



# THE NEW JERSEY ITALIAN HERITAGE COMMISSION



## Italian Explorers Christopher Columbus & Giovanni da Verrazzano

**Grade Level:** Fourth and Fifth Grade

**Subjects:** Social Studies

**Categories:** History and Society

**Standards:** Please see page 5 of the lesson plan for complete New Jersey Student Learning Standards alignment.

**Objectives:**

The students will be able to:

1. Explain the difference between celebration and observance.
2. develop an understanding and respect for Christopher Columbus, Verrazzano and other Italian explorers.

**Abstract:**

Students will examine the period when the Portuguese and Spanish looked for other ways to reach Oriental spice markets and how Italian sailors, cartographers and navigators, started to offer their considerable skills as seamen to look for a western route to the Indies. Cristoforo Colombo was the first Italian to cross the Atlantic, but others such as Giovanni da Verrazzano made great voyages west, as he was the first European to look onto the New Jersey coast and sail into New York harbor.

**Materials Required:**

- Access to the internet
- A globe or world map
- Discussions questions, according to your class's ability level
- Copies of maps

**Background:**

In 1453, the Ottoman Turks finally defeated the last vestige of the Eastern Roman Empire, the second Rome, Constantinople. There had been an overland trade spice-route from the Orient that went through Constantinople and avoided a Venetian-Egyptian near monopoly of the spice trade from the East. Once the Turks closed the Constantinople spice-route, the Egyptians placed a 33% tariff on all Eastern trade. The Venetians still prospered through their virtual monopoly of the Egyptian spice trade, but states in Europe had to pay much more for goods. The Portuguese and Spanish looked for other ways to

reach the Oriental spices. Italian sailors, cartographers, and navigators, particularly those on Italy's west coast, like the Genoans, started to offer their considerable skills as seamen to look for a western route to the Indies. Cristoforo Colombo was the first Italian to cross the Atlantic, but others such as Giovanni Caboto (John Cabot), Giovanni da Verrazzano, Amerigo Vespucci, and many regular sailors shortly followed.

Biography of Christopher Columbus

<http://gardenofpraise.com/ibdcolum.htm>

Basic history of Christopher Columbus' voyages and maps

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/explorers/page/c/columbus.shtml>

Timeline for Christopher Columbus

[http://www.softschools.com/timelines/christopher\\_columbus\\_timeline/14/](http://www.softschools.com/timelines/christopher_columbus_timeline/14/)

### **Procedures:**

- I. Discuss the difference between a celebration and observance.
  - a. "Celebration means having a party for a joyous occasion."
  - b. "Observance means paying attention to all details and facts, honoring."
  
- II. Read and discuss the history of Christopher Columbus,  
<http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/articles/worldhistory/columbus1.htm>  
Read and discuss the history of Giovanni da Verrazzano  
[https://kids.kiddle.co/Giovanni\\_da\\_Verrazzano](https://kids.kiddle.co/Giovanni_da_Verrazzano)
  - a. For older children, you may want to download and reproduce copies of their biography.
  
- III. Identify on globe or world map the land of Italy, the city of Genoa, and the country of Spain for Columbus
  
- IV. Identify the land of Italy, the city of Florence, and the country of France for Verrazzano.
  - a. Discuss why Christopher Columbus is known as a controversial explorer and why some object the observance of this holiday.
  - b. Explain that Verrazzano is no where near as controversial because he did not establish permanent settlements in America.
    - i. Americans observe Verrazzano's journey by naming the large bridge between Staten Island and Brooklyn after him.
  - c. Choose questions that are appropriate for your class from the list of Discussion Questions found in the Worksheet.
    - i. You may want to read these aloud, or make copies to complete them individually, or in groups.
      1. If your students complete the questions on paper, have a class discussion to review their answers.

### **Assessment:**

Review student's written answers or check for understanding from the students' oral answers.

### Extensions:

- Create a Christopher Columbus activity book. Download the activity pages and reproduce for your class.  
<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/books/holiday/columbus/activity/>
- Teach your class a song about Christopher Columbus  
<http://www.theholidayzone.com/columbus/songs.html>
- Assign character parts and have your students act out the story of Columbus searching for someone to fund his voyage. Have the students give reasons why they would or would not fund such a trip based upon the facts in that time era.
- In 1492 Columbus Sailed the Ocean Blue
  - Have your class create a banner to honor Columbus.
    - On long white bulletin board paper, paint or color a blue ocean along the bottom.
      - Use brown construction paper and cut out three large ships.
        - Use white construction paper, cut large rectangular sails.
      - Label each ship with the name from Columbus' fleet, the *Nina*, the *Pinta*, and the *Santa Maria*.
- Have your class create a banner to honoring Verrazzano for being the first European to view what became New Jersey and New York.
  - On long white bulletin board paper, paint or color a blue ocean along the bottom.
    - On long white bulletin board paper, paint or color a blue ocean along the bottom.
      - Use brown construction paper and cut out one large ship.
        - Use white construction paper, cut large rectangular sails.
      - Label the ship with the name of Verrazzano's ship, *La Dauphine*
- Have each student create a poster about a place they have traveled to.
  - They should include photographs, drawings, facts, and one or two paragraphs telling when they traveled, where they went, what they did, what they liked most about their trip, and if there was anything that they did not like and would change.
  - Discuss what Columbus would put on his poster if he were to make one about his trip to the New World.

### Resources:

Biography of Christopher Columbus

<http://gardenofpraise.com/ibdcolum.htm>

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Timeline for Christopher Columbus

[http://www.softschools.com/timelines/christopher\\_columbus\\_timeline/14/](http://www.softschools.com/timelines/christopher_columbus_timeline/14/)

Biography of Giovanni da Verrazzano

[https://kids.kiddle.co/Giovanni\\_da\\_Verrazzano](https://kids.kiddle.co/Giovanni_da_Verrazzano)

Biography of Giovanni da Verrazzano

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15364a.htm>

# **New Jersey Student Learning Standards**

## **Social Studies**

- 6.1.4.D.4 Explain how key events led to the creation of the United States and the state of New Jersey
- 6.1.8.B.1.b Analyze the world in spatial terms, using historical maps to determine what led to the exploration of new water and land routes.
- 6.1.8.C.1.a Evaluate the impact of science, religion, and technology innovations on European exploration.

## **English Language Arts**

### RI.4.3

Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.

### RI.4.5

Describe the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in a text or part of a text.

### RI.5.3

Explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific information in the text.

### RI.5.5

Compare and contrast the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in two or more texts.

### SL.4.2

Paraphrase portions of a text read aloud, or information presented in diverse media and formats. (e.g., visually, quantitatively, and orally)

### SL.5.2

Summarize a written text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats. (e.g., visually, quantitatively, and orally)

# Italian Explorers

## Christopher Columbus & Giovanni da Verrazzano

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Discussion Questions:

1. Where was Columbus born?

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2. What did Columbus always want to become?

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3. What did Columbus hope to accomplish in life?

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4. Why did Columbus have difficulty finding someone to fund his voyage?

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5. Why do you think Columbus' crew was willing to join the risky voyage?

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6. Would you have been willing to take such a risk? Why or Why not?

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7. The initial excitement of Columbus' men changed as they spent a month out on the open sea. What do you think may have been on their minds?

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8. Did Columbus ever find what he was looking for?

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9. What did Columbus bring back to the King and Queen of Spain?

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10. Columbus' voyage west to reach the east resulted in the discovery of a New World. If the voyage had not taken place, would this New World have been discovered or left undiscovered for many more years?

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11. Christopher Columbus dreamed of and planned his risky voyage for years. What dreams do you hope and plan for?

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12. Why did Giovanni da Verrazzano not receive the notoriety of Columbus or Henry Hudson?

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