



Explorers of the Americas

Send your students on an imaginary stow-away adventure By Jacqueline Clarke

Give your explorers unit a twist and watch students' interest take off. Working in groups, students research and write a first-hand record of an explorer's voyage as if they were stowing away on a journey across the sea.

Trip Trackers

Begin with some preliminary research as a class. Study and compare the journeys and routes of major explorers to the New World. Cover your world map with clear laminate and draw the route of each explorer you study. Make a key with a different symbol and color for each explorer. As a class, compare their routes, distances, travel dates, and discoveries. Who traveled the farthest? Who made the most discoveries? Then challenge students with the map **Reproducible** (next page).

Explorer Time Line Posters

Divide the class into groups and let each group choose an explorer with whom to "travel." Provide print and digital resources for students to use as they research. On poster board, have each group record their explorer's dates of exploration and discoveries. Suggest they add a few stowaway touches such as "Our hiding place was nearly discovered today!" Invite the groups to decorate their posters

with their own illustrations of the voyage. Hang the posters around the room and encourage students to look for similarities and differences, such as which countries sponsored the voyage and what the explorers' goals were.

Postcards From Stowaways

Ask each "stowaway" to record his or her journey on a postcard addressed to a friend or family member. They can write, for example, about the day they set sail, the experience of a storm at sea, or the first time they saw land. Encourage them to use their imaginations and their creative skills, drawing or tracing their own illustrations for the postcards. Share the postcards by reading them aloud and by having

students exchange and answer each others' postcards.

Interview the Stowaways

Celebrate the end of their hard work and research by inviting the groups of stowaways to take turns sharing "actual" stories of their adventures and days with a famous explorer over mugs of frosty root beer. They can dress up in big boots, eye patches, or floppy hats with feathers. For simple props, try construction-paper telescopes, drawings of their explorers' ships, or hand-decorated handkerchief nautical flags. The rest of the class can act as news reporters asking questions of the adventurers: What was the best thing they learned? Where would they like to explore next? ■

Books to Explore

- *The Discovery of the Americas*, by Betsy and Giulio Maestro (HarperCollins, 1991)

Links to Explore

- Peek into Christopher Columbus's journal at legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/source/columbus1.html

Special thanks to the teachers who contributed their ideas: Bob Krech, Janet Worthington-Samo, and Judy Wetzel.



Name _____

Meet the EXPLORERS



Directions: Answer each question with the name of the correct explorer.

1. I believe I discovered the New World first in 1001 A.D.

2. In 1492, I set sail with the Niña, the Pinta, and the Santa Maria.

3. I was the first explorer to circumnavigate the globe, in 1577.

4. I journeyed to Florida in search of the Fountain of Youth.

5. I traveled to and claimed Newfoundland for England.

6. I named the Pacific Ocean for its peaceful waves.

Magellan



Drake



Columbus



o De Leon



Cabot



Eriksson



Answers to Reproducible Activity

Meet the Explorers Reproducible, page 2.

1. Eriksson
2. Columbus
3. Magellan
4. De Leon
5. Cabot
6. Drake