

# John Cabot

This text is excerpted from an original work of the Core Knowledge Foundation.

In 1490, Giovanni Caboto (/joh\*vah\*nee/kah\*boh\*toh/) moved his family from Venice to Spain. Years of experience as a Venetian spice trader had made Caboto an expert seaman. Now he was caught up in the spirit of exploration.

Caboto wanted to form an expedition to search for a northwesterly route to the Spice Islands.

Unfortunately, the monarchs of both Portugal and Spain had other plans.

The Portuguese had established their own route to the East around the Cape of Good Hope at the southern tip of Africa. When Christopher Columbus returned from his voyage, the Spanish believed that they had found another route. No one wanted to hear Caboto's proposal for still another route.

Caboto moved with his family to the port city of Bristol, England. There, Giovanni Caboto changed his name to John Cabot. The English monarch, Henry VII, and the merchants of Bristol were happy to give the explorer their support. They hoped he would bring them great wealth.

After a failed first attempt in 1496, John Cabot set sail again in 1497. He sailed under an English flag with only one ship and a crew of eighteen. The ship crossed the North Atlantic. After five weeks of travel, the crew spotted what they called "new found land." Cabot believed that he had found an island off the coast of Asia. He returned to England to report his findings.



*John Cabot sought support for an expedition to find a passage to the Spice Islands through North America.*

The sailors did not have any spices or silks to show for their journey, but they were able to describe scooping fish out of the water in baskets. The voyage was judged a success, and another trip was planned for the following year.

The next time Cabot set sail, he had a fleet of five ships. One of his ships returned to Bristol after a storm. Cabot and the other four ships were never seen again. To this day, nobody knows for certain what happened to them.



*Cabot's crew described waters so rich in fish they could be scooped out in baskets.*

## The Northwest Passage

John Cabot was one of the first explorers to seek the Northwest Passage to the Indies. He was not the last. Cabot's son Sebastian followed in his father's footsteps, as did many other explorers. For many years, all of these explorers were frustrated in their attempts. Those who went south found a continuous band of land blocking their way—the eastern coast of North America. Explorers who went farther north were literally stopped cold, their passage prevented by ice in the water. The farther north explorers went, the fewer goods they could find to bring back home. Northern explorers generally had almost nothing to show for their efforts.

Even though the explorers failed to find a northwesterly shortcut to the Indies, their attempts did have some helpful results. Explorers looking for the passage made maps of the coast of North America and thus set the stage for the colonization of the continent.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is a meaning of the word **route**?

- A. a way or road
- B. the Internet
- C. male siblings

2. What is another meaning of the word **route**?

- A. an established line of travel or access
- B. business done by rail, steamship, etc.
- C. the land ruled by a count or a countess

**Please use each answer choice only once. Choose the one word that best completes the sentence.**

3. Other maps showed the \_\_\_\_\_ between villages.

- A. routed
- B. reroute
- C. route
- D. routes

4. No vehicles can drive up the steep, dangerous \_\_\_\_\_ to the camp.

- A. routed
- B. reroute
- C. route
- D. routes

5. The computer said there were problems in the subsurface system, and it was attempting to \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. routed
- B. reroute
- C. route
- D. routes

6. On modern cars, the exhaust pipe is \_\_\_\_\_ through a catalytic converter that is part of the car's emission control system.

- A. routed
- B. reroute
- C. route
- D. routes

7. Please write your own sentence using the word **route**.

8. What would you like to remember about the meaning of the word **route** so that you can use it when you write or speak?

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**Answers will vary.**

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