**Discovering America**

**Introduction:**

3 August 1492, an Italian adventurer named Christopher Columbus set sail from Spain to find a new way from Europe to Asia. The discovery of America came as a result of many transformations which occurred in Europe at the end of the middle ages.

1. **Circumstances of discovery :** 
   1. The Crusades
   2. The end of feudalism and the emergence of monarchies
   3. Renaissance
   4. Religious and economic reasons
2. **Christopher Columbus journey:** the Italian adventurer, Christopher Columbus, decided to engage in this voyage and promised the King of Spain to find a new and short route to reach Asia without passing through the Mediterranean sea. After he left Spain, ten weeks he reached an island, he named it San-salvador (holy savior). He thought that he landed in the Indies. For this reason, he called the friendly, brown skinned people who greeted him ‘Los Indios' meaning Indians. But in fact, Columbus was not near India and it was not the edge of Asia but it was a new continent. European soon called it America and called those inhabitants Indians.

**The original inhabitants**

**Introduction :** when the Europeans arrived in the new continent, they found it already inhabited by some Indian tribes which were believed to have migrated from Mongolia(East Asia) through Siberia ( East and northeast Russia) thousands of years ago. In 1600, their number in what is now the USA was estimated to one and half million. These tribes differed in their languages, cultures and traditions. Amerindians is the name given to the original inhabitants of America who were living in small groups known as tribes or towns.

1. **The Pueblo :** are people of present day Arizona and New Mexico. They were the best organized of the Amerindian farming people. They lived in groups of villages and towns. Long before Europeans came to America, the Pueblo were building networks of canals across the deserts to bring water to their fields. They were relatively peaceful and more civilized.
2. **The Apache :** were the neighbors of the Pueblo. They were never settled farmers, they wandered the deserts and mountains hunting and gathering wild plants. The Apache used to obtain food by raiding their Pueblo neighbors and stealing it. They were fierce and warlike and they were much feared by the Pueblo.
3. **The Iroquois :** were a group of tribes who lived far away from the Pueblo and the Apache in the woods of the northeastern North America. They were skilled farmers, hunters and fishermen. The Iroquois were fierce warriors and were feared by their neighbors as the Apache of the Western deserts were feared by their.
4. **The Sioux :** many miles to the west, on the vast plains of grass that stretched from the Mississippi River (northeast) to the Rocky Mountains (western North America), there was another warrior nation. This group called themselves Dakota, which means ‘allies'. But they were better known by the name which other Amerindians gave to them ; Sioux, which means ‘enemies'. The Sioux grew no crops and built no houses. For food, for shelter and for clothing they depended upon the buffalo.

Many east-coast Indians helped the first English settlers to survive the hunger and the tropical diseases hitherto unknown to them. Later on, as more settlers arrived, the Indians turned out to be staunch defenders of their ancestral lands.

**European Settlements in the New Continent**

1. **Spanish Exploration and Settlement:** Spain took several steps to establish colonies in the new continent. During the 1490s and 1500s, Spain continued its attempts to settle in America looking for gold and more precious metals.
2. **French Exploration and Settlement:** France also was looking for ways to gain wealth through exploration and colonization. Its first goal was to find the mythical Northwest Passage to Asia. When that search failed, they began to focus on the new found land for colonies.
3. **English Exploration and Settlements :** Among the European settlers in the new world, the English settlement was slow to start. English interest in North America began with the voyages of the Italian navigator John Cabot sponsored by king of England Henry VIII, who reached the region which became known as New England. The reasons behind the delay of the English settlement in the new continent were:
   1. The Spanish Threat
   2. Economic crisis