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World Civilization 1

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### Crash Course Response

John Green discusses the exploration and voyages of several mariners from various countries throughout the Age of Exploration in the Crash Course video.

Columbus was an Italian adventurer who set sail for Spain. His major purpose was to find a new trade route to Asia by traveling westward. In 1492, he sailed off with three ships and landed in the Bahamas, thinking he had reached the Indies. Columbus is widely credited with "discovering" America, despite the fact that he never stepped foot on the mainland.

Vasco da Gama was a Portuguese explorer who sailed to India in 1497-1499. His goal was to establish direct trade with India and bypass the Muslim and Venetian middlemen who controlled the trade. He succeeded in establishing a direct trade route and opened the way for Portuguese colonialism in India.

Zheng In the early 15th century, he undertook seven maritime missions as a Chinese explorer. His ambition was to create Chinese control in the Indian Ocean and to increase Chinese influence via trade and diplomacy. He sailed all the way to East Africa, but his missions were cut short by the Ming Dynasty's choice to turn inward.

In terms of similarities, all of these mariners were seeking new trade routes and were motivated by economic gain. They all had to overcome great challenges, including navigating uncharted waters, dealing with unknown cultures, and facing difficult conditions at sea. They were all also able to make significant discoveries that expanded the knowledge of the world at the time.

In terms of comparisons, Columbus was sailing for Spain, whereas da Gama and Zheng He were sailing for Portugal and China, respectively. Columbus' discovery of the New World had a tremendous influence on the Americas, while da Gama's expedition opened up new commercial opportunities in India and Zheng He's journeys were aimed at consolidating Chinese control in the Indian Ocean. Furthermore, Columbus and da Gama were both traveling with the stated objective of discovering a new way to Asia, but Zheng He's trips were focused on increasing China's influence through commerce and diplomacy.