

# COLUMBUS REACHES INDIES

## LANDS ON UNKNOWN ISLAND

Barcelona, Spain, March 1493

Admiral Christopher Columbus and his daring crew have just returned from an uncharted island near the shores of India. The landing, which took place last October, is expected to open a new route to the Orient. He is seeking the support of Queen Isabella for a second voyage on which he hopes to establish a trade route.

STORY ON PAGE TWO



Photograph by Dori

To really understand history we have to look very carefully at events. It's as easy to miss important events as it is this deer hiding near Urbana.



## Illinois!

**What is Illinois?** Write your answer below.

Did you say it is a state, your home, part of America? Yes, if you live in Illinois, it is all of these. But it is more. Illinois is people, land, homes, farms, cities, schools, and rivers. They are all part of Illinois. What are some other parts of Illinois?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

So Illinois is not just a space on a map or a name on your address!

Have you been outside of Illinois? Have you been in any of these states? (Circle the ones that you have been in.)

- Indiana      Missouri      Wisconsin  
Iowa      Kentucky

Look at a map of America. What is special about these states?

You are right if you said that they all touch Illinois. They are our neighbor states.

What about these? (Circle any you've been in.)

- Alaska      Hawaii  
California      Maine  
Florida      Washington

Can you find these on your map? What is special about them?

They are far away from Illinois. In fact, two of these states are so far away that they may not be on your map! Which two are they?

What do all of these states have in common? (Mark 'X' by the right answers.)

1. \_\_\_ They are part of America
2. \_\_\_ There are no boys or girls in them
3. \_\_\_ People there love their families and state
4. \_\_\_ They have a *history*
5. \_\_\_ They have jungles and swamps

If you marked 'X' on #1, #3, and #4, you are right. #2 is wrong because there are boys and girls in every state. Why is #5 wrong?

## Illinois is part of America

While we live in Illinois and love Illinois, we also live in America and love America. We are all proud of both. In *My Illinois*, you will learn some things about both. You will especially learn about the past. We will study the people who came before us in Illinois and in other parts of America. We will study the land and learn how it was discovered and explored. We will learn what it was like and what has happened on it. It is the story of the past. It is our *heritage*.

This story is filled with adventure. It has heroes and villains, good times and bad times, success and failure. Sometimes we may wish we could change it, but we can't. But if we pay close attention, we can learn from it. Then, maybe we can make the future better. Are you ready? Let's go.

## Columbus in "America"

When word of Columbus' remarkable discovery reached Spain, there was much excitement. It was thought he had reached the outer islands of Asia called the "Indies." They thought he was close to the country of India where many things came from that they could not get in Spain. They thought that by sailing west he had reached the farthest lands of the East in less time!

They were mistaken. At 2:00 in the morning of October 12, 1492, a crewman on the *Pinta* sighted an island of the Bahamas off the southeast coast of what is now America. A cannon shot announced the discovery and soon Columbus landed, threw himself to his knees, and returned thanks to God. He named the island "San Salvador." He thought he was on an island near India and sailed among the islands in the area. Today we call them the "West Indies." He never did see the mainland of America and he never did know he was still half way around the world from India!

Columbus returned three more times for further explorations. He was still looking for India. He thought he was too far north so he sailed further south. Then he landed on the coast of South America and thought that was Asia. He never did land on the main part of America. However, he left small landing parties on several islands to establish settlements.

On his first voyage, he left a settlement at Navidad on the island of Hispaniola. When he returned and found it destroyed by natives, he built a fort and *founded* Santo Domingo. Today, this is the capital of

Photo of a globe showing North and South America and the Atlantic Ocean.

In the picture, Illinois is near the top of the globe and Spain is at the far right.



the Dominican Republic. Columbus also discovered Haiti, Jamaica, Cuba, Trinidad, and Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico is an island *commonwealth* of America.

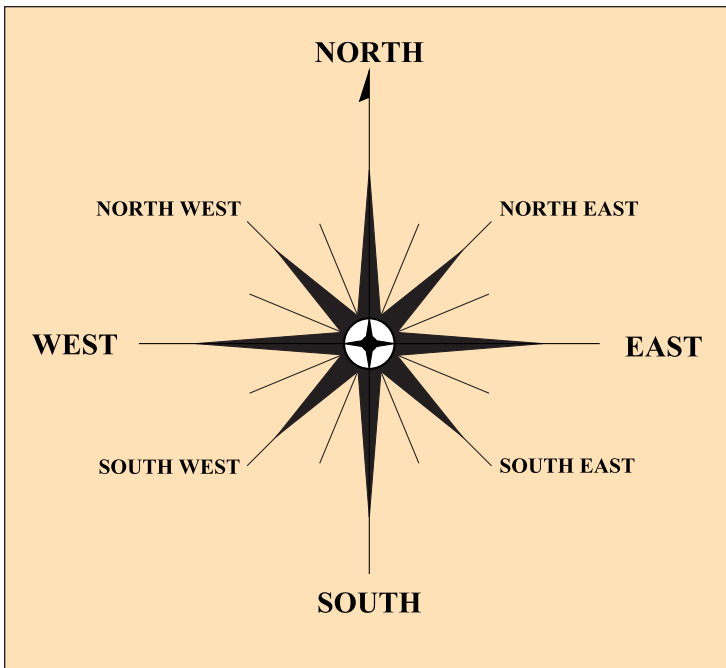
## Understanding your world

For this activity you need a globe. A globe is a model of the earth we live on. It is a *replica*, a likeness in small size. It is round like the earth is round. It has a map on it that shows where the land is and where the sea is. The sea is usually colored blue. The land is shaped in many ways and has countries on it often shown in different colors. The different land shapes are called *continents*. The seas between them are the *oceans*.

Look at your globe. Can you find America? Turn the globe and look at the top half until you find it. Do you see how America fits into the middle of a large continent? Now look above America and find Canada. Next look below America and find Mexico. Again, look at Canada. On the left of it find the state of Alaska. Alaska is part of America, but Canada is in between. Altogether, America, Canada, and Mexico form most of the continent of North America.

Look at the thin line of land below Mexico. Today this is called "Central America." Follow it down and to the right until you come to the country of Colombia. Colombia is a country on another continent called "South America." Find a few other countries on this continent. Find Brazil, the biggest country in South America. Why do we call this continent "South America" and our own "North America"? Yes, because one is north of the other. The top half of the globe is north, the bottom half is south.

"North" is a direction. It means toward the top of the globe. "South" means toward the bottom of the globe. Since your globe probably tilts slightly, the top and bottom are really where the pole sticks out that



Compass illustrating the 16 points.

the globe spins on. Find the North Pole and the South Pole. Spin the globe slowly. The line made from pole to pole through the globe is the *axis*. The world, like your globe, spins on its axis. It makes one full turn each day.

Set your globe on a table. Look for a doorknob in the room. Imagine the doorknob is the sun. Imagine you are standing on the globe in Illinois like you are standing on the earth. Turn the globe slowly. Sometimes you will be able to see the sun. Other times you will be away from the sun. Our earth is just like that and that is why we have day and night.

Look again at your globe. Canada is north of America. Mexico is south of America. But Mexico is north of Brazil. “Well,” you say, “Mexico is not straight north. Straight north of Brazil is an ocean.” Find its name. It is the Atlantic Ocean. America is left of the Atlantic Ocean. We call this direction “west.” The Atlantic Ocean is right of America. We call this direction “east.” To tell directions we use these four names: north, south, west, and east. Sometimes we use them together.

When we use two of them together, we always use the north or south name first. We may even use three together. These are called the “16 points of the compass.” Look at the illustration above. Do you see why?

Find Illinois. What part of America is it in? We say it is in the “Middle West” or “Midwest.” When you look closely you can see that it is not really in the middle. We will learn more about this as we continue our study.



Find California. It is west of Illinois. Find the state of Washington, north of California. Where is it? Find Florida. Look in the southeast to find it. Find Spain. It is not in America. It is another country on another continent. From Florida go straight east on your globe, across the Atlantic Ocean. When you come to land you should be in Morocco on the continent of Africa. The next country north of Morocco is Spain. It is on the continent of Europe.

Spain is where Christopher Columbus lived. It is far east of America. The Atlantic Ocean is in between. No one in Spain had ever crossed that ocean. Some thought the ocean was flat and that if you sailed far enough you would go right off the edge. Others thought the world was round but were afraid to sail far from land. Many imagined demons and dragons out there.

Columbus believed they were wrong. He believed he could sail around the world and come right back to Spain. He thought it would be a shorter way to India and Cathay. (“Cathay” was the name for China in those days.) But Columbus didn't know it was so far and he didn't know North and South America were in the way!

Nobody knew about America except the people who lived there. Who were they? Yes, the *Native Americans*, the Indians. (In issues #4 and 6, you will learn about these people.) But the Indians did not know about the people in Spain either! They were an *isolated* people. Neither people knew or understood the other.

## Trade

Many people lived in Spain and the other countries of Europe. Some were farmers or merchants. There were fishermen, miners, lumbermen, and many others. Some countries raised lots of food, while other countries had lots of coal. People in one country needed what people in other countries had. So people bought what they

needed from each other. The people who have things sell them to the people who need them. The buying and selling of goods is called *trade*.

But there were some things that could not be found anywhere in Europe. There were spices and tea that came from India and silk cloth that came from Cathay (China). *Caravans* would go all the way to India and Cathay by land to deliver goods from Spain and trade them for goods from Cathay.

Look at your globe. Find India. It is east of Spain. How would you get there? The first trade routes went overland. Later they learned how to go by boat.

How would ships of that day have to sail to get from Spain to India?



Make sure your string travels the shortest distance from the starting and ending point, in this case Illinois and Spain.

over 8 inches, about 5,400 miles. Do you agree? That is how far you would fly. But what about going by boat?

Lay your string on the globe and *navigate* a line around Africa to the southern tip of India keeping close to the shore. How far is it? I measured it at about 13,200 miles. At an average speed of 5 miles per hour, it would take that boat about 110 days to sail that far. That's almost four months! It could take even longer.

After the boat sailed one way, it would have to sail all the way back. It would take about the same time. That's why sailors were gone from their families so long. It also caused many other problems.

For example, boats could not carry enough food and fresh water for the whole journey. They needed to stop along the way to get fresh supplies of food and water. Sometimes storms would surprise them. There was no weather bureau to warn them. Storms caused many ships to sink. These are some good reasons why ships sailed close to shore whenever they could.

It took a lot of courage to sail straight out to sea away from land. But that is what Columbus and his crew did. They wanted to go west to India.

---



---

Today there is a canal called the Suez. It makes it much easier. But in those days, ships would have to sail all the way around Africa to get there.

## Finding distance on your globe

Find the line that goes around your globe halfway between the poles. It is an east-west line called the *equator*. Take a piece of string long enough to go around your globe at the equator. Place one end of the string on the equator and wrap the string around your globe until it overlaps. Be sure the string is on the globe and straight. Cut the string where it overlaps. Measure it with a ruler. How long is it?

The earth we live on is about 25,000 miles around. My globe is 38 inches around. That means that every inch on my globe is about 25,000 miles divided by 38 inches or about 660 miles per inch. This is called a *scale of miles*. On a globe it is easy to figure distances using a piece of string.

Take your string and put one end in the middle of Spain and stretch it to your town in Illinois. Make sure to lay it the shortest way. If you do it right, the middle of your string will pass over the eastern end of Canada. How long is it? Mine is about 6 1/2 inches. (Yours may be different.) How far is it? 6 1/2 inches times 660 miles per inch equals 4,290 miles. This means I could fly straight to Spain in under 4,300 miles. (Note: If my plane flew 430 miles per hour, how long would it take?)

Now place your string from Spain to the southern tip of India. How far is it? On my globe it is a little

### REACTION TIME

1. What is the world?
2. When the sun "comes up," what really happens?
3. Why did people think the world was flat?
4. How do you know it is not?
5. Why didn't Columbus reach India?
6. Why is trade important to you?