

Subjects

Social Studies
Language Arts

Summary

Students will develop an understanding for Spanish explorer, Christopher Columbus and create a newspaper or magazine around his discovery of the Dominican Republic.

Overall

Expectations.

Students will create fictional stories in the format of a Newspaper or Magazine based on some facts of the discovery of the Dominican Republic.

Specific

Expectations

Students will work in partners or small groups to create a newspaper.

Author

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The New World: Columbus makes landfall

BACKGROUND

Christopher Columbus discovered the Dominican Republic in 1492. It is said that in the tiny settlement of Isabella (60 km east of Luperon, where we are anchored), you can see the compass he used on one of his last sailing vessels. It is also said that his body is buried under the cathedral in the capital city, Santo Domingo.

One thing is certain, this small Spanish country would have been a welcome site for any explorer after weeks and weeks at sea with its green mountains and fertile valleys. And some of the natural harbours and inlets along the north coast would have offered welcomed protection from the northerly swells of the Atlantic Ocean, too.

ARTICLE

The Year is **1492**. Christopher Columbus is on an expedition of discovery for the King of Spain. On December 5, 1492, he makes landfall on the north coast of what is today the Dominican Republic (commonly referred to as the DR). This is his first landfall in the New World. With flag in hand, Columbus makes claim to this new land in the name of Spain calling it Hispaniola, "Little Spain". The Dominican Republic is the site of the first European settlement in the "New World".

Staking a claim to the new land and salvaging the ruins of his flagship, s.v. *Santa Maria*, Columbus ordered Fort Navidad to be built on the north coast of Hispaniola. Columbus then sailed back to Spain leaving a colony of men behind to establish a settlement, He would return within the year.

As with many new lands, Native Indians inhabited the land. However, many explorers considered the Native Indians to be inhospitable and/or savages. Upon his return to Hispaniola, Columbus found that the Native Indians had destroyed the Fort and killed the men who'd remained. Thousands of Spanish colonists soon came to Hispaniola, *conquered* the Indians and established settlements along the north coast of *their* new land.

Just 4 years after first making landfall, Columbus's brother, Bartholomew founded La Nueva Isabela, later known as Santo Domingo, along the south coast. Today, Santo Domingo, is the capital of the DR, and is the oldest city in the Western Hemisphere.

ACTIVITY -this activity can be done with partners or in small groups

1. Using the information in the Article section and supporting it with other research about Columbus and fueled by your imagination, create a short 2-3 page community newspaper or magazine for Columbus's new land. If you are unsure of newspaper or magazine design or layout, visit a public library to see a variety from around the world or look at local newspapers in your community.

Here are some suggested ideas to consider for your newspaper or magazine:

- a) Newspaper name – banner with date, price and circulation number. Or front page design of your magazine with similar information. Consider the picture you would like to have on the cover of your magazine, for example, Columbus in full uniform.
- b) The headline and story of the actual discovery in December 1492 of Hispaniola. Follow the 5 W's rule- Who, What, When, Where, Why.
- c) A short biography or background piece on Columbus himself. You may wish to include facts such as: a description of his childhood; how he became a sailor; what his parents or family think of his discovery; what his life is like now as a famous explorer. Consider what people like to know when they read about "famous people".
- d) "All in the family" - Include a short article or mention of his brother's discovery 4 years later.
- e) Feature an interview with someone who served under Columbus on one of his ships and describe the voyage itself – could be a "Dear diary" piece or a postcard home to his family.
- f) At least 2 advertisements of items that would be relevant to readers back in 1492 or to the budding explorer. For example, there could be advertisements for equipment one must have when planning to live aboard a ship such as a compass, or sea sick remedies.
- g) Arts section – poems, sea shanties or songs, jokes, cartoons or drawings relevant to the discovery, for example a drawing of the ship or sketch of Columbus with his famous parrot.

Celebrate your scholastic efforts with a "Newspaper or Magazine Launch" in your school Library. Invite other classes along to see what you've been creating. If you are a Home Schooler, as well as classes at school, post your work on our website for others to see. It is a great way to share ideas. Home Schoolers may be able to arrange to feature their work in a public library as well.

2. As a follow-up to the Arts section on Sea Shanties, research on the Internet, superstitious phrases sailors have told each other over the years. For example, the following phrase about the weather is one that I still follow:

"Red Sky at night, Sailors delight...Red Sky in morning, Sailors take warning."

This means, if the sky is red at dusk, it will be a calm evening at sea. However, if the sky is red as the sun is rising (dawn), it will be a rough day at sea.

See if you can find 2 or 3 other sailing superstitions.