

Sample Pages from



Created *by* Teachers *for* Teachers and Students

Thanks for checking us out. Please call us at **800-858-7339** with questions or feedback or to order this product. You can also order this product online at **www.tcmpub.com**.

For correlations to state standards, please visit
www.tcmpub.com/administrators/correlations

Building Fluency through Reader's Theater: Early America

This sample includes the following:

Teacher's Guide Cover (1 page)

Table of Contents (1 page)

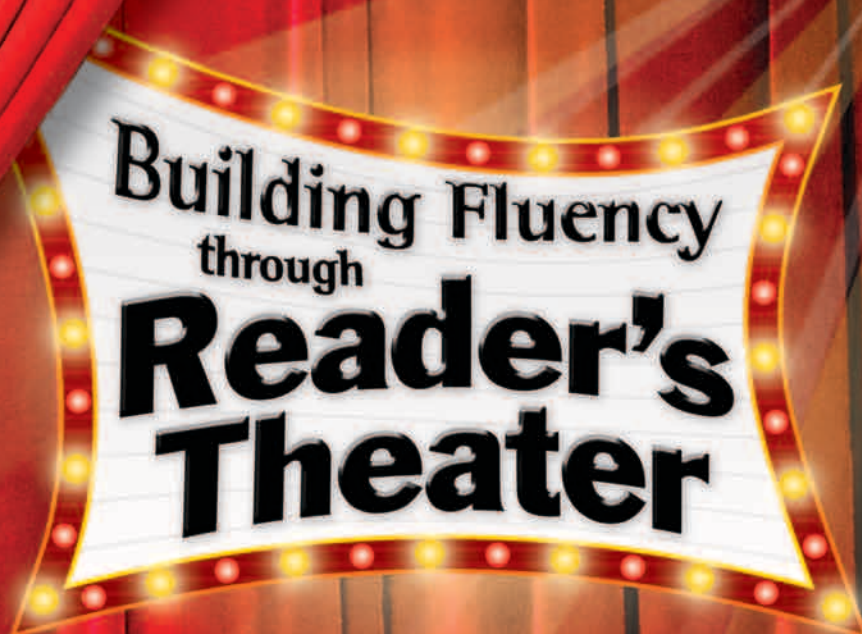
What's Included in Each Lesson (7 pages)

Lesson Plan (6 pages)

Script (14 pages)

To Create a World ⁱⁿ which
Children **Love** to Learn!

800-858-7339 • www.tcmpub.com



Building Fluency
through
**Reader's
Theater**

Early America

Teacher's Guide



Teacher Created Materials

Table of Contents

Introduction

Foreword by Dr. Timothy Rasinski	3
The Connection Between Fluency and Reader’s Theater	5
Tips on Reader’s Theater by Aaron Shepard	8
Correlation to Standards	11
What’s Included in Each Lesson	13

Social Studies Scripts

Voyages of Columbus

Columbus’s Voyages Lesson Plan	20–25
Columbus’s Voyages Character Masks	26–31

Work or Starve

Jamestown Colony Lesson Plan	32–37
Jamestown Colony Character Masks	38–43

Friends and Foes

Pocahontas and the Powhatan Indians Lesson Plan	44–49
Pocahontas and the Powhatan Indians Character Masks	50–55

Indentured in America

Colonial Times Lesson Plan	56–61
Colonial Times Character Masks	62–67

Patriots in Boston

Patriots in Boston Lesson Plan	68–73
Patriots in Boston Character Masks	74–79

Declaring Our Independence

Writing the Declaration Lesson Plan	80–85
Writing the Declaration Character Masks	86–91

The Reveres

American Revolution Begins Lesson Plan	92–97
American Revolution Begins Character Masks	98–103

The Constitution of the United States

The U.S. Constitution Lesson Plan	104–109
The U.S. Constitution Character Masks	110–115

Appendix

Home-School Connections	116
Aaron Shepard’s Tips	118
Contents of the Performance CD	119
Contents of the Teacher Resource CD	122
Bibliography	125

What's Included in Each Lesson

Objectives

The objectives state the purpose of each lesson and communicate the desired outcome of the lesson related to fluency and the content area. The objectives are taken from the Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) compilation of content standards for K–12 curriculum. As stated on the McREL website (<http://www.mcrel.org>), the purpose of the standards compilation is “to address the major issues surrounding content standards, provide a model for their identification, and apply this model in order to identify standards and benchmarks in the subject areas.”

Summary

Within each lesson there is a summary section that describes the script and provides information to share with students to prepare them for the reader's theater performance. To decide which scripts to complete with students, read the summaries to determine how each fits in with your teaching plans. As a convenience, the summaries for the scripts are also provided below.

In *Voyages of Columbus*, 14-year-old Felipe leaves his hard life on the streets to sail on the *Santa Maria*, along with a prisoner named Luis. They take care of the cats, turn the hourglass, and see amazing “sea monsters.” When Felipe is given the helm of the *Santa Maria*, he crashes onto some reefs. Luis and Felipe tell the tales of their journeys with Columbus, “Admiral of the Ocean Sea.”

John Smith is in shackles in *Work or Starve: Captain John Smith and the Jamestown Colony*, but how can that be if he is to lead the colony? The colonists won't listen to him until there is trouble! With the men and boys dying and the food nearly gone, Smith embarks on a bold journey that nearly costs his life. His relationship with Pocahontas, and her father, Powhatan are essential to the survival of the colonists.

In *Friends and Foes: The Powhatan Indians and the Jamestown Colony*, Powhatan decides to destroy the colonists. With little food, 90 percent of the colonists dead, battling the Indians, and more colonists coming, there is little hope for the colonists. What can save them? A marriage between Pocahontas and John Rolfe bridges the gap and brings peace to the Indians and the colonists in unexpected ways.

Charles is a young boy, in *Indentured in America*, sold into servitude when his parents die coming to America. He befriends a slave, Henry, and together, they learn the value of sacrifice for that which they value most—their own freedom. A sailor, Adam, risks his freedom to help them achieve theirs.

What's Included in Each Lesson *(cont.)*

Summary *(cont.)*

In *Patriots in Boston*, children and families witness and participate in the events leading to the “tea party” in Boston. As taxes and new laws are forced on the colonists, they know they have to take action to preserve their freedoms. With leadership from Samuel Adams, families disguise the men as Indians, who dump the tea into the Boston Harbor, creating a pivotal moment in American history.

Declaring Our Independence depicts the formation of the important document, the Declaration of Independence, through the sometimes nervous eyes of one of its originators, Roger Sherman. Sherman, Adams, Jefferson, Franklin, and many others risk treason in order to write a document that declares freedom to the citizens of a new government.

In *The Reverses: A Family Forced Apart*, Paul Revere, Jr. must defend his home while his mother and sisters flee Boston and join his father who is in exile after warning Hancock and Adams of the approaching British. The young Paul, and his friend, Thomas, hunt squirrels and scare away intruders. They must be brave and resourceful, and when their families return, it is clear that they have become young men.

John Russell is a young man who enters the highly guarded Pennsylvania State House just as the delegates are debating about a Constitution for the United States. John Russell's story is told in *The Constitution of the United States: The Foundation of Our Government*, where he is given the opportunity to assist the delegates. George Washington praises him for the work he does, and James Madison gives him a very special gift.

Materials

All of the materials needed to complete each lesson are listed in this section to assist in lesson preparation.

Introduce the Literature

Each script in this kit is based on a piece of children's literature. You are encouraged to read the book to your students or have your students read the book during language arts time.

What's Included in Each Lesson *(cont.)*

ELL Support

Reader's theater can be used effectively in classrooms with English language learners to enhance students' proficiency in the areas of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Furthermore, the program can be adapted to scaffold and model language usage to meet students' needs at multiple ELL levels. Through this program's ELL support activities and other various components of the lesson plans, students will become actively engaged in authentic language development activities. As a result, students' motivation to utilize the English language will increase.

The drama component of reader's theater helps students feel less inhibited in both speaking and reading the English language, and thus fluency in both areas will increase. In *Stage by Stage: A Handbook for Using Drama in the Second Language Classroom* by Ann F. Burke and Julie C. O'Sullivan, the authors state that "Drama is simply a good way to get students' whole selves involved with language and it is fun" (p. xiii). The authors also emphasize that once students feel less inhibited, their fluency will increase, because within the context of reader's theater there is an inherent opportunity to do repeated readings and practice skills, such as pronunciation, in an authentic context.

Jennifer Catney McMaster (1998), in her review of research studies involving literacy and drama in the classroom, states the benefits of drama for emergent readers. Drama provides prior knowledge and rich literary experiences needed for future readers as well as a scaffold for literacy instruction. It helps students develop symbolic representation, new vocabulary, knowledge of word order, phrasing, and metacognition, and introduces them to various forms of discourse, all of which contribute to the construction of meaning from text.

Each script in this kit is accompanied by a musical piece as well as a corresponding poem. Both of these components have also been shown to facilitate students' language acquisition. Educator Tim Murphey (1992) analyzed the lyrics of pop songs and found several common language characteristics that would benefit language learners: the language is conversational; the lyrics are often sung at a slower rate than dialogue; and there is a repetition of vocabulary and structures. Moriya (1988) found that music provided Asian learners a forum to practice pronunciation and learn the phonemic differences between Asian languages and English. Speakers of various languages can benefit from the language experience that the music selections will provide.

The poetry component to the program can be used in many creative ways to enhance students' language acquisition in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Gasparro and Falletta (1994) assert that using poetry in an ELL classroom provides students with the opportunity to explore both the linguistic and conceptual facets of text without focusing on the mechanics of language. Choral reading of the poem builds fluency and provides practice in pronunciation. Some of the vocabulary words used in the script are reinforced through the poem, providing the opportunity to see the words used in multiple contexts.

What's Included in Each Lesson *(cont.)*

ELL Support *(cont.)*

The accompanying poems can also serve as a model for students to write their own poems. Depending on students' ELL levels, a framework or template can be developed for each poem to structure the writing process and provide students another opportunity to use the vocabulary and word order they have learned from the script and the poem. Additionally, the poem can also serve as a medium for discussion of the themes and concepts presented in each script. Moreover, students and teachers can create action sequences to facilitate visualization and comprehension of the text. Gasparro and Falletta (1994) emphasize that dramatizing poetry enables the learner to become intellectually, emotionally, and physically engaged in the target language; therefore, language is internalized and remembered.

Students' listening comprehension will also develop as a result of using reader's theater. According to Brown (2001), some characteristics of speech make listening difficult, such as clustering, redundancy, reduced forms, performance variables, colloquial language, rate of delivery, stress, rhythm, intonation, and interaction. Brown proposes methods for helping second-language learners overcome these challenges. Reader's theater utilizes authentic language and contexts, is intrinsically motivating, and supports both bottom-up and top-down listening techniques. Illustrations in the scripts, along with the possible inclusion of realia and gestures, will assist students in understanding unfamiliar vocabulary and idiomatic phrases.

In addition, the professional recording of the scripts on the Performance CD will provide another opportunity for students to enhance listening comprehension and reading ability. The voices on the CD are articulate and expressive, and they serve as models for accurate pronunciation and fluent reading. By listening to the CD, students will be able to practice visualizing text and speech. One Best Practice suggested by second-language teacher-training programs is for the students to hear an oral reading of the piece of literature prior to reading it aloud themselves. The CD can be used for this practice as well.

Reader's theater provides a medium for ELL students to interact with other students in the classroom and will facilitate the development of a strong community of language learners. The experience will increase students' motivation and diminish their inhibitions to learn the new language. The components of the program will provide the necessary support and scaffolding that teachers need to provide effective instruction to ELL students in the areas of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The program will engage students and serve as a model for fluency, pronunciation, and overall language usage.

What's Included in Each Lesson *(cont.)*

Involving All Students

Even though each script has only six roles, all students can be involved in each reader's theater performance. Students can be involved in a variety of ways. This section of each lesson suggests ways to include all students.

Reading the Script

This section of each lesson explains how to introduce the reader's theater script to your students and offers suggestions for introducing unfamiliar vocabulary and understanding the characters. As you read each script with the students, you may try to use the following performance tips.

Performance Tips

Reader's theater performance can be a frightening experience for some students. Assist them by reviewing the following suggestions.

- Relax! Breathe deeply and speak slowly to avoid a quivering or breathless voice.
- Stand with one foot in front of the other and with your weight balanced to avoid that feeling of shaking and trembling.
- Do not rush through your lines or speak too rapidly. Take your time and say each word distinctly.
- Movement is good for emphasis or to help you look relaxed, but do not move back and forth or develop nervous mannerisms. Avoid wringing hands, tugging at clothing, or twisting hair.
- Mistakes are a normal part of any learning experience. If you make one, correct it and go on.

Getting to know your character will make your performance more believable. Use these questions to get in character as you rehearse.

- How old do you think the character is?
- What kind of voice do you think the character should have? Is the voice soft, loud, high-pitched, or low-pitched?
- How does the character stand or use his or her hands when speaking?
- Does the character seem happy, proud, or excitable?
- Do you think this character is serious or silly?
- Is the character kind?
- Do you think people would like this character?
- What can you do to communicate this character's personality to others?

What's Included in Each Lesson *(cont.)*

Assigning Roles

Each script contains six character roles. Each of the roles is written for a different reading level. The chart below lists the reading levels for all the characters in the eight scripts.

Script Title	High 3 rd Grade 3.5–4.0	Low 4 th Grade 4.0–4.5	High 4 th Grade 4.5–5.0
<i>Voyages of Columbus</i>	Columbus Felipe	Queen King	Luis Narrator
<i>Work or Starve</i>	William John	George Edward	Pocahontas Narrator
<i>Friends and Foes</i>	Pocahontas Powhatan	George William	John Narrator
<i>Indentured in America</i>	Charles Henry	Mr. Walker Adam	Narrator Capt. Thomas
<i>Patriots in Boston</i>	Samuel George	Lucas Belinda	Sarah Narrator
<i>Declaring Our Independence</i>	Mrs. Dunlap Robert	Roger Thomas	John Narrator
<i>The Reveres</i>	Sarah Debby	Rachel Paul	Thomas Narrator
<i>The Constitution of the United States</i>	John Ben	George Delegate	James Narrator

What's Included in Each Lesson *(cont.)*

Assigning Roles *(cont.)*

Reading Levels Correlation Chart

Grade Level Range	Guided Reading	Early Intervention	DRA
3.5–4.0	O–Q	22–24	34–40
4.0–4.5	Q–R	24–25	40
4.5–5.0	R–T	25–27	40–44

Meeting the Fluency Objective

Each lesson focuses on a specific fluency objective, such as reading with accuracy or reading with expression. This section provides procedures for teaching the fluency objective related to the featured script.

Content-Area Connection

Each reader's theater script focuses on the social studies content area. This section of each lesson explains the content and provides suggestions for introducing this content to your students. The content in the scripts can be quite sophisticated and warrants specific instruction to help your students understand it.

Fine Arts Connection

Each script has a song and a poem to accompany it. Your students will perform these songs and poems at designated places within the reader's theater performances. Your kit includes a Performance CD containing all of the songs and poems related to the eight scripts. This section of each lesson offers suggestions for using this CD to learn the songs and poems.

Voyages of Columbus

Columbus's Voyages Lesson Plan

Objectives

- **Fluency:** Students will deliver oral presentations and read passages fluently, focusing on the use of voice and tone as they read.
- **Content Area:** Students will discover the route taken by Christopher Columbus as he discovered the New World, as well as discuss the many things he found in the New World.

Summary

In *Voyages of Columbus*, 14-year-old Felipe leaves his hard life on the streets to sail on the *Santa Maria*, along with a prisoner named Luis. They take care of the cats, turn the hourglass, and see amazing “sea monsters.” When Felipe is given the helm of the *Santa Maria*, he crashes onto some reefs. Luis and Felipe tell the tales of their journeys with Columbus, “Admiral of the Ocean Sea.”



Materials

- *Voyages of Columbus* script booklets
- *Columbus's Voyages Character Masks* (pages 26–31 or Teacher Resource CD); copied on cardstock
- copies of *Take-Home Script: Voyages of Columbus* (Teacher Resource CD)
- *PowerPoint*® slide show (Teacher Resource CD)
- overhead transparencies of the poem and song (Teacher Resource CD)
- Performance CD and CD player or computer with a CD drive and speakers

Introduce the Literature

Have students read the story, *Where Do You Think You are Going, Christopher Columbus?* by Jean Fritz. After students have read the story, place them into six small groups. Assign each group one of the following topics: “Before His Adventure,” “During His Adventure,” or “After His Adventure.” Two groups will be assigned to each topic. Then, have the students pretend as if they are on the voyage with Christopher Columbus. Have them record five main events that either led up to his adventure, occurred during his adventure, or occurred after his adventure, depending on their assigned topics. Then, have the groups create collages that show these main events. Allow students to use magazines or clip art for their collages, as well as their own drawings. Hang the groups’ collages in chronological order around the room, to show the main events of Columbus’s voyage.



ELL Support

Help ELL students find the five main events for their assigned time periods. This way, they can focus on how they are going to present these main events in their collages, rather than focusing on actually finding the main events.

Involving All the Students

While this script has only six roles, there are many different ways you can involve all of your students. For this reader’s theater experience, assign those students who do not have speaking parts to create backdrops that can be used during the performance. The backdrops might include the three ships on which Columbus and his men sailed, pictures of the New World, or an ocean scene.

Reading the Script



1. Tell students to close their eyes as you read the following: “The waves crashed against the boat, causing it to bounce relentlessly in the ocean. At times, I feared we would never reach our destination. Was the possibility of fame and fortune worth the fear of the unknown? Could our captain lead us to our destination, or would we die never seeing land again?” Ask the students what images they got in their minds as you read the sentences. What historical event might this paragraph be describing? Allow the class to state possible answers. Explain that they will be reading a script about Christopher Columbus and his famous voyages to the New World.
2. Provide each student with a copy of the script. You can give the script booklets to small groups or you can print copies of the Take-Home Script. Play the professional recording as students follow along in their scripts. As you play the recording, ask students to pay attention to the different voices and expressions that the readers use as they perform the script.
3. After reading the script as a class, ask the students if there were any vocabulary words that they did not know. To help students learn the unknown words, have them find the definitions for those words in the glossary at the end of the script or by using dictionaries. Once they have found the meanings of the unknown words, ask them to pretend as if they are Christopher Columbus, trying to convince the King and Queen of Spain to finance his journey. How could he convince them that he should go? Have them write convincing arguments using at least four new vocabulary words from the script. Allow them to share their arguments with the class, or pretend as if you are the king/queen, and have them share their arguments with you.
4. Once students are familiar with the vocabulary words, show them the list of characters from the script. Then, divide the students into groups of five. Have each member of the group choose a different character, excluding the narrator. Then, have the students write journal entries, as if they are the character they chose. Their entries should describe their thoughts and feelings about their journey, based on the script. Have them share their journals with their groups, discussing the similarities and differences between the characters and what they wrote.



ELL Support

Allow the ELL students to work with higher-level students as they complete their journal entries and persuasive arguments. This way, they can get help if they are struggling with any words.

Voyages of Columbus

Columbus's Voyages Lesson Plan



Assigning Roles

Assign roles to students based on their reading proficiency. It is important to remember that when students practice fluency, they should read materials at or below their reading level. This helps them to focus on their accuracy, expression, and reading rate. If a student is reading text that is too difficult, his or her attention will focus on decoding words rather than reading with fluency. These are approximate reading levels for the roles in this script:

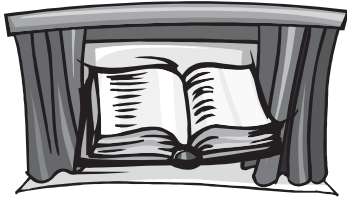
- ❖ Columbus: high 3rd grade
- ❖ Queen: low 4th grade
- ❖ Luis: high 4th grade
- ❖ Felipe: high 3rd grade
- ❖ King: low 4th grade
- ❖ Narrator: high 4th grade

Meeting the Fluency Objective

1. The fluency objective for this script focuses on using tone and voice while reading a passage. It might be helpful to do this lesson before reading the script, in order to model the use of voice when reading. To model tone and voice, read the following sentence aloud to students: *“I’ve never been on the sea before.”* First, read it in a monotone voice, showing little or no expression. Then, ask students how they could read the same sentence using an excited voice. Allow the class to practice saying *“I’ve never been on the sea before!”* in an excited voice. Ask them to do the same using quiet voices, frightened voices, and sad voices. Explain that voice is the way we say things to show our emotions, and the tone of our voices helps convey those emotions.
2. Then, ask the class which tone of voice might be most appropriate for the script they will be reading. Tell students that the use of tone helps others know how the characters are feeling, and it can add interest and variation to a story. In the script, there are times when Columbus and his crew show various emotions. When reading these sentences, it is especially important to use appropriate tone and voice because it helps convey the characters’ thoughts and feelings.
3. Place students into small groups. Have the groups find two to three examples of where particular voices and tone should be used. Have them read those examples aloud in the proper voice and tone. You may choose to assign each group a type of voice, or you may allow them to choose which type of voice they would like to convey to the class.
4. For further practice with tone and voice, write some sentences from the script on the board. Read the sentences aloud in a monotone voice. Ask students how they could improve on the tone and voice as they read. Allow various students to show the class the proper tone to use for the sentences. Also, discuss how to express surprise, anger, happiness, and other emotions that might be found in the script.
5. Explain to the students that it is important to be familiar with the lines of the script in order to read it smoothly and fluently. Point out that it is hard to add tone and expression when you are focusing on reading and comprehension. Allow the students to read the script once again, focusing on tone and voice.

Voyages of Columbus

Columbus's Voyages Lesson Plan



Social Studies Connection

The focus of this script is Columbus's voyages to the New World. This script begins in Spain with Columbus trying to convince the king and queen to finance his journey.

1. On a map, have students trace the routes Columbus took to the New World. Then, ask students to mark his first journey in one color, his second in another, and so on. You may allow them to use the script and other resources in order to map each of Columbus's journeys. Then, ask them to use a fifth color to map the journey that he planned to take to the Indies.
2. Ask students the following discussion questions: "What would have happened if Columbus had taken the route he intended to take?" "How might the world be different today?" "What effects has his journey had on the world?"
3. Ask students to pretend as if they are Christopher Columbus returning from his first voyage to the New World. The king and queen of Spain have asked him to create a travel brochure of the many things he saw on his journey. The brochures should include the following information: what Columbus saw once he reached the New World, what his journey meant for others, and pictures of things he might have seen on his journey and at his final destination. Allow them to share their brochures in small groups.



ELL Support

Allow ELL students to work with teacher's aides as they create their brochures, so that they can get help with words they might include to describe some of the items on their brochures.

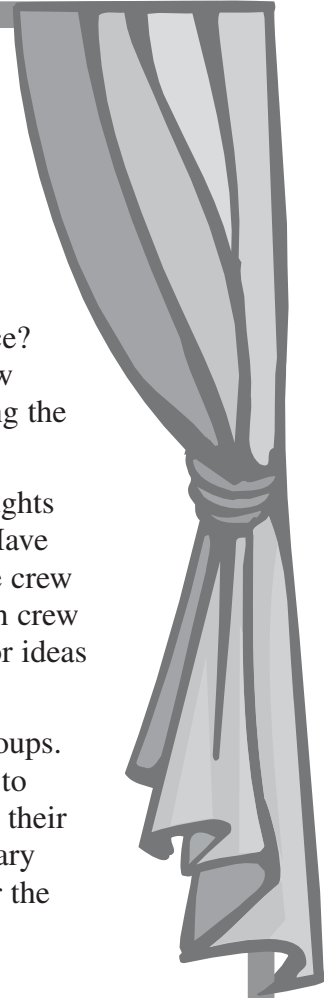


Voyages of Columbus

Columbus's Voyages Lesson Plan

Fine Arts Connection

1. The *Voyages of Columbus* script contains a song and a poem. The song and poem relate to the reader's theater, but are not limited to use only with this script.
2. To relate the poem to the fluency objective for this lesson, ask students to listen to the professional reading of the poem. Then ask them to point out the tone used for the poem. Was it a monotone voice? An excited voice? A quiet voice? Did the voice go along with the words of the poem to show the meaning? Ask students to use proper tone as they read the poem during the reader's theater performance.
3. After reading the poem several times, ask students to think about the thoughts and emotions of the men on board the ship. Were they excited? Scared? Have the students create "face cards" showing the thoughts and emotions of the crew members from the script. The students may use index cards—one for each crew member—to create their face cards. Remind them to refer to the poem for ideas about the crew members' thoughts and feelings.
4. After listening to the song several times, divide the students into small groups. Assign each group a different stanza from the song. Then, ask the groups to create props, scenery, actions, and even simple costumes to go along with their assigned stanzas. Have students practice singing the song with the necessary voice and tone. Then, ask the groups to perform their assigned stanzas for the class or for other classrooms.



ELL Support

Allow ELL students to create actions for the poem or song that go along with the words. Then, ask them to teach those actions to the other students. This will help the ELL students understand and remember the meaning of the words in the poem and/or song.

Voyages of Columbus

Columbus's Voyages Lesson Plan

Performance CD

Description	Track
Characters, Setting, and Script Reading, pages 4–16	Volume I, Track 03
Poem: “My Turn”	Volume I, Track 04
Script Reading (cont.), pages 16–21	Volume I, Track 05
Song: “Admiral of the Sea”	Volume I, Track 06

Teacher Resource CD

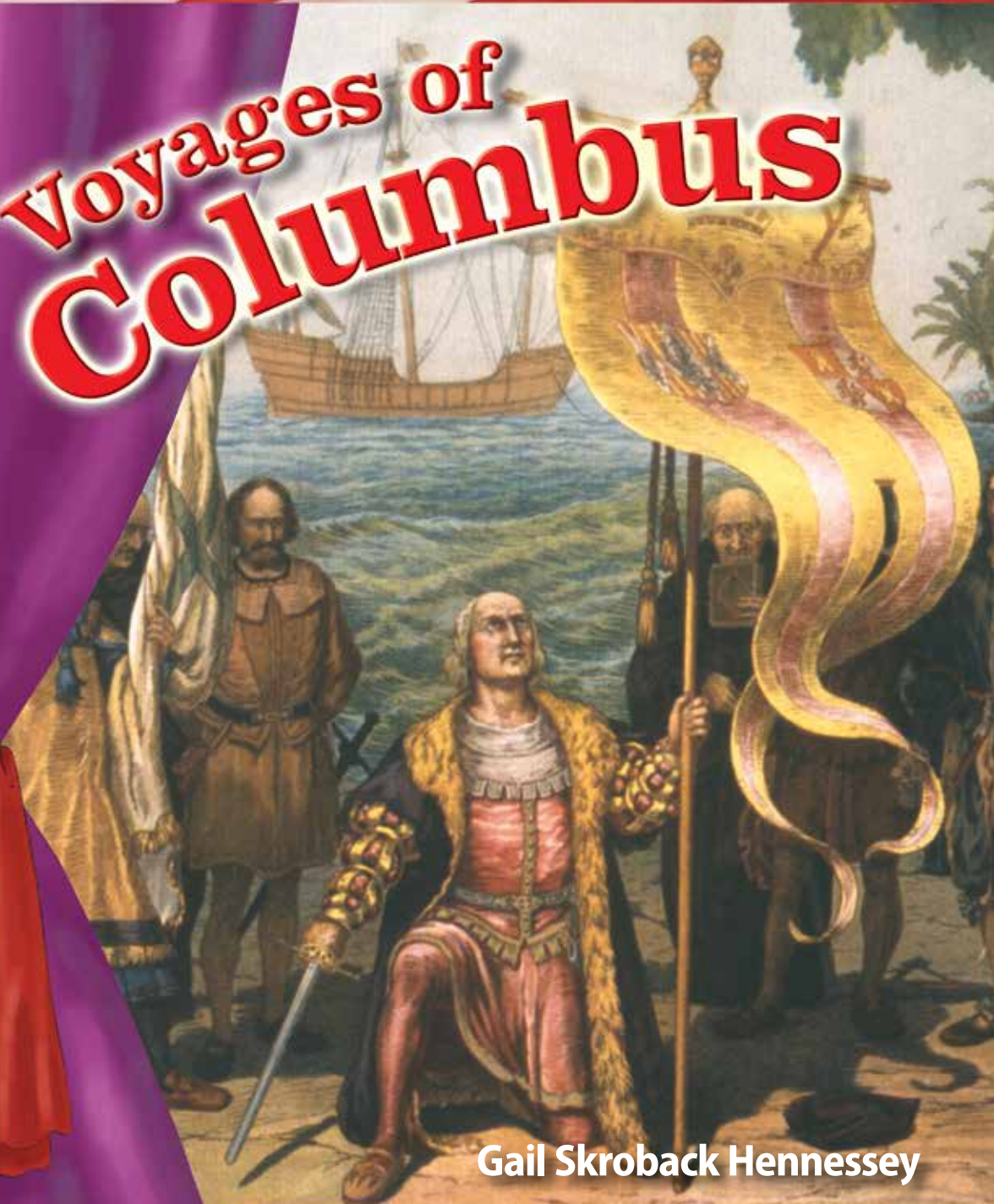
Description	File Name
Columbus Character Masks	masks_Columbus.pdf
Take-Home Script: Voyages of Columbus	THS_Columbus.pdf
<i>PowerPoint</i> ®: Voyages of Columbus	PP_Columbus.ppt
Song Transparency: “Admiral of the Sea”	song_Columbus.pdf
Poem Transparency: “My Turn”	poem_Columbus.pdf

Image Credits

Page Number in Script	Credit
cover	The Library of Congress
1	The Library of Congress

Building Fluency through Reader's Theater

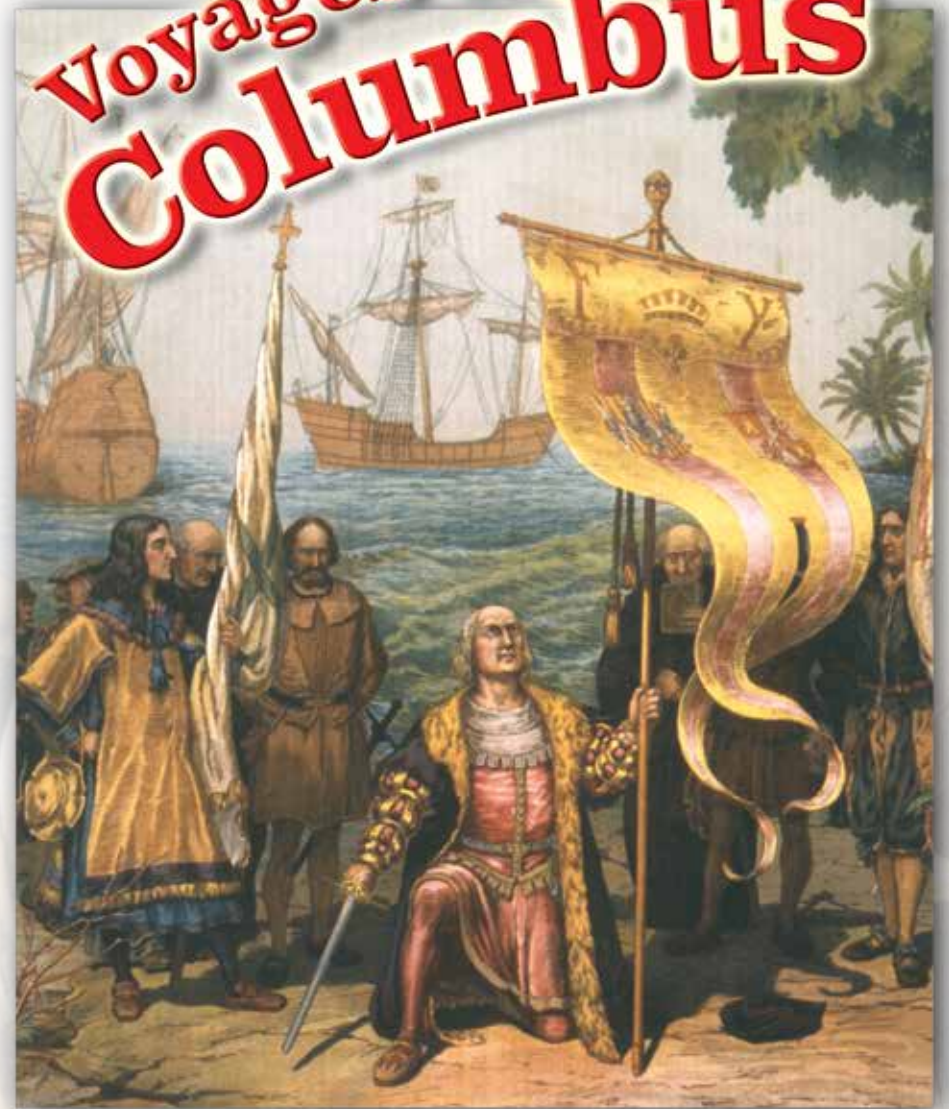
Voyages of Columbus



Gail Skroback Hennessey

Social Studies

Voyages of Columbus



Gail Skrobback Hennessey, M.S.T.

Tips for Rehearsing Reader's Theater

By Aaron Shepard

- Make sure your script doesn't hide your face. If there is anyone in the audience you can't see, your script is too high.
- While you speak, try to look up often. Don't just look at your script. When you do look at the script, move just your eyes and keep your head up.
- Talk slowly. Speak each syllable clearly.
- Talk loudly! You have to be heard by every person in the room.
- Talk with feeling. Your voice has to tell the story.
- Stand or sit up straight. Keep your hands and feet still if they're doing nothing useful.
- If you're moving around, face the audience as much as you can. When rehearsing, always think about where the audience will be.
- Characters, remember to be your character even when you're not speaking.
- Narrators, make sure you give the characters enough time for their actions.

Tips for Performing Reader's Theater

By Aaron Shepard

- If the audience laughs, stop speaking until they can hear you again.
- If someone talks in the audience, don't pay attention.
- If someone walks into the room, don't look at him or her.
- If you make a mistake, pretend it was right.
- If you drop something, try to leave it where it is until the audience is looking somewhere else.
- If a reader forgets to read his or her part, see if you can read the part instead, make something up, or just skip over it. Don't whisper to the reader!
- If a reader falls down during the performance, pretend it didn't happen.

Voyages of Columbus

Characters

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!

Act 2

Narrator: After attending church, Columbus and his crew set sail on August 3, 1492, aboard his three ships—the *Nina*, the *Pinta*, and the *Santa Maria*. The voyage, which would change the world, was about to begin.

Luis: Hello! My name is Luis Gutierrez. I'm glad I'm on the *Santa Maria* with Columbus. What's your name?

Felipe: I'm Felipe Hernandez. I'm 14 years old. I've never been on the sea before. I'm a bit scared. I have no family or home. Life on the streets has been very hard. I thought this voyage might improve my life. Anyway, if I die, no one will miss me.

Luis: It's nice to meet you, Felipe. My life isn't great, either. I'm one of the prisoners who was offered the choice to either rot in jail for the rest of my life or join Columbus. The decision was an easy one for me!

Felipe: Why were you in jail? What did you do, Luis?

Luis: I made some stupid choices in life. I helped a friend who was in prison for murder escape from jail. Well, let's start fresh—both of us. Right now, I've got to get back to work mopping the decks. Columbus also asked me to care for the cats brought along to eat the rats on the ship.

Felipe: I've got to run, too. Columbus has asked me to keep the hourglasses for him. Every half an hour, when the sand empties to the bottom of the glass, it's my job to turn them. That's how we will keep track of time while on the ship. I'll have to be really careful not to break the hourglasses, or Columbus might have me thrown overboard!

Narrator: The ships were loaded with food including sea biscuits, cheese, raisins, salt, honey, rice, beans, sardines, water, and wine. Other provisions, such as cannons, muskets, crossbows, and firewood, were loaded on board as well. Trade and gift items on board included needles, mirrors, scissors, and other trinkets.

Columbus: I'm going to keep a journal of my voyage to record the weather conditions, people, and places that I see along the way. I am glad that King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella have agreed to give me ten percent of all the treasures that I find. They will also give me the title of Admiral of the Ocean Sea. I will be in charge of all of the lands that I discover!

Narrator: The Ocean Sea is what the people of the time called the Atlantic Ocean. Writing is not an easy task aboard ship with its constant moving from side to side. Quills, used for writing, need to be sharpened constantly. Columbus could only write two or three words before having to dip the quill back into the ink. Columbus decides to keep two journals of the voyage, as he wants to keep some details of the voyage to himself, such as the total distance traveled.

Columbus: I had one of the crew cut two marks on a railing of the *Santa Maria*. Every hour I'll have a log thrown overboard to record the time it takes for the log to pass these marks. This will help me keep track of the distance we travel in one day.

Narrator: The days pass. One day the crew sees a huge creature spouting water from its head. This frightens the men onboard the ships. "So, it's true," say the crew, "Sea monsters DO exist!" Many grow more fearful of the unknown ocean that lies ahead. As the weeks continue, life becomes more difficult aboard the ships. The crew is getting worried that land will never be seen.

Luis: Many of the men are grumbling about a meteorite that was seen last night. The men say that's a sign of bad luck ahead. Others are saying that if the world is round, how will we get back since it would mean sailing uphill?

Felipe: Yes, I've heard the talk. I have to admit that I'm pretty scared, too. We have slowed down quite a bit with the lack of wind and all the seaweed in the water. Maybe, I should have stayed on the streets of Cadiz, Spain!

Luis: Try to be calm, Felipe. Columbus is a smart man. I still trust him, and so should you.

Felipe: I want to trust him, but some men are threatening a mutiny if land isn't found soon!

Narrator: The seaweed-covered area of the Atlantic Ocean where the ships sail is called the Sargasso Sea. To calm the men, Columbus shows them his journal, which indicates that they haven't traveled that far from land.

Columbus: Look, men—to the left. I see birds! And over there—some branches with flowers are drifting in the water!

Luis: Felipe, do you know what that means? Land is near! Land is near!

Felipe: I hope you're right, Luis. I don't want to go through the same disappointment we went through a couple of weeks ago when someone thought they saw land. I was so depressed when it was discovered that he was wrong. I want so badly to walk on solid ground again.

Luis: Don't forget—the queen has promised 10,000 maravedis of gold each year for life to the first man who spots land.

Narrator: On October 12, 1492, a cry of “Land ho! Land ho!” echoes throughout the *Santa Maria*. Columbus claims the queen's prize for himself. After years of preparing for this day and waiting seven years before getting the Spanish king and queen to fund his voyage, Columbus has reached what he thought was his goal—the Indies. Little does Columbus know, he has discovered uncharted land in the Bahamas. But Columbus thinks it is an island near Japan. Luis and Felipe are in the landing party that follows Columbus onto the shore. In his hand, Columbus carries a flag of Spain.

Columbus: I proudly claim this land for Spain. Men, I told you we'd find a new route to the Indies!

Luis: Look, Felipe! There are people coming to greet us. They are wearing only animal skins. They don't have weapons. They don't seem to be hostile.

Narrator: Columbus asks his interpreter to speak a greeting in Arabic. The natives don't understand him. Believing he is in the Indies, Columbus calls the natives Indians. He names the land San Salvador, meaning Holy Savior.

Felipe: Did you see that one native grab Columbus's sword? I guess the Indian has never seen such a weapon before because he cut himself badly when he touched the blade.

Luis: I must give these gifts to Columbus to give to the Indians, so they will know that we are friendly people. I wonder if the natives have ever seen gifts so beautiful as these — glass beads, red caps, mirrors, bells?

Narrator: The natives call Columbus and his crew “men from the sky” and give them strange looking birds, broken pottery, and woven cloth. The crew is amazed at what they see but wonder where to look for gold. Columbus explores the area for several weeks. Then, one night . . .

Columbus: Men, let's get some rest. Helmsman, the waters are calm. It should be an easy night. Just stay on course and follow the star.

Narrator: The helmsman is tired, though, and unknown to Columbus, gives the task of steering the ship to Felipe that night. Since the waters are calm, he thinks it will be all right to give this important job to the young boy.

Felipe: Wow, look at me. I'm steering the *Santa Maria*! This is much better than turning hourglasses.

Luis: Felipe, the waters are calm, but you should be very careful. Even with the moonlight, it's still hard to see what's out in the distance.

Poem: My Turn

Narrator: Suddenly, a crash is heard when the ship hits a reef. Columbus and his men rush onto the deck. The men try to clear the ship of the reef. The natives offer to help. But try as they might, it can't be done.

Columbus: Men, we can't save this ship. Even though the natives have offered to help us, we can't get the *Santa Maria* clear of the reef. She's a loss.

Felipe: Sir, I am very sorry. Please don't punish me.

Columbus: It is the helmsman who will answer to me. You were just doing what you were told to do. Luis, get me the helmsman! Now!

Narrator: Columbus decides it's time to sail back to Spain, leaving behind several of his crew to continue the search for gold. Columbus takes with him several natives and a few other things to present to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella.

Act 3

Columbus: My king and queen, I return with many gifts. The hammock is a bed that swings between two trees. Some of my men used them on board the ship instead of sleeping on deck.

Isabella: Welcome, Admiral of the Ocean Sea. You, your children, and your children's children will share this title and control of the lands you have claimed for Spain. Ferdinand, aren't these birds beautiful? They call them parrots.

Ferdinand: Very colorful, my queen! What are these piles of leaves you bring, Columbus?

Columbus: King Ferdinand, the Indians call this tobacco.

Isabella: We are eager to hear of your trip.

Columbus: It was a very difficult voyage home, my queen. We had to face raging storms and high waves. Some of my men thought they would never survive the voyage back to Spain. I, too, was worried. I placed a copy of my journal into a barrel and threw it overboard. I thought that if our ship sank, someone might find the barrel with my details of our journey. Fortunately, my men and I survived to tell it in person.

Isabella: You are a truly wise man, Columbus. What you have done is a miracle! I order you, Columbus, a footman to open doors for you and serve your meals.

Ferdinand: Columbus, bring those natives to me. I wish to touch their faces. Amazing. Truly, amazing. I must say, Columbus, I didn't have faith in you as did my queen. But now you have my support and any funds you will need. We want you to go back as soon as possible! We want you to find the mainland and not just the islands of the Indies.

Columbus: Thank you, my king. I need many men for my next trip. I'll need men who will be willing to stay and build colonies for Spain.

Narrator: In September 1493, six months after returning from his first voyage, Columbus sets sail again. Unlike the first trip, Columbus is sent off with trumpets and cannon salutes. There are 17 ships and 1,200 men including craftsmen, soldiers, priests, and personal servants. Dogs, sheep, and 50 horses are also brought along.

Act 4

Narrator: The two friends, Luis and Felipe, are sitting around a fire in a small house in the city of Cadiz. The year is 1506.

Luis: I hear that Columbus has died this week. He never budged from his belief that he had sailed to the Indies and China. He was so disappointed when people disagreed, and insisted that he found new lands instead.

Felipe: He was a stubborn man when it came to his beliefs. Do you remember on the second voyage we took when he made the crew swear that we had landed in China? Do you really think he would have cut out our tongues if we had said otherwise?

Luis: Yes! I remember his disappointment when we discovered that the men left behind on San Salvador had all been killed by the natives. Columbus had hoped the two peoples would have gotten along.

Felipe: The worst trip was probably the third trip—don't you think? People accused Columbus of mistreating the natives and his own crew. We volunteered to go back on the ship with Columbus, who was sent back in chains!

Luis: Fortunately, the king and queen forgave Columbus and even allowed him one more trip back. I heard he kept those chains with him for the rest of his life and said he wanted them buried with him.

Felipe: On that last trip, Columbus showed his cleverness when we got stranded on the island of Jamaica. Natives refused us food and water. He saw an eclipse was about to occur and told the people that if we didn't get food and water, he'd take the moon away forever! When the eclipse began, the chief was so frightened—he gave us anything just to get back the moon.

Luis: It's been fascinating to be part of all the exploration of the area, and discovering many new foods, such as potatoes, pineapples, and tomatoes.

Felipe: Yes, it has been an adventure, Luis, my good friend. Too bad Columbus didn't realize that on his fourth trip. He got within 35 miles of the Pacific Ocean. Let us give a toast to the great Spanish explorer who changed our world—Christopher Columbus. Hear! Hear!



Song: Admiral of the Sea



My Turn

Wow! Look at me,
A sailor on the sea.
The ship's in my hands
To steer faithfully.

Like the boldest of crew,
I'll stand brave and true.
I'll sail this fine ship
'Cross the ocean of blue.

In me is their trust!
I'll do what I must.
I'll follow the star,
Onward or bust!

This world isn't flat!
We're all proving that.
Oh, ho! Here we go!
Oh, no! What was that?



Admiral of the Sea



Christopher Columbus knew the riches he could gain
So Ferdinand and Isabella, the King and Queen of Spain
Gave him three small ships to sail and very soon he'd be
The Admiral of the Ocean Sea

Bold and brave, oh they knew they shouldn't fail
West towards the Indies they'd go
If the world is flat off the edge they're sure to sail
Where this voyage was taking them they really didn't know

The crew aboard Columbus' ships grew fearful every day
There was no sight of land and home seemed very far away
But, they trusted in their captain

"Yes, it's worth the risk," they said
I'd rather sail uncharted seas than be in jail or dead

Bold and brave, oh they knew they shouldn't fail
West towards the Indies they'd go
If the world is flat off the edge they're sure to sail
And there was quite a celebration when they heard
"Land Ho!"

Glossary

consent—to give your permission

eclipse—when the earth’s shadow is cast upon the moon, blocking out its view

mariner—a sailor

persistent—never giving up

request—to ask for something

volunteer—to do something without being asked

Summary

In *Voyages of Columbus*, 14-year-old Felipe leaves his hard life on the streets to sail on the *Santa Maria*, along with a prisoner named Luis. They take care of the cats, turn the hourglass, and see amazing “sea monsters.” When Felipe is given the helm of the *Santa Maria*, he crashes onto some reefs. Luis and Felipe tell the tales of their journeys with Columbus, “Admiral of the Ocean Sea.”



TCM 10543