

- Have students divide into small groups. Each group represents one side of the situation that occurred in the New World as the Spanish took over and forced the native people into slavery. Encourage each group to develop a newspaper article or editorial page reflecting the opinions and viewpoint of their side. Groups to be represented might include the Spanish royalty, Spanish settlers, Columbus and the Taino.
- Conduct a class research project on the specific diseases that the Spanish brought with them to the New World. Display the research, explaining what caused the diseases, how the diseases were transmitted, what caused the native people to be unable to fight off the diseases and what cures we have today for the same diseases.
- Students might enjoy making models of Columbus' ships or an artistic display of his voyage, linking it to a geographic visual of the territory explored.
- Have students research how much space and how many crew members were on the Santa María. With that information, estimate how much food and material would be needed for a voyage such as Columbus' first trip to the New World. Determine if they could store such a volume of supplies in their ship. Have the students make choices and form priorities for filling the allotted space. Visit the "Culinary History of Columbus" Web site ([www.castellobanfi.com/features/story\\_3.html](http://www.castellobanfi.com/features/story_3.html)) for more information about the types of food that Columbus would have brought on his voyages.

### Suggested Internet Resources

Periodically, Internet Resources are updated on our web site at [www.LibraryVideo.com](http://www.LibraryVideo.com)

- [www1.minn.net/~keithp/](http://www1.minn.net/~keithp/)  
The "Columbus Navigation Homepage" examines the history, navigation and landfall of Christopher Columbus. This site includes excellent information about navigation, Columbus' ships, his crew and details of each of his voyages.
- [www.mariner.org/educationalad/ageofex/columbus.php](http://www.mariner.org/educationalad/ageofex/columbus.php)  
The Mariners' Museum has an on-line curriculum guide for the Age of Exploration, which features information about Columbus. This site provides information about Columbus' four voyages, including specifics about his ships and navigational technology.
- [www.ucalgary.ca/applied\\_history/tutor/eurvoya/](http://www.ucalgary.ca/applied_history/tutor/eurvoya/)  
University of Calgary's "European Voyages of Exploration" web site contains information about Columbus, complete with maps and excerpts from primary source documents detailing Columbus' journeys.
- [www.hartford-hwp.com/Taino/photos/gallery.html](http://www.hartford-hwp.com/Taino/photos/gallery.html)  
This site of the Taino Inter-Tribal Council has pictures of Taino people and important aspects of their culture, including symbols, artwork and other artifacts.

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[www.shipsofdiscovery.org/columbus.htm](http://www.shipsofdiscovery.org/columbus.htm)

"Ships of Discovery" features information about Columbus' ships that were lost in the course of his four voyages, and describes attempts to discover these shipwrecks.

### Suggested Print Resources

- Alter, Judy. *Christopher Columbus: Explorer*. Child's World, Chanhassen, MN; 2003.
- Molzahn, Arlene Bourgeois. *Christopher Columbus: Famous Explorer*. Enslow Publishers, Berkeley Heights, NJ; 2003.
- Roop, Peter. *Christopher Columbus*. Scholastic, New York, NY; 2000.
- Sundel, Al. *Christopher Columbus and the Age of Exploration in World History*. Enslow Publishers, Berkeley Heights, NJ; 2002.

#### TEACHER'S GUIDE CONSULTANT

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## CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

Grades 5–8

This guide is a supplement designed for teachers to use when presenting programs in the video series *Explorers of the World*.

**Before Viewing:** Give students an introduction to the program by relaying aspects of the historical overview to them. Select pre-viewing discussion questions and vocabulary to provide a focus for students when they view the program.

**After Viewing:** Review the program and vocabulary, and use the follow-up questions and activities to inspire continued discussion. Encourage students to research the topic further with the Internet and print resources provided.

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## Historical Overview

The story of Christopher Columbus and his travels began in Europe during the 15th century. At this time, spices and riches dominated the commerce and trade of the world, and the Italian city states controlled the flow of these goods from the Far East to European markets. Portugal and Spain, two of the first modern European nations to come into being, wished to change that economic relationship by cutting out the middlemen. For this reason, Portugal began the exploration of the African coast, seeking passage to the Indies and Spice Islands. Spain was second to enter this race for wealth.

In the late 1400s, a map maker named Christopher Columbus brought his plan for exploration to the Portuguese for funding. Columbus proposed that he sail west across the Atlantic Ocean directly to Asia rather than sailing around Africa. After the Portuguese rejected his plan, Columbus turned to the Spanish rulers, Isabella and Ferdinand. The Spanish royalty supported Columbus in four endeavors to achieve his goal of reaching the East by sailing west.

Only two problems stopped Columbus from reaching Asia: the Earth was much larger and the sea passage from Spain to China was much longer than anyone had imagined. There also was a large, relatively unknown land mass blocking Columbus' way to Asia. Despite his difficulty in finding Asia, Columbus did sight almost every island in the Caribbean and he is recognized as the first European to successfully cross the Atlantic Ocean and reach land in the Americas. Columbus' explorations opened a New World to the Europeans and inspired many future explorers to discovery.

## Time Line

**1451** — Columbus is born in Genoa, Italy.

**1476** — Columbus lives in Portugal and works as map maker.

**1492** — Columbus makes first voyage to the New World in three ships. Discovers Hispaniola, a Caribbean island.

**1493** — Columbus makes second voyage to the New World with seventeen ships in an effort to colonize Hispaniola.

**1498** — Columbus makes third voyage to the New World and discovers Trinidad.

**1502** — Columbus makes fourth and final voyage to the New World to explore Central and South America.

**1506** — Columbus dies in Spain, wealthy but not yet respected for his explorations in the New World.

## Vocabulary

**explorer** — A person who travels in search of a goal, such as wealth, information or colonization.

**discovery** — The process by which individuals from one culture reach a place where, to their knowledge, no one from their culture has gone before. Discovery is primarily an ethnocentric experience, in that discoverers believe that their culture is the first to discover an area, despite the presence of other cultures already settled there.

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**Marco Polo** — (1254–1324) A merchant and explorer from Italy who traveled from Europe to Asia. Polo spent 17 years traveling in China, and his exploits were recorded in a famous book that influenced future explorers, including Columbus.

**Cathay** — The name by which the northern part of China was known in Europe during the time of Columbus.

**Cipango** — The name by which Japan was known in Europe during Columbus' time.

**Bartholomew Dias** — (1450–1500) A Portuguese explorer who sailed around the southern tip of Africa, proving that the East could be reached by sailing east.

**Isabella and Ferdinand** — (1451–1504; 1452–1516) Joint rulers of Spain from 1479 to 1504. Through their sponsorship of Columbus' voyages, a Spanish empire was developed in the New World.

**Moors** — Muslim people living in Spain during Columbus' time. Ferdinand and Isabella fought a war against the Moors in Spanish territory. After the Moors were defeated, the Spanish rulers were able to fund Columbus' voyages to the New World.

**mutiny** — A rebellion or uprising against those in power. A mutiny often occurs on a ship, with a crew rebelling against a captain.

**Hispaniola** — The large island discovered by Columbus. Today, known as Haiti and Dominican Republic.

**Taino** — The native people Columbus found living in the regions of the New World he first reached.

## Pre-viewing Discussion

- Ask students to brainstorm lists of what they know about Columbus, and what they know about the Taino, the people Columbus “discovered” in the New World. Compare the lists and challenge students to generate reasons for why more information is known about Columbus than the native people he encountered.
- Columbus' voyages to the New World were long and dangerous. Ask students to speculate about Columbus' nature and personality. What kind of person would be able to make four trips across the Atlantic Ocean, surviving shipwrecks, mutiny and resistance?
- Have the students discuss what it means “to discover” something. Consider the “discovery” of the New World from the perspective of Columbus and his crew versus the Native Americans already living there.

## Focus Questions

1. What influence did Marco Polo's book have on Columbus and his voyages?
2. Describe Columbus' idea for exploration.
3. Why did Portugal reject Columbus' idea?
4. How did Columbus use the prevailing winds to cross the Atlantic?
5. How did Columbus prevent mutiny on his ship?

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6. How did Columbus miscalculate his estimates about his voyage across the Atlantic Ocean?
7. Why did the Taino revolt against Spanish rule?
8. How did the Spanish treat the Taino after repressing their rebellion?
9. How did Columbus' interaction with the Taino influence their population?
10. What areas of the New World did Columbus discover in his four voyages across the Atlantic?
11. When did Columbus realize he had discovered a new land mass and not just some islands off the coast of China? How did he determine he had discovered a new continent?
12. Who were the two Spanish rulers who made Columbus' voyages possible? How did they treat Columbus after his discoveries? Why?

## Follow-up Discussion

- As a result of their encounters with Columbus, his crew and the Spanish settlers, the Taino suffered a great decline in their population. Challenge students to discuss the ethical question “Do the ends justify the means?” with regard to the Spanish conquest of the native people of the New World.
- Encourage students to discuss the Spanish attack on the Taino after they rebelled and killed the Spanish settlers. Compare and contrast the perspectives of the Spanish and the Taino concerning this attack. Generate alternatives for how these two groups could have interacted more peacefully.
- Marco Polo influenced many world explorers, including Columbus, with his extensive journeys and tales of exotic places. Discuss with students the positive and negative aspects of Polo's influence on Columbus' travels.
- A common myth that has persisted throughout history is that Europeans in Columbus' time thought the Earth was flat and that Columbus proved that it was round. Have students discuss why myths like this one continue and see if they can brainstorm a list of other such myths that pervade common knowledge.
- Based upon the standards of his time, have students debate whether Columbus was a criminal or a hero in his voyages of exploration and the results that arose from them. Discuss if this opinion of Columbus changes under the standards of modern time.

## Follow-up Activities

- In small groups, students can generate plans for exploring the world in the name of Spain in the late 1400's. This plan should include a destination, an estimate of the distance from Spain, the number of ships required and the desired number of crew members. Help each group to research their exploration plan and to develop a rationale for their choices. Once groups have created their plans, they can present them to a group of students selected by the “Spanish royalty” to hear the claims.

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