



Day 18 Age of Exploration Unit  
45 Minutes

Histogeography of the Age of Exploration

**Lesson Title:**

*Exploring Colonial Empires in the Americas (Pre–Revolutionary War)*

**Grade Levels:**

Grades 3–9

**Time Needed:**

45 minutes

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Learning Objectives

Grades 3–5

- Identify regions controlled by Spain, France, Britain, and Portugal.
- Name at least one explorer connected to each empire.
- Use a color-coded map to answer basic comprehension questions.

Grades 6–9

- Compare the goals and strategies of the major colonial empires.
  - Explain how geography shaped colonial settlement.
  - Use map evidence to explain territorial claims.
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**Materials**

- Colonial Empires Interactive Map (Spanish, French, Portuguese, British toggles)
- Student devices
- Optional: graphic organizers (Venn diagrams, comparison charts)

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### 1. Warm-Up - (5 minutes)

Teacher asks:

“Why would European countries want colonies far away from home?”

Expected responses: access to resources, trade, power, curiosity, spreading religion.

Differentiation:

- Grades 3–5: Teacher records ideas visually.
- Grades 6–9: Students discuss with partners first.

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### 2. Map Demonstration (5 minutes)

Teacher models how to:

- Toggle between empires
- Click regions
- Read explorer lists and descriptions
- Interpret colors on the map

Differentiation:

- Grades 3–5: Teacher reads descriptions aloud.
- Grades 6–9: Students preview map sections independently.

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### 3. Guided Exploration (10 minutes)

Grades 3–5:

- Find one Spanish region; list an explorer.
- Find one British region; identify a resource.
- Find one French region; describe how they traveled.

Grades 6–8:

- Compare the French and Spanish approaches to colonization.
- Determine why France focused on rivers and the interior.
- Identify how geography influenced economic activities and evaluate which empire had the strongest geographic advantages.
- Identify evidence of competition between European powers.
- Explain the strategic importance of the Caribbean region.

Teacher circulates and supports as needed.

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#### **4. Scavenger Hunt (15 minutes)**

Students complete the 10-question multiple-choice quiz.

Grades 3–5:

- May work in pairs
- Teacher clarifies vocabulary when needed

Grades 6–8:

- Independent work encouraged
- Students return to map for evidence

Teacher reviews key questions afterward.

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#### **5. Closing Reflection (5 minutes)**

Exit Ticket (differentiated):

Grades 3–5:

“Name one empire and one place it controlled.”

Grades 6–8:

“How did geography help or challenge one empire’s expansion?”

Grade 9:

“Which empire had the strongest advantage in the Americas? Support your answer with evidence from the map.”