

Letters Patent to John Cabot (1496)

Dieses Dokument vom 5. März 1496 ist eines der ersten Entdeckerpatente überhaupt, ausgestellt nur vier Jahr nach demjenigen von [Columbus](#). Es gab dem italienischen Händler *Giovanni Caboto* nach Bekanntwerden von *Columbus'* Entdeckung die Lizenz, eine Westpassage nach Asien zu suchen. Nach einem erfolglosen Versuch 1496 erreichte er im Juni 1497 Nordamerika, das er für einen Teil Asiens hielt. Für eine weitere Reise mit sechs Schiffen erhielt er im Februar 1498 ein zweites Patent.

Der hier abgedruckte Text basiert auf der englischen Übersetzung, die mit dem [lateinischen Original](#) abgedruckt ist bei: *Francis Newton Thorpe (Hrsg.)*, *The Federal and State Constitutions Colonial Charters, and Other Organic Laws of the States, Territories, and Colonies Now or Heretofore Forming the United States of America. Compiled and Edited Under the Act of Congress of June 30, 1906, Band 1, Washington 1909, S. 45-47.* Für die Textarbeit gibt es eine [Unterrichtsfassung](#).

The Letters Patent of King Henry VII

Granted unto John Cabot and his Three Sons, Lewis, Sebastian and Sancius for the Discoverie of New and Unknown Lands

Henry, by the grace of God, king of England and France, and lord of Ireland, to all to whom these presents shall come, Greeting.

[1] Be it known that we have given and granted, and by these presents do give and grant for us and our heiress to our welbelovyd John Cabot citizen of Venice, to Lewis, Sebastian, and Santius, sonnes of the sayd John, and to the heires of them, and every of them, and their deputies, full and free authority, leave, and power to saile to all parts, countreys, and seas of the East, of the West, and of the North, under our banners and ensignes, with fine ships of what burthen or quantity soever they be, and as many mariners or men as they will have with them in the sayd ships, upon their owne proper costs and charges, to seeke out, discover, and finde whatsoever isles, countreys, regions or provinces of the heathen and infidels whatsoever they be, and in what part of the world soever they be, which before this time have been unknowen to all Christians:

[2] We have granted to them, and also to every of them, the heires of them, and every of them, and their deputies, and have given them licence to set up our banners and ensignes in every village, townes, castle, isle, or maine land of them newly found. And that the aforesayd John and his sonnes, or their heires and assignee may subdue, occupy and possesse all such townes, cities, castles and isles of them found, which they can subdue, occupy and possesse, as our vassals, and lieutenants, getting unto us the rule, title, and jurisdiction of the same villages, townes, castles, and firme land so found. Yet so that the aforesayd John, and his sonnes and heires, and their deputies, be holden and bounder of all the fruits, profits, gaines, and commodities growing of such navigation, for every their voyage, as often as they shall arrive at our port of Bristoll (at the which port they shall be bound and holden onely to arrive) all maner of necessary costs and charges by them made, being deducted, to pay unto us in wares or money the lift part of the capitall gaines so gotten. We gliuing and granting unto them and to their heires and deputies, that they shall be free from all paying of custome of all and singular such merchandise as they shall be free from all paying of customes of all and singular they shall bring with them from those places so newlie found.

[3] And moreover, we have given and granted to them, their heires and deputies, that all the firme lands, isles, villages, townes, castles and places whatsoever they be that they shall chance to finde, may not of any other of our subjects be frequented or visited without the licence of the foresayd John and his sonnes, and their deputies, under payee of forfeiture as well of their ships as of all and singular goods of all them that shall presume to saile to those places so found. Willing, and most straightly commanding all and singular our subjects as well on land as on sea, appointed officers, to give good assistance to the aforesayd John, and his sonnes and deputies, and that as well in arming and furnishing their ships or vessels, as in provision of quietnesse, and in buying of victuals for their money, and all other things by them to be provided necessary for the sayd navigation, they do give them all their helpe and favour. In witnesse whereof we have caused to be made these our lettres patents.

Witnesse our selfe at Westminister, the fifth day of March, in the eleventh yeere of our reigne.