

**AGE OF DISCOVERY:
SPAIN: COLUMBUS
FIRST VOYAGE OF 1492**



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Description

Through the investigation of primary and secondary sources, students in this lesson will identify, understand and be able to explain the details of Columbus' First Voyage to the New World, why he undertook the challenge of sailing west to reach the east, why the Spanish monarchs supported the voyage, and finally how the world was forever changed on 12 October 1492.

Subjects

European History, World History, US History

Grade Level

11-12

Duration

90 minutes

Tour Links

- Plaza de Colón, Madrid
- Cathedral of Seville
- Royal Cathedral of Granada
- El Museo Naval Madrid
- Palos de la Frontera, Huelva

Essential Questions

- Who was Christopher Columbus?
- Where did he come up with the idea to sail west to reach the Indies?
- Did people really believe the world was flat before Columbus? If not, where did the story come from?
- Why did the Spanish monarchs, Ferdinand II and Isabella I, decide to support Columbus in 1492?
- What did Columbus find when he reached the New World?
- How was Spain and the world forever changed on the morning of 12 Oct 1492?

Academic Summary

Your Highnesses, as Catholic Christians, and princes who love and promote the holy Christian faith, and are enemies of the doctrine of Mahomet, and of all idolatry and heresy, determined to send me, Christopher Columbus, to the above-mentioned countries of India, to see the said princes, people, and territories, and to learn their disposition and the proper method of converting them to our holy faith; and furthermore directed that I should not proceed by land to the East, as is customary, but by a Westerly route, in which direction we have hitherto no certain evidence that any one has gone. So after having expelled the Jews from your dominions, your Highnesses, in the same month of January, ordered me to proceed with a sufficient armament to the said regions of India, and for that purpose granted me great favors, and ennobled me that thenceforth I might call myself Don, and be High Admiral of the Sea, and perpetual Viceroy and Governor in all the islands and continents which I might discover and acquire, or which may hereafter be discovered and acquired in the ocean; and that this dignity should be inherited by my eldest son, and thus descend from degree to degree forever.

Journal of the First Voyage of Christopher Columbus, 03 Aug 1492

Soon they saw naked people; and the Admiral went ashore in the armed launch, and Martin Alonso Pinzon and his brother Vicente Anes, who was captain of the Nina. The Admiral brought out the royal banner and the captains two flags with the green cross, which the Admiral carried on all the ships as a standard, with an F and a Y, and over each letter a crown, one on one side and the other on the other. Thus put ashore they saw very green trees and many ponds and fruits of various kinds. The Admiral called to the two captains and to the others who had jumped ashore and to Rodrigo De Escovedo, the notary of the whole fleet, and to Rodrigo Sanchez de Segovia; and he said that they should be witnesses that, in the presence of all, he would take, as in fact he did take, possession of the said island for the king and for the queen his lords, making the declarations that were required, and which at more length are contained in the testimonials made there in writing.

Journal of the First Voyage of Christopher Columbus, 12 Oct 1492

On 12 Oct 1492, at approximately 2:00 AM local time, Rodrigo de Traina, a Spanish sailor aboard the vessel Pinta, reportedly cried out “Tierra! Tierra!”... the signal for land. Columbus and his crew had done it. They had sailed west from Europe and reached the East, or so he thought. De Traina had indeed spotted land, but it wasn’t Cipango (Japan) or Cathay (China). It was instead a small island somewhere in what we now call the Caribbean Sea (historians and cartographers disagree to this day as to which island Columbus actually discovered, but most evidence points to the modern island of San Salvador in the Bahamas). He didn’t know it, but Columbus was actually almost 8000 miles from Japan. Columbus may not have found a western route to Asia, nor did he “discover” a new world (the Vikings had planted a colony off the coast of Canada 500 years earlier), but he did nonetheless open a door to the collision of cultures and lands.

Through the investigation of primary and secondary sources, students in this lesson will identify, understand and be able to explain the details of Columbus' First Voyage to the New World, why he undertook the challenge of sailing west to reach the east, and why the Spanish monarchs supported the voyage.

Objectives

1. World and why he undertook such an expedition to the west.
2. Students will identify, understand and be able to explain the issues surrounding the story that Renaissance Europeans believed the world was flat before Columbus.
3. Students will identify, understand and be able to explain why Columbus' discovery of the New World on 12 Oct 1492 is considered a watershed even in world history, not only in Spain but also in the Americas.

Procedure

I. Anticipatory Set

- Writing / Question: Did Columbus really "discover" America? (5 min)
- Handouts – Copies of documents and readings from the websites listed. (5 min)

II. Body of Lesson

- Lecture / PPT – Early European Explorers (20 min)
- Video – Columbus (15 min)
- Independent Activity – Students read the articles and sources on Columbus' First Voyage, taking notes as appropriate (20 min).
- Suggestion: Have the students read some of these articles and sources for homework before class.
- Group Activity – Socratic Seminar: Discussion on Columbus' First Voyage. (15 min)

III. Closure

- Exit Ticket / Assessment / DBQ – Essay: Explain in detail Columbus' First Voyage, why he undertook the challenge of sailing west to reach the east, and why the Spanish monarchs supported the voyage.

Extension

On tour: Plaza de Colón, Madrid

While on tour, students visit the Plaza de Colón in Madrid, where they will find a monument to Columbus. As this lesson shows, the famous explorer had to wait until the completion of the Reconquista in 1492 to make his first voyage. The explorer and his descendants fought the Spanish Crown for many years over what the explorer believed were his rights under various crown proclamations. Ferdinand II and Isabella I, the Catholic Monarchs who completed the Reconquista, are buried in Granada.

Web Links

Lesson Plan Websites

- ibiblio.org/expo/1492.exhibit/c-Columbus/columbus.html
“1492: An Ongoing Voyage” – from an Exhibit of the Library of Congress, Washington DC
- gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/exploration/resources/columbus-reports-his-first-voyage-1493
“Columbus reports on his first voyage, 1493” (article) – from the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History
- blogs.jefftwp.org/wordpress/rzegas/files/2011/12/Columbus-Journal.pdf
Primary Source reading with questions from the Journal of Christopher Columbus
- fordham.edu/halsall/source/columbus1.asp
Christopher Columbus: Extracts from Journal (primary source) – from the Medieval Sourcebook at Fordham University
- avalon.law.yale.edu/15th_century/colum.asp
“Privileges and Prerogatives Granted by Their Catholic Majesties to Christopher Columbus: 1492” (primary source) – from the Avalon Project at Yale Law School Lillian Goldman Law Library
- <http://www2.fiu.edu/~harveyb/colum.html>
“Christopher Columbus – Letter to Lord Raphael Sanchez, 14 Mar 1493” (primary source) – on the Florida International University website
- ucalgary.ca/applied_history/tutor/eurvoya/columbus.html
“Christopher Columbus and the Spanish Empire” (website – includes article and primary sources) – from the University of Calgary (Canada) website
- teachingchannel.org/videos/choosing-primary-source-documents?fd=1
Reading Like a Historian: Primary Source Documents (video) – great 2 minute video on how to incorporate primary sources into the Common Core and history classes – from Shilpa Duvoor of Summit Preparatory Charter High School in Redwood City, CA – highly recommended for teachers
- youtube.com/watch?v=9hBJHg_DzFM
History Channel Documentary – Columbus (Part 1)
- historyteacher.net/APEuroCourse/PowerpointPresent/EuropeanExplorationAndColonization.ppt
“Age of Early European Explorations and Conquests” – PowerPoint presentation from Susan Pojer, AP history teacher from Horace Greeley High School in Chappaqua, NY
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CXrPNq8pE5E>
“Cities of Light: The Rise and Fall of Islamic Spain” (video) – PBS video (produced by Unity Productions Foundations) – although almost 2 hours long, is well worth watching. Highly recommended for students and teachers.

Background Information

- en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christopher_Columbus
“Christopher Columbus” – Wikipedia article
- en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_History_of_the_Life_and_Voyages_of_Christopher_Columbus
“A History of the Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus (book by Washington Irving)” – Wikipedia article.
- en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reconquista
“Reconquista” – Wikipedia article
- en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Myth_of_the_Flat_Earth
“Myth of the Flat Earth” – Wikipedia Article
- passports.com/group_leaders/on_the_road/spain/madrid
On the Road: Madrid – city facts from Passports Educational Travel
- passports.com/group_leaders/on_the_road/spain/cordoba
On the Road: Cordoba – city facts from Passports Educational Travel
- passports.com/group_leaders/on_the_road/spain/granada
On the Road: Granada – city facts from Passports Educational Travel

Other Relevant Passports Lesson Plans

- www.passports.com/lesson_plans/peru/pizarro-and-the-conquest-of-the-incas
Conquistadores in the New World – Pizarro and the Incas
- www.passports.com/lesson_plans/spain/al-andalus-islamic-spain
Al-Andalus: Islamic Spain
- www.passports.com/lesson_plans/spain/reconquista-of-iberia
Reconquista in Iberia
- www.passports.com/lesson_plans/turkey/byzantine-istanbul-fall-of-constantinople-1453
Byzantine Istanbul – Fall of Constantinople 1453

Key Terms

- Age of Exploration
- Christopher Columbus
- Ferdinand II and Isabella I
- San Salvador
- Medieval
- Reconquista

