

# LEIF ERIKSON

About AD 1000



## Growing up on Greenland

Watch out for that iceberg! **Erik the Red** shouted the order to the rowers. Exiled from Iceland, Erik was searching for a new home for his family. Young Leif, his son, kept staring at the huge iceberg while they slowly and carefully rowed past it in their Viking ship. Soon the **fjord** opened up and Leif could see green grassland both to the right and left. The men stopped rowing and the ship gently grounded on the beach. They all went ashore. For the first three years, they lived in seclusion. There were no other **inhabitants** around. They focused on their family and environment, learning and taking what the new land offered.

## Come West - to Greenland

After three years, Erik the Red returned to Iceland. He told of the bounty which he had found in the new land to the west, the land he named Greenland. Stimulated and excited by his tales, hundreds of people packed up their families and belongings and followed him to their new home.

## Leif becomes a Christian

Leif grew to be a large man, one known for his fair judgment and honesty. Having been reared under his father's adventurous hand, Leif had a strong urge to travel and explore. One of his first trips was eastward to Norway, the homeland of his family. He arrived and was well received by **King Olav**. Leif and his men stayed there for the winter, and were taught the foundations of **Christianity**.

## New land to the west!

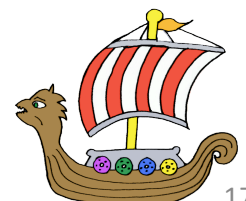
Some years before AD 1000, another Viking relayed exciting news of a new land to the west. Leif, an adventurer in his own right, bought a ship, gathered a crew of 35 and sailed westward. With favorable weather and winds, Leif and his crew were soon following the outlines of the new lands that they had heard of. They continued onward, stopping only briefly at the other two lands, until they reached the third new land.

## Vinland is Good

There, they came ashore and had forests to provide wood for their homes and boats. They found their winter to be frost-free, and agreed they had plenty of grass to feed the animals. Also, the rivers and lakes were filled with **salmon** and a large variety of other fish. And the earth! It seemed to be black and rich, where they could easily grow their crops and grape vines were everywhere! So pleased was Leif by the bountiful land, he named it **Vinland**.

## Leif the Lucky

In the spring, Leif and his men returned to Greenland. On his return journey, one story claimed that Leif came upon a wrecked trading vessel whose crew he rescued. For this good deed, he received the entire rich cargo and the nickname **Leif the Lucky**.



Name \_\_\_\_\_



# LEIF ERIKSON

**Questioning Before You Read:** What question comes to mind before you read this article?

I wonder \_\_\_\_\_

**Questioning While You Read:** While you are reading, what question comes to mind?

I wonder \_\_\_\_\_

**Questioning After You Read:** After you read, what question comes to mind?

I wonder \_\_\_\_\_

**Determine Importance:** What do the headings tell you in this article?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Visualization:** In the article, it talks about the earth being black and rich. Write a simile.

The earth was as black as \_\_\_\_\_

**Text-to-Self Connection:** Tell about something in the article that is familiar to you.

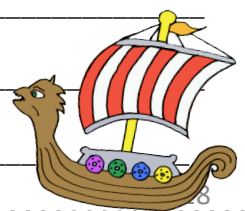
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Inference:** What do you think Leif did with the rich cargo he received for rescuing the wrecked vessel and crew?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Synthesize:** Describe any changes Leif experienced throughout the article.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



# CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS



## Biography

Columbus was born in Genoa, Italy in 1451. He later lived in Lisbon where he worked as a trader. He learned how to make maps and navigate a ship. Christopher Columbus is the European explorer who is credited for discovering America. There were already **Indigenous** people living in America at the time. There was even another European explorer, Leif Erikson, who had been to the Americas before. However, it was Columbus' voyage that started exploration and the **colonization** of the Americas.

## A Shortcut to China

Columbus and his brother, Bartholomew, knew that there were great riches to be had in China and the Indies. However, traveling overland by the **Silk Road** was dangerous and a sea route around Africa seemed much too long. Columbus thought he could sail straight to China by crossing the Atlantic Ocean. It would turn out that Columbus was wrong. The Earth was much larger than he thought and there was another land, the Americas, between Europe and Asia.

## Three Ships and a Long Voyage

Columbus spent years trying to convince someone to pay for his voyage. He first tried to get King John II of Portugal to pay for his journey, but the King was not interested. Finally, he was able to convince **Queen Isabella** and **King Ferdinand** of Spain to pay for the trip. He set sail on August 12, 1492 with three ships named the **Nina**, the **Pinta**, and the **Santa Maria**. The voyage was long and difficult. At one point, his men threatened mutiny and wanted to turn back. They didn't think he had a good plan. Columbus promised them he would turn back in two days if they didn't find land. In his journal, however, he wrote that he had no intention of turning back.

## Finding Land

On October 12, 1492, land was spotted. It was a small island in the Bahamas that Columbus would name San Salvador. He met indigenous people there that he called **Indians** because he was convinced that he had landed in the Indies. After making his discovery, Columbus was eager to return home to Spain and claim his riches. Only the **Pinta** and the **Nina** were able to return to Spain. The **Santa Maria** wrecked off the coast of Hispaniola. Upon returning home, Columbus was treated like a hero. He presented some things he had found including turkeys, pineapples and captured the native people. The King of Spain was pleased enough to fund future expeditions. Columbus wrote in his journal that the native people would make good servants. He not only captured and enslaved some of the people who lived there, but he tortured, sold, and killed some of them to gain power and land.



## More Voyages

Columbus would make three more voyages to the Americas. He explored more of the Caribbean and even saw mainland America. Although he was governor of the territory, the Spanish monarchs arrested him for mistreating some of the colonists. Columbus died on May 20, 1506. He died thinking he had discovered a shortcut to Asia across the Atlantic Ocean. He never knew that he was in the Americas.

Although Columbus is known for starting the "**Age of Exploration**," it is also believed that he started bringing diseases to America, which eventually wiped out much of the native population.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS



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**Questioning After You Read:** After you read, what question comes to mind?

I wonder \_\_\_\_\_

**Determine Importance:** Why is the Silk Road boldfaced in this article?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Visualization:** In the article, it talks about Bahamas being a small island. Write a simile.

The island was as small as \_\_\_\_\_

**Text-to-Self Connection:** Tell about something in the article that is familiar to you.

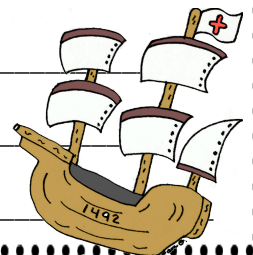
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Inference:** Do you think Christopher Columbus died a happy man? Why or why not?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Synthesize:** Explain how the King and Queen of Spain changed their thoughts about Columbus.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_





# AMERIGO VESPUCCI



## Biography

Amerigo Vespucci was born in Florence, Italy to a respected family. He received a good education and worked for the **Medici**, a powerful family in Europe. The Medici sent him to Spain in 1491 to prepare ships for voyages. Here he developed a friendship with Christopher Columbus and became eager to explore the unknown.

## Voyages

With his knowledge of preparing a ship, his education in **astronomy**, and advice from Christopher Columbus, Vespucci was confident to explore the seas. Spain agreed to fund his voyage. Vespucci's first expeditions reached the coast of South America. He continued traveling south along the coast in search of a waterway that he hoped would take him to India. Since he did not find this waterway, Spain thought his voyage was unsuccessful and stopped funding his voyages. However, Portugal decided to support him and he continued his travels. He came back with stories about the native peoples and their large huts. He was believed to have discovered present day **Rio de Janeiro**.

## The Navigator

With Vespucci's knowledge and interest in navigation, he was able to determine that he had discovered new land. He used an **almanac** based on astronomy to figure out the time difference, distance, and his ship's location in longitude. He figured there was no possible way he could be in the Indies.

## Compare and Contrast Vespucci and Columbus

Both Vespucci and Columbus had landed in the New World. Columbus thought he had discovered an unknown part of Asia, whereas Vespucci knew he was in a New World.

## Naming the New World

In 1507, a **cartographer** named Martin Walseemuller was working on a map of the world. Since he wanted to include the New World, he suggested naming these new lands, **America**, after Amerigo Vespucci. It was the first map created that included the new lands as well as a portrait of Vespucci!

## After His Travels

Although Vespucci was done exploring, he still encouraged others to adventure into the seas. He became a "**master navigator**" in Spain. He recruited and trained other navigators and prepared a map of the routes ships should take when traveling to the New World.



Name \_\_\_\_\_



# AMERIGO VESPUCCI

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I wonder \_\_\_\_\_

**Determine Importance:** Why is "master navigator" boldfaced in this article?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Visualization:** In the article, it talks about the large huts created by the native peoples. What materials do you think they used to create these huts?

\_\_\_\_\_

**Text-to-Self Connection:** Tell about something in the article that is familiar to you.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Inference:** Do you think Martin Waldseemuller believed Vespucci was a talented navigator? Why or why not?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Synthesize:** How did Spain's opinion of Vespucci change? Explain.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



# JOHN CABOT



## Biography

Giovanni Caboto was born in Genoa, Italy around 1450. He later moved to Venice and became a **naturalized citizen** of that city-state in 1476. He took employment with a Venetian mercantile firm and learned his trade on the Mediterranean Sea. Cabot sailed the eastern shores visiting the fabled city of Mecca. Becoming convinced that the quickest way to the rich trade of the far east was by sailing west, he moved his family to London in 1484. He changed his name to John Cabot and petitioned **King Henry VII** for a letter patent to permit him to search for a way to China.

## Early Voyages

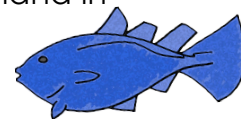
After Columbus proved the sailing west theory, Henry finally granted Cabot **authorization** to sail "to all regions, countries and seas in the east, in the west and in the north." (The south belonged to Spain.) Cabot wasted no time getting underway and sailed from Bristol in the same year. Before long, he was back due to foul weather, lack of supplies and problems with the crew.

Taking more time to prepare, Cabot sailed again on May 2, 1497 in the bark **Matthew** with 18 men, possibly including his son, Sebastian. Five weeks later, on June 24, he stepped ashore, raised a cross and banner of the king and claimed the land for Henry VII. He also discovered **cod-fishing** grounds which brought wealth to England. Despite finding signs of human habitation, Cabot made no effort to contact them, instead returning to *Matthew* and sailing further down the coast of what may have been Nova Scotia. He returned to England in August without setting foot on those shores again.

## Search for China

Convinced he had landed on the coast of Asia, Cabot set out again on February 3, 1498 with several ships filled with trade goods from **merchants** in London and Bristol. His exact route is unknown but he sailed long enough to know that he had not found Asia. Henry VII lost interest in these voyages when he reaped no financial returns.

The fate of John Cabot is unknown. He returned to England and probably died shortly afterwards, for there is record of only two payments of his annual pension. It is also suspected that he was lost at sea off Newfoundland during a later voyage.



# JOHN CABOT



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I wonder \_\_\_\_\_

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I wonder \_\_\_\_\_

**Determine Importance:** What does the picture of a fish tell you in this article?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Visualization:** In the article, it says the weather was foul. What else is foul?

The weather was foul like a \_\_\_\_\_

**Text to Self Connection:** Tell about a time when you lost interest in something.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Inference:** Why did Cabot take more time to prepare when he sailed on May 2?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Synthesize:** What else may have happened to the fate of John Cabot?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

