

Biography

Christopher Columbus: Explorer of the New World

Discussion Questions

1. What were Columbus' original intentions in exploring the oceans? What was the perception of the world at the time? Why were Europeans trying to find a water passage to China?
2. Was Columbus the first European to "discover" America?
3. What was involved in sea exploration? What were some necessary steps to form a sea expedition?
4. What were the names of Columbus' three ships? What were some of the difficulties in Columbus' first expedition?
5. What is the present-day name of the place where Columbus first landed? Locate this place on a map. What did he do when he arrived? What is the present-day name of the place where Columbus arrived next?
6. Describe Columbus' relations with the Native Americans. How did the Spanish regard the Native Americans? How did the Native Americans regard the Spanish?
7. Did the Spaniards and the Native Americans regard gold with equal value? Did the Spaniards and the Native Americans have a similar vision of the world? Explain.
8. Where do we derive the term "Indian giver?" How did the explorers misinterpret this generosity?
9. How was Columbus regarded in Spain upon his return? What was Spain's second voyage to the New World? How did it differ from the first expedition?
10. What happened between the 39 Spaniards left in the New World and the Native Americans living there? Why did this happen? How were the Native Americans treated after this incident?
11. How did these experiences set the tone for interactions between Native Americans and settlers? In what ways were Columbus' actions towards the Native Americans consistent with the time period in which they took place?
12. What happened to the colonists and the Native Americans in Española? Were the settlers' expectations fulfilled? Why did Columbus' reputation deteriorate during this time?
13. What differentiates Columbus' third journey from other expeditions? Where did he land on his third journey?
14. What transpired on Columbus' fourth voyage? What prediction saved his ship? Where did they finally land? How did Columbus trick the Native Americans to continue feeding them?

Extended Activities

1. Examine the different navigational techniques mariners used in the 1400's and 1500's. Draw a picture of different devices and explain how they were used. Outline other knowledge that was crucial to being a successful and skillful mariner. Give 3 examples of Columbus' navigational skills.
2. Write an entry in a diary or captain's log that Columbus might have written in his early career, during one of his expeditions or upon landing in the New World.
3. Most revolutionary people do not realize the extent of their accomplishments during their lifetime. How was Columbus' reputation at his death different than it is today? What has history taught us about Columbus that people living in the 1400-1500's did not know? Did Columbus ever know the magnitude or ramifications of his

"discovery?" Explain your ideas in an essay or oral presentation. Use examples! In your conclusion, address the following question: Is it worth the struggle involved to pursue your goals even if these goals are not realized until after your lifetime? Why or why not?