

Activity 1

Do you know the answers?

1. Columbus' first name was ...
a) Francis b) Christopher c) Ferdinand
2. He was born in ...
a) 1451 b) 1551 c) 1651
3. Columbus was ...
a) Spanish b) Portuguese c) Italian
4. His flagship ship was called ...
a) *Isabella* b) *Santa Fe* c) *Santa Maria*
5. On his first voyage Columbus reached land on the ...day.
a) 10th b) 17th c) 24th
6. Columbus made a total of ... voyages to the New World.
a) 2 b) 3 c) 4

Activity 2

Now read a text about Christopher Columbus and check your answers.

Student A

Christopher Columbus (or Cristoforo Colombo in Italian) was born in 1451 in Genoa, in present-day Italy. As a young boy he spent many days listening to sailors' tales of their voyages. As soon as he could he became a sailor and studied mapmaking and navigation. By the age of 25 he was living in Portugal. At the time explorers were trying to find a sea route to Asia. Some explorers were trying to sail around Africa, but Columbus realised that by sailing west you should reach Asia. Finally, in 1492, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, the rulers of Castile and Aragon (in Spain) agreed to give Columbus the money he needed to buy ships and supplies.

Student B

Columbus set sail on August 3rd, 1492. After a short stop in the Canary Islands he sailed west with his three ships – the *Nina*, the *Pinta* and the *Santa Maria*. The voyage was difficult, but on October 12th, after 17 days at sea, they saw land. Columbus thought he had sailed around the world to Asia, but of course he hadn't. Columbus spent ten weeks exploring before sailing back to Spain where he promised King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella gold and jewels. In the next 11 years he made three more voyages, but never discovered gold. Finally, he was sent back to Spain where he died in 1506 at the age of 55.

Activity 3

There are six factual mistakes in the article below. Find and correct them.

Famous explorer Columbus dies

by Miguel Lopez – 1506 – Seville.

The world famous sailor, Francis Columbus died at his home last night. He was born in 1541 in the small town of Genoa. At this time explorers were trying to find a sea route to Portugal. In 1492 King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella gave Columbus the money he needed for a voyage. He set sail on August

3rd with two ships. He landed in the Canary Islands where he stopped for supplies before setting sail west. After 17 weeks he finally reached land. He made four more voyages to the New World before returning to Spain two years ago.

Activity 4

Look back at the texts and find words that have the following meanings:

- a) The skill to find a way for a ship to go in a certain direction using maps or the stars.
- b) A long journey by ship.
- c) The way you go when you travel from one place to another.
- d) To begin a journey by ship.
- e) Food and equipment that you need for a journey.

Columbus
Adrian Tennant**Level**

Pre-intermediate/Intermediate

Topic

Columbus

Subject(s)

History

Time (approx)

Activity 1: 10 – 15 minutes

Activity 2: 15 minutes

Activity 3: 10 – 15 minutes

Activity 4: 10 minutes

Preparation

Activity 1: Photocopy of quiz for each student/pair.

Activity 2: Photocopy one per two students & cut into A & B worksheets.

Activity 3: Photocopy for each student/pair.

Activity 4: This can be photocopies and given to each student/pair or, written up or read out by you.

Activity 1

- 1 On the board write up *Columbus*.
- 2 Ask students what they can tell you about him. Encourage the students to use English and write up some of the things they say.
- 3 Tell students they are going to do a short quiz on Columbus, but not to worry as they'll have some choices.
- 4 Put students in pairs and give each pair a copy of the quiz and ask them to work together and discuss the choices.
- 5 Monitor, but don't help or tell the students which answers are correct.
- 6 Tell students you're not going to check the answers yet, but that they will do this in the next activity.

Activity 2

- 1 Split each pair, so you have one student A and one student B.*
 - 2 Tell them that you want them to work alone.
 - 3 Give student A the worksheet marked Student A and student B the one marked Student B.
 - 4 Tell students to read their text and find the answers to three of the questions.
 - 5 Monitor, and help where necessary.
 - 6 Next, ask the original pairs to sit together and tell each other the answers to the three questions from the quiz that were in their text.
 - 7 Finally, check as a class.
- * Alternatively, put students in groups of four. Ask two students to work together as student A and two as student B. Follow the same procedure as above from step 3.

Answers

- 1b) Christopher
2a) 1451
3c) Italian (technically Genoese)
4c) Santa Maria
5b) 17th
6c) 4 (1 + 3 more)

Activity 3

- 1 Ask students to look at the text and ask *What is it?*
- 2 Elicit *newspaper article*.
- 3 Tell the students that there are six factual mistakes in the text. They should read it and try to find and correct the mistakes.
- 4 Tell the students to try and do it without looking back at the texts from activity 2.

- 5 Give the students five minutes and then put them in pairs and get them to check together.
- 6 Finally, check as a class or get them to refer back to the texts from activity 2 and check.

Answers

Famous explorer Columbus dies

by Miguel Lopez - 1506 – Seville.

The world famous sailor, **Francis**

Christopher Columbus died at his home last night. He was born in ~~1541~~ **1451** in the small town of Genoa. At this time explorers were trying to find a sea route to **Portugal** **Asia**. In 1492 King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella gave Columbus the money he needed for a voyage. He set sail on August 3rd with ~~two~~ **three** ships. He landed in the Canary Islands where he stopped for supplies before setting sail west. After 17 ~~weeks~~ **days** he finally reached land. He made ~~four~~ **three** more voyages to the New World before returning to Spain two years ago.

Activity 4

- 1 Ask students to read the five definitions.
- 2 Tell the students that the words that match the definitions are in the texts they have read in activity 2.
- 3 Ask the students to read through the texts and find the words (one is a collocation).
- 4 Put students in pairs and get them to work together and discuss their ideas.
- 5 Monitor and help where necessary.
- 6 Check as a class.

Answers

- a) navigation
- b) voyage
- c) route
- d) set sail
- e) supplies

Useful websites

Brief page from the BBC.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/columbus_christopher.shtml

Slightly more detailed page which also has information about the four voyages undertaken by Columbus.

<http://www.mariner.org/educationalad/ageofex/columbus.php>

Great site for younger students, or low-level students. Includes a quiz.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/famouspeople/standard/columbus/index.shtml>