

BOOK STATS

Grade Level Equivalent: Pre-K-1 Ages: 4+

Lexile Measure: IG880L Pages: 32

Genre: Illustrated Biography

Subject/Theme: Dreamers, Explorers, Biographies, History, Famous People and Places, Autumn

Common Core Standards	Reading	Writing	Listening & Speaking	Language
Kindergarten	RI.K.1, RI.K.2, RI.K.3, RI.K.4, RI.K.7	W.K.3, W.K.7	SL.K.1, SL.K.2, SL.K.5	L.K.4, L.K.5
Grade 1	RI.1.1, RI.1.2, RI.1.3, RI.1.4, RI.1.7	W.1.3, W.1.7	SL.1.1, SL.1.3, SL.1.4, SL.1.5	L.1.4, L.1.5

OVERVIEW

Book Summary

The author engages young readers from the start as we see young Christopher Columbus leaning out a window and daydreaming about exploration and treasure. His dreams follow him into adulthood, when he decides to sail to the Indies.

Columbus convinces the king and queen of Spain to supply him with ships and sailors. He and his crew sail off into the unknown on the *Niña*, the *Pinta*, and the *Santa María*. When the ships reach the island of San Salvador, Columbus thinks they have arrived in the East Indies and refers to the people there as “Indians.” Columbus didn’t realize that his dreams had brought him to a new land, the Americas.

The book’s age-appropriate, realistic illustrations picture the sequence of events in the story and also provide young readers with information about the costumes and ships of the times. The maps drawn into the illustrations help young readers understand the geography of Columbus’s brave journey.

Teaching the Book

This first biography introduces young readers to Christopher Columbus and the dreams that led him to America. The book provides an opportunity to teach a biography, practice sequence of events, and introduce exploration words. Activities will engage students in mapping, art projects, and exploring their own dreams.

Genre Focus: Biography

Comprehension Focus: Sequence of Events

Language Focus: Exploration Words

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Marion Dane Bauer is a critically acclaimed author of numerous picture books, chapter books, and young adult novels. Bauer has been praised for her ability to step into the viewpoint of any child or young adult, in a wide variety of circumstances.

The author lives in a small town outside Minneapolis, MN. She loves cats, dogs, hiking, and camping outdoors. For more information, visit Bauer’s homepage at <http://www.mariondanebauer.com/>.

Get Ready to Read

Pre-Reading Activities

A Brave Voyage Explain to students that they will be reading a biography, the story of a person's life, about Christopher Columbus. Begin by giving students the following information.

- Christopher Columbus reached America over 500 years ago.
- No one in Columbus's part of the world knew that the Americas existed. Columbus thought he was going to China.
- Columbus sailed by looking at the stars and a compass.
- Columbus's voyage took 34 days.

Build their background knowledge by displaying Google Earth or a world map to show Columbus' long and daring route to the Americas. First, show students where Columbus started his journey (Spain) and then where he ended (San Salvador island; present-day Bahamas). Ask students: What do you think it was like to sail this far in a small boat at the time? How would you have felt?

Preview and Predict Have students study the cover of *Christopher Columbus*. Ask them to describe what they see and how they can tell Columbus lived long ago.

Vocabulary

Exploration Words Introduce students to these words about explorers and Columbus's exploration. Define the words and show students the place names by using the maps embedded in the illustrations, Google Earth, or a classroom world map.

Use **Resource #1: Vocabulary Cards** on p. 7 and distribute copies to students.

dreamer
sailor
Spain

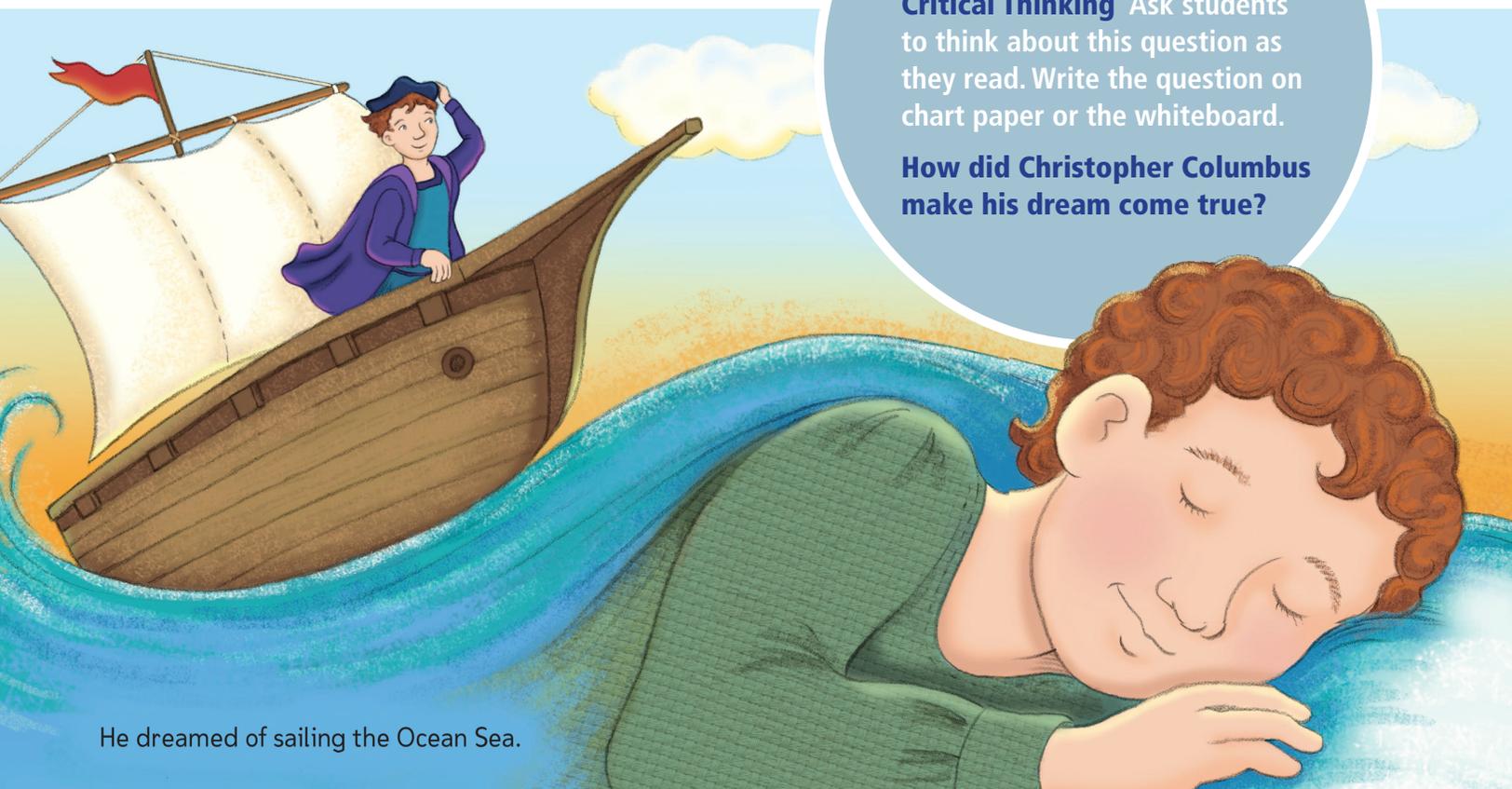
explorer
Indies
Americas



BIG QUESTION

Critical Thinking Ask students to think about this question as they read. Write the question on chart paper or the whiteboard.

How did Christopher Columbus make his dream come true?



He dreamed of sailing the Ocean Sea.



As You Read

Reading the Book

Read-Aloud Read the book aloud to students, modeling fluency and expression. Encourage students to follow along in their own books, studying the illustrations as each page is read. The read-aloud will familiarize students with the text and build their listening skills.

Shared Reading Reread the book, asking students to read their copies at the same time. Cue them to read aloud certain words and phrases that you omit from your reading. Depending on the reading skills of the group, encourage them to read the text aloud, along with you.

Comprehension Focus

Sequence of Events Explain to students that biographies are stories of a person's life. Biographies tell important events that happened during the person's life in the sequence, or order, that they happened. Keeping track of what happened first, next, and last in a biography helps readers understand the person's life.

Use the cards on **Resource #2: Sequence of Events** to model for students how to keep track of the sequence of events in Columbus's life. Pass out copies of the cards and have students cut them apart and mix them up. Then model for students how to identify the sequence of events in the story.

Model: What happened first in the biography? The book begins when Columbus was a young boy. So, the first event is "As a boy, Christopher Columbus dreamed of sailing the Ocean Sea." I'll put that first. What happened next? You help me sort the cards in the right order, or sequence.

Have students volunteer the sequence of events in the rest of the story and put the cards in the right sequence.

After You Read

Questions to Discuss

Lead students in a discussion of these focus story elements.

- 1. Biography** When does the biography of a person usually start? (*When the person is born or young.*)
- 2. Sequence of Events** What did Columbus do after the king and queen of Spain said, no? (*He kept asking until they said, yes.*)
- 3. Explorer Words** Look at the picture of Columbus crossing the ocean with his three ships. How do you think *sailors* got their name? (*They rode in ships with sails that catch the wind.*)

WORDS TO KNOW

Exploration Words

Give students the following meanings for the vocabulary words, one at a time. Have them hold up the vocabulary card that matches each meaning.

1. someone who imagines something he or she really wants to do (*dreamer*)
2. someone who travels to an unknown place (*explorer*)
3. someone who travels on a ship, originally a ship with sails (*sailor*)
4. a country in Europe; where Columbus set sail (*Spain*)
5. where Columbus thought he was going (*Indies*)
6. where Columbus ended his voyage (*the Americas*)

Questions to Share

Encourage students to share their responses with a partner or small group.

- 1. Text to Self** Would you have wanted to join Columbus on his journey? Why or why not?
- 2. Text to World** What places do explorers go to today? How do they get there?
- 3. Text to Text** What other explorers do you know about? What did they explore?

Extension Activities

Reading/Writing Connection

Write or Draw a Dream Ask students to think about the dreams they have. Do they dream about a place they want to go? Do they dream about what they want to be when they grow up? Ask students to draw a picture of themselves, like the one of Columbus on the first page of the book. Have them draw a big “thought” cloud coming out of their heads. Inside the cloud, they can draw or describe in words one of their dreams.

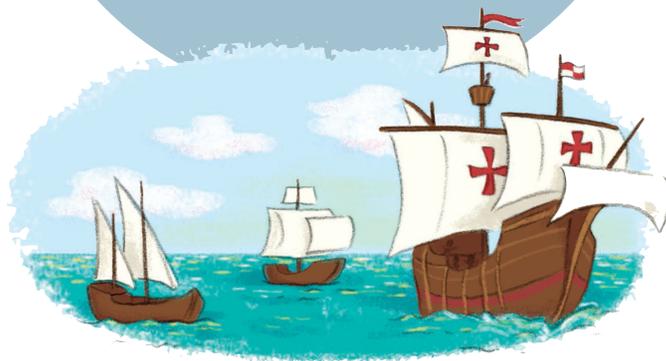
Don't forget the



BIG QUESTION

Critical Thinking Give each student an opportunity to answer the big question. Encourage students to support their answers with details and evidence from the text. Tell them there is no one right answer.

How did Christopher Columbus make his dream come true?



Content Area Connections

Science **Compass Rose** On the last spread in the book, the illustration shows Columbus's route along with a compass. Ask students to use the compass and the map to figure out the direction that Columbus sailed to the Americas. Then ask what direction he sailed coming back to Spain. If possible, give students a compass to use in the classroom.

Social Studies **Columbus Day** Explain to students that the United States celebrates Columbus Day on the second Monday in October. That is close to the actual date that Columbus landed in the Americas, October 12, 1492. Italian Americans have special celebrations, because Columbus was born in Italy. Ask students to find Columbus Day for the current year on a calendar.

Language Arts **IN 1492** This favorite Columbus Day poem/song is available at various sites on the Internet. Students will enjoy hearing the poem read after reading the biography of Columbus. The poem begins:

In fourteen hundred ninety-two
Columbus sailed the ocean blue.

Arts **Design A Ship** Have students look at the pictures of Columbus's ships sailing across the ocean. Ask students to draw their own ship and make a design for the sails, like the ones on Columbus's ships. At the bottom of the drawing, have them write the name of their ship.

BIG ACTIVITY

Timeline for Christopher Columbus Have the class create an illustrated timeline of the important events in Columbus's life. Use the events on **Resource #2**, give them numbers, and assign one to each student to illustrate. Pass out the “Big Activity” printable to the group. Ask each student to write their event and circle its number on the time line at the top of the page. They can use the rest of the page for their picture.

Create a timeline of Columbus's life on a long sheet of paper and post it in the classroom. Add the students' illustrations.

Name _____

Date _____

BIG ACTIVITY: A Timeline for Christopher Columbus

Draw an event from Christopher Columbus's life for a time line.

My Event: _____

Circle where it is on the time line:

_____ 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____

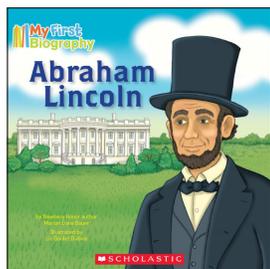
My Drawing:



READ MORE AND LEARN MORE

Use these books and other resources to expand your students' study of the book or theme.

Author Connections



My First Biography: Abraham Lincoln

Marion Dane Bauer

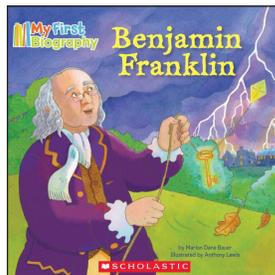
Ages: 3-5

Grades: PK-K

President Abraham Lincoln thought slavery was wrong.

He fought a war to hold the

country together and to make it free for everyone. This book introduces Abraham Lincoln to the youngest readers and inspires them to stand up for what's right. **Available as a Storia e-book**



My First Biography: Benjamin Franklin

Marion Dane Bauer

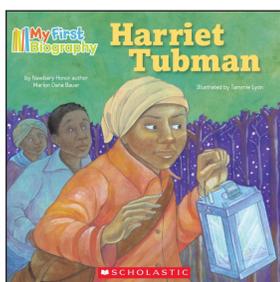
Ages: 4-8

Grades: PK-3

Lexile Level: 790L

Benjamin Franklin is famous for many accomplishments, including discovering that lightning is

electricity, creating an almanac filled with wise and funny sayings, and helping the United States of America get started. **Available as a Storia e-book**



My First Biography: Harriet Tubman

Marion Dane Bauer

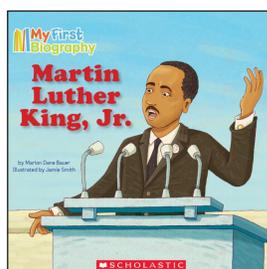
Ages: 4-8

Grades: PK-3

Lexile Level: 530L

When Harriet Tubman escaped from slavery, she vowed she would fight to free all slaves. This book

introduces Harriet Tubman to the youngest readers and inspires them to fight for freedom. **Available as a Storia e-book**



My First Biography: Martin Luther King, Jr.

Marion Dane Bauer

Ages: 4-8

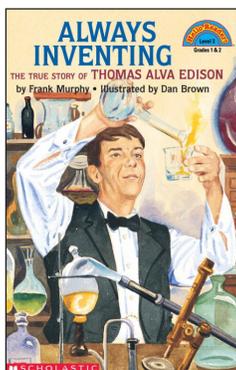
Grades: PK-1

Lexile Level: 670L

Dr. King's story, his unforgettable words, and the way his efforts

changed the world forever are all communicated in the simple, yet lyrical text. **Available as a Storia e-book**

Topic Connections



HLR (3): Always Inventing: The True Story of Thomas Alva Edison

Frank Murphy

Ages: 6-8

Grades: K-2

Lexile Level: 460L

From childhood, Thomas Alva Edison was full of curiosity and always inventing. He never stopped. During his lifetime, Edison dreamed

up more than 1,000 inventions including the movie camera, light bulb, and phonograph. **Available as a Storia e-book**



Testing the Ice: A True Story about Jackie Robinson

Sharon Robinson

Ages: 7-10

Grades: 2-5

Lexile Level: 800

Sharon Robinson honors her father's memory with this heartwarming story of the great baseball player after he retired. She learns about her father's

courage when he tests the ice in a local pond, despite his fear of water. **Available as a Storia e-book**

Other Resources

Teaching Christopher Columbus

For more information about the life of Christopher Columbus, go to: <http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/christopher-columbus-1451-1506>

Go to www.Scholastic.com/storia-corner to find PDF versions of the Storia teacher guides and links to purchase the related books.

dreamer

explorer

sailor

Spain

Indies

Americas

Resource #2: Sequence of Events

Name _____

Date _____

Christopher Columbus

Cut out the cards, mix them up, and then put them in the correct order.

<p>As a boy, Christopher Columbus dreamed of sailing the Ocean Sea.</p>	<p>Columbus asked the king and queen of Spain for help. Finally, they said, "Yes."</p>
<p>Columbus set sail with 90 sailors and three ships.</p>	<p>At last, the sailors spotted land.</p>
<p>Columbus landed on an island in the Americas.</p>	<p>Columbus met the people who lived on the island.</p>