

# PRINCE HENRY THE NAVIGATOR

## Worksheet

1. Of what country was Henry the Navigator a Prince?

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2. Where was Prince Henry born? What year?

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3. What steps did Henry take that helped to open the African route to Asia?

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4. Define "cartography."

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5. Define "astronomy."

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6. Define "navigation."

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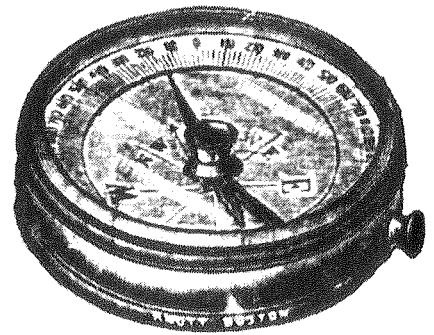
7. How many expeditions did Prince Henry send? How many did he go on himself?

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MARINER'S COMPASS

# COLUMBUS SAILS TO THE NEW WORLD

## *Project*

The crusades, the Renaissance, the invention of printing, and the travels of Marco Polo in the East had set people to thinking about matters in the great world beyond the limits of their own little villages or towns. The part of the earth in which the greatest number were interested was India. The reason was that Europeans had learned to enjoy the spices, silks, cottons, and jewels of the East. The old way of bringing these to Europe was up the Red Sea, past Constantinople and through the Mediterranean to Genoa. Now that the Turks held Constantinople, the eastern Mediterranean was a dangerous place. Just as people were beginning to think they must have the Eastern luxuries, it became more and more difficult to obtain them, and the nation that could find the shortest way to India would soon be possessed of untold wealth.

One man who was thinking most earnestly about India was Christopher Columbus. He was born in Genoa and had been at sea most of his life since he was fourteen. He had read, studied, and thought until he was convinced that the world was round and that the best way to reach China and Japan was not to make the wearisome overland journey through Asia, but to sail directly west across the Atlantic. He had asked the city of Genoa to provide money for the expedition. He had also asked the king of Portugal, but to no avail. Finally he appealed to Ferdinand and Isabella, king and queen of Spain.

This was why, toward the end of the fifteenth century, a company of learned Spaniards met together at Salamanca to listen to the schemes of a simple, unknown Italian sailor. Columbus told them what he believed. Then they brought forward their objections. "A ship might possibly reach India in that way," said one gravely, "but she could never sail uphill and come home again." If the world is round and people are on the opposite side, they must hang by their feet with their heads

down," declared another scornfully. Another objection was that such an expedition as Columbus proposed would be expensive. Moreover he demanded the title of admiral of whatever lands he might discover and one tenth of all precious stones, gold, silver, spices, and other merchandise that should be found in these lands. This was not because he was greedy for money, he was planning to win the Holy Sepulcher at Jerusalem from the Turks, and to do this would require an enormous fortune.

Columbus had formed a noble scheme, but there seemed small hope that it would be carried out by Spanish aid, for the Spaniards were waging an important war with the Moors, or Mohammedans. The Moors had a kingdom in the south of Spain containing a number of cities. In the capital, Granada, was the palace and fortress of the Alhambra, a wonderfully beautiful structure, even in the ruins as it is today. Granada was captured, but even then the Spaniards seemed to have no time to listen to Columbus.

At length he made up his mind to leave Spain and go for aid to the king of France. With his little son Diego he started out on foot. The child was hungry, and so they stopped at the gate of the covenant of La Rabida, near the town of Palos, Spain, to beg for the food that was never refused to wayfarers. The prior was a student of geography. He heard the



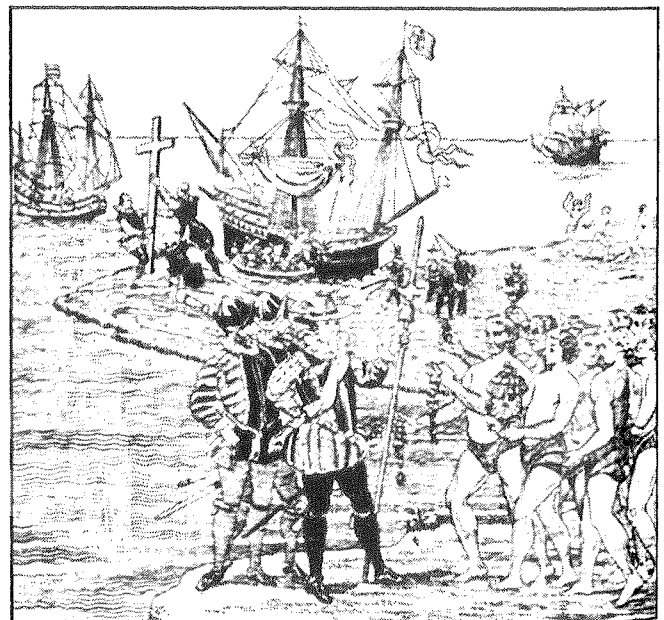
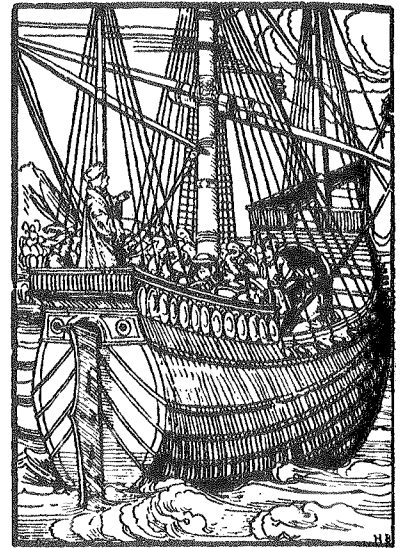
# COLUMBUS SAILS TO THE NEW WORLD

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ideas of Columbus, put faith in them, and invited some of his learned friends to meet the stranger. "Spain must not lose the honor of such an enterprise," the prior declared, and he even went himself to the queen. He had once been her confessor, and she greeted him kindly. King Ferdinand did not believe in the undertaking, but Queen Isabella became thoroughly interested in it. She was Queen of Aragon by her marriage to Ferdinand, but she was Queen of Castile in her own right, and she exclaimed, "I undertake the enterprise for my own crown of Castile, and I will pledge my jewels to raise the necessary funds."

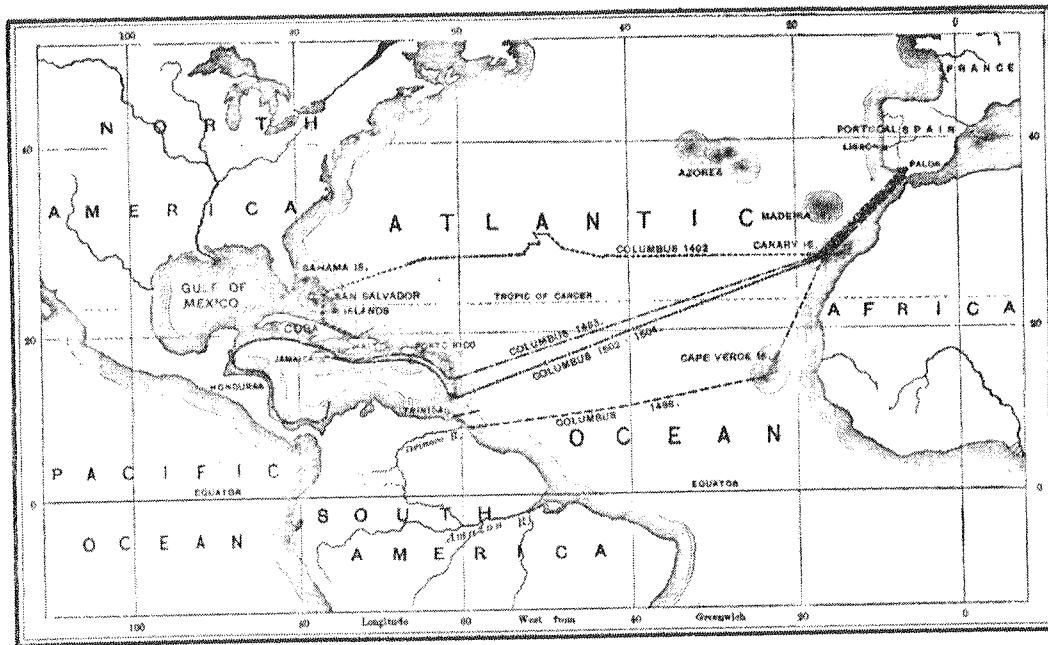
Thus, after eighteen years' delay, the way opened for Columbus, and he set sail from Palos with three small vessels. Even after they were at sea Columbus must have felt as if his troubles were just begun, for his sailors were full of fears. They were cowards, but no one had ever crossed the Atlantic. There were legends that in one place it was swarming with monsters, and that in another the water boiled with the intense heat. There was real danger, also, from the jealous Portuguese, for it was rumored that they had sent out vessels to capture Columbus' little fleet. It is a small wonder the sailors were dismayed by the fires of the volcanic peak of Tenerife, but they were almost equally alarmed by every little occurrence. The mast of a wrecked vessel floated by, and they feared it was a sign that their vessel, too, would be wrecked. After a while, the magnetic needle ceased to point to the North Star, and they were filled with dread lest they should lose their way on the vast ocean. One night a brilliant meteor appeared, and then they were sure that destruction was at hand. The good east wind was sweeping them gently along, but even that worried them, for they feared it would never alter, and how could they get home? Some of them had begun to whisper together of throwing Columbus overboard. Then one day they saw land-birds and floating weeds and finally a glimmering light. The sailors were as eager to press onward as their leader.

Early on the following morning land appeared. Columbus, wearing his brilliant scarlet robes and bearing the standard of Spain, was rowed ashore. He fell upon his knees and kissed the ground, thanking God most heartily for his care. Then he took possession of the land for Spain. The natives gathered around, and he gave them bells and glass beads. He supposed that he was just off the coast of India, and as he had reached the place sailing west, he called it the West Indies



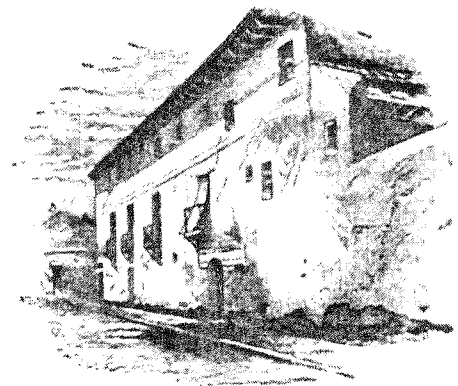
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and the people Indians. The island itself he named San Salvador. It is thought to have been one of the Bahamas. He spent some time among the islands, always hoping to come upon the wealthy cities of the Great Khan. At length he returned to Spain, dreaming of future voyages that he would make.

When he reached Palos, the bells were rung and people gave up their business to celebrate the wonderful voyage and the safe return. Columbus made three other journeys across the ocean, hoping every time to find the rich cities of the East. His enemies claimed that he mismanaged a colony that had been founded in the New World. Another governor was sent out, and he threw the great Admiral into chains. Ferdinand and Isabella were indignant when they knew of this outrage yet they could not help being disappointed that China had not been found. Neither they nor Columbus dreamed that he had discovered a new continent; and even if they had known it, they would have much preferred finding a way to trade with the distant East.



HOUSE AT VALLADOLID WHERE COLUMBUS DIED

*Pretend that you are Peralonso Nino, the pilot on the Santa Mariaro .. After reading a few excerpts from Admiral of the Ocean Sea, A Life of Christopher Columbus or some other translation of his diary (many should be available at your local library), use the following page to place an entry in your journal. What do you think he would have said? You may choose any time period you want, for instance when they believed they were lost or maybe when they saw land for the first time.*

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