Europeans Explore the New World

In the 900s Vikings from Scandinavia sailed to North America. But word of this unfamiliar land did not reach the rest of Europe.

Five hundred years later, Columbus believed he had reached the islands of the Indies and referred to their inhabitants as Indians.

After finding no sign of the cities and treasures of the Indies, other European explorers began calling the Americas the New World.

A. Vikings Reach North America

Ancient Scandinavian sagas, or stories, told of Viking settlements in Vinland. Few believed them until traces were found of a Viking village, 

Treasures of the Incas and the Aztecs fueled Spain's quest for gold.

Spanish explorers soon stopped looking for the Indies and started looking for gold. They mixed silver and seized gold objects made by Aztecs and other Native Americans.

Spanish Explorations and Conquests

- Vespucci
- Ponce de León
- Cortés
- Narváez and Cabecilla de Vaca
- Pizarro
- de Soto
- Coronado
- Cabrillo and Fages

= Spanish conquest

- 1531-1600: Spanish explored coasts and traveled inland searching for gold. They based their land claims on their explorations and their conquests of native empires.