

AF2: Understand, select, retrieve information and reference the text.

Caravel

In the 1440s, a **caravel** style ship could be found in the Atlantic Sea and the Mediterranean Sea. These small-to-medium sized ships were used as cargo carriers, warships, patrol or dispatch boats, and pirate ships. The earliest evidence of the **caravel** was in Spain or Portugal in the 13th century. They were used mostly as fishing vessels.

Prince Henry the Navigator of Portugal started exploring the West African coastline using his home in Sagres as a navigational centre. The Portuguese discovered that the standard medieval merchantman (which was another type of boat) could not sail effectively through the winds and currents along the coast. So, Prince Henry and his builders started to adapt the **caravel** for long-distance exploration and trade. The ships were designed and built at the port of Lagos, Portugal.

Portuguese shipwrights built two- or three-masted ships without a forecastle and a low aft castle. The hull design had a rounded bottom with room for lots of cargo. This was useful for carrying goods for trade. While sailing around the coast, the ship would be rigged with a lateen sail for the ease of tacking. A lateen sail is a triangular sail. Captains, such as Christopher Columbus, would convert the sails to square for open water and to add speed.

The ships weighed from 50 to 200 tons and were cheap to rig, cheap to man, and carried much cargo. The **caravel** was favoured for its speed and manoeuvrability especially along the inlets and streams in Africa and the newly discovered Americas.

Make up five questions to ask your friends about this piece of text. You need to make the answers up as well and must ensure that the questions can be answered only from the text.