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Christopher Columbus

by Katie Clark

Christopher Columbus is often given credit for discovering the American continent. What this means is that his discovery of America was when people from Europe first found the land. We know native people had been living on the land for a long time before he arrived. We also know other explorers had landed there hundreds of years before, but they did not stay.



Christopher Columbus and his crew were the first European explorers who found the land and set up colonies in the name of their European rulers.

Most people believe Columbus was born in Italy in the year 1451. He worked in Italy, Portugal, and Spain. Once he became an adult, he worked on ships. He had a talent not only for sailing, but also for navigating. He could understand wind currents, star positions, and tides. People around him quickly realized that he was an expert navigator.

The people of Europe wanted to find a path through the sea from their nations to China. They could not go over the land because there were wars with the lands between them and Asia.

Christopher Columbus believed that if anyone could find a path through the water to China, it was him. He went to the rulers in Italy, where he was born, but they were not interested in funding his mission.

Next, Columbus went to the rulers of Spain. They agreed to fund, or pay for, his expedition. Columbus prepared for the trip by securing three ships and a large crew.

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On August 3, 1492, he and his crew set sail. Their ships were the Nina, Pinta, and the Santa Maria. Columbus guided the ships to sail south. From there they followed the tide and the winds toward the west. They finally found land on October 12, 1492.

The place where they landed is now called the Bahama Islands, near the state of Florida. However, Columbus believed he had found Asia. The people of Europe did not know about the American continent. Because of this, Columbus assumed he was either on the island nation of Japan, or on the mainland of China.

Columbus and his crew found many treasures. They found not only gold, but also exotic birds called parrots. They decided to sail back to Spain with this treasure.

When Columbus returned to Spain, he convinced the rulers that he should go back. He would find more treasures. The rulers agreed to fund his trip again.

Christopher Columbus ended up making four trips to the American continent. It wasn't until the third trip that he realized it was not Asia. He had found a new land.

More ships were sent, and the people set up colonies.

Christopher Columbus never did find a path through the sea to Asia. He died shortly after his fourth journey to the American continent. Though he didn't accomplish what he set out to do, he will always be remembered for opening the way for the European colonization of the Americas.

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- 1) Come up with textual evidence from the text to support the following assertions or inferences.

Assertions/ Inferences	Textual evidence
Columbus had a talent for sailing and navigating. (assertion)	
Columbus was confident about his talent for sailing. (inference)	
Neither Columbus nor his teammates believed that they had found America. (assertion)	

- 2) Find out the central idea of the text.

- 3) Why do you think the Italians didn't want to fund the idea of Columbus?

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- 4) Explain how the last paragraph contributes to consolidate the central idea.

- 5) What does the word 'expedition' mean, as used in this sentence: They agreed to fund, or pay for, his expedition.

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- 1) Come up with textual evidence from the text to support the following assertions or inferences.

Assertions/ Inferences	Textual evidence
Columbus had a talent for sailing and navigating. (assertion)	He could understand wind currents, star positions, and tides.
Columbus was confident about his talent for sailing. (inference)	Columbus believed that if anyone could find a path through the water to China, it was him.
Neither Columbus nor his teammates believed that they had found America. (assertion)	Europeans had no idea about the American continent. Because of this, Columbus assumed it was either Japan or China.

- 2) Find out the central idea of the text.

The central idea of the passage is how Christopher Columbus and his team discovered the Americas and why the world credits him with this achievement.

- 3) Why do you think the Italians didn't want to fund the idea of Columbus?

This is because the Italian rulers either were not convinced of its success or they simply didn't have sufficient evidence of Columbus's talent.

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- 4) Explain how the last paragraph contributes to consolidate the central idea.

The last paragraph reiterates this idea as it says he never found a path to Asia and even though he didn't fully accomplish his goal, he will be remembered as someone who opened the way for the European colonization of the Americas.

- 5) What does the word 'expedition' mean, as used in this sentence: They agreed to fund, or pay for, his expedition.

Expedition means a journey or voyage with a purpose of exploration or scientific research.