

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

The Slave Trade

When he first saw the Indians, Columbus thought that they would make very good servants. He wrote:

They are completely defenceless and of no skills or arms.... and so they are fit to be ordered about and to work, to sow and to do all else that may be needed.

Because gold was not available in the vast quantities he'd hoped for, Columbus decided the Indians would prove to be the valuable resource. They could be worked on plantations or could be taken back to Spain to be sold as slaves.



The Main Events - The First Voyage

- Columbus was born in Genoa, Italy in 1451.
- At the age of 14 he went to sea for the first time.
- In 1484 he devised a plan to sail west to India, China and Japan rather than travel east as was usual at that time.
- On Friday 3rd August 1492, having received backing from the King and Queen of Spain, he set sail with three ships - The Santa Maria, The Pinta and The Nina.

The Second Voyage

- On 25th September 1493, Columbus set sail again. This time he had 17 ships.
- On November 3rd 1493, Dominica in the West Indies was sighted and soon after that, Guadeloupe. Many quarrels broke out on board ship and for a while Columbus lay ill on Hispaniola.
- In 1496 Columbus returned to Spain.

The Third Voyage

- In 1498 Columbus made a third voyage with 30 ships and he returned to Spain in 1500.

Why is Christopher Columbus remembered?

At that time, the Arawak/Taino peoples had no large animals like horses, oxen or mules to use as work animals and there were not many wild animals to hunt. However, there were some small animals which included snakes, rodents, bats, worms and birds. They also hunted ducks and turtles and caught fish in fishing nets made of cotton.

New plants and animals were introduced into America by Columbus and his crew. These included wheat, sugar, coffee, and other new plants and animals.

Arawaks were not physically or culturally suited to such treatment and so, black African slaves were taken to work on the plantations.

Following in Columbus' wake

In 1990, John Dyson, author of 'For Gold, God and Glory', set out on his own voyage across the Atlantic, following what he believed to be Columbus' real route. He sailed in a reconstructed caravel called The New Nina.



Dyson believes that, when Columbus set sail in 1492, he was armed with a map which had either been given to him or sold to him by a sailor who had already visited the Indies.

On his journey, Columbus kept two diaries or log books. Many people think that this was because he believed that the crew would mutiny if they knew their real route and how many leagues west they had sailed.

Dyson believes that the real reason for having a false version was the fear that it might fall into Portuguese hands. If the Portuguese had known that Columbus was sailing through their waters south-west of the Canaries, there could have been great trouble.

Why is Christopher Columbus remembered?

Christopher Columbus didn't find the land he expected to find. He didn't find the great Khan of China, only naked natives who thought that Columbus and his crew had come from the heavens.

He explored the islands around the Americas for his hoping to find gold, spices or other riches. He failed because he wasn't where he thought he was!

His four voyages made Spain rich but did not benefit the natives. He started out with good intentions and was friendly with the natives but, as time passed he was under pressure to find gold. He forced the natives to produce gold and enslave some of them after they rebelled against his rule.

It is remembered because his voyage started the tradition of Europeans to America and changed history.

Columbus Day

Christopher Columbus arrived in the Americas on October 12th 1492. The anniversary of his arrival is celebrated with an official holiday.

In the United States of America, Columbus Day is always celebrated on the second Monday in October.

The first celebration took place in 1792, three hundred years after Columbus found America.

In New York a huge parade is held each year.

Many people don't like this holiday because the settlement of Europeans in the Americas led to the destruction of the history and culture of the people who were native to these lands. What do you think?

