



Christopher Columbus sailed west to Asia . . .

If you were Columbus, what would you have done?
Write your answer (best guess) to each question.

1. Columbus was born Italy. He grew up in Genoa, a seaport. When he was 20, he went on his first long sea voyage. When pirates attacked his ship, Columbus was wounded. His ship sank and he was stranded in Portugal. If you were Columbus, what would YOU do?
2. Everybody and his brother wanted to get to Asia. It had everything (spices, silk) that Europeans wanted to buy. But the land route to Asia took years. Portuguese explorers were sailing eastward - around Africa - to get to Asia. If you were Columbus, what would YOU do?
3. In 1482, Columbus asked the King of Portugal to finance a **westward voyage to Asia**. The king turned him down: Experts said Asia was 11,000 miles to the west; Columbus estimated that it was only 3,000 miles. If you were turned down flat, as Columbus was, what would YOU do?
4. In 1492, Columbus began his voyage with 104 men in three small wooden ships (the Niña, the Pinta, and the Santa Maria). The ships sailed south to the Canary Islands (off the coast of Africa), then headed west into the unknown. After 3 weeks on the **Atlantic Ocean**, his sailors lost heart. No one had ever been out of sight of land for so long. After 68 days at sea, they panicked: On October 10th, they insisted that Columbus turn back. If you were Columbus, what would YOU do to prevent a mutiny?
5. Columbus first landed on the island of San Salvador in the **Bahamas**. Columbus then sailed to **Cuba** and to the island of **Hispañiola**. (Today, Hispañiola is split into the Dominican Republic and Haiti.) On Christmas Day, he shipwrecked off the coast of Haiti. Columbus' biggest ship (the Santa Maria) sunk and its sailors could not fit onto the remaining two little ships. If you were Columbus, what would YOU do?
6. Columbus figured the experts in Spain would doubt that he ever reached Asia. If you were Columbus, what would YOU take with you as proof that you had landed on a new continent?
7. On the way home, the Niña and Pinta were separated during a horrible storm. One ship (the Niña) was about to sink. If you were Columbus, what would YOU do?
8. When his ship landed off the coast of Africa, the Portuguese governor thought Columbus was lying about going to "Asia." Columbus' crew was arrested on their way to church. (They wanted to thank God for getting them safely home.) If you were Columbus, what would YOU do?
9. When Columbus finally arrived in Spain, he was given a hero's welcome by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. He was named "**Admiral of the Ocean**," making him the governor of the **Atlantic Ocean**. He was also named "Viceroy of the Indies," which made him the governor of Asia. He was ordered to make a second voyage to set up a colony on the island of Hispaniola (Haiti/Dominican Republic). In 1493, Columbus set out with 17 ships and 1,000 colonists. When they reached the **Dominican Republic**, Columbus learned that the 40 men he had left behind had been killed. The men, in a wild hunt for gold, had mistreated the Indians. If you were Columbus, what would YOU do now?

10. In 1498, Columbus made his third voyage to the New World. Hoping to find gold to please his sailors, Columbus sailed further south than usual. Near the Equator, the wind stopped blowing - a disaster for ships with sails and no motors. The ships stopped dead in the water and the men suffered in the blazing tropical sun. They finally drifted to the coast of **Venezuela**. His sailors were angry that they had not discovered gold. When he returned to Haiti, the colonists were also angry that they had not discovered enough gold. If you were Columbus, how would YOU satisfy their gold fever?

11. In 1500, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella agreed with Columbus' crew that Columbus should be punished for being too harsh on the settlers of Hispaniola. Columbus was put in chains and shipped to Spain for trial. Although they released him, they named a new governor for Hispaniola. Columbus was humiliated; people on the streets laughed at him. If you were Columbus, what would YOU do?

12. Columbus sailed as far west in the Caribbean Sea as he could, looking for the Pacific Ocean that would take him to China. He landed in **Panama**, never realizing that the Pacific Ocean lay just 100 miles over the mountains to the west. He ran into hurricanes, warlike Indians, and two of his ships leaked so badly that they sank. He and his men were marooned on the island of Jamaica for a year. His rival, the governor of Hispaniola, refused to rescue him. Columbus and his men were starving. He knew that an eclipse of the moon was predicted soon. If you were Columbus, how could YOU use the eclipse to convince the Native American Indians to help you?

13. At 53 years old, Columbus returned to Spain. He suffered from severe arthritis, so his sailing days were over. His sons lived permanently in Santo Domingo, his base in the Dominican Republic. Columbus was on his deathbed. If you were Columbus, where would YOU want to be buried?