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A Note to Parents and Teachers

DK READERS is a compelling reading programme for children. The programme is designed in conjunction with leading literacy experts, including Cliff Moon M.Ed., who has spent many years as a teacher and teacher educator specializing in reading. Cliff Moon has written more than 160 books for children and teachers. He is series editor to Collins Big Cat.

Beautiful illustrations and superb full-colour photographs combine with engaging, easy-to-read stories to offer a fresh approach to each subject in the series. Each DK READER is guaranteed to capture a child's interest while developing his or her reading skills, general knowledge, and love of reading.

The five levels of DK READERS are aimed at different reading abilities, enabling you to choose the books that are exactly right for your child.

The "normal" age at which a child begins to read can be anywhere from three to eight years old. Adult participation through the lower levels is very helpful for providing encouragement, discussing storylines and modelling reading at a faster, fluent pace. As your child's reading confidence and skills increase, they can move through this levelled series.

No matter which level you select, you can be sure that you are helping your child learn to read, then read to learn!



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DK READERS

2
BEGINNING
TO READ ALONE

The story of Columbus

Written by Anita Ganeri



A Dorling Kindersley Book

In August 1492, a sailor called Christopher Columbus set out on an amazing voyage. He sailed across the Atlantic Ocean from Spain.

He hoped to bring back gold and treasure from the far lands of Asia that were called the Indies.

In October, Columbus saw land, but this was not the Indies.

Columbus had reached some islands near North and South America.

To Columbus and his sailors, the Americas were a whole new world.



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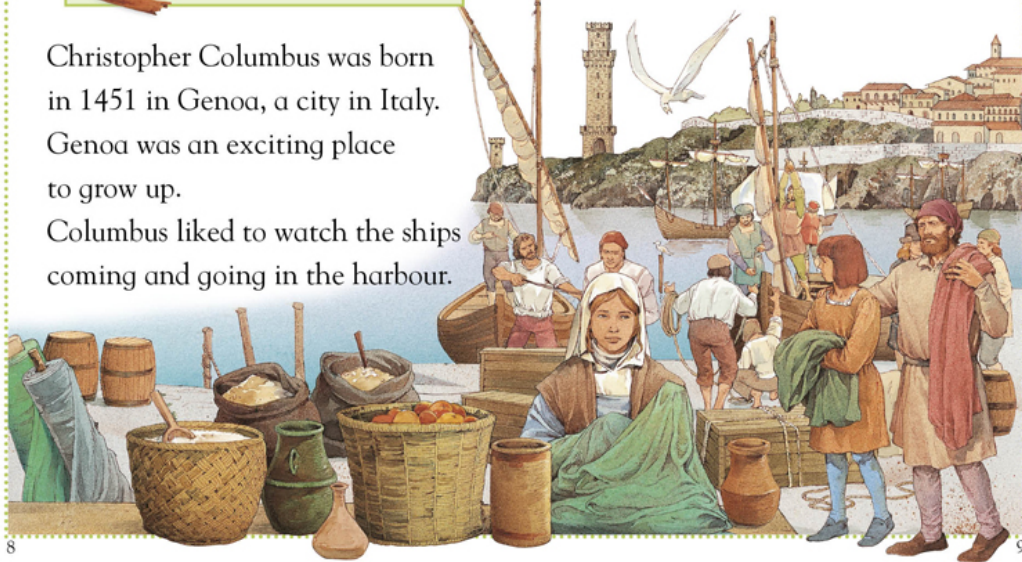
Riches from the Indies

Every day, great sailing ships arrived in Genoa bringing expensive goods from the Indies, such as gold, silks and spices.

Christopher Columbus was born in 1451 in Genoa, a city in Italy. Genoa was an exciting place to grow up. Columbus liked to watch the ships coming and going in the harbour.

He also learned to read, write and do simple sums.

He often helped his father, who worked as a weaver.



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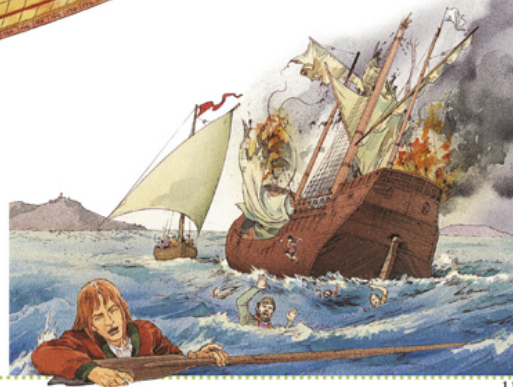


This map of the world was made in 1482. People knew about the continents of Europe, Africa and Asia, but they did not know their true size and shape.

When Columbus was a teenager, he left home to become a sailor. He wanted to explore the world.

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Once, his ship was attacked by pirates. They set the ship on fire and Columbus had to jump into the deep sea. He held on to an oar and swam to shore.



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Columbus moved to Portugal. He became a sea captain and sailed to many different places. He and his brother also made maps and charts of the sea.

Columbus got married and had a family. He still studied his maps and charts. He gazed out at the Atlantic Ocean and had a wonderful idea.



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In Columbus's time, merchants and explorers from Europe always travelled eastwards to the Indies to buy gold, silks and spices.



This is a map of the world as we know it today. It is very different from the old map on page 10.

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Planet Earth

By Columbus's time, most people knew that Earth was round, not flat. But not even Columbus knew how big our planet really is.



They thought the only way to reach the Indies was to go east.

But Columbus believed he could sail west across the Atlantic Ocean to the Indies.

He thought his route would be easier but he did not know that the ocean was so big or that the Americas were in the way.

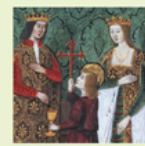
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Columbus needed money to pay for the ships and crew, and for food and supplies. He asked the King of Portugal for the money, but the King said, "No!" Then Columbus asked the King and Queen of Spain. They were interested in his plan, but told him to wait.

Six years later, the King and Queen of Spain finally agreed to help him. Columbus promised to bring them riches from his voyage.

Ferdinand and Isabella

King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain were very powerful. Isabella became a strong supporter of Columbus and his dream.



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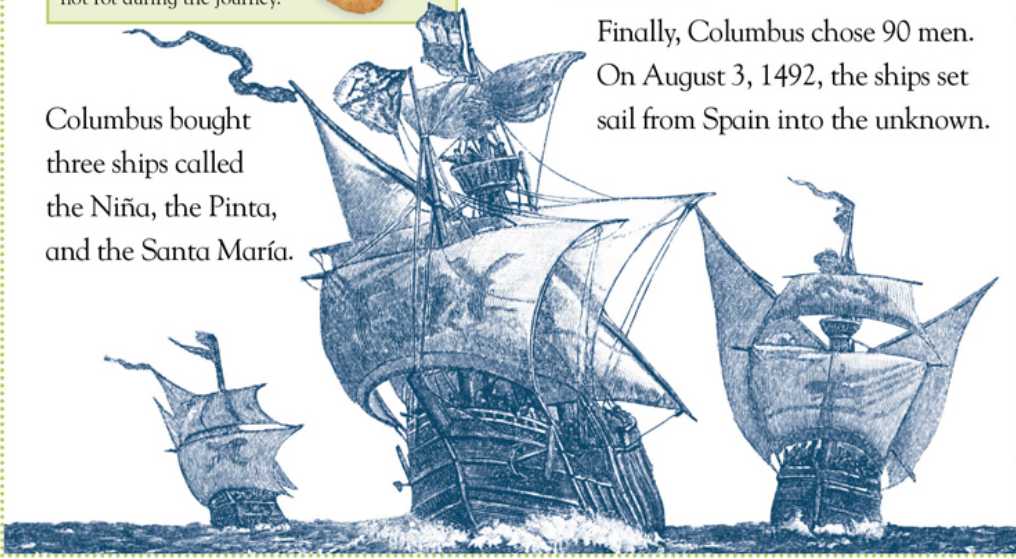
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A sailor's life

Columbus's crew slept on the ship's floor. They ate dry biscuits called "hard tack" and salted meat that would not rot during the journey.



Columbus bought three ships called the Niña, the Pinta, and the Santa María.



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He also bought food and supplies, such as ropes and nails.

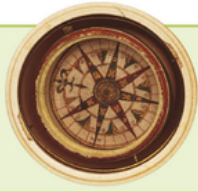
It was hard to find good sailors for the crew.

Finally, Columbus chose 90 men.

On August 3, 1492, the ships set sail from Spain into the unknown.

Finding the way

Columbus used a compass like this to guide the ships southwest across the Atlantic Ocean.



At first, the voyage went well. The weather was good and the wind blew the ships along. The sailors saw strange new sights, including a whale!

But many weeks passed with no sight of land.

The crew grew angry and scared.

Perhaps they were lost?

Would they ever get home?

They began to think that Columbus had made a big mistake.

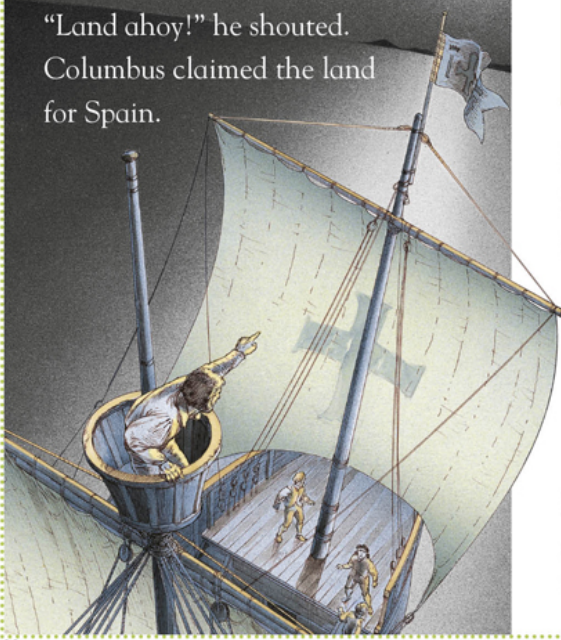
But he would not turn back.



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At last, on October 12, 1492,
the look-out saw a beautiful island.
“Land ahoy!” he shouted.
Columbus claimed the land
for Spain.



Island people

Columbus called the
island people “Indians”
because he believed
he had arrived in
the Indies.



He thought they had
reached a new part
of the Indies.



But this was not true.

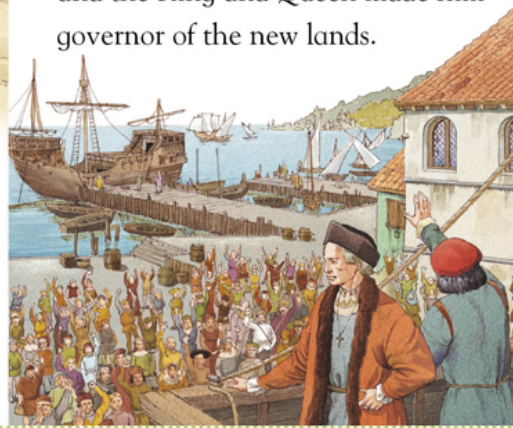
The island was in the
Caribbean Sea, near America.
Columbus never admitted
his mistake.

He made the crew sign a paper to
say they had landed in the Indies.
Then they went to look for gold.



Columbus sailed on.
Then disaster struck!
The Santa María sank near an island
that Columbus called Hispaniola.
The Taíno people lived on the island.
They were kind and helped the crew.

Columbus chose 39 men
to stay on Hispaniola,
whilst he and the others sailed home
aboard the Niña and the Pinta.
They reached Spain in March 1493.
Cheering crowds greeted Columbus
and the King and Queen made him
governor of the new lands.



Soon Columbus set sail again.
He took 17 ships and 1200 people.
He wanted to build new cities and
win more riches for Spain.

Columbus sailed to Hispaniola.
But the sailors who had stayed
behind on the island were dead.
They had been cruel to the Taínos,
and the Taínos had fought back.
Columbus and his people sailed
to the other side of Hispaniola,
where they began to build their city.
But many people became sick.
They were very unhappy and
they blamed Columbus.



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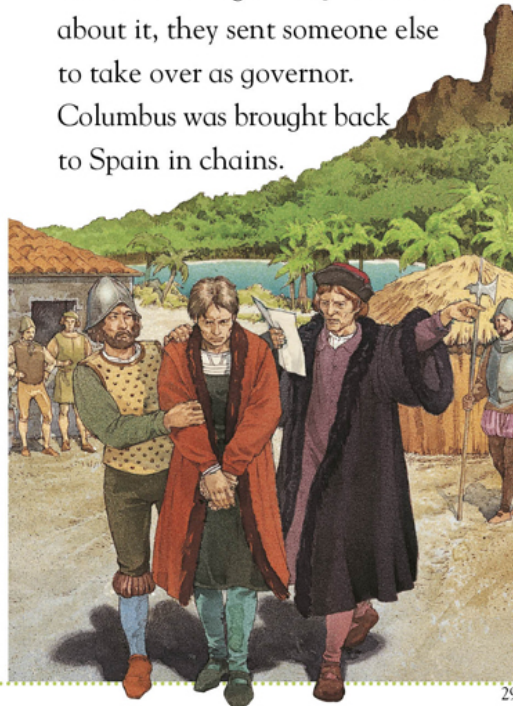
Columbus explored many islands
in the Caribbean Sea.
Everywhere he went,
he searched for gold.
He made four voyages altogether.



■ Voyage 1 ■ Voyage 3
■ Voyage 2 ■ Voyage 4

During his third trip,
Columbus treated the local
people like slaves and
argued with his own people.

When the King and Queen heard
about it, they sent someone else
to take over as governor.
Columbus was brought back
to Spain in chains.



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The King and Queen forgave Columbus and let him sail across the ocean one more time.

On Columbus's last voyage, fierce storms damaged the ships. Columbus and his crew were stranded on an island that is now called Jamaica. They traded with the local people, who gave them food to survive. After a year on Jamaica, a rescue ship finally arrived to take them home.

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Back in Spain, Columbus became sick and he died on May 20, 1506.



He never received the honours that he felt he deserved.

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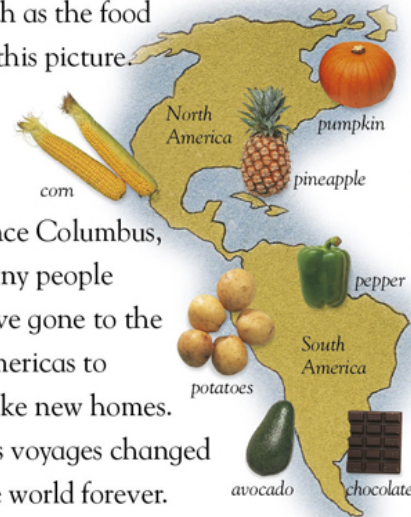


Today, Columbus is remembered as a famous explorer. He was daring and brave, but sometimes cruel. He showed that it was possible to sail across the Atlantic Ocean. Columbus did not find a new route to the Indies. Instead, he made contact with a New World.

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Many explorers followed Columbus to the New World.

They found amazing things that people in Europe had never seen, such as the food in this picture.



Since Columbus, many people have gone to the Americas to make new homes. His voyages changed the world forever.

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Exploration facts

Vikings from northern Europe may have explored parts of the Americas long before Columbus's famous voyage.

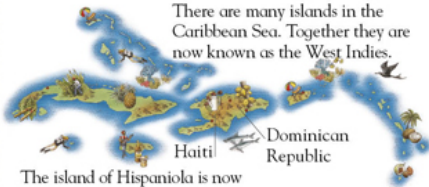


The Taíno people carved long canoes, which they used for travelling among the Caribbean islands, and for fishing. Some canoes could carry 100 people.

In Columbus's time, the Atlantic Ocean was called the Ocean Sea. It was believed to be the only ocean. In fact, water covers more than two-thirds of Earth.



There are many islands in the Caribbean Sea. Together they are now known as the West Indies.



The island of Hispaniola is now divided into two countries called Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

In 1507, a map-maker first used the name America on a map of the New World. It was named after another Italian explorer called Amerigo Vespucci.



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