

Should we care about Christopher Columbus?

Guided Notes

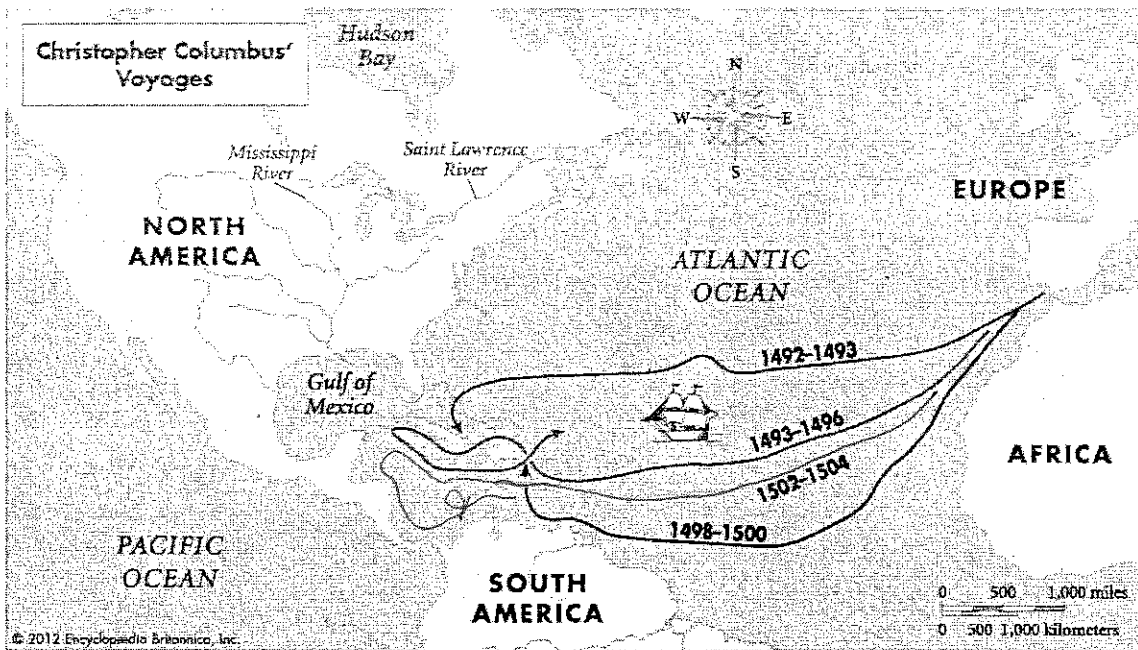
What textbooks teach:

Christopher Columbus was an Italian-born navigator who sailed in the service of Spain. He is commonly described as the discoverer of the New World—America. Although Columbus was in search of a westward route to Asia by sea, the "discoveries" he did make were more important and valuable than the route he failed to find. Columbus, though he sailed a different route, followed many Europeans who earlier had crossed the Atlantic.

Columbus had become interested in westward voyages. He had learned of the legendary Atlantic Ocean voyages and sailors' reports of land to the west of the Madeira Islands and the Azores. Acquiring books and maps, Columbus accepted Marco Polo's erroneous location for Japan—2,400 km (1,500 mi) east of China. In addition, he accepted Ptolemy's underestimation of the circumference of the Earth and overestimation of the size of the Eurasian landmass. He came to believe that Japan was about 4,800 km (3,000 mi) to the west of Portugal—a distance that could be sailed in existing vessels. His idea was furthered by the suggestions of the Florentine cosmographer Paolo dal Pozzo Toscanelli. In 1484, Columbus sought support for an exploratory voyage.

In 1485, Columbus took his son and went to Spain; there he spent almost seven years trying to get support from Isabella I of Castile. He was received at court, given a small annuity, and quickly gained both friends and enemies. An apparently final refusal in 1492 made Columbus prepare to go to France, but a final appeal to Isabella proved successful. An agreement between the crown and Columbus set the terms for the expedition.

Columbus' Voyages:



Observations of the map:

- Discovers caribbean & not America
- Exploring → spices, slaves, gold/money

Document Study: Christopher Columbus to Ferdinand and Isabella (April 1493)

Student Summary:

- He discovered islands
- He found "Indians" → converts to Christianity & slavery
- Lots of resources: gold, spices, tobacco/cotton

thinks he's
very successful

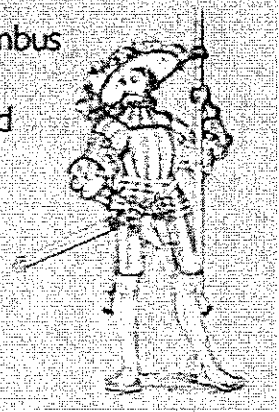
Why Celebrate Columbus Day?

Officially declared a holiday in 1937

Franklin Roosevelt

* Celebrating Italian-American heritage

Let's celebrate Columbus day by walking into someone's house and telling them we live there now



your cards