

Name _____



Christopher Columbus: The Explorer Who Sailed Across the Ocean

Christopher Columbus was one of the most famous explorers in history. He is best known for sailing across the Atlantic Ocean and reaching the Americas in 1492. His journey changed the world, bringing together Europe and the lands across the ocean.

Early Life and Dream of Exploration

Christopher Columbus was born in 1451 in Genoa, Italy. As a young boy, he loved the sea and dreamed of sailing to new places. He worked as a sailor and studied maps and navigation.

At that time, people in Europe wanted new trade routes to Asia. Merchants traded spices, silk, and gold, but traveling by land was slow and dangerous. Columbus believed he could sail west across the Atlantic Ocean and reach Asia faster.

The Famous Voyage

Columbus asked King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain to support his journey. They gave him three ships:

- The Niña
- The Pinta
- The Santa María

On August 3, 1492, Columbus and his crew left Spain. The journey was long and difficult. The sailors were worried because they had never sailed so far. Finally, on October 12, 1492, they saw land. Columbus had reached an island in the Caribbean, but he thought he was in Asia!

Discoveries and Challenges

Columbus explored several islands and met the native people who lived there. He called them "Indians" because he thought he had reached India. He was wrong, but his journey led to more explorations of the New World.

He made four trips across the Atlantic. However, things did not always go well. Columbus faced storms, food shortages, and conflicts. His leadership was questioned, and he even spent time in prison when he returned to Spain.

A Lasting Impact

Columbus died in 1506, still believing he had found a new route to Asia. Even though he was wrong, his journey changed history. It led to more European explorations and the beginning of trade between Europe and the Americas.

Today, people remember Columbus as a brave but complicated explorer. While he opened the door to new lands, his arrival also brought challenges for native people. His story reminds us of the power of exploration and curiosity.