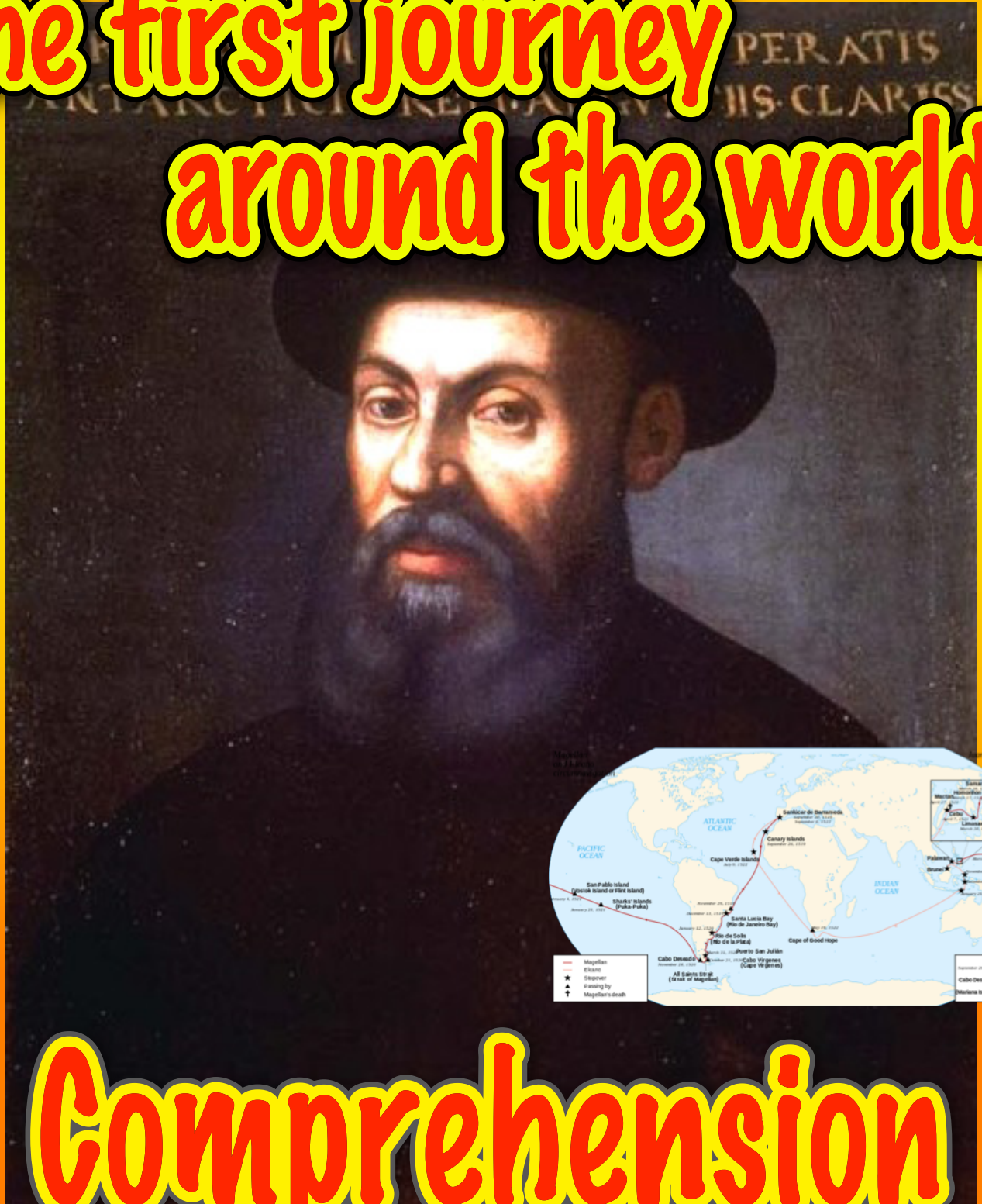


Magellan:

The first journey around the world



Comprehension

Magellan: the first journey around the world

The early years that we call Tudor times are called the Age of Discovery. Ferdinand Magellan lived at this time. European countries like Spain and Portugal had grown wealthy by trading gold, silver and spices brought from Africa and Asia. But there was fierce competition for the trade routes to the 'Spice Islands' as they were called. The route went around the coast of Africa, then India and on to East Asia. In the early part of the 1500s, Portugal had been capturing more and more of this route for themselves. Spain did not want to lose out on valuable goods, so the Spanish king, Charles V, was willing to pay someone to find a new trade route.

Magellan was the man for the job, even though he was Portuguese and not Spanish. Magellan knew the Spice Islands from when he worked for Portugal. But in 1512 Magellan fell out of favour with the Portuguese king and turned to Spain for support. Magellan set out a daring plan to sail west from Europe via the Americas. The Spanish king was keen to agree.

So, in 1519, Magellan set sail with a fleet of five ships, only one of which would return to Spain three years later. These tiny ships battled stormy weather in the Atlantic Ocean as they made their way to south America. The ships' crew, who were mostly Spanish, did not fully trust Magellan because he was Portuguese, and they threatened mutiny. But Magellan harshly punished the ringleaders, and the expedition continued.

Magellan did not know South America because there were no maps. He was exploring the unknown, but his instincts helped him find and steer through a passage that went from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean around the southern tip of South America. But these are some of the stormiest ocean areas in the world and two of the ships sank before reaching the western coast of South America. At this point Magellan thought the worst was over, and that he must be close to Asia by now, but he was wrong. The three remaining ships had to sail west for fourteen weeks across the Pacific Ocean before reaching any land.

By now Magellan and his crew were almost starving, but they re-supplied their ship there, and then pressed on. They finally reached the Philippines in Asia in 1521. He had reached the Philippines via Africa on previous voyages, which meant Magellan had found the route round the world he had searched for. But he would not live to tell the world about it himself because he was killed in an argument between locals that turned into a bloody fight. Only eighteen crew on one ship escaped. They sailed back to Spain along the Africa trade route. But all the same, before his death, Magellan had sailed to the same part of the world from the east and the west, thus making him one of the first men to sail around the world. The part of the ocean that he discovered around the tip of South America is called the Magellan Strait in honour of his exploration.

Understanding words

Before we can understand a story we have to know what all of the words mean. Let's try one...

a Write the sentence in which you found the word 'valuable'.

b From that sentence, suggest what 'valuable' means.

c Write a new sentence using the word 'valuable'.

d Use a dictionary to find words with a similar meaning (synonyms) to 'valuable'.

e Draw a small picture showing what you think 'valuable' means.

Try this for other words, too. 2

Finding key words

Next, we need to find the key words that tell us what the story is about...

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list like the one below. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym). You don't have to use all the spaces, but you should not use more.

Key word	Synonym (similar word)
Example: daring	bold

Sequencing

Sequencing means getting the events in the right order. Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense.

After finding a passage through South America, Magellan sailed across the Pacific Ocean.

But after a dispute, Magellan fell out of favour with the Portuguese king.

When they finally arrived in Asia, Magellan was killed in a dispute between locals.

The Spanish king funded Magellan to sail west to Asia instead of east, and so establish a new trading route.

Magellan was born in Portugal and found success as a sailor and explorer.

The crew nearly starved, but made it to land before they did.

Magellan set sail in 1519, and first sailed to South America.

Get to the facts

1 What did Spain and Portugal trade in Africa and Asia?

2 Which country did Magellan come from?

3 Which country did Magellan turn to for support?

4 How many ships set off on Magellan's expedition?

5 How long did it take to cross the Pacific Ocean?

Make a story...

When you read a description it often gives you ideas about how the event might be described differently.

Land ahoy!

We've been sailing for weeks now. Whenever I look over the ship's side, I see water going on forever in all directions. I'm so hungry, I can barely walk from one side of the ship to the other. But I pull myself to my feet and stare out to sea. There is something on the horizon... (now complete the story)

Below is a plain text version for printing:

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Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym).

For example:

Key word – daring Synonym – bold

Sequencing:

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