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**Holiday Facts & Fun:  
Columbus Day  
Second Edition**

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**Teacher's Guide**  
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Produced  
by  
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# COLUMBUS DAY

## SECOND EDITION

From the  
Holiday Facts & Fun  
Series

Grades K-5

Viewing Time: 14:00

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

#### Intended Audience and Uses

*Columbus Day* has been produced for students in grades K-5. This video has several classroom uses. First, it can be used to help students understand and appreciate the holiday. Second, it can be used as part of primary-intermediate social studies units that cover explorers or 15<sup>th</sup> century exploration. This program meets McREL K-4 History Standard 8 (“Understands major discoveries...and some of their social and economic effects...”); McREL U.S. History Standard 1 (“Understands the characteristics of societies in...Western Europe...after 1450”); and McREL U.S.

History Standard 3 (“Understands why the Americas attracted Europeans...”).

## Program Synopsis

The program is divided into two sections. The first begins with Anthony and his friends as they visit Anthony’s grandfather Guilliani. Mr. Guilliani has been building a model of the Santa Maria, one of Columbus’s ships. Anthony’s grandfather explains that even though Columbus is sometimes credited as the person who discovered America, others came before him. The program narrator then tells Columbus’s life story, beginning with his fascination with ships as a child in Genoa, Italy. Viewers learn that Columbus began sailing on ships as a teenager, and eventually became a captain. The program points out that Columbus made estimates of the earth’s size from studying Marco Polo’s writings, and that he tried unsuccessfully to convince the king of Portugal (where he had settled) to finance a voyage to find a sea route to Asia. Undaunted by the king’s refusal, Columbus then travels to Spain, where he was, after many years, able to convince Isabella and Ferdinand to finance the voyage. Although the sailors were fearful and wanted to turn back, Columbus persisted and eventually landed on one of the Bahaman Islands (which he mistakenly thought was the Asian mainland). Columbus was welcomed as a hero when he returned to Spain. The second part of the program briefly discusses the consequences of Columbus’s voyage – further European exploration of the Americas and the establishment of new world countries – and then explains how Columbus Day is celebrated today. After showing a large Columbus Day parade, the program turns its attention to a celebration in Columbus Wisconsin, where Joseph Laufer, a college professor, has traveled to give several

presentations about Columbus. After professor Laufer gives his program at a local school, the celebration's biggest event – riding across the Wisconsin countryside in three hot air balloons – is shown.

## VIEWER OBJECTIVES

After viewing this video and participating in the suggested activities, viewers should be able to do the following:

1. Tell about Christopher Columbus's life.
2. Name the three ships used on Columbus's first voyage.
3. Explain the importance of Columbus's first voyage.
4. Tell why Columbus is considered one of the greatest explorers of all time.

*The producers encourage you to make adaptations and changes to the following lesson plan whenever you feel it will enhance your students' learning experiences. Only by tailoring the material to your unique classroom situation will you be able to maximize the educational experience afforded by these materials.*

## SUGGESTED LESSON PLAN

### Viewing Strategies

Various strategies may be employed when showing ***Columbus Day*** to your class. If you wish to use the video as a way to give general information about the holiday, you may find it useful to show the entire program in one screening, then follow up with appropriate questions (see the ***Suggested Discussion Questions*** blackline master) and/or activities suggested in this guide. Alternately, you may wish to show only the first section of the video if presentation time is limited, or if your class is using the

video to learn more about explorers or early exploration of North America.

## Introduce the Program

*The producers encourage you to prescreen the program to familiarize yourself with its content.*

Ask the class if anyone has taken a trip lately. What kind of transportation was used? A car? A train? An airplane? How does a person who drives a car know where to go? Has anyone ever been on a ship? What was it like? Since there are no highways and street signs on the ocean, how does the captain of a ship (or the ship's pilot) know where to go? Explain global positioning systems and other navigational devices used in modern ocean transport – and how they aid ships at sea.

## Pre-Viewing Activities

Now ask, “How do you think ship captains were able to get their ships from one place to another long ago, before there were global positioning systems and compasses?” Explain that ancient mariners were able to use maps of coastlines and the position of the stars at night and the angle of the sun in the sky to help them determine their location and which direction they should travel. They used instruments called astrolabes and cross-staffs to measure the angle of the sun and position of the stars. What problems might arise when using those instruments? (If it were cloudy, they would be of no use; it would be tricky getting an accurate reading in rough seas because the instruments couldn't be held steady.) Would it be difficult to find some place if there were no coastal maps? Now tell your class that they will see a video about a ship's captain who lived more than 500 years ago. He had no maps to show

where he was going. Ask the class to determine if he was foolish or brave.

## Post-Viewing Activities

Discuss the program, first asking the question posed before its screening (*i.e.*, was Christopher Columbus foolish or brave?). Of course, you may use the ***Suggested Discussion Questions***, if you prefer. Duplicate and hand out ***Columbus's Ships***. You may read it aloud, assign this activity as homework, individual seatwork or committee work. Help your students understand how extremely small and cramped these ships were and how difficult it would have been to spend many weeks living on such a small vessel filled with provisions.

### Description of Blackline Masters

***SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS*** – Gives questions that may be asked after each segment is viewed.

***COLUMBUS'S SHIPS*** – Helps students understand the difficulty of traveling across the ocean in 1492.

### ANSWER KEY

**Video Quiz:** 1. b. Genoa, Italy 2. False 3. Christopher Columbus's son 4. a., His advisors said the ocean was too large to reach China 5. c., Isabella and Ferdinand 6. False 7. Sea monsters, and wouldn't get back because the winds were blowing the wrong way 8. a., an island in what is now known as the "Bahamas" 9. pineapples, sweet potatoes, corn 10. b., a very skillful sailor who was patient and brave.

**Columbus's Ships:** 100 miles per day

## TRANSCRIPT OF THE VIDEO

Part I: Introduction and the Story of Christopher Columbus

Anthony – on the right, holding the dark blue umbrella – and his friends Jonathan, Kim and Maria are excited.

You see, Anthony's Grandfather Guilliani has almost finished a project the children have been keeping track of for almost a year now. So they're eager to see it.

And there it is – a model ship!

Grandpa Guilliani is famous for his model ships in Little Italy, a neighborhood in Chicago, Illinois, where many Italian-Americans live.

Many of Grandpa Guilliani's ships are in the Guilliani family business, a restaurant in Little Italy.

Kim: Have you thought of a name for it, yet?

Grandfather Guilliani: Oh, I've known its name for a long time. It's the Santa Maria, one of Christopher Columbus's ships.

Kim: I know who Christopher Columbus was. He discovered America!

Grandpa: Well, that's what a lot of people say. But he really wasn't the first person in America.

Native Americans came to North America – that's the part of the world where we live – thousands of years before Columbus. They came from a part of the world we call Asia.

Not only that, a famous Viking explorer, Leif Ericson, sailed across the ocean and reached North America about 500 years before Christopher Columbus did.

But even though Columbus didn't really discover America, he's still one of the most important explorers of all time. And his story is very interesting.

Narrator: When Christopher Columbus was alive, people knew much less about the world than we do today.

He lived in Genoa, a city in Italy, some 550 years ago.

Genoa was next to the sea and young Christopher spent a lot of time watching ships sail in and out of its harbor.

He loved the sea and sailing, and when he was only a teenager, took his first job on a ship.

He was a very good sailor, and in time became a captain, a person in charge of a ship and its sailors.

Columbus traveled far and wide as a sea captain. His ships carried goods, such as cloth and metal, to many countries.

Once, his ship was attacked by pirates off the coast of Portugal. It sank, but Christopher was able to swim ashore.

He liked Portugal and decided to make it his home.

He met a beautiful noblewoman there, married her, and had a son, whom they named Diego.

But Columbus still sailed ships across the seas.

As you can imagine, he learned many different things on his journeys. One thing Columbus learned was how the explorer Marco Polo traveled over land to China.

Marco Polo's travels gave Columbus an idea of how big the earth was, and how he could reach China by sailing west, over the ocean.

He tried to convince the king of Portugal to give him money for ships and supplies for the journey. But the king couldn't make up his mind.

Columbus waited for years and years for the money.

Finally, the king of Portugal said no. His advisors had convinced him that Columbus couldn't get to China by sailing westward. The ocean, they said, was too big.

But Christopher Columbus didn't give up.

He went to Spain to try to get money for his journey from Ferdinand and Isabella, the king and queen of that country.

When he was in Spain, Columbus and his son stayed with some priests. (Columbus's wife had died several years earlier.)

One of the priests knew the king and queen and he told them about Columbus's plan.

Queen Isabella liked the plan. But she said there wasn't enough money for the voyage. Spain was at war at the time, and much of its money had to go for soldiers – and for their ships, food, tents and weapons.

The war lasted six more years, but Columbus still didn't give up his dream. Most other people would have, but not him.

Finally, his patience was rewarded. When the war ended, Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand gave him the ships and supplies he needed.

And on a summer day in 1492, Christopher Columbus began his journey.

He had three ships – the Pinta, the Santa Maria and the Niña. It took more than a month to cross the ocean, and as the days passed into weeks, the sailors became more and more fearful.

Some thought giant sea monsters would swallow them up.

Others were afraid that since the winds always seemed to blow away from Spain, their ships – moved only by winds in the sails – wouldn't be able to take them back home.

But Christopher Columbus didn't turn back. He knew there were no monsters and that the winds would blow them back if they first sailed to the north.

Just when everyone else was about to give up hope, land was sighted!

Columbus thought he had reached Asia, but he had really come upon an island, one in a group of islands we now call the "Bahamas."

There, friendly natives, whom he called "Indians," greeted him and his sailors.

When Columbus returned to Spain, he was welcomed as a hero! Almost everybody thought he had found a way to Asia by sailing west.

## Part II: The Importance of Columbus's Journey and Celebrating Columbus Day

After Columbus made his voyage, other explorers from different countries began exploring and settling the lands across the ocean.

In time, new countries and new ways of living were started on these lands, things that might not have happened had not Christopher Columbus been so brave, so patient and so willing to stick to his beliefs.

And that's why we celebrate Columbus Day every October – to honor the courage and patience of that great explorer.

Parades are held on Columbus Day in many places throughout the country. And as you can easily imagine, speeches about courage and patience are often given.

Some time ago, a special celebration was held in a town named after the adventurer – Columbus, Wisconsin.

Five hundred days before the five hundredth anniversary of Christopher Columbus's historic journey, the citizens of that small town watched as children and grownups marched down the streets, carrying flags and flowers and playing music.

One of the people in the parade was Christopher Columbus, himself – or at least a person who pretends to be the famous explorer.

His real name is Joseph Laufer, a college professor who travels all around the country giving speeches about the life and times of Christopher Columbus.

He talks to adults and children.

He often tells them little known and interesting facts about Columbus, including the new foods that were found on his journey.

Joseph Laufer: One of the most unusual foods was this.

We in Europe had never seen a pineapple. And you know another food we discovered that we brought back? Anyone know what this is? What kind of potato? A sweet potato – very important for the European diet after I came back.

And, of course, the most important all foods was corn. Yes, we got that from the Indians.

And you know, we weren't good to the Indians. I wasn't good to the Indians. The Spanish who were with me weren't good to the Indians.

We enslaved some of them. And so Native Americans aren't too happy with me. And I say, what we did then was what everybody did back then. That doesn't mean it was right. But if we were back today, we wouldn't do it that way.

Narrator: The biggest event during the two-day celebration was a ride in three huge hot-air balloons, specially named for the occasion as...that's right! The Pinta, and the Santa Maria, and the Niña.

Once the balloons were filled with hot air, up they went with their passengers. And they sailed across the skies like Columbus and his sailors sailed the ocean.

Of course, not everyone can celebrate the brave deeds of Christopher Columbus by riding in a hot air balloon across the countryside – or even by building a model of one of his ships.

But each of us can celebrate by remembering his bravery, his patience, his skill as one of the greatest sailors of all time and his strength of character -- never giving up, even when others didn't think he was right.

Sailing across the ocean in 1492 was a great achievement.

And it couldn't have been done without a great person – like Christopher Columbus – leading the way.

### Web Resources

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Columbus Day Arts and Activities

**[www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/columbus/](http://www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/columbus/)**

A large number of Columbus Day art and craft activities geared for elementary students.

The ChildFun Family Website

**<http://www.childfun.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=19>**

A collection of Columbus Day craft activities and songs.

## Discussion Questions – Columbus Day, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

### For Segment One

1. Did Columbus discover America? (no)
2. Who came to America before Christopher Columbus? (Native Americans, Leif Ericson)
3. In what city did Columbus grow up? (Genoa, Italy)
4. What two things did Columbus love when he was growing up? (the sea, ships)
5. Where did Columbus work when he was a teenager? (on a ship)
6. When Columbus became a ship's captain, what things did he transport? (cloth and metal)
7. Where did Columbus live after his ship was attacked by pirates? (Portugal)
8. What was Columbus's son's name? (Diego)
9. What explorer helped Columbus figure out how big the earth was? (Marco Polo)
10. How did Columbus want to get to China? (sail westward)
11. Who did Columbus try to convince to finance a journey to China? (King of Portugal)
12. Why wouldn't the King of Portugal give money for his voyage? (His advisors said the ocean was too big.)
13. Where did Columbus go to get the money for his voyage? (Spain)
14. Why did Columbus have to wait for the money? (Spain was at war.)
15. Who gave the money for his voyage? (Ferdinand and Isabella)

16. What were the names of Columbus's ships? (Santa Maria, Pinta, Niña)
17. What did the sailors fear? (monsters, winds wouldn't blow them back)
18. Where did Columbus land? (island in Bahamas)
19. Who greeted Columbus and his men when they arrived there? (Native Americans whom he called "Indians")
20. How was Columbus treated when he returned to Spain? Why? (as a hero because people thought he had found a way to China by sailing west)

### For Segment Two

1. What happened after Columbus made his voyage? (more explorers came and new countries and new ways of living were started)
2. How is Columbus Day often celebrated? (with parades)
3. Who is Joseph Laufer and what does he do? (a college professor who gives speeches/programs about Columbus)
4. What foods did Columbus bring back to Europe? (pineapple, sweet potato, corn)
5. Did Columbus treat Native Americans well? (no)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Columbus's Ships

Directions: Read the information below. Then see if you can figure out how many miles Columbus's ships traveled, on average, each day.



A Carrack

As you saw, Christopher Columbus had three ships on his first voyage. He was the captain of the largest, the Santa Maria. The Santa Maria was a "carrack," a trading ship. It wasn't built to explore. It was built to haul goods back and forth. The Santa Maria was about 60 feet long and less than 30 feet wide. There were probably 41 men on it. It also carried enough food and supplies for one year. In today's world, the Santa Maria would be a tiny ship. It was very crowded. The other two ships were even smaller! After Columbus left Spain, he sailed southward. He stayed in the Canary Islands, off the coast of Africa, for more than a month. On September 6, he left after his ships had been repaired. He traveled about 3,800 miles until he reached one of the Bahaman Islands. He arrived on October 12, 38 days later. How many miles, on average, did the three ships travel each day?