

336. Christopher Columbus and the discovery of America

Things to think about - KS2 - PDFs only

Set Two - Things to Think About - 59 (A4) sheets.

low quality samples only

Columbus' Journal - The Wildlife

14 September, 1492:
A tern and a tropical bird are seen flying over the sea.

Sunday, 16 September, 1492:
Columbus' crew began to see many tufts of very green seaweed which, as it appears, is not long been torn from the earth. They thought that they were near an island but not the mainland.

Monday, 17 September, 1492:
The crew saw even more seaweed from rivers. In it they saw many things which the Admiral kept for his crew of the Niña.

Columbus' Journal - The Wildlife

Tuesday, 18 September, 1492:
Martín Alonso Pinzón saw a great crowd of birds go towards the west. He hoped to sight land that night.

Wednesday, 19 September, 1492:
At ten o'clock they saw a booby in the evening, another. Booby birds usually fly further than 20 leagues.

Thursday, 20 September, 1492:
They caught by hand a bird like a gull. It was a river bird, not a sea-bird.

Friday, 21 September, 1492:
They saw a whale, a sign of land always!

Columbus' Journal - The Wildlife

Saturday, 22 September, 1492:
They saw some petrels and another bird.

Sunday, 23 September, 1492:
They saw a pigeon, a booby, another river bird and other white birds. There was much vegetation in the water and in it they found crabs.

Tuesday, 25 September, 1492:
They saw many dorados and other fish.

Saturday, 29 September, 1492:
They saw a sea-bird that does not go more than 20 leagues from land. There are many of these on the Cape Verde islands.

October, 1492:
The weather is very sweet and temperate. There was a heavy rain. Many flying fish landed on the ship.

What were the new lands like?

We know the lands that Columbus reached on his voyages - but what were those places really like? What kind of people did he meet?

The first native people Columbus met were the Taino Indians. These were the people who lived on the islands.

- They slept in hammocks.
- They wore string beaded necklaces.
- They slept on mats on the floor.
- They smoked tobacco.
- They cultivated cotton.
- They ate cassava - a kind of potato.
- They grew maize.
- They paddled dug out boats.
- They had only simple weapons.
- Their weapons were no match for the Spanish crews.

Columbus' Journal - The Taino Indians

I knew that they were a people who could be more easily converted to our holy faith by love than by force. To that end, I gave some of the red caps to wear and glass beads to put around their necks, and many other things of little value which gave them great pleasure and made them so much our friends that it was a marvel to see.

Afterwards they came to the ship's boats and we were, swimming and bringing us presents of cotton threads in skeins, darts and many other things. We exchanged them for other things as glass beads and small bells. They gave what they had with good will and appear to me to be a race of people who are in everything.

Columbus' Journal - The Taino Indians

They go as naked as the day when their mothers bore them. I saw mostly youths, none more than thirty years of age. They are very well built. Their hair is short and coarse, almost like the hairs of a horse's tail. They wear the hairs brought down to the eyebrows, except for a few locks behind which they wear long and never cut.

They paint themselves black. Some paint themselves white, others red, and others whatever colour they find. Some paint their whole body, some only on the face, others on the arms and legs.

Columbus' Journal - The Taino Indians

They neither carry nor know anything of iron. For I showed them swords and they cut themselves with the blade and cut themselves with the iron. They have no iron. They do not know iron.

Columbus' Journal - The Taino Indians

They came to the ship in small canoes. They came out of the trunk of a tree like a lotus.

The canoes were each made of one piece of tree trunk and wonderfully worked considering the country. They are large, some of them holding 40 to 45 men, others smaller, and some only large enough for one man.

They are propelled with a paddle like a baker's shovel, and they go at a marvellous rate. If a canoe capsizes, they all promptly begin to swim and to bale it out with calabashes that they take with them.



Columbus' Journal - The Taino Indians

I was attentive, and took the trouble to find out if there was gold. I saw that some of them had a small piece of gold fastened in a hole they have in their nose.

By signs I was able to make out that to the south, or going from the island to the south, there was a king who had great cups full of gold. I tried to get them to go there, but afterwards I saw that they wouldn't.

I shall go there and see for myself.



Columbus' Journal - The Taino Indians

This island is rather large and very flat with bright green trees, much water and a very large lake in the centre. It is without any mountain and the whole land is so green it is a pleasure to look on it.

Cotton is grown in abundance.

The people are very docile. They bring us food and water. We understand that they have asked us if we come from heaven.

