobacco to England in return for finished consumer goods.

A strong response shows understanding of the topic by analyzing the required sources and including well-chosen evidence from the sources, such as:

- Columbus reported to the Spanish monarchs that they could reap huge rewards if they established an empire in the Americas and exploited their vast natural resources and mineral wealth (Source 1);
- Cortés emphasized the importance of achieving glory in his efforts to conquer the Aztec Empire (Source 2);
- The portrait of Sir Francis Drake shows a globe to symbolize his circumnavigation of the globe. It also shows him wearing a sword to indicate that he engaged in military activities, particularly against the Spanish (Source 3).
- World trade routes in the 1500s showed that the Americas, Europe, Asia, and Africa were becoming integrated in a global economy, as goods and resources were exchanged between the five continents (Source 4);

A strong response also includes important information beyond what is presented in the sources, such as:

- Identifying the goods of the Columbian Exchange. The Americas exported plants such as potatoes, tomatoes, tobacco, corn, peanuts, pineapples, vanilla, and cacao to Europe, Asia, and Africa. Europeans, Asians, and Africans became dependent on many of these agricultural products for their daily diets. From Europe, Asia, and Africa came horses, cattle, pigs, coffee beans, sugar cane, citrus fruits, and bananas. These became staples of the new cash crop economy that was based on plantations worked by large numbers of enslaved Africans.
- Explaining that millions of enslaved Africans were brought to the Americas to work in plantations and mines to exploit the natural resources of the region. Most of them died from disease and exhaustion within a couple of years of arriving in the Americas.
- Explaining that there was a blending of European, Native American, and African cultures in Central and South America, as exhibited by the foods and musical traditions of the people.

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- Identifying additional explorers, such as Francisco Pizzaro who conquered the Inca Empire in the Andes Mountains and also exploited its wealth, sending large quantities of silver back to Spain.
  - Identifying motivations of other countries, such as France, who set up a fur trading empire in much of North America.
  - Describing motivations of settlers in establishing settlements. For example, Europeans wanted to introduce their way of life and religion to indigenous tribes. Many also hoped to claim large tracks of lands with the hopes of becoming wealthy and living like nobles in Europe. Many immigrants also came to the New World seeking religious freedom.