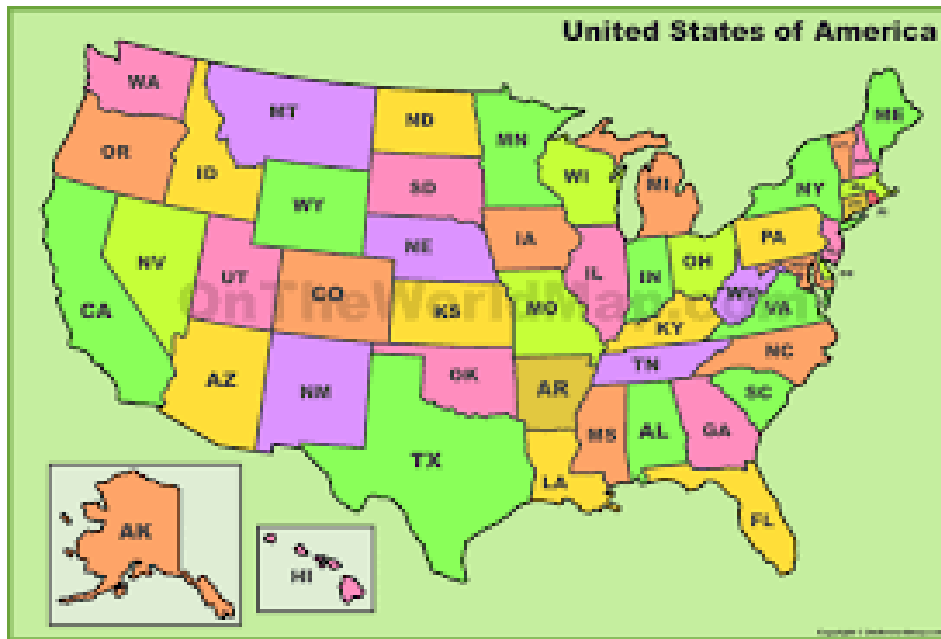


# AMERICA



America, 'land of the free', 'the new world' owes its discovery chiefly to one great man, Christopher Columbus. He was a gifted mariner who believed passionately that he could reach new lands and Asia by sailing westwards where no one had gone before. He held such confidence to the point of being seen as [arrogant in his demands](#) while gathering support for his cause.

Columbus was a Genoese who settled in Lisbon in 1477 and unsuccessfully attempted to secure support from the Portuguese monarch. King John II of Portugal found his demands excessive. Columbus wanted the title 'Admiral of the Ocean', the vice-regency and hereditary rights of government over the territories he would find, and a tenth of all profits. Rejected by Portugal, he moved to Spain where he spent a total of eight years seeking the support of Queen Isabel and King Ferdinand. Spain was still fighting the Arabs then to regain their

lost territories. The war finally ended and after much difficulties and persistence, Columbus finally won their support.

On August 3, 1492, three ships set off from Palos, Spain in search of the 'new world'. The flagship was Santa Maria and the other two were Pinta and Nina. In addition to the crew, there were a physician, a surgeon, pilots, a judge and a royal notary who was to record events for the monarch's interests. Finally, Columbus was on his way sailing westwards into the unknown, towards his dream. It was not an easy journey. They did not sight land until September the 6th, when a lookout shouted "Tierra, tierra!" **a shout that would echo through the world.**

Columbus, had reached the Caribbean Islands. He spent some time exploring the islands and the Santa Maria was wrecked on the north shore of Hispaniola on December 5. He left some men behind while he went back to Spain to proclaim his discoveries and to claim his title as 'Admiral of the Ocean'. He had returned triumphantly and was now a hero. The next expedition was to comprise of 17 ships and 1500 colonists.

Sadly, things did not go on well for Columbus. By 1502, he had led a total of four expeditions and was constantly bickering with the noblemen and the church officials who followed along. He was charged with maladministration of the Indies following a rebellion by some noblemen. Columbus ended his days in poverty and pleading for the acknowledgement of his rights.

While he did not actually reach America, Christopher Columbus had opened up the way to the two continents for future mariners. He never gave up the idea of reaching Asia by sailing further westwards. His

vision attracted other navigators and fortune hunters who followed his vision and discovered the two continents. Amerigo Vespucci was a Florentine business representative who sailed along the north coast of South America. He was quick to realize that it was not Asia and when a German geographer in 1507 referred to the new world as America, the name caught on to this day.

Christopher Columbus had opened the door for the immigration of the hordes of European colonists by discovering the 'new world'. Spain, Portugal, England, France and the Netherlands soon explored and attempted to claim territories in the Americas. This brought many different people to America and started waves of immigration. The immigrants were attracted to America for various reasons like religious tolerance, opportunities for wealth, good farmland and space. Thus the diversity, feelings of freedom and acceptance became part of the American culture which is still very much alive today.

***Answer the following questions using complete sentences.***

1. What was Columbus' belief that led to his greatness ?
2. Why Columbus was regarded as '[arrogant in his demands](#)'.
3. Give two reasons that hindered Columbus from achieving his dream.
4. Suggest a reason for a judge to be among those going on the journey.
5. Explain the phrase '[a shout that would echo through the world](#)'.
6. Which group in particular caused Columbus downfall ?
7. Why is Columbus being honored for the discovery of America ?

8. How did America get its name ?
9. Name two things that the immigrants have in common.
10. Choose a word or phrase from the last two paragraphs that has the same meaning as the following words:
  - (a) paved
  - (b) swarms
  - (c) looked for
  - (d) differences