

Contents

Introduction.....	5
1. Ferdinand II of Aragon.....	9
2. Christopher Columbus.....	15
3. Pedro	21
4. Christopher Columbus.....	27
5. A Taino islander.....	33
6. Christopher Columbus.....	37
7. Diego de Arana.....	43
8. Martín Alonso Pinzón	47
9. Christopher Columbus.....	53
10. Isabella I of Castile.....	59
Afterword.....	65
Glossary.....	69
Before reading activities.....	77
While reading activities.....	78
After reading activities.....	84

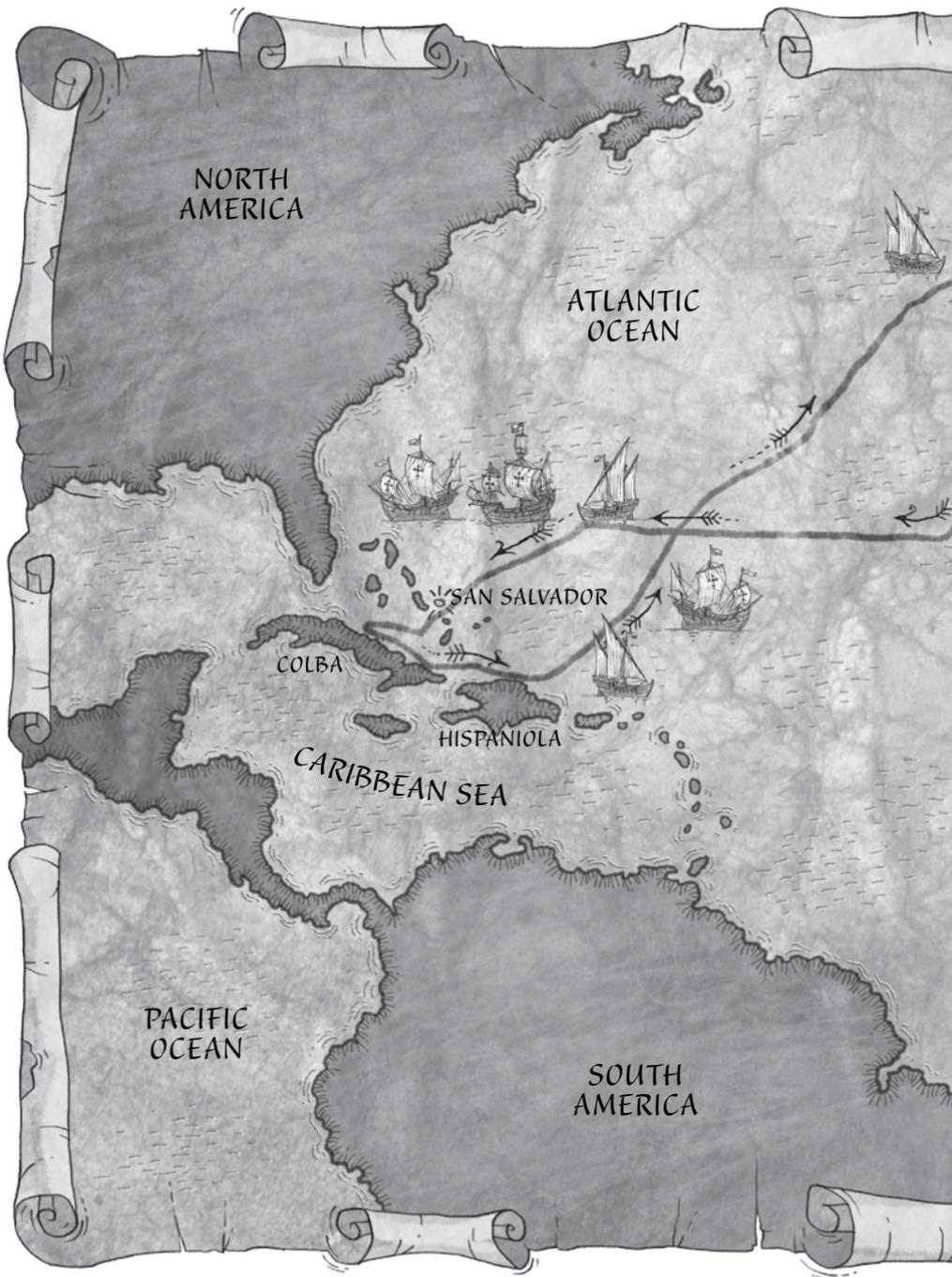
Introduction

When Christopher Columbus finally saw land in October 1492, he thought he had **discovered** an island in ‘the **Indies**’. The Indies were the far-off lands of Asia, to the east of India, which included places that we now call China and Japan. Before the time of Columbus, Europeans had travelled to India and China along the Silk Road, and they had brought back ***silk** and **spices**. At this time, the **rule** of the Mongols gave stability to much of Asia. However, after the **fall** of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks in 1453, the land route to Asia became dangerous and difficult. Europeans wanted to continue to **trade** with Asia, but they needed to find a sea route there.

The Portuguese began to look for an eastern sea route to the Indies by **sailing** down the coast of Africa. They made good progress with this during the 1480s. The Portuguese **sailor** Bartholomew Diaz sailed round the Cape of Good Hope at the bottom of Africa in 1488. However, Christopher Columbus had a different plan. He believed that he could reach the Indies by sailing west across the ‘**Ocean Sea**’. This is what we now call the Atlantic Ocean.

Columbus was probably born in 1451 in the sea port of Genoa, which is today part of Italy. At about the age of 14, he went to sea, and during the late 1460s and the 1470s, he sailed on trading ships around the Mediterranean, and also to Northern Europe.

* Words that look like **this** appear in the glossary at the end of the book.



COLUMBUS'S FIRST VOYAGE



In around 1476, Columbus moved to Portugal and established a map-making business with his brother, Bartholomew. In 1479, he married Felipa Perestrello Moniz, who was from an important Portuguese family. They had a son called Diego in 1480. During these years in Portugal, Columbus studied many important books. He read works by earlier travellers such as Marco Polo and **scholars** like Ptolemy. He then **developed** his ideas about sailing westwards to the Indies.

Like many educated people at this time, Columbus knew that the world was round. However, his calculations about the size of the Earth were wrong: he believed that the world was much smaller than it truly is. Because of this, he thought that the distance to the Indies across the Ocean Sea was much shorter too. And of course, he didn't know that the American continent was in the middle either!

In the 1480s, Columbus asked for **support** for his plans from King John II of Portugal, and Isabella I of Castile and Ferdinand II of Aragon. However, they all said 'no' again and again. People think that Columbus's brother, Bartholomew, also went to the **court** of Henry VII of England to ask for support. During this time, Columbus's wife died, and he moved to Castile with his son.

Living in Castile, Columbus could go more easily to Ferdinand and Isabella's court, and on his visit in 1486 they listened to his ideas with some interest. However, the king and queen were busy trying to **conquer** the **Muslim** Kingdom of Granada. In the end, they finally took possession of the city of Granada on 2 January 1492. At last, after many years, Isabella and Ferdinand might be ready to think about Columbus's plans more seriously!

1. Ferdinand II of Aragon

Santa Fe, Granada, 18 April 1492

What a day we had yesterday! Isabella and I finally ***signed** a **contract** with that Columbus man. Well, of course, I didn't actually sign it myself. I AM the King of Aragon, King of Sicily, Count of Barcelona, Duke of Montblanc and Count of Ribagorza. I'm also King of Castile ('by right of my wife' – don't like that bit so much!). I'm FAR too busy and important for that type of thing, so my secretary Juan de Coloma signed the contract for me.

Of course, when Columbus came to our **court** again, I wasn't at all surprised. To be honest, I thought, 'Oh no, it's that **sailor** from Genoa (or wherever he's from) again!' You see, he's been following Isabella and me around for YEARS now. And of course, he isn't difficult to recognise with his red hair, long face and blue eyes.

If I remember, he first came to talk to us in 1486 about his plans for a **voyage** of **discovery**. We thought his ideas were interesting, but also a bit, well – **MAD**. He spoke for ages with a big map in front of him. He isn't only a sailor, you know, he's a map-maker too!

Columbus, or 'dear Christopher' as Isabella likes to call him, thinks that he can arrive in the **Indies** by **sailing** west across the **Ocean Sea**. He says that the

* Words that look like **this** appear in the glossary at the end of the book.

whole voyage will only take a week on one of those **caravels!** A week to get to Asia— can you believe it?!

He makes it all sound SO exciting. He has read an old book by a traveller called Marco Polo which talks about a country called **Cipangu**. Columbus thinks that he knows how to get to Cipangu on the other side of the Ocean Sea. It seems that Cipangu is FULL of gold – there are even houses with gold roofs there!

H

*Cipangu is an island in the eastern ocean... They have gold in the greatest abundance... but as the king does not allow anyone to export it, few **merchants** visit the country. This circumstance explains the extraordinary richness of the sovereign's palace... the entire roof is covered with gold... So great indeed are the riches of the palace that it is impossible to give a true idea of them.*

(Marco Polo)

Isabella and I were very interested, especially in all that gold, but we thought his plans were a bit too good to be true. So six years ago in 1486, we asked our **scholars** at the University of Salamanca to look at his ideas. They talked to him and thought about it. But in the end they all decided that his calculations were wrong – the Indies are MUCH further away than he thinks. So Isabella and I said ‘thanks’ but ‘no thanks’ to him.

Now, when Columbus came back again this time, Isabella’s adviser said, ‘Just tell the man to go away. You’ve only just taken Granada from the **Moors** and you really haven’t got time to listen to him AGAIN.’ At first, I agreed and we sent Columbus away on his slow, old mule. But then I woke up in the night! ‘Perhaps, it’s a terrible mistake!’ I thought. So early the next morning, I **sent for** my soldiers. ‘Go and find that Columbus man!’ I shouted. So my men found Columbus on the road going north and brought him back here.

Now, you might **wonder**, ‘Why did Ferdinand ask him to come back?’ Well, first of all, I’ve been looking at our money and to be honest, we haven’t got much. In fact, we’ve spent most of it on those wars against the Moors and the Reconquest of Granada. So some gold from that place Cipangu would be VERY useful. Columbus can help to **spread** the one true faith there too (that’s Catholicism in case you were wondering!).

Also, I’m sick and tired of hearing about our neighbour King John of Portugal and his wonderful ‘super-explorer’ Bartholomew Diaz.

Bartholomew Diaz
'School Report'

1488

Bartholomew has had an excellent year. He hasn't been to many lessons as he's gone on so many voyages. But he has made great progress in geography.

His greatest **achievement** this year has been **sailing** down the coast of africa and **discovering** a place called 'the Cape of Good Hope'. He has been given the school geography prize because he has helped to open up an eastern **trade** route to the Indies by sea. Clever boy!

Well done, Bartholomew, and keep up the good work!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John II". The signature is written in black ink and features elaborate flourishes, particularly at the end of the name.

'Head teacher'

Imagine! It makes me green with jealousy just thinking about it!

I was also worried that Columbus had plans to go to the French king next. I really don't want any of my neighbours and RIVALS to discover a western route to the Indies across the Ocean Sea before us. Columbus has already visited John II of Portugal AND sent his brother to talk to Henry VII of England.



All in all, I'm pleased that Columbus came back. If his voyage is a success, everybody will say, 'Ferdinand, you're such a clever man!'. And my name will be in all the history books. And I suppose they might even mention Isabella too!

But to be honest, Isabella and I aren't sure that Columbus WILL come back! That's why we agreed to such a good contract. It says that Columbus is going to be **Admiral** of the Ocean Sea, and governor of all the countries he discovers! He's also going to have 10% of all the gold, **jewels** and **spices** that he find there! If he does come back, he'll be rich, but of course, Isabella and I will be even richer!

And do you know the best thing? At least half of the money is coming from Italian **investors**. Ha ha! The voyage will be in our name, but we don't need to find much of the money for it! Fantastic!

Glossary

achievement: objective that is carried out, often showing great ability or effort

admiral: high-ranking officer in the navy

anchor (vb.): stop a boat or ship from moving using a specially designed heavy object

arrow: narrow piece of wood with a sharp end that is shot using a bow

avoid: prevent something happening

awful: very bad, terrible

bead: small, round object with a hole through it that is used to make jewellery

bear: tolerate; endure

bell: hollow metal instrument that makes a musical noise

Bohio: initial name used by Columbus to refer to the island that today consists of Haiti and the Dominican Republic

bow: instrument used to shoot an arrow

brave: valiant

breathe in: inhale

bunch: collection of things of the same kind held closely together

cabin: room inside a ship or boat

cabin boy: servant to the officers on a ship

calm: tranquil; without wind

cane: hollow stem of plants like bamboo or sugar cane
cannon: large gun that fires heavy projectiles
canopy: fabric covering that hangs over a bed, chair or other piece of furniture
caravel: fast, light ship
chain: series of metal links used to confine a prisoner
change (one's) mind: change one's opinion
chilli (pepper): small pepper with a strong taste
Cipangu: name used by Marco Polo to refer to Japan
Colba: name used by Columbus to refer to Cuba
complain: express dissatisfaction or discontent
complaint: expression of dissatisfaction or discontent
conceal: hide; keep something secret
conquer: take control of a country or people using force
contract: legal agreement
court: residence of a monarch; also refers to the people who attend the monarch
crew: collective term for the people who work on a ship
crowd: large number of people in the same place
current: movement of water in a particular direction
deadly: describes something that causes death
deck: platform that extends across a ship to the other
deserve: earn the right to something through one's actions
develop: cause something to grow or evolve
discover: find something important that was previously unknown
discovery: act of finding something important that was previously unknown

dough: raw mixture used to make bread, cake or biscuits
epidemic: large number of cases of a disease in a particular place
exchange: give and receive reciprocally
faith: religion
fall (n.): capture by an enemy
fear (vb.): be afraid; worry
float: be on the surface of a liquid
flour: finely ground wheat, used for making bread
fool: idiot
forbid: order someone not to do something
force: violence
fort: fortified place, often occupied by soldiers
found: establish
gain (n.): increase of possessions or wealth
gesture: movement that expresses an idea or attitude
gift: present
goal: objective
grateful: thankful
greedy: describes an excessive desire for money or food
greet: say hello; welcome
hanging: suspended in the air
harbour: port
hardtack: type of hard biscuit that was used on ships and in the army
hawk: bird of prey that feeds on small mammals
hire: rent
Hispaniola: name given by Columbus to the island that today consists of Haiti and the Dominican Republic

horizon: line at which the Earth and sky appear to meet

huge: enormous, very big

hurry (vb.): go very quickly

hut: basic type of building, often made of wood

immunity: resistance to a disease

in charge: responsible

Indies: old name for East and South-East Asia

investor: person who puts money into a business or other activity with the expectation of making a profit

jewel: precious stone

keen: interested in; enthusiastic

kidney bean: dark red bean

kindness: benevolence

law suit: legal case

league: old way of measuring distance, equal to approximately four to six kilometres

local: relating to or from a particular place

log-book: book in which details of a ship's voyage are written

look-out: person on a ship whose job is to watch the sea in case land or another ship appears

loss: disadvantage; something that is lost

mad: insane; not sensible

mainland: principal part of a country or continent, not an island

maize: American cereal crop with large grains

man-of-war: warship

maravedi: money in use in Castile and Aragon in the late 15th century

maroon: be on a remote island, without the means to leave

meadow: piece of land covered with grass

measles: infectious disease that causes fever, catarrh and red spots on the skin

merchant: trader; person who buys and sells products

mine: place where metals and other raw materials are extracted from the ground

monk: man who is a member of a religious order

Moors: historical term describing the North African Muslims that conquered the Iberian Peninsula

Muslim (*adj.*): relating to Islam

mutiny: rebellion of sailors or soldiers

native: person who is indigenous to a place or country

necklace: piece of jewellery worn around the neck

notary: person who writes and certifies legal documents

Ocean Sea: old name for the Atlantic Ocean

on board: on a boat or ship

pale: light coloured

parrot: brightly coloured bird that can imitate human speech

pay (*n.*): salary

point: indicate something using the finger

poor: bad

pray: make a request or give thanks to God

prayer: request or thanksgiving to God

pretend: behave in a false way

provisions: supplies of food, often for a journey or expedition

punishment: penalty or sanction for a crime or bad behaviour

relative: family member

remind: cause someone to remember or think of something

repair: fix

restless: nervous; unable to rest or relax

reward: prize (usually money) given in return for a special service or achievement

rise: become higher; go up

roll out: flatten and spread out

rudder: part of a ship consisting of a blade that controls the direction in which the ship moves

rule (n.): control over a country or people

run out (of something): use up one's supply

sail (n.): piece of strong fabric that catches the wind and helps a ship or boat to move

sail (vb.): travel by ship or boat

sailor: person who works on a ship

save: rescue

scar: mark left on the skin after a wound has healed

scholar: person who studies a subject and has extensive knowledge of it

send for: ask or order somebody to come

servant: person who works for another person, especially doing domestic work

set sail: leave by ship or boat

shore: land (as opposed to the sea or ocean)

sight: thing we can see

sign (*vb.*): authorise or agree to something by writing one's name

silk: fine cloth made from thread produced by silkworms

sink: become submerged in water

slave: person treated as another person's property

smallpox: viral infection that causes fever and small red spots on the skin

snoring: noisy breathing during sleep

spear: weapon consisting of a long, narrow piece of wood with a sharp end

spice: vegetable substance used to flavour food

splash: wet something with small particles of liquid

spot: see

spread: disseminate over a wider area or among a greater number of people

stare: look at someone in a fixed and intense way

steal: take someone's possessions or money without their permission

stick: small branch from a tree

storm: high winds, often combined with heavy rain

stranger: unknown person

stretcher: piece of strong fabric stretched between two poles that is used to move a sick or injured person

strike: hit

stubborn: inflexible; obstinate

support (*n.*): action of helping someone, for example by giving them money

surround: be all around a person, place or thing

sweet potato: sweet-tasting root similar to a potato

tailor: person who makes clothes
take on: allow something to enter
take (someone) to court: initiate a legal case
tax: money that the government collects from the country's inhabitants
threaten: put in danger
trade (n.): buying and selling of products
trade (vb.): buy and sell products
treaty: agreement between two or more countries
trouble (adj.): violent; tends to cause problems
trusting: disposed to have confidence in other people's good intentions
typhus: infectious disease that causes high fever, red spots on the skin and extreme physical weakness
volunteer (n.): person who freely agrees to do something
volunteer (vb.): freely agree to do something
voyage: long journey, often by sea
warlike: bellicose, martial
warn: inform someone about a possible danger
waste: bad use of something
weak: not strong
weapon: object or instrument that is used in combat
weed: wild plant that is not considered to be useful
weevil: beetle larvae that feeds on foodstuff
well built: large
whisper: speak very quietly
wonder (vb.): ask oneself; speculate
worry (n.): concern or anxiety
yucca: root that is a popular food in South America

Before reading activities

1. Match the words to the correct descriptions.

Asia	Place where Columbus began his first voyage
Catholic Monarchs	Type of ship used by Early-Modern explorers
Caravel	Famous Portuguese explorer
Bartholomew Diaz	Continent that Columbus was trying to reach
Genoa	Rulers who supported Columbus's voyages
Palos	Place where Columbus was probably born

2. Do you think these sentences are true or false? Correct the false sentences.

- Christopher Columbus was the first explorer to try to discover a sea route to Asia.
- Columbus asked several European monarchs to support his first voyage.
- Columbus called the native people that he encountered 'Indians' because he thought he was in Asia.
- Columbus discovered huge amounts of gold and spices on his first voyage.
- The new continent that Columbus discovered was named after him.

While reading activities

Read the introduction. Then choose the correct word to complete these sentences.

- a) The Indies were lands in *Asia/Europe*.
- b) After 1453, it was *easier/more difficult* to travel by land from Europe to India and China.
- c) Columbus wanted to find *an eastern/a western* route to Asia.
- d) The *Turks/Portuguese* were also looking for a sea route to Asia.
- e) Columbus was probably born in 1451 in a city that is now in *Italy/Portugal*.
- f) In *1479/1476* Columbus married into an important Portuguese family.
- g) Columbus thought the Earth was *smaller/larger* than it really is.

1. Read chapter 1. Find the mistake in each sentence and correct it.

- a) Ferdinand is very busy, so his brother signed the contract for him.
- b) Ferdinand thinks Columbus is difficult to recognise.
- c) Ferdinand and Isabella first met Columbus in 1492.
- d) Columbus thinks that it will take a month to sail to the Indies.
- e) Ferdinand and Isabella don't have much money after their wars against the French.
- f) John II discovered the Cape of Good Hope.
- g) Ferdinand is worried that Columbus will go to the King of Portugal next.
- h) In the contract, Columbus will have half of all the gold, jewels and spices that he finds.