People in History
A named leader on a voyage during the age of exploration

Christopher Columbus was born in the port city of Genoa in 1451. Here he learned to sail the Mediterranean Sea.

Back then, people thought that the world was flat and were too frightened to sail far in case they fell off the edge. Columbus believed that the world was round and was determined to prove it. He tried to prove his point by showing he could reach the east by sailing west. He also believed that Asia was much closer to Europe than it actually is. He was right by saying he could reach Asia but he didn't know about the huge continent that was between Asia and Europe.

He brought his idea to the King and Queen of Portugal but the King was only interested in the Africa route to Asia. With the King telling him this he brought his idea to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain, Portugal's rivals.

At first, they decided not to sponsor his voyage as they knew nobody had ever sailed that far into the Atlantic Ocean and returned to tell the tale, but as Columbus was so determined he convinced them to sponsor him and supply him with a crew, ships and supplies.

Columbus was given three ships. The Nina and Pinta which were caravels and the third ship was named the Santa Maria which was a Nao. The Santa Maria was captained by Columbus himself and The Nina and Pinta were captained by the Pinzon brothers.

The voyage started on the 3rd of August 1492. All the sailors were frightened and anxious on the journey. Columbus had his maths wrong but didn't tell his crew as he feared they would go into mutiny against him. On the ship, Columbus used multiple navigation instruments such as an astrolabe which found the latitude by pointing the instrument at the sun, and a compass which told you if you were in the north or the south of the hemisphere by using a

magnetic needle. On the 12th of October 1492, they reached land and were convinced they had reached India.

When they thought, they had reached India, they were actually on an island off the coast of America. Columbus planted a Spanish flag and a cross to represent Christianity. When he returned to Spain in 1495 after exploring for 3 months, he brought goods such as pineapples and he even brought along native Indians to prove his discovery.

He returned to the Indies three more times and was made Governor as promised. When he returned, many of the Europeans who followed along were extremely cruel to the natives by showing acts of robbery, torture and murder. The 'Indians' even accused Columbus of cruelty and was arrested and brought back to Spain. He proved to be innocent but grew to be a bitter and disappointed man.

He died in 1506 aged 51 due to arthritis and was known to be one of the most famous men in history.