

Name _____

An Explorer's Journal

Dear Journal,

After many weeks on the ship, the ability to see land on the horizon was wonderful. As we sailed closer, everyone on the ship gathered at the bow to get a glimpse of our new home. My head was filled with the possibilities of opportunities this new land would offer us.

I was not unaware of the difficulties we would encounter. Early explorers had sent word back to Europe that this new land was full of challenges. The terrain could be rough and without any shelter the weather will be punishing. Our first task would be to build a fort to keep us safe from the indigenous population and shelter us from the elements. Knowing this, we are sure to be more successful than those who explored before us.

Still, the wide open spaces available to us get the wheels in my head turning. I imagine the crops that can be grown and sold for a large profit back in Europe. The plentiful supply of lumber from the piney woods will be a great resource. We will work to be the first to harvest these resources and establish the trade pattern. We will also be the best!

There is more opportunity to be had in trading with the indigenous people. They know the land and will hopefully teach us the best way to live off of it. We have many things they want too, like crops not native to the area and guns with ammunition. We will make sure the trade is beneficial for us and does not give them too much power.

Thinking back to my life in Europe, I know things here in the new world will be very different. I will not be able to walk through town to meet my needs, but instead will learn to live off the land. One thing I am excited about is having room to stretch out. Back home, our neighbors were almost on top of us, but here, there is space to spread out as far as the eye can see!

Of course, I wouldn't mind finding some of that gold and riches that are rumored to be here. I would sure love to become wealthy beyond my imagination. There are more riches than just gold and silver though, there is certainly something to be said for being a landowner.

©TeachingInTheFastLane

What genre would this passage be?

What is an example of figurative language used in paragraph three?

What were the motivations of the explorer who wrote this journal entry?

Using context clues, what do you think the word glimpse in the first paragraph means?

What point of view is the passage told from?

What can you infer about the writer of this journal entry based on his excitement to see land?



Think of a place you would like to explore. Make a list of the positives and negatives for exploring it and write a paragraph convincing someone to go with you.

Name _____

Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca was born between the years of 1487 and 1492 in Spain. The exact date of his birth is unknown because documents from this long ago are not available. When he was still young, both of his parents passed away leaving him as an orphan.

Cabeza de Vaca joined the Spanish military as a young adult and received awards for his service. It was during this time that he was recognized for his accomplishments and selected as an officer to explore North America with Pánfilo de Narváez. For this journey, they sailed five ships with the goal of settling along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico.

After crossing the Atlantic, the ships landed in Cuba where they stayed for the winter. In 1528, they crossed to modern day Florida and sent 500 men along with horses to land. Their exploration of Florida was unsuccessful and many men died. They were no longer able to reach their original ships, so they had to build new rafts to escape. Their goal was to reach a Spanish settlement in Mexico.

These rafts were not built to withstand the waves and were dangerous. After several weeks adrift in the Gulf of Mexico, a storm caused the raft Cabeza de Vaca was in charge of to crash land into the Texas coast near Galveston Island. Sickness swept through the remaining men. Combined with the brutal weather, many more died.

Cabeza de Vaca began to make a new life for himself as a merchant trading goods with the indigenous people. This wasn't entirely successful though as he was taken as a prisoner of one tribe and held for over a year.

Still, he tried to reach Mexico and the Spanish settlement there. Eventually they made it, but continued on their journey throughout Mexico.

Throughout his time in Texas, Cabeza de Vaca became known as a defender of the indigenous population and Texas' first European historian. In his book, *Relacion*, he told of his adventures throughout Texas and wrote about the landscape, plants, and native population.

Cabeza de Vaca

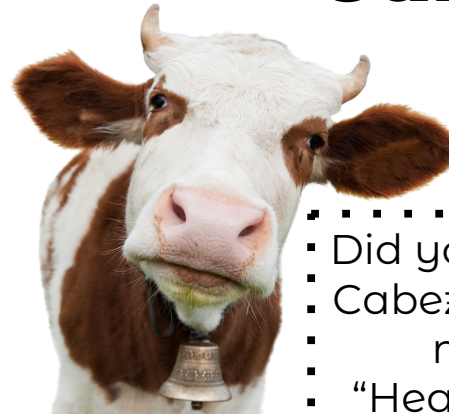


Photo from Deposit Photos

Did you know?
Cabeza de Vaca
means
"Head of Cow"
in Spanish.

Write a one sentence summary of the information on Cabeza de Vaca.



A lot of things went wrong for Cabeza de Vaca on his journey through North America. Write a personal narrative about a time something didn't go according to plan.

Where was Cabeza de Vaca from?

How did the author organize the text?

What can you infer about Cabeza de Vaca's journey?

Why did the author include a photo of a cow?