CLN Televised Courses
GED Preparation/Social Studies
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GED Social Studies
Worksheet: Lesson 2

FOCUS: EUROPEAN EXPLORATION OF THE "NEW WORLD" / EARLY EXPLORERS

VOCABULARY:
Find the definitions of the following words and use them in a sentence.

1. exploration
2. civilization
3. archeological
4. inhabitants
5. seafaring
6. missions
7. continents
8. envoy
9. alternate
10. mirage
11. foreign
12. conquistadores (conquistadors)

MARCO POLO

In 1298, Marco Polo dictated an account of his travels through Asia to a writer from Pisa. The book, which Polo called "Description of the World," was the first known travel account, and opened the little known world of Asia to Europeans. Marco Polo's great skill at story telling, combined with the wealth he had brought back from his travels, caused many Europeans to favor developing trade with Asia. Since travel over land was generally difficult and dangerous, explorers like Columbus and da Gama began to look for alternate ways to reach Asia by sea.

Marco Polo's adventures began when he was 17 years old, when he left with his father and uncle for China. Nikola and Mate Polo had recently returned from a 15 year journey in Asia, where they had served at the court of Kublai Khan, the Mongol emperor who ruled over two thirds of Asia. The Khan had asked the Polos to bring some European scholars to his court so that they could teach him about Christianity. The explorers traveled overland from Palestine to China. Marco describes the many sights and cultures he saw along the way, sometimes with great accuracy and sometimes with fanciful imagination. In fact, when Marco Polo was on his deathbed, he was accused of making up many of the stories he told. However, we now know that some of the accounts that seemed difficult to believe