

Give America a New Name

You can do this by yourself or in a small group



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1

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The name “America” was a mistake. Mapmakers thought that Amerigo Vespucci had been the first to discover these new lands. So they named them after him. If North America had been named for Christopher Columbus instead, perhaps you would live on a continent named Columbia or Columbiana.

What if the New World had been named for Leif Ericsson or the Vikings? What might it have been called? It could also have been named for John Cabot, Saint Brendan, or Magellan. What names might have been used if the New World had been named for them?

The Americas probably already had many names when these explorers first came to the New World. What names might the first Americans have given to these lands? Sometimes names for places come from the way they look. Greenland got its name because the land there looked so green. Why was Newfoundland a good name? Think up as many different names for America as you can. Write them down and share them with the class.



What Will You Need?

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What Will You Need?

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It's your job to outfit one of Magellan's ships. This means that you must decide what things you will need on your voyage. Think about what you might need on such a long trip. You will have to plan on a supply of food, tools, weapons, and extra parts for your ship. What other kinds of things will be needed?

Think about what would be truly necessary—things that you must have. Then think about what other items would be useful or just nice to have along. There may be some items that you could get along the way; can you think of any?

Use your imagination as much as possible. You can look at some books to get other ideas. Remember that space on your ship is limited: not everything you could use will fit. You must plan carefully. There won't be any shops along the way, and you don't want to run out of the really important supplies—such as food! Be ready to present your list of supplies to the captain for approval.

Headline! Read All About It!

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Headline! Read All About It!

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"COLUMBUS SIGHTS LAND!" could have been a newspaper headline on October 12, 1492. Headlines should be short and exciting. They catch the reader's eye. They make the reader want to know more. Headlines make people want to read the stories in the newspaper.

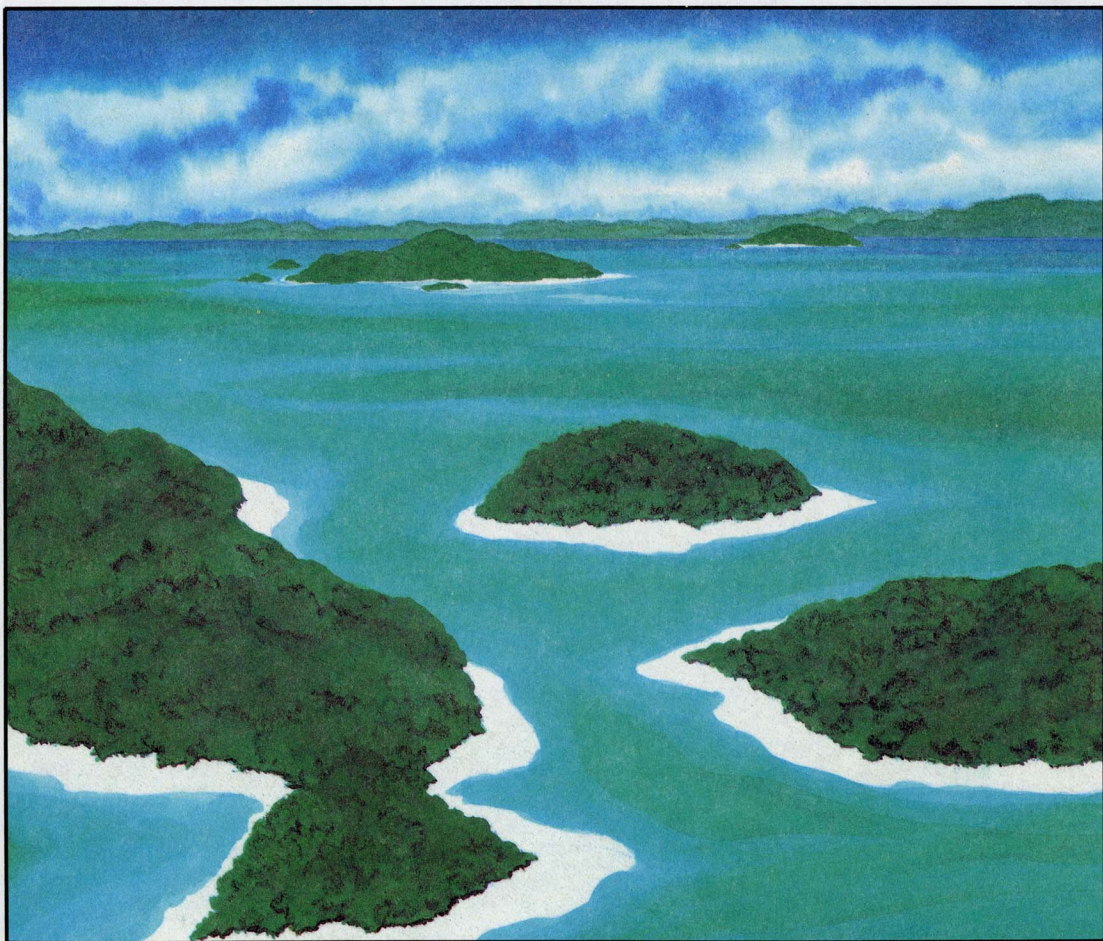
Using the events in this book, see if you can write some exciting headlines. "MARCO POLO REACHES CHINA!" could be one. See if you can come up with at least ten different headlines for the "news events" in the book.

It might be fun to choose your favorite headline and write the rest of the news story to go with it. You should try to tell what happened in about ten sentences. A news story should tell: *who* was there, *what* happened, *where* it happened, and *when*. If you are working in a group, each person can pick a story to write. Then you'll have a whole newspaper!

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Be a Travel Agent

You can do this by yourself or with a partner



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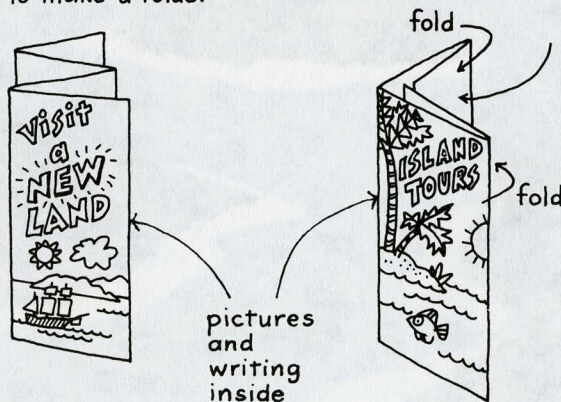
Be a Travel Agent

You can do this by yourself or with a partner

Many explorers have returned to Europe raving about the wonders of a fabulous new place that they call the New World. You are a travel agent and you want to encourage your customers to be the first tourists in the New World.

Prepare a fold-out brochure with several pages, telling about this new vacation spot. Naturally, since there are no hotels or resorts yet, you will have to sell the idea of the “rustic comfort of grass huts...” and so on. This project can be done in a fun and humorous way, but be sure to include some real information about what these tourists might see in the places they would be visiting. Describe the scenery, the recreational possibilities, the food, and the people of the New World. What purchases might these tourists be able to make? What souvenirs could they take home? Use exciting language and colorful pictures in your brochure to attract your customers. Share it with the class.

different ways
to make a folder



Make a Treasure Map

You can do this by yourself or with a partner



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Make a Treasure Map

You can do this by yourself or with a partner

Many explorers came to the New World in search of treasure. The treasure was not always what they expected. The New World was rich in natural resources. Some were valuable minerals, such as gold and silver. But some other natural resources, such as timber and fish, turned out to be just as valuable. What other natural resources existed in the New World? Find out what they were and where they were located.

Make a map of the Americas. Show where the natural resources were most plentiful by marking them on your map. Some may be found in a number of different places. Make a key for your map, using a different symbol for each resource. Make your map large and colorful.

Are there some resources that were plentiful in 1500 but are scarce now? Are there some natural resources that were not known in 1500 but are now used? How did the native peoples use the resources of the land? Contrast this with what the Europeans did when they arrived. Be able to discuss your answers when you share your map with the class.