

## Unit 3, Lesson 1: Columbus Selling His Idea

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### Lesson Overview

In this lesson, students will learn about the reasoning behind Columbus' radical idea to sail west to get east, and investigate reasons why he had such a difficult time finding sponsors for his Enterprise of the Indies.

### Delaware Standard(s)

- **History Standard 1a, 4-5 [Chronology]:** Students will study historical events and persons within a given time frame in order to create a chronology and identify related cause-effect factors.
- **History Standard 3a, 4-5 [Interpretation]:** Students will explain why historical accounts of the same event sometimes differ and relate this explanation to the evidence presented.

### Big Ideas

- causes, effects, change over time

### Essential Questions

- Why was Columbus' Enterprise of the Indies considered so radical?
- Why did it take so long for Columbus to find a country to pay for his Enterprise of the Indies?

### Enduring Understandings

Students will understand that Columbus proposed to do what no European had ever done (sail west to get to the Far East) but significantly underestimated the size of the earth.

### Resources

- [Lesson 1 Google slides](#)
- [Resource 1: Marco Polo - Game and Fame](#)
- [Resource 2: World Map](#)
- [Resource 3: Potential Routes](#)
- [Resource 4: Create a Timeline](#)
- [Resource 5: Using Clues to Solve a Mystery](#)
- [Resource 6: Why Did No One Want to Pay for Columbus' Trip?](#)
- [Resource 7: Checks for Understanding](#)

## Procedures

### Part I - Marco Polo as Motivation

1. **Warm-Up:** Present the following scenario to the students.

A friend comes up to you and invites you to go on a nice long trip. You get excited and say yes. Your friend then says, "GREAT, let's try going west to get east."

Explain how you would respond to your friend.

2. **Reading:** Distribute copies of [Resource 1: Marco Polo - Game and Fame](#) to students. Tell them that they are going to learn about a man named Marco Polo. Ask them...
  - a. Have you ever played the game Marco Polo?
  - b. Do you know who Marco Polo is?

**Read Resource 1** *Marco Polo: A Game and Some Fame*. There is a nice interactive map [here](#) that you can project to show where Italy and China are, and the route that Marco Polo traveled. The map also has points on his travels that you can click on to see where the Polos stopped. The green lines show the route from Venice to Beijing. The blue lines show the route of their return trip.

3. **Videos: There are two videos that illustrate and describe the travels of Marco Polo.**
  - a. The Brain Pop Video [here](#) is quite childish...beginning with a cartoon character in a pool playing the Marco Polo game.
  - b. The PBS World Explorers Video [here](#) (or on YouTube [here](#)) is more academic but suited for 4th grade students.

You might consider showing both then use the opportunity to address the ELA standard that establishes the expectation that students will be able to integrate information from two texts on the same topic to write or speak about a subject knowledgeably.

4. **Map Analysis:** Project a copy of [Resource 2: World Map](#). This is a map that does not show America but ignore this for now as it will be a focus in an upcoming lesson.
  - a. Draw students' attention to the red boxes on the perimeter of the map that show the cardinal directions (North, South, East, and West). Then point to Europe and the Far East. Remind them of Columbus' idea i.e., to go west to get east. Ask students if they understand Columbus' idea after looking at the map.
    - i. From the standpoint of geography, students will be well served to appreciate one benefit of using a globe over a map as a result of this experience. The one-dimensional nature of a map makes it more difficult to conceptualize Columbus' radical idea.
  - b. Project a copy of [Resource 3: Potential Routes](#). Draw attention to the following:

- i. Marco Polo's Route - traveled east to get to the east. This route took over 3 years.
  - ii. Columbus' idea - sail west to get to the Far East (China). He believed it would take much less time.
  - iii. Note that this is one reason why Columbus is a significant figure in history. He was proposing to do something that others (as far as Europeans knew) had not attempted to do.
5. **Reveal Columbus' Proposal - "The Enterprise of the Indies."** Christopher Columbus went around to kings and queens in Europe asking them to pay for his plan that he called the *Enterprise of the Indies*. That plan was to sail to the Far East by sailing west.

## Part II

1. **Timeline Analysis:** Distribute copies of [Resource 4: Create a Timeline](#). Have students create a timeline using the events listed on the Resource. The events should go in the empty white boxes to the left of the line while the dates should go in the smaller gray shaded boxes on the right of the line.
  - a. After the students complete their timelines, ask the following:
    - i. How much time passed between when Columbus came up with his Enterprise of the Indies idea and when Spain finally agreed to sponsor his Enterprise of the Indies? **[9 years. Emphasize that this is a long time]**
    - ii. Why do you think it might have taken that long? **[there are quite a few reasons but the one that will be focused on in the next part of this lesson will be that many people believed that Columbus could not pull it off. For now, don't share this with students as this point will be the focus of the next part of the lesson]**
  - b. Tell students that the next part of the lesson will focus on that last question i.e. Why do you think it might have taken so long for Columbus to convince Spain to fund his Enterprise of the Indies? You will now give them two clues and see if they can figure out the reason.
2. **Using Clues to Solve a Mystery:** Distribute copies of [Resource 5: Using Clues to Solve a Mystery](#). Have students work in small groups to see if they can figure out how the clues might answer the question: *Why do you think it might have taken so long for Columbus to convince Spain to fund his Enterprise of the Indies?* **[students may not figure out the answer, but it will be revealed in the reading found on Resource 6 which they will read next]**
3. Distribute copies of [Resource 6: Why Did No One Want to Pay for Columbus' Trip?](#). Ask students to focus on two purposes:
  - a. Why did it take so long for Columbus to find a sponsor for his Enterprise of the Indies?
  - b. Why was he finally sponsored?

## Debrief

1. Revisit the essential questions for the lesson:
  - a. Why was Columbus' Enterprise of the Indies considered so radical?
  - b. Why did it take so long for Columbus to find a country to pay for his Enterprise of the Indies?
  
2. Reinforce the Enduring Understanding:
  - a. Students will understand that Columbus proposed to do what no European had ever done (sail west to get to the Far East) but significantly underestimated the size of the earth.