

# Why Did the English Sail to the New World?

The journey to the New World undertaken by renowned English explorers like Christopher Columbus, John Cabot, and Sir Francis Drake is a significant chapter in the history of exploration. The motives behind these expeditions were multifaceted, ranging from economic incentives to religious freedom, curiosity, and the thirst for power and glory. This article aims to explore and shed light on the reasons that drove the English to venture into the unknown and set sail to the New World.

## 1. Economic Opportunities

One of the primary motivations for English exploration was the search for new trade routes and economic opportunities. The European powers of the time, including England, were driven by the desire to establish direct access to the lucrative spice trade in the East. After the Ottoman Empire captured Constantinople in 1453, the overland route to Asia became hazardous and costly. Therefore, the English set their sights on discovering a sea passage to the East, which ultimately led to the discovery of the Americas.

The English were also drawn to the New World by the prospect of discovering valuable resources, such as gold, silver, and other precious metals. The tales of vast riches in the lands across the Atlantic Ocean fueled the imagination of English explorers and investors alike.

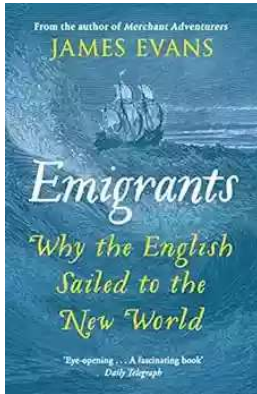
### Emigrants: Why the English Sailed to the New World by James Evans(Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5

Language : English

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Text-to-Speech : Enabled



Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
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Print length : 336 pages



## 2. Religious Freedom

The search for religious freedom played a crucial role in motivating the English to sail to the New World. During the 16th and 17th centuries, England underwent religious turmoil, with the Church of England struggling for dominance and numerous dissenting religious groups emerging. Many of these groups, often referred to as separatists or dissenters, sought a place where they could practice their faith without persecution.

One significant example of religious motivation leading to English exploration is the story of the Pilgrims. These Separatist Puritans, desiring to escape religious persecution, sailed on the Mayflower in 1620 and established the Plymouth Colony in present-day Massachusetts. Their arrival marked one of the earliest successful English settlements in the New World.

## 3. Curiosity and the Spirit of Adventure

The Age of Exploration was characterized by a prevailing sense of curiosity and a thirst for adventure. As knowledge began to spread throughout Europe and scientific advancements made seafaring more feasible, people became increasingly fascinated by the world beyond their known shores. This spirit of

exploration and the desire to navigate uncharted territories drove many English explorers to set sail towards new horizons, eager to map the unknown and satisfy their intellectual curiosity.

#### **4. Competition and Power Struggles**

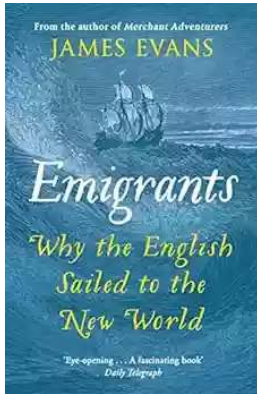
The New World became a battleground for European powers vying for dominance and control over territories and resources. England, like its rivals Spain and France, wanted to expand its influence and secure its claim on the newly discovered lands. By establishing colonies in the Americas, the English sought to enhance their global power, assert their economic dominance, and secure strategic advantages over their competitors.

English explorers like Sir Francis Drake undertook voyages with the intention of challenging Spanish dominance in the Caribbean and acquiring resources to weaken Spain's position. These actions were part of a larger political and economic struggle between European powers seeking to establish their empires and secure their place in the world.

The decision of the English to sail to the New World was driven by various factors, including economic opportunities, religious freedom, curiosity, and the pursuit of power. The desire for wealth, the need for religious sanctuary, the thrill of exploration, and the quest for dominance all played a role in shaping English exploration and colonization in the Americas.

Understanding the motivations behind these voyages illuminates the complex tapestry of history and provides insights into the dynamics that shaped the world we live in today.

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'Marvellously engaging' The Times  
'Brisk, informative and eye-opening' Daily Telegraph

In the 1600s, vast numbers of people left England for the Americas. Crossing the Atlantic was a major undertaking, the voyage long and treacherous. Why did they go?

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