**Subject area/course**: History/Social Studies; World History

**Grade level/band**: 9

**Task source**: Educational Policy Improvement Center (EPIC)

**Get Your Passport Ready: Traveling with Early Explorers**

**TEACHER'S GUIDE**

1. **Task overview**:

The Commercial Revolution fueled a desire to explore the world. Travelers, adventurers, and explorers went looking for markets, power, and/or knowledge. In groups of four, students will individually research the journeys of four adventurers. After conducting their research, each member will share their information with the group. Students will individually decide which journey they would most like to join. To do so, they will have to fill out an application to take part in a time-travel experiment and be allowed to join their chosen explorer and his journey. The application asks them to explain why their chosen journey was important historically, why they would like to be a part of it, and what they feel they can contribute to it.

1. **Aligned standards:**
2. **Primary Common Core State Standards**

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.1](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/9-10/1/) Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/9-10/9/) Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/SL/9-10/1/) Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.2](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/SL/9-10/2/) Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.7](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/9-10/7/) Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.9](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/9-10/9/) Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

1. **Critical abilities**

Research: Conduct a sustained research project to answer a question and demonstrate understanding of the subject under investigation, gathering relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources and use advanced searches effectively.

Analysis of Information: Integrate and synthesize multiple sources of information in order to address a question, make informed decisions, while evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

Communication in Many Forms: Use oral and written communication skills to learn, evaluate, and express ideas for a task and audience.

Interpersonal Interaction and Collaboration: Develop a range of interpersonal skills, including the ability to work with others, to participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations.

1. **Time/schedule requirements:**

Students will need 1 week to research and 1 class period in which to present their research. They will then need 1-2 days to complete their application to join a travel party.

1. **Materials/resources:**

* Explorer Analysis document, one copy per student (included in the student prompt)
* Time Travel Application, one copy per student (included in the student prompt)
* Library and/or Internet access for students
* If possible, work with your librarian to find primary source diaries and excerpts written about or by the four explorers.
* The National Geographic website (http://www.nationalgeographic.com) has excellent resources on the four explorers named in this task.

1. **Prior knowledge:**

Students should be able to:

* Read a map and identify geographic places.
* Have a basic understanding of various kingdoms and historic dynasties in Europe, West Africa, North Africa, Horn of Africa, South Asia, Central Asia, SE Asia, and China.
* Know basic differences between major religions and some of the well-known traditions.
* Research a topic and summarize the information in a short presentation.
* Explain and support a point of view.

1. **Connection to curriculum:**

None listed.

1. **Teacher instructions:**

DAY 1:

* Briefly review with students the “known world” from the viewpoint of Europeans and Asians during the 14th and 15th centuries. A historical map showing the various kingdoms, empires, religions, and geographic features would be helpful. Be sure to highlight the spread of Islam, the African kingdoms, Indian and East Asian empires, and the Silk Road. North America can be shown from the perspective of early cartographers.
* Ask students what they think it would be like to travel during this time. What do they know about how people traveled, what obstacles and dangers existed, and what areas would be the most difficult to travel in?
* Distribute the student handout and review the requirements. Clarify concerns and answer questions. Divide students into groups of four and have them decide who in each group is going to research Marco Polo, Ibn Battuta, Columbus, and Zheng He. Columbus and Marco Polo are the most easily researchable for students needing accommodations, while Ibn Battuta and Zheng He are more difficult.
* Let students know the timeline of the task, including due dates.

DAYS 2-6:

* Provide class time for students to conduct research. Explain to them that as they do their research, they should use the Explorer Analysis document and answer as many questions on it as they can. They will use this document to share their research findings with their groups. Also, their answers will be useful to them in completing the Time Travel Application.

DAY 7:

* Students should come to class prepared to share their research. Have students meet in their groups of four. Allow each student 10 minutes to present the information and answer questions. After all four have presented, allow 5 minutes for students to discuss who they think they will choose and to clarify any other information they need to complete their Time Travel Application. Provide a due date for applications.

ON APPLICATION DUE DATE:

* Have students meet in the groups of four and share their applications. As a full class, debrief students’ work by asking students questions such as the following: Which explorer would they choose to join? What criteria were important in their choice? How many students chose the same person they researched for their group? Why do they think that is? What points of view about the journey do their primary and secondary sources express? Which accounts seem most accurate? What, in general, were the reasons why people traveled or explored? Why were there no women exploring during this time period? Which explorer do students think had the greatest impact on the future? What are conditions like today in the regions discussed during this task?

1. **Student support:**

Additional Scaffolding for Day 1:

* Divide students into four groups. Limit each group to just one of the four explorers. Have each group work together to locate sources on that one explorer.

Additional Scaffolding for Day 2-6:

* As group members research their explorer, ask each individual to fill out an Explorer Analysis document.
* Students will share their answers on this document with their small group, and the group will prepare a ten minute presentation on their explorer based on what they have learned.

Additional Scaffolding for Day 7:

* Each group gives its presentation and answers questions from other class members.
* Students will fill out their Time Travel Application based on these presentations. While they are likely to choose their own group's explorer, they will have the opportunity to make other choices based on these presentations.

1. **Extensions or variations:**

* There are many other explorers that could be used for this activity. Feel free to add others. These were chosen because they are diverse and represent many parts of the world other than the Portuguese, Spanish, French, and English explorers during the Age of Discovery.
* Students could write a persuasive essay as to why his or her choice is the better expedition to join.
* Students could make posters campaigning for their choice of expedition.

1. **Scoring:**

Student work can be scored using the Get Your Passport Ready Rubric. **The final products on which students will be assessed are a fully completed Explorer Analysis document and a Time Travel Application.** The Time Travel Application should demonstrate knowledge of the explorers’ contributions, including a reasoned response to why the student would join the expedition.