

# Lesson 3: Hidden History - Diego Bermudez

Unit 3  
Grade 4

Today we are going to learn about an incident that happened on Christmas Eve of 1492 and about boys who helped Columbus “discover” America

What have you learned about Columbus and his Enterprise of the Indies?

Let's take a look at this image.

1. Scan the image quickly. What do you notice first?
2. Observe its parts. List the people, objects and activities that you see in the image.
3. Draw a conclusion - what do you think is happening in this image?



How to read this document:

1. **Read** the document independently
2. **Discuss** how it contributes to their understanding of the image on Resource 1
3. **Write** - write an improved conclusion about what the image on Resource 1 attempts to illustrate and what happened to one of Columbus' ships on Christmas Eve of 1492.

## Resource 2: Log of Christopher Columbus

**Monday, December 24, 1492**

"...11 o'clock at night. I decided to lie down to sleep because I had not slept for two days and one night. Since it was calm, the sailor who was steering the ship also decided to catch a few winks and left the steering to a young boy, a thing which I have always forbidden throughout the voyage. It made no difference whether there was wind or calm; the ships were not to be steered by young boys.

The ship went up on the bank so quietly that it was hardly noticed. When the boy felt the rudder ground and heard the noise of the sea, he cried out. I jumped up instantly

...I did the only thing I could. I ordered the mast cut and the ship lightened as much as possible, to see if it could be refloated...I could not save her.

...I sent a representative to the Native American King who had invited me to his village last Saturday...My men told me that the King wept when he heard of the disaster. He sent all his people from the village with many large canoes to help us unload the ship...He himself, along with his brothers and relatives helped unload the ship.

The King ordered everything placed near the houses, even emptying some so that everything could be stored and guarded.

I certify to Your Highness [King of Spain] that in all the world I do not believe there is a better people or a better country. They love their neighbors as themselves...and are always smiling.

Explain how the information in this document contributes to, or changes, your understanding of the image that you analyzed on Resource 1.

Corroboration is part of the disciplinary literacy in history. It involves evaluating the credibility of your sources by checking them with other sources.

How well does the image support the information in Columbus' log?

Which details in the image “stay” with the evidence?

Which details in the image “stray” from the evidence?



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We are now going to read about a group whose contributions to history are often hidden - kids!

Purpose for reading:

- Focus on how this reading contributes to your understanding of:
  - Columbus' Enterprise of the Indies
  - the roles that young people played
  - how two places got their names.

#### Resource 3: Diego Bermudez - A Boy Who Helped "Discover" America

Diego Bermudez sailed with Columbus on the Santa Maria in 1492. He was only 12 years old. Twenty other boys also sailed with Columbus. Their families were poor. Some of the boys were homeless and had to beg for food each day. They probably felt pretty lucky to get jobs on ships.

Columbus needed boys to do three jobs on the Nina, Pinta, and Santa Maria.

Job 1: Older teenagers were hired because they had little fear. These boys usually climbed the ropes to arrange and change the sails. Sails had to be arranged to catch the winds that moved the ship forward.

Job 2: Some of the boys became servants for the ship's officers. They did whatever the officers needed them to do.

Job 3: Younger boys like Diego Bermudez were hired to do work that others did not want to do. They cooked, cleaned pots, and scrubbed the decks of the ships. Most of them went around barefoot and wore the same clothes every day.

What was Diego's most important job? He was kind of like a singing clock.

Everyone on the ships had to spend four hours per day doing "watch duty." They had to look out for bad weather, enemy ships, and land. When ships "ran aground" they were frequently damaged badly by underwater rocks. **Pause here.** What do you think it means when a ship "ran aground?"

The Santa Maria ran aground on Christmas Eve of 1492. Native Americans tried to help free the ship, but it did not work. So, they took the Santa Maria apart one piece of wood at a time and used it to build a fort which they called La Navidad. La Navidad means Christmas in Spanish. That fort became the first Spanish settlement in North America.

There is an interesting story about the Santa Maria. The officer who was supposed to be steering the ship was really tired. So, he woke-up one of the boys on the ship and ordered him to steer the ship. Guess what! That boy also fell asleep. Then the Santa Maria ran aground. That boy could have been Diego, but we may never know because Columbus did not mention the boy's name in his log.

Diego did make it back to Spain.

Columbus made three more trips to the "New World." Diego did not return to America, but his brother Juan did. On Columbus's last trip, 56 out of the 99 crew members were teenagers or younger. One of them was Christopher Columbus' 13-year-old son Ferdinand.

So, what do we now know from history? The name of the island now called Bermuda comes from Diego's family name. One of Diego's relatives discovered Bermuda in 1505. "Bermudez" became "Bermuda."

Get to know your world better. Look on a map to see where Bermuda is.

Source: We Were There Too – Young People in U.S. History by Phillip Hoose.

# Show me what you know!

## Resource 4: Checks for Understanding

- Which of the following happened first?
  - The Santa Maria ran aground
  - La Navidad became a settlement
  - Bermuda was discovered
  - Columbus took his last trip to the New World
- According to the reading, why did the Santa Maria run aground?
  - It was a dark night
  - It was being steered by a boy
  - It was blown by a hurricane
  - It was made of rotten wood
- According to the reading, which of the following was an effect of Diego Bermudez's trip to the New World?
  - He became a ship captain
  - He was given an award by the Queen of Spain
  - He had an island named after his family
  - He was allowed to change the ship's sails
- Read each conclusion in Column 1 below then circle the Resource that you worked with in this lesson that supports the conclusion. The conclusion may be supported by more than one of the Resources

| Conclusion                                | Resource(s) That Support It          |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1- The Santa Maria ran aground            | Resource 1   Resource 2   Resource 3 |
| 2- A boy was steering the Santa Maria     | Resource 1   Resource 2   Resource 3 |
| 3- Native American helped the Europeans   | Resource 1   Resource 2   Resource 3 |
| 4- Boys helped Columbus discover America  | Resource 1   Resource 2   Resource 3 |
| 5- The Santa Maria was turned into a fort | Resource 1   Resource 2   Resource 3 |