



Christopher Columbus: The Journey That Changed the World

The Story of Christopher Columbus

I've included so many options with this nonfictional text, you are sure to find something that fits your classroom.

Reading the Article

- Print the article or show it on a viewer such as a SmartBoard.
- Show the video version to the article. With this version, I read the article while students watch the illustrations and text being drawn.

Basic Multiple-Choice Questions:

Printable and interactive versions (using Hot Potatoes) of multiple-choice questions are available to assess students' comprehension of the article. The quiz offers instant feedback but does not collect or record scores, making it an excellent tool for formative assessment.

[Go to the online quizzes.](#)

-----Answer Key for the Multiple Choice Version-----

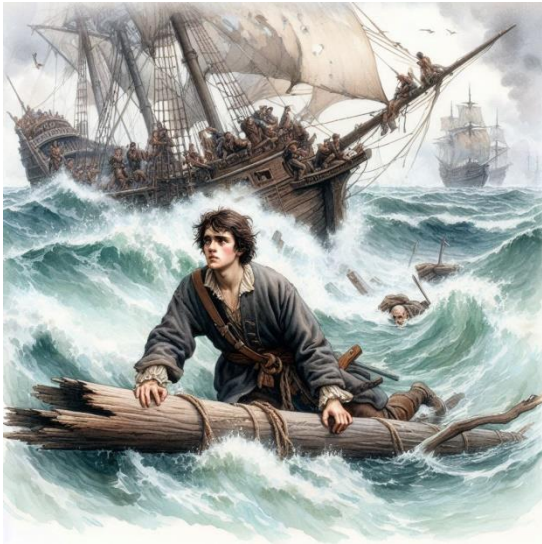
1. (a)
2. (b)
3. (a)
4. (b)
5. (a)
6. (d)
7. (a)
8. (a)
9. (a)
10. (c)
11. (a)



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Introduction to Columbus's Early Life

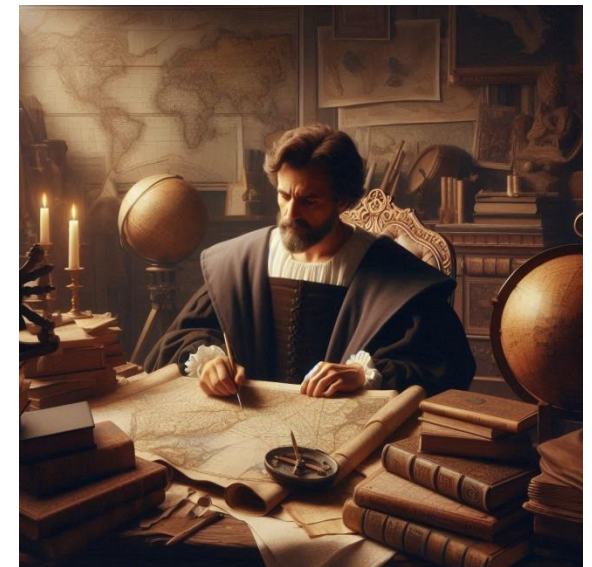
Christopher Columbus was born in the busy port city of Genoa, Italy, in 1451. Growing up by the Mediterranean Sea, he was fascinated by the ships and sailors that came and went. By the time he was 14, Columbus was ready to join the adventure and set sail on Italian ships.



His life took a dramatic turn when, at 25, his ship was attacked by French pirates on a voyage to England. Despite being hurt, Columbus survived by clinging to a piece of floating wood until he reached shore.

The Map Maker and His Dream

After his adventures at sea, Columbus settled down and opened a small shop where he sold maps and books to sailors. He became an expert map maker, spending hours studying and creating maps of the known world. Columbus loved reading about distant lands, and one book by Marco Polo particularly captured his imagination. Polo's tales of riches in the Indies made Columbus believe he could reach these lands by sailing west across the uncharted ocean. He dreamed of discovering a new route to the Indies to bring back valuable jewels and spices.



Raising Money for His Voyage

Columbus was determined to make his dream a reality but needed ships and money. He first asked King John II of Portugal for three ships to test his idea of sailing west to reach the East. The king turned him down. Undeterred, Columbus went to other European rulers in France and England, but they also refused. Finally, Columbus approached King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain. At first, Queen Isabella wasn't convinced and said no. But Columbus's persistence paid off when, later on, the Spanish monarchs agreed to fund his voyage. They provided him with three ships—the Niña, the Pinta, and the Santa María—and a crew of about ninety men.



The Voyage Across the Atlantic

On August 2, 1492, Columbus and his crew set sail on their daring journey across the Atlantic Ocean. The voyage was anything but easy. The sailors were terrified of the unknown waters. They had heard tales of sea monsters and feared that they might sail right off the edge of the world, which some still believed was flat. On September 1, 1492, they sailed past an erupting volcano on the island of Tenerife and witnessed a fiery meteor streaking across the sky and crashing into the ocean. The crew took these as bad omens, adding to their fears.

Discovery and Return

Finally, after 71 long days at sea, Columbus's ships spotted land on October 12. Excited, Columbus and his men rowed ashore and planted the Spanish flag in the sand, claiming the island they named San Salvador for Spain. Believing he had reached the Indies, Columbus called the native people he encountered "Indians." In reality, he had landed on an island in the Bahamas, southeast of what is now Florida.

In March 1493, Columbus returned to Spain, bringing with him a few of the native people he had met. King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella were so pleased with his discovery that they gave him the grand title of Admiral of the Ocean Sea.





Legacy and Later Voyages

Columbus made three more trips to the Americas in 1493, 1498, and 1502, exploring new lands like Cuba, which he called Juana. However, he never found the vast riches he had hoped for. Columbus passed away on May 20, 1506, in Spain, with only modest wealth to his name. Despite this, his voyages opened the door to the exploration and eventual settlement of the Americas, leaving a lasting legacy in history.



Quiz on Christopher Columbus

1. Columbus was born in ---.

- a) Genoa, Italy
- b) Valladolid, Spain
- c) Lisbon, Portugal
- d) the Canary Islands

2. From what you learned, what do you know about some of the men who sailed with Columbus?

- a) They believed they could find a new way to the Indies by sailing to the west.
- b) They were afraid of what might happen to them on the voyage.
- c) They often traveled to the New World.
- d) They never believed the stories about falling off the edge of the Earth or meeting sea monsters.

3. Columbus named the inhabitants of the place he discovered Indians because he thought he had found

- a) India
- b) America
- c) the Caribbean
- d) Portugal

4. The island Columbus called Juana is today called ----.

- a) Dominica
- b) the Indies
- c) Bahamas
- d) Trinidad

5. What year did Christopher Columbus finally set sail with his three ships and crew?

- a) 1492
- b) 1498
- c) 1502
- d) 1484

6. In what direction did Christopher Columbus sail?

- a) north
- b) south
- c) east
- d) west

7. When did Columbus spot land on his first voyage?

- a) October 12
- b) January 2
- c) July 4
- d) September 6

8. When Columbus returned to Spain he was given the title

- a) Admiral of the Ocean Sea
- b) Brethren of the Coast
- c) Ship Chandler
- d) Master Chief Petty Officer

9. How many voyages did Columbus make to the New World?

- a) 4
- b) 1
- c) 15
- d) 8

10. Columbus's voyage to the New World would not have been possible if it were not for ----.

- a) Lewis and Clark
- b) King John II of Portugal
- c) King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella

11. Columbus had three ships. They were the Nina, Pinta, and

- a) Santa Maria
- b) Endurance
- c) Speedwell
- d) Discovery

Unlock the Fall Vault of teaching resources by subscribing to my newsletter! As a subscriber, you'll gain exclusive access to **additional Christopher Columbus resources**, including advanced multiple-choice questions that challenge students to think critically, constructed response questions with organizers to enhance their writing skills, and a variety of engaging activity handouts designed to deepen their understanding of Christopher Columbus's life and voyages.

Additionally, subscribing to my newsletter grants you access to a unique collection of fall-themed teaching resources that make your classroom both fun and educational. Inside the vault, you'll find autumn-themed materials like figurative language activities and seasonal writing prompts.

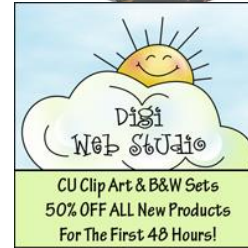
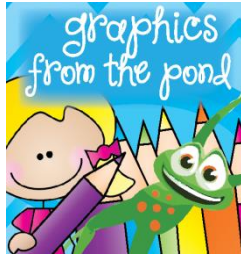
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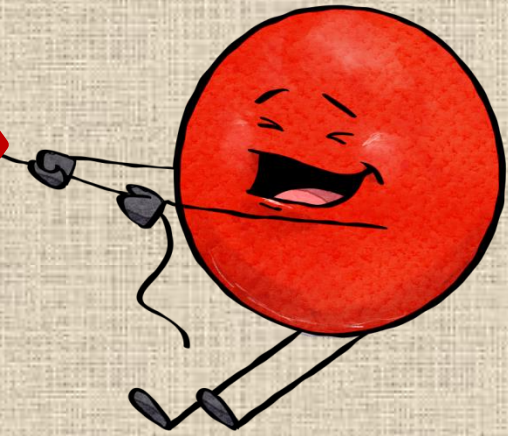


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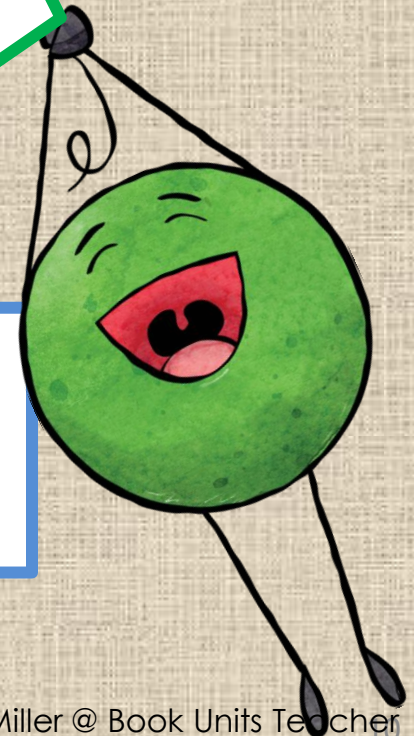
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