

# Voyages of Columbus



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## Characters

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**Columbus**

**Queen Isabella**

**Felipe Hernandez**

**Narrator**

**King Ferdinand**

**Luis Gutierrez**

## Setting

This reader's theater takes place in the court of Spain's King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, aboard Columbus's flagship, *Santa Maria*, and in Cadiz, Spain. This story is based on actual events.



## Act I

**Narrator:**

It has been a difficult time for Columbus. He has been trying to get a country to support his efforts to search for a new trade route to the Indies. The kings of France and England have turned him down. King John II of Portugal has also said that the idea is a waste of money and that sailing west to get to the Indies is foolish. Even Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand denied Columbus. But, Columbus is very persistent, and he won't give up on his idea. He has again returned to the court of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella to ask them to reconsider his request for money, ships, and men.

**Columbus:**

Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand, it is a great honor that you have agreed to see me once again. With the Arabs closing the land routes in 1453, Europeans can no longer sail to the Indies for the needed spices. Spices are very important to us to preserve our foods. Going by water to reach the Indies is dangerous, but the spices and the jewels and other riches that can be had from the area are worth the risks. I'd like to try going in a different direction—west—to reach the Indies.

**Ferdinand:** Columbus, why have you waited for over a year to meet with us? As we have told you before, we don't want to support your idea of a westward voyage to the Indies.

**Isabella:** My king, let's hear what young Columbus has to say. He is a stubborn man who refuses to give up on his dream.

**Columbus:** Thank you, my queen. As you know, my given name is Christopher, which means "Christ bearing." As a Christian, my voyage would not be to just get spices and riches—I would spread God's word to those I meet and claim the lands I find for your Christian Spain.

**Isabella:** Columbus, you must know that converting people to God is one of my most important missions. My religious beliefs are very important to me and I want to spread Christianity to everyone. Ferdinand, what do you think of giving Columbus a small amount of money and three small ships?

**Ferdinand:** Again, I think his ideas are foolish, but I will consent to your wishes.

**Columbus:** Your majesties, thank you very much. I will bring back many riches to Spain.

**Narrator:** Columbus is granted three ships and 90 men. The ships are small and not built to explore. Columbus's crew includes some prisoners who will be given a chance for freedom if they agree to sail with him. Although most people believe the world is flat and that the ocean is full of sea monsters, the men agree to accompany Columbus on his voyage. Their dreams of becoming rich and famous make the trip worth the risks.

**Columbus:** Men, I have spent years learning to be a skilled mariner. I lived for many years in Portugal, studying under Prince Henry the Navigator. I worked first as a mapmaker and once said to my brother, "I want to add to a map!" I will fulfill my dream, as I am determined to find a route to the Indies by going west. I know how to use a compass and the stars to navigate direction. Our ships are small, so space below and on deck will be limited. You will have to sleep in shifts. Among you are carpenters, a silversmith, sailors, a doctor, and even someone who speaks Arabic, so we will be able to talk to the people we meet. Four of you are convicts who have been pardoned to join my crew. We sail tomorrow and will get to the Indies by sailing west!