The 15th and 16th centuries are called "the Age of Exploration." And for good reason. During this time, a vast influx of new science and technology filled the exploration world. Advances in cartography, shipbuilding, and exploration techniques led to exploration of vast new frontiers for Europeans. New trading routes were discovered, and trade increased throughout Europe. All these improvements in science and technology led to the exposure of Europe's wondrous for new routes were found to the Far East, and even a whole new world was discovered as a result of increased learning.

Much of the beginnings of sea exploration in the 15th century can be attributed to Prince Henry the Navigator. It was he who set up the school of navigation school for sea exploration in Portugal, and brought the best scholars to find new advances in the world of sea exploration. One area that particularly interested Henry and other explorers was a sea route to the Far East. The Muslims controlled the route to the Far East by land, and Portugal desired to make a name for itself. Prince Henry financed expeditions to go around Africa and to the Far East. As advances in cartography were made, the voyagers came closer and closer and eventually, the Far East was reached by Vasco de Gama. If it were not for Prince Henry's ambition for sea travel, the route to India may have not been found for quite some time.

Improvements in technology also helped the cause of sea exploration. Lateen sails, triangular sails built to be able to catch the wind at any angle, helped to increase the freedom sailors had in where to go and not have to worry about the direction of the wind. The compass
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and astrolabe were instrumental in helping Captain find their way to distant lands. Finally, smaller, faster ships were built, cutting the time needed for voyages to the Far East or to the New World. Trade greatly increased because ships could travel at a greater rate than before.

The thinking of many people during this period of time also influenced European trade and exploration. The 15th and 16th centuries were the time of the Renaissance, a celebration of the achievements of man. People began to look at humans as creatures who could accomplish anything. People began thinking beyond what the normal perception and started to look outside the box. The scientific revolution is an example of this, and this exploration of the unknown permeated to explorers and scientists. Had Christopher Columbus not dared to try a western route to China, the New World would have remained unknown to Europe. The willingness of people to step out explore the unknown helped the cause of exploration and discovery of new frontiers, and helped Europe both scientifically and economically.

The Age of Exploration was a major turning point in European history. Not till the Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution was there a time where science, thought, and technology brought about a whole new perspective of the world. With new technology and the ambition to explore the unknown, the explorers helped to shape a New World and change how people looked at the world.
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Advances in mapping technology encouraged European exploration and trade. The knowledge acquired from thinkers & scientists containing ideas of the world & technology as well as advances in learning & thought from the renaissance onward, influenced 15th & 16th century European exploration & trade. The necessary technology greatly eased the trip of ships while the thoughts & things learned increased explorers' questioning attitudes & the need for answers.

During the renaissance people applied their knowledge into figuring out how the world worked & how one can use certain tools etc to make the world easier to take on. For example, Behnere & Schoonei made maps which when helped explorers in determining where their destination should be or in some cases, or Christopher Columbus's case, whether the map was accurate. Maps helped determine where the things should be & therefore how long the exploration should take. Methods of reaching the stars also came into play, by reading they could get lost less or not at all, which encouraged them to explore. Also a tool used to figure out latitude & how to use it to get to a destination also influenced explorers as well as trade, the compass which was an older invention by the Chinese increased one's knowledge of where they were.

Besides tools to determine where in the world you are or how to get to a certain area, ships were made differently. New sails, which were triangle shaped & stronger with the wind, made these easier & more reliably to succeed in bad weather.
Heavier, better, stronger ships also made carrying more goods possible & easier in case of battle when a trade ship was raided.

Indefinitely besides new technology, new ship sizes were set up. Henry of Navarre, a sailor himself, set up a nautical training school which prepared sailors & therefore increased the willingness to explore the world they didn’t really know. Universities & schools were set up also to teach ideas of how the world was & doubts maintained people increased the willingness to explore. Different learning in an economic & social view also increased exploration. Because people were brought up learning that gold & money was good & it was the way of the world explorers & traders also left their countries. Exploring was a way for normal people to find riches.

In another sense traders learned that they needed new trade routes. Because of explorers like Christopher Columbus, Diaz, Valla, etc., they acquired the knowledge that certain countries could be a place to exchange for goods they needed. Thus this influenced trade for the poor, the already rich, merchants, & monarchs.

Advances in learning & technology greatly influenced European trade & exploration. People were more willing to take the risk because of methods improving success (compass, sails, maps & tools) 

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