

A brief history of the first voyage of Christopher Columbus – August 3rd 1492 - May 20th 1506

Part 1: Outline Plan

My Leaving Cert history essay is on **Christopher Columbus**. He is important because he was a famous explorer. The reason I'm doing this project is because I wanted to know more about Columbus. I studied him briefly in my Junior Cert but I knew a Leaving Certificate project would teach me a lot.

AIMS, THIS IS WHAT I PLAN TO DO IN MY ESSAY:

- 1) To look at the early life of Columbus,
- 2) To investigate the background to the first voyage,
- 3) To carry out a detailed history of his first voyage and,
- 4) A brief history of the later ones,
- 5) To look at the consequences and results of his voyage and
- 6) To look at his brief legacy in world exploration.

Having picked my title and aims, the next thing I had to do was to go and get sources from the local library and online. I found numerous amounts of books in the local library. Here are two of them:

BOOKS:

1. (**Christopher Columbus and the New World of His Discovery by FILSON YOUNG**).
2. (**Columbus: The Four Voyages, 1492-1504 by LAURENCE BERGREEN**).

HERE ARE MY WEBSITES:

I also used the Google search engine and located:

1. (**www.christophercolumbusexplorerbiography.com**) and

2. ([www.christophercolumbus exploration history.com](http://www.christophercolumbusexplorationhistory.com)) I drew up a plan for my essay and typed it up on Microsoft Word. I'm happy I achieved my aims.

Part 2: review of sources

During my essay I used many sources. These include books and websites. I put a full list of all my sources at the back of my essay. You can find my bibliography in that part of my essay. I'm going to review my 3 main sources here. They were two books and a website.

My first source was a book. It was called (**Columbus: The Four Voyages, 1492-1504**) by **Laurence Berggren**, published by (**Viking penguin**) in 2011. This was an interesting book. It covered his life in fairly good detail and in particular it looked at the first voyage. Over a number of chapters the author says that Columbus wasn't a good explorer because he thinks that he got lucky a number of times. It was a good source.

My second source was another book called (**Who Was Christopher Columbus?**) by **Bonnie BERN** published by (**penguin group**) in 2013. I enjoyed this book and it's a good source because it was very detailed, and it was written in an easy to understand way. It covered his full life in good detail. There were many facts and the author also included dates.

My final source was a website called (**ChristopherColumbus@www.history.com**). On this website you find out the history behind Christopher Columbus. The webpage showed a video on Columbus, and some info on his early life. It was a good source because it showed me all I needed to know about Christopher Columbus and his voyages. In a general way the books were better for detail.

Part 3: essay

Christopher Columbus is probably, the most famous explorer in history. His voyages led to the discovery of a new continent that was later called **America**. He was born in **Genoa** in **1451** and sailed many voyages to Atlantic Countries including Ireland. **He went to Galway some legends say.**

He studied old maps and decided that the world was round. He thought if he sailed west from **Europe** he would reach **Asia** and the **Spice Islands of Asia**. At the time the area was called **East Indies**. However Columbus had gotten the distances wrong, and didn't know an undiscovered continent stood in his way.

Christopher Columbus needed to get a ruler to give him money for his voyage and he explained his idea to the king of **Portugal**, but the king refused to pay for his journey. The Portuguese were more interested in searching for a route to **Asia** by going down the coast of **Africa**.

Christopher Columbus moved to Spain and put his idea to **King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella**. After a long delay they agreed to finance his voyage. They hoped that his voyage might beat Portugal in the race to get to the **East**. They also wanted to spread **Christianity**.

Christopher Columbus set sail from port Palos on **3rd August 1492** with three ships. They were called the **Nina**, the **Pinta**, and the **Santa Maria**. He travelled on the **Santa Maria**. In total there were ninety men on new ships. They sailed first to the **Canary Islands**, where they took on supplies and carried out repairs on the ships. On **6th September**, Columbus left the **Canaries** on his voyage. The voyage had begun for real.

Columbus was planning to sail out in the open ocean. As the weeks went some of the men began to think they wouldn't see **Spain** again. On the morning of **12th October** land was spotted from a lookout on the **Pinta**. Columbus went ashore and claimed the land for Spain. He named the land **San Salvador** and thought he reached Asia. He named the people **Indians** because he believed he was Indian. He continued his voyage looking for a passage to the **East**. He reached **Cuba** by the end of the month and thought **Cuba** was **Japan** from Cuba he sailed

to **Hispaniola**. On **Christians Day** the **Santa Maria** hit a rock and had to be abandoned. Columbus decided to return home on the **Nina**. He survived terrible storms and reached **Portugal** in **March 1493**, soon after he returned to **Spain**.

News of Columbus' discovery spread throughout Europe. He received a hero's welcome in **Spain**. He brought some kidnapped **Indians** with him and some gold. Ferdinand and Isabella were delighted at the idea of great riches in the lands Columbus had discovered and wanted to conquer the land for **Spain**.

About six months later, in September 1493, Columbus returned to the Americas. He found the Hispaniola settlement destroyed (to this day, no one knows what happened there) and left his brothers Bartolomeo and Diego behind to rebuild, along with part of his ships' crew and hundreds of native slaves.

Then he headed west. He took along slaves and planned to continue his search for gold and other goods. Instead of the gold he had promised the Spanish monarchs, he sent some 500 slaves to Queen Isabella. The queen was horrified—she believed that any people Columbus discovered were Spanish subjects who could not be made slaves.

In May 1498, Columbus sailed west across the Atlantic for the third time. He visited Trinidad and the South American mainland before returning to the Hispaniola settlement. Here the colonists had staged a revolt against the **Columbus brother's** mismanagement and brutality. Conditions were so bad that the Spanish crown had to send a new governor to take over. **Christopher Columbus** was arrested and returned to **Spain** in chains.

Christopher Columbus sailed on three voyages and explored **Central** and **South America**, but never reached **North America** he discovered **Puerto Rico, Trinidad, Jamaica, Panama** and month **Orinoco River**.

In 1502, cleared of the most serious charges but having lost his noble titles, Columbus persuaded the Spanish king to pay for one last trip across the Atlantic. This time, Columbus made it all the way to Panama just miles from the **Pacific Ocean**. He had to abandon two of his four ships after an attack by hostile natives.

No matter how hard he searched for the passage to the **East** he couldn't find China. He returned to **Spain** for the final time in **1504** he became ill and in **1506** he died. Though he believed that he had found a new route to **Asia**, many people began to realise that he had in fact discovered a **New World** which inspired many explorers to sail **westward**.

To conclude **Columbus** did not discover the Americas. Also he wasn't the first European to visit the **New World**. Viking explorers had sailed to Greenland and Newfoundland in the **11th** century. However, his journey kicked off centuries of exploration and exploitation on the **American** continents.

The consequences of his explorations were severe for the native populations of the areas he and conquered. **Disease** and **environmental** changes resulted in the destruction of the majority of the native population over time, while **Europeans** continued to extract natural resources from these territories. Today, Columbus has a mixed legacy he is remembered as a daring and path breaking explorer who transformed the **New World** yet his actions also unleashed changes that would eventually devastate the native populations he and his fellow explorers encountered.

In spite of the damage caused by **Columbus** voyages, his work also had some positive impacts on the world. He pioneered new sailing and navigating techniques, which allowed **Europeans** to travel further than ever before and more safely. He brought plants and animals from the Americas back to **Europe** providing his people with a greater array of resources.

Part 4: Review

This is my review. I'm doing this to see if I achieved my aims. I've looked on my essay and I can see that:

- 1) I looked at the early life of Christopher Columbus,
- 2) I investigated the background to his first voyage,
- 3) I carried out a detailed history of his voyage,
- 4) I done a brief history of the later ones,
- 5) I looked at the consequences and results of his voyage and
- 6) I will look at his legacy in world explorations.

I had one or two problems on the way. The first problem was that the essay had to be corrected a couple of times which made my essay more slower to finish and problem two was that my essay wasn't accurate and I was told to change it around so it could make more sense I fixed these two problems by following my teachers instructions and during the class.

Part 5: A full list of sources

BOOKS:

- 1) Follow the Dream: The Story of Christopher Columbus by Peter Sis, in 2003.
- 2) My First Biography: Christopher Columbus by Marion Dane Bauer, in 2010.

WEBSITES:

- 1) All about Christopher Columbus (1451-1506)
@www.Scholastic.com
- 2) Christopher Columbus-Exploration-
@www.History.com
- 3) Christopher Columbus-Ages of
@www.Exploration.com
- 4) Christopher Columbus:@www.enchanted
Learning.com