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| **1. Better ships and sails:**  Europeans learned how to make triangular sails. This allowed them to turn the sail and catch the wind. Ships became stronger, faster and easier to handle. | **2. Better maps and charts:**  Mapmakers began to make more accurate maps. They were drawn to scale and had compass directions. Sailors returning from voyages created new maps for other sailors. | **3. Religion:**  Most people in Europe were Christians. They thought that believing in other gods was evil worship of the Devil. Some explorers went on their voyages to spread Christianity. |
| **4. Wealthy People:**  There were many wealthy kings and merchants in Europe who were willing to lend money to explorers. They expected profit in return from riches which the explores hoped to find. | **5. Gunpowder and guns:**  By the 15th century gunpowder and guns were being used in Europe. Sea captains could take cannon, guns and ammunition on their voyages in case they met any hostile tribes. | **6. New Navigational Instruments:**  New navigational instruments, such as the compass helped sailors to find out what direction was north. Other instruments helped calculate how far north or south of the equator they were. |
| **7. Henry the Navigator:**  He encouraged sailors to sail down the west coast of Africa. By 1460 they had discovered Sierra Leone and were hoping to find a way of sailing around Africa to India. | **8. Bartholomew Diaz:**  He reached the southern tip of Africa. It was so stormy that his men refused to sail any further. When he returned in 1488 it was named the ‘Cape of Good Hope.’ | **9. Christopher Columbus:**  He believed he could reach India by sailing across the Atlantic Ocean. He set sail in 1492 and landed on islands off the coast of America. He called them the ‘West Indies.’ |