

1st Social Studies Play:

The Discovery of the Americas



Cast:

Narrators #1-17

Hunters #1 - 3

Leif Ericsson

Crew

Native

Marco Polo

Columbus

Queen

John Cabot

Amerigo Vespucci

Vasco de Balboa

Ferdinand Magellan

Juan Sebastian Elcano

Cartographer

Narrator#1: Welcome to our show. Come with us on a journey back in time. Let's go back 20,000 years ago when the world was quite different. During the Ice Age, there was a Land Bridge that connected Asia with North America. The first people to arrive to North America were Stone Age Hunters who crossed over this bridge.

Hunter #1: Boy, it sure is cold out here.

Hunter #2: I'm hungry.

Hunter #3: Do you see any animals out there for us to hunt? (A mammoth walks by.)

Hunter #1: Look! There's an animal.

Hunter#2: Hey, our dinner is getting away!

Hunter#3: Let's follow it!

Narrator#2: For many years people crossed over this land bridge and migrated throughout the New World. They went down to what today is known as North America, Central America, and South America. During this time, Earth's climate was changing. It was getting warmer and the ice was melting. People could no longer get to the New World by foot. The people who were left in the New World were called Native Americans. Now we begin our look at the early explorers who sailed to this New World.

Ericsson: Hello, I am Leif Ericsson. The year is 1,000. I am a Viking and captain of my ship.

Crew : Land ho! Land ho!

Ericsson: We have discovered a new land!

Narrator #3: The Vikings had actually landed on an island off the coast of Canada. Today we call it Newfoundland.

Cartographer: (show on map)

Ericsson: Let us try and set up our own colony here.

Native: Why do you try and take over our land?

Narrator#3: The Vikings had a difficult time at their new land. They sometimes fought with the native people and their life was harsh and isolated. The Vikings finally gave up and left.

Ericsson: We're outa here!

Narrator#4: For the next 500 years, no new explorers seem to have come to the Americas. Few people in Europe knew about the Viking discoveries in North America. There was poor communication between distant places.

Narrator#5: During this time, Europeans had little interest in taking long sea voyages to faraway lands. They were too busy at home, fighting wars among themselves, battling disease, and traveling to the Middle East.

Cartographer: (show on map)

Marco Polo: Hello, I am Marco Polo. The year is 1270. I have heard stories about great riches and spices in the Far East. My journey to China took 3 years. I traveled by land and by sea. It was a very hard journey!

Narrator#6: It was a very difficult journey for Europeans to travel through Asia to get to China and India. Europeans decided to travel by sea.

Cartographer: (show on map)

Columbus: Hello, I am Christopher Columbus. I believe there must be an easier way to sail to China. Instead of sailing around Africa, I believe that if I sail west across the Atlantic Ocean, I will reach India. But I need money for my voyage.

Queen: Who are you and why are you here?

Columbus: Oh, Queen Isabella of Spain, will you please help me? I want to sail west across the ocean, but I need money for ships and supplies.

Queen: Are you mad? You want to sail across that deep dark ocean?

Columbus: I believe it is an easier way to get to India. Whatever I find, will belong to you.

Narrator#7: After many years, the Queen finally agreed to help Columbus. In 1492, Christopher Columbus set sail with his three ships, the Nina, the Pinta, and the Santa Maria across the Atlantic Ocean.

Cartographer: (show on map)

Crew: Land Ho!

Columbus: At last I reached India. Look! Here come some Indians.

Narrator#9: Well, actually, Columbus did not reach India. He actually was in the Bahamas, which is an island by present day Florida and the people he met were Native Americans.

Cartographer: (show on map)

Native: Here is some of our food. We call this maize, which is what we call corn.

Columbus: This food is delicious. I must write to Queen Isabella and tell her all about my discoveries.

Narrator#10: Columbus made 3 more voyages back to what he believed was India. But in fact he had sailed to the islands of the Caribbean and the coast of South America.

Cartographer: (show on map)

Cabot: Hello, I am John Cabot. The year is 1497. I also believe that if you sail west you will reach India. I asked the king of England to help me for my voyage.

Narr.#11: John Cabot had reached North America. The discoveries made by Columbus and Cabot caused Europe to take interest in the Americas. These unexplored lands seemed to offer the promise of great wealth.

Vespucci: Hello, I am Amerigo Vespucci. The year is 1499. I have to set sail west across the Atlantic.

Cartographer: (show on map)

Crew: Land ho!

Vespucci: We have finally reached land. I don't think I am in India. I think this is a New Land. I will write about my discoveries.

Narr.#12: Vespucci was actually traveling down the South American coast. Later, a mapmaker who thought Vespucci was the first to discover the New World used the name Amerigo to give the New World its name -America.

Cartographer: (show on map)

Balboa: Hello, I am Vasco de Balboa. The year is 1513. Our crew has set sail from Europe in search of new land.

Crew: Land ho!

Balboa: At last, we have reached land. Come crew; let us explore this new land.

Narr#13: Balboa and his crew landed in Panama.

Cartographer: (show on map)

Crew: Oh, it is difficult going through these jungles and climbing these mountains!

Balboa: Look! Look crew! An ocean!

Narr.#14: Balboa was the first European to see the Pacific Ocean from the American Shore.

Cartographer: (show on map)

Magellan: Hello, I am Ferdinand Magellan. The year is 1519. I believe that if I sail west across the Atlantic and then go down the coast of South America, I will find a sea passage to India.

Narr.#15: Magellan had reached the tip of South America and reached the New Ocean which he called the Pacific. Today, this is known as the Strait of Magellan.

Cartographer: (show on map)

Narr.#15: Magellan continued to sail on having no idea how large the Pacific Ocean was. Magellan sailed as far as the Philippine Islands. Unfortunately Magellan was killed in a battle between two native tribes.

Del Cano: Hello, I am Juan Sebastián Elcano Del Cano. My captain, Magellan, was just killed. My crew and I are determined to complete our journey across the Pacific. We did it! We have reached Spain. We have completed the first round-the-world journey!

Cartographer: (show on map)

Narr#16: Many more European explorers sailed across the Atlantic to the New World to claim land, gold, and other riches for their countries. They did not care that these already belonged to the Native Americans.

Narr. #17: Unfortunately, many Native Americans lost their freedom and could not fight the powerful weapons the Europeans had brought with them. The Europeans had also brought with them diseases that killed many of the natives.

Narr.#16 Although the European explorers were brave sailors, the people and land of the Americas would be forever changed.

The End