



# **Christopher Columbus Activity Bundle**

## **Integrated Reading and**

## **CRITICAL THOUGHT**

## **Activities**

For Grades 5-8

**7 INTEGRATED ACTIVITIES**  
Perfect for Interactive Notebooks  
Perfect for Morning Work or Assessments

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## ANSWERS

Name	Answers
Christopher Columbus Answers	1451, A, A, 150, ABD, B, B, D, D, D

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**Virtual History Teacher**  
**Christopher Columbus Test**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions: You are playing the role of a history teacher who is grading the test below. See the questions and your “student’s” answers. Grade the quality of the answers on a scale of 1-4, “1” being a poor answer and “4” being a great answer. For each answer you grade, use your knowledge of Christopher Columbus, or, reference the [mrnussbaum.com](http://mrnussbaum.com) online biography, to add the missing pieces.

<b>Question 1: How did hard work finally pay off for Columbus?</b>	Score:
<b>Student Answer:</b> He sailed across the Atlantic Ocean.	
Your Response:	

<b>Question 2: Do you think Christopher Columbus deserves as much credit as he gets? Why or why not?</b>	Score:
<b>Student Answer:</b> No. He was really mean.	
Your Response:	

<b>Question 3: What was the EFFECT of Columbus's travels?</b>	Score:
<b>Student Answer:</b> He became very famous.	
Your Response:	

Answers:

<b>Question 1: How did hard work finally pay off for Columbus?</b>	Score:
<b>Student Answer:</b> He sailed across the Atlantic Ocean.	
Your Response: Your answer is incomplete. Columbus tried for ten years to get monarchs from four different nations to finance his westward trip across the ocean. He was so sure that he could reach Asia by sailing west that he never gave up. Finally, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain took a chance on him by giving him a crew and three ships in the hopes of obtaining great wealth.	

<b>Question 2: Do you think Christopher Columbus deserves as much credit as he gets? Why or why not?</b>	Score:
<b>Student Answer:</b> No. He was really mean.	
Your Response: Answers vary here, but Columbus does sometimes get credit for “discovering” the New World. Despite his voyage, he couldn’t have been more wrong about where he ended up. Columbus believed until the day he died that he had indeed found the shortcut to the Indies. He never realized he had sailed to the “New World.” With his own national American holiday, and his violence and cruelty toward the natives he encountered, perhaps he does get too much credit, considering he didn’t even know what he had found.	

<b>Question 3: What was the EFFECT of Columbus’s travels?</b>	Score:
<b>Student Answer:</b> He became very famous.	
Your Response: Columbus did become a hero, but the effects of his travels were far more important. Columbus’s journeys formed the basis for Spanish claims in the New World. Because of Columbus, Spain was able to colonize the New World and grow into one of the world’s largest and richest empires.	

**Fact or Fiction?**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

Below is a passage on Christopher Columbus. On the following page is a chart with ten statements. Indicate whether each statement is fact or fiction.

**Heading West to Reach the East**

Christopher Columbus was born in Genoa, Italy, in 1451. His career in exploration started when he was very young. As a teenager he traveled the seas and eventually made Portugal his base. Columbus came to believe that the East Indies (present-day Indonesia and surrounding islands) could be reached by sailing west through the Atlantic Ocean. He appealed to the kings of Portugal, France, and England to finance a westward trip to the Indies, but all denied his request. After ten years of monumental efforts but fruitless results, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain agreed to finance Columbus in the hopes of acquiring great wealth. On August 3, 1492, Columbus, crew, and three ships, the Nina, Pinta, and Santa Maria, left Palos, Spain, and headed westward.

**Land Sighted!**

After stopping in the Canary Islands off the coast of Africa, Columbus's ships hit the open seas. Covering about 150 miles a day, the trip was long and arduous. The crew was afraid of sea monsters and grew more restless every day that land was not sighted. Columbus offered a reward for the first person to sight land. On October 12, a crew member aboard the Pinta sighted one of the Bahama Islands. Columbus set foot on what he believed was one of the Spice Islands, a group of islands in Asia (now known as Indonesia), where valuable spices and riches came from. He named the land San Salvador. Columbus failed to find the riches he expected and continued to search for China. He next visited Cuba and Hispaniola (Dominican Republic). He encountered native peoples who he named "Indians" because he believed they were inhabitants of the Indies. Columbus enslaved many of these people and forced them to mine for riches. Countless native peoples died as a result of Columbus's actions; many others died of disease.

**I Did Find a Shortcut to the Indies!**

Columbus returned to Spain a hero. He was named Viceroy of the Indies. He soon returned to the New World but never found the riches he expected. Some began to believe that Columbus had found "a new world" rather than a shortcut to the Indies.

# Legacy

Christopher Columbus is credited with discovering the continent of North America, although he probably wasn't the first explorer to see the continent, and he believed until his death that the islands he encountered were in the Asian continent. His discoveries were instrumental in the establishment of Spanish colonies in North America. Today, we celebrate Columbus Day in October to commemorate his discoveries.

	FACT	FICTION
Christopher Columbus was born in Spain but sailed for Italy.		
King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella eventually agreed to pay for Columbus's journey.		
Christopher Columbus believed that by sailing east, he could reach the East Indies.		
It took ten years for Columbus to finally fulfill his belief that the Indies lie to the west.		
Of the three ships, a sailor aboard the Santa Maria was the first to sight land.		
San Salvador was the name that Columbus gave the land that he and his crew first set foot upon.		
Although Columbus was hailed as a hero in Spain, he treated the natives he encountered violently.		
Columbus visited the land that is now the Bahamas, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic.		
Columbus sailed to the land known then as the Spice Islands.		
When Columbus died, he finally realized he had sailed to the New World rather than Asia.		

**Answers:**

	FACT	FICTION
Christopher Columbus was born in Spain but sailed for Italy.		X
King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella eventually agreed to pay for Columbus's journey.	X	
Christopher Columbus believed that by sailing east, he could reach the East Indies.		X
It took ten years for Columbus to finally fulfill his belief that the Indies lie to the west.	X	
Of the three ships, a sailor aboard the Santa Maria was the first to sight land.		X
San Salvador was the name that Columbus gave the land that he and his crew first set foot upon.	X	
Although Columbus was hailed as a hero in Spain, he treated the natives he encountered violently.	X	
Columbus visited the land that is now the Bahamas, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic.	X	
Columbus sailed to the land known then as the Spice Islands.		X
When Columbus died, he finally realized he had sailed to the New World rather than Asia.		X



## Overrated

Most of you have probably heard of the term “overrated.” It means that someone (or something) gets more credit or accolades than they deserve. Anyone can think anything is overrated. For example, if I go to dinner at a five-star restaurant that has lots of positive reviews, and the food I am served is cold and tasteless, I’d consider the restaurant “overrated.” Movies, books, musicians, and athletes, are common topics in conversations about things that are overrated.

Some people believe that Christopher Columbus is overrated in history. They might argue that Columbus didn't even know he had stumbled upon the New World and believed, until his death, that he had found the elusive shortcut to the Indies. They might also say that he wasn't even the first to find the New World, and, that he was cruel and brutal to the local natives he encountered.

In the space provided below, what is something you think is overrated and why? Explain in detail.



## **Columbus Day, or Not So Much?**

Christopher Columbus has long been celebrated in America with Columbus Day, the second Monday of every October. Recently, many have advocated for eliminating Columbus Day because although Columbus made a history-changing discovery, he was known to have been extremely cruel to the natives he encountered in the West Indies, and was responsible for the enslavement and murder of tens of thousands.

Do you think Columbus Day should be celebrated? If not, choose an important person who should replace Columbus and receive a national holiday. Either way, explain your reasoning in detail and give specific examples of why you made your choice.



# Topic Sentence – Christopher Columbus

**Name:**

Forming good topic sentences is crucial to writing successful reports. Below is the topic sentence of a body paragraph within a biography on Christopher Columbus. There are four detail sentences that should come after the topic sentence. First, choose the four from the series of sentences below and then, form the paragraph. Start the paragraph with the topic sentence below. There are four additional sentences from those below that should be included.

**Topic Sentence:** After stopping in the Canary Islands off the coast of Africa, Columbus's ships hit the open seas.

Sentence	Does it belong in the paragraph with the above topic sentence?
He appealed to the kings of Portugal, France, and England to finance a westward trip to the Indies, but all denied his request.	
Columbus offered a reward for the first person to sight land.	
Covering about 150 miles a day, the trip was long and arduous.	
The crew was afraid of sea monsters and grew more restless every day that land was not sighted.	
Finally, on October 12, a crew member aboard the Pinta sighted one of the Bahama Islands.	
He soon returned to the New World but never found the riches he expected.	

## Answers

Sentence	Does it belong in the paragraph with the above topic sentence?
He appealed to the kings of Portugal, France, and England to finance a westward trip to the Indies, but all denied his request.	NO
To calm his fellow sailors, Columbus offered a reward for the first person to sight land.	YES
Covering about 150 miles a day, the trip was long and arduous.	YES
The crew was afraid of sea monsters and grew more restless every day that land was not sighted.	YES
Finally, on October 12, a crew member aboard the Pinta sighted one of the Bahama Islands.	YES
He soon returned to the New World but never found the riches he expected.	NO

After stopping in the Canary Islands off the coast of Africa, Columbus's ships hit the open seas. Covering about 150 miles a day, the trip was long and arduous. The crew was afraid of sea monsters and grew more restless every day that land was not sighted. To calm his fellow sailors, Columbus offered a reward for the first person to sight land. Finally, on October 12, a crew member aboard the Pinta sighted one of the Bahama Islands.

## **CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS Reading Comprehension**

Christopher Columbus was born in Genoa, Italy, in 1451. His career in exploration started when he was very young. As a teenager, he traveled the seas and eventually made Portugal his base. He appealed to the kings of Portugal, France, and England to finance a westward trip to the Indies, but all denied his request. After ten years of monumental efforts but fruitless results, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain agreed to finance Columbus in the hopes of acquiring great wealth. On August 3, 1492, Columbus and three ships, the Nina, the Pinta, and the Santa Maria, left Palos, Spain, and headed westward.

After stopping in the Canary Islands off the coast of Africa, Columbus's ships hit the open seas. Covering about 150 miles a day, the trip was long and arduous. The crew was afraid of sea monsters and grew more restless every day land was not sighted. Columbus offered a reward for the first person to sight land. On October 12, a crew member aboard the Pinta sighted one of the Bahama Islands. Columbus set foot on what he believed was one of the Spice Islands, a group of islands in Asia (now known as Indonesia), where valuable spices and riches came from. He named the land San Salvador. Columbus failed to find the riches he expected and continued to search for China. He next visited Cuba and Hispaniola (Dominican Republic). He encountered native peoples who he named "Indians" because he believed they were inhabitants of the Indies.

Columbus returned to Spain a hero. He was named viceroy of the Indies. He soon returned to the New World but never found the riches he expected. Some began to believe that Columbus had found "a new world" rather than a shortcut to the Indies.

Christopher Columbus made one of the greatest discoveries in the history of the world - North America. Though he probably wasn't the first explorer to see the continent, and he believed until his death that the islands he encountered were in the Asian continent, his discoveries were instrumental in the establishment of Spanish colonies in North America. Today, we celebrate Columbus Day in October to commemorate his discoveries.

1.) In what year was Christopher Columbus born? \_\_\_\_\_

2.) On October 12, 1492, where did Columbus think he was?

- a.) Asia
- b.) Africa
- c.) North America
- d.) Dominican Republic

3.) Which of the following is NOT a ship that went on the voyage?

- a.) Santa Monica
- b.) Santa Maria
- c.) Pinta
- d.) Nina

4.) About how many miles did the ships travel every day? \_\_\_\_\_

5.) Select all of the following places that Columbus visited on his voyage.

- a.) Dominican Republic
- b.) Cuba
- c.) Florida
- d.) Canary Islands

6.) What happened last?

- a.) Columbus was named viceroy of the Indies.
- b.) Spain set up colonies in the New World.
- c.) October 13, 1492
- d.) Columbus encountered Indians.

7.) Which of the following is closest in meaning to "fruitless"?

- a.) without any cost
- b.) without success
- c.) broken promise
- d.) without fruit

8.) Christopher Columbus thought he could find a shortcut to the Indies by sailing...

- a.) east.
- b.) north.
- c.) south.
- d.) west.

9.) What country eventually agreed to finance Christopher Columbus's trip?

- a.) England
- b.) Portugal
- c.) France
- d.) Spain

10.) What happened first?

- a.) October 12, 1492
- b.) The Santa Maria left Spain and headed westward.
- c.) Columbus stopped in the Canary Islands.
- d.) King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella agreed to pay for the trip.