

LESSON 3 - 1492

1492

[Point out Ferdinand, Isabella, and Columbus in the picture as you read.]

The year was 1492. King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, as the rulers of Spain, provided Christopher Columbus with three ships.

Rulers are leaders in charge of a country or land, like kings and queens. Who were the rulers of

Spain? They gave him money to pay for crews *[Point to the men in Columbus's*

boat.] A crew is a group of people working on a ship. to sail them, plus food and water

for the long voyage. Columbus was to sail his fleet westward to the Indies. There he would trade European goods for rare spices, gold, and other treasures that the king and queen desired.

Columbus and his crew, the sailors who sailed the three ships, would take some supplies made in Europe to trade for the spices and gold they were seeking.



Columbus's three ships had names: the Niña [/nee*nyə/], the Pinta, and the Santa María. *[Have students repeat the names after you.]* Can you find the smallest ship in the picture? That is the Niña. The middle-sized one, the Pinta, was the fastest of the three. Columbus chose to sail on the largest ship, the 120-foot-long Santa María, or Saint Mary. *[Tell students approximately how many feet long your classroom is, and how many classrooms put together would be as long as the Santa Maria.]* Proud of all three vessels, and wanting his voyage to succeed, he was determined to choose the best sailors that he could find in all of Spain.



[Tell students that this palace is what Columbus imagined he and his crew would see when they arrived in the Indies.]

Columbus was confident that he could attract the men he needed and convince them to go on the voyage. True, he had to paint word pictures of warm, beautiful lands where gold and rare spices were so common that a person could hardly avoid tripping over them. He suggested, without actually promising, that his crew would return to Spain so rich that they could all live in grand homes and wear fine clothes.



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Another thing he told them was quite true: Queen Isabella had offered a huge cash reward *a lot of money* to the first person who sighted the Indies. Perhaps it was this offer that was most convincing of all to the sailors. One by one, Columbus found his men, and they agreed to join his expedition. *An expedition is a journey by a group of people for a special reason.*



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[Point out how the crew takes little boats to get to the ships.]

At last everyone and everything was ready. On August 3, 1492, the Niña, the Pinta, and the Santa María sailed out of their Spanish harbor bound for a possible fortune in the Indies. The sailors were proud and excited.



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But when they passed the last familiar lands, the Canary Islands, and found themselves in open sea, out of sight of any land, their excitement began to turn to uncertainty, and then to fear. Columbus tried to calm their fears.



Both Columbus and the crew were feeling less safe the longer they sailed in the open sea. As days passed, and then weeks, Columbus's reassurance was no longer enough to keep the crew from becoming seriously frightened. *What do you think they're afraid of? [Be sure to remind students that Columbus made his trip long, long ago. Emphasize that the sailors had no way to communicate or talk with anyone other than the other sailors on the ships.]*



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Days and days and long nights passed. The Niña, the Pinta, and the Santa María had been sailing westward out at sea for weeks now. They had entered a part of the ocean in which long, thick seaweed covered the surface in every direction for as far as the eye could see. "This is a good sign," Columbus thought. *Why do you think Columbus thinks that seaweed is a good sign?* "It may mean we are nearing land."



But then the winds died down to nearly nothing, and the sails hung lifelessly from the masts. The three ships crept forward, and sometimes stopped moving altogether. Each day was like the one before, and Columbus and the sailors wondered, "Will we ever get out of this seaweed? Will the wind ever change and come back to us?" *Why do the sailors want the wind to come back? [Make sure students understand there are no motors or engines on the ships to make them move. They can only move if the wind fills the sails of the ship.]*



At last, after days and days, the wind picked up again and they sailed free of the clinging seaweed and back into the open sea. Still, the sailors worried, and they no longer bothered to hide their doubts from Columbus. "When will we find the lands you promised us?" they asked.

"Soon," he told them, trying to look confident. "Soon we will get there." But as he said this, Columbus too had his own doubts.



But the sailors were tired of sailing and were losing hope. They came to Columbus one day and begged him to turn the ships around. "Give me three more days," he said. "If we have not seen land by then, we will turn around."

But the days passed with no sign of progress.

Then on the third day, a sailor called out, "There is something floating in the water up ahead."



"Fish it up out of the water," Columbus ordered. Some sailors tossed a net over the side and drew up the object. "It is a stick!" cried one of the sailors. "It looks as if someone has carved its sides with a knife."

"That must mean there's land ahead, and someone is living there," the others said excitedly. *Why is a carved stick a sign of land?*



The next day, several sailors saw branches with green leaves floating on the surface of the water. *What's the third sign that they are getting close to land? (branches with green leaves)* Then the crews of all three ships saw a large flock of land birds flying overhead. "We must be getting close to land!" the men cried with great excitement. *What's the fourth sign that they are getting close to land? (birds)*



The birds circled above as if examining the three ships, then turned back in the direction from which they had come. "Follow them," Columbus ordered. "The birds will lead us to land."

Soon the salty sea breezes began to carry a new scent their way. "Could we be smelling the spices of Asia up ahead?" the sailors asked one another, growing more and more excited. But still they saw no land.



On the evening of Thursday, October 11, Columbus ordered the ships to drop anchor, something they had not done on the entire voyage. "If we really are close to land," he thought, "we might be carried by the current up against the shore in the darkness and never know until it's too late."



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That night, walking the deck of the Santa María, he saw a light in the distance. "It is too far away to be coming from the Pinta," he thought, knowing that the ship was anchored farther ahead of his own. "And the light is too low in the sky to be a star. It must be a fire set by some human being on a shore up ahead!" *The shore is the land at the edge of a body of water. How do you think Columbus will feel when he sees the shore? What's the fifth sign that they are getting close to land?*



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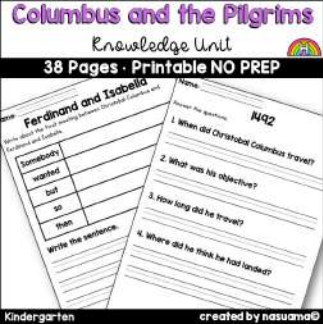
A few hours later, in the early morning hours of October 12, 1492, Columbus heard the sound of a cannon. "It is coming from the Pinta," he thought. "They must have sighted land!" *Why do you think the Pinta fired its cannon? Which of the three ships saw land first?* Waiting impatiently as the early light of dawn increased, he stared ahead until he saw what the sailors on board the Pinta had seen: a long, low shore on which the ocean waves were smoothly breaking. The men of the Pinta were cheering, and a moment later, cheering broke out aboard the Niña and the Santa María, too. *What finally happened on October 12, 1492? Describe what you see the sailors doing in the picture.*



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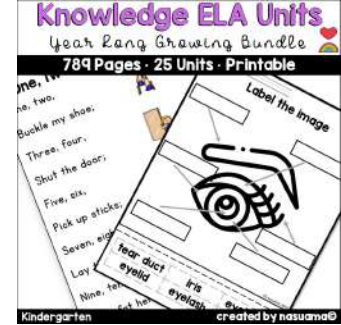
Dressing formally *or nicely* for the occasion, and carrying a long flag pole bearing the flag of Spain, Columbus and some of his men rowed over the waves in a small boat to the shore of this new land. Stepping out into the water, Columbus and the sailors stepped ashore. By his calculations, Columbus believed he had landed on the continent of Asia, in the Indies. Then, he plunged the flagpole into the sandy shore and said, "On behalf of their majesties, I, Christopher Columbus, claim this land and all that is in it for Spain."





COLUMBUS AND THE PILGRIMS

BUNDLE



Name: _____

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Answer the questions.

1. When did Christobal Columbus travel?

2. What was his objective?

3. How long did he travel?

DO YOU NEED EXTRA ACTIVITIES?

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