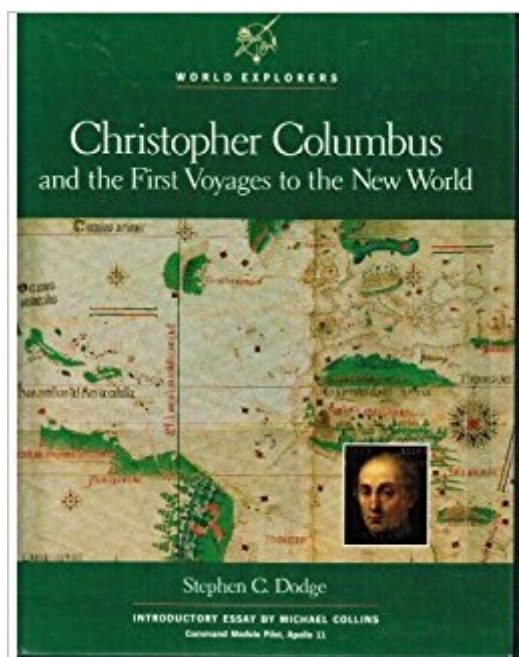


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# Christopher Columbus (Wld Exp) (Z) (World Explorers)



## Synopsis

-- Fascinating tales of the journeys of adventurers and explorers-- Details how these expeditions broadened our knowledge-- Illustrated with maps, paintings, drawings, and photographs

## Book Information

Series: World Explorers

Library Binding: 127 pages

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Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 1 customer review

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## Customer Reviews

Grade 8-12-- As the 500th anniversary of Columbus's first voyage draws near, this biography joins the growing number of recently published books about him. With a textbook-style format and size and relatively short length, it will provide excellent research material. There are quotes from diaries, excellent reproductions of paintings and engravings, full-page portraits introducing the chapters, color prints of several early maps and a coat of arms, and a map detailing the routes of Columbus's four voyages. Dodge's style, however, which is marked by long sentences with advanced vocabulary and complex structure, may prove difficult to many young readers. Meltzer's *Columbus and the World Around Him* (Watts, 1990), aimed at a similar age level, has a less intimidating narrative style. Both books discuss Columbus's unwavering belief that he was right, his unwillingness to admit mistakes, and the mistreatment of the Indians by him and his men. As Dodge explains, Columbus was both vilified for his enslavement and torture of the natives and elevated to near sainthood for his role in their conversion to Christianity. His book is notable for its attention to important historical detail and the many valuable illustrations, but Meltzer's book is outstanding for its extension beyond the reporting of events to the interpretation of history in a style that will not only

interest uninitiated readers but will also inform and even entertain them. --Phyllis Graves,  
Creekwood Middle School, Kingwood, TX Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc.

"Christopher Columbus and the First Voyages to the New World" makes the case that what Columbus did in 1492 was "the most momentous miscalculation in history." Stephen C. Dodge tells the story of the stubborn captain-general who led at iny fleet of three ships from the Spanish port of Palos that August. Columbus was convinced that by sailing west across the Atlantic Ocean he would reach the Indies and claim the riches coveted by all of Europe for Ferdinand and Isabella, the king and queen of Spain. They sponsored the expedition that after a voyage of a little more than a month discovered an island gateway to two new continents that had been forgotten by whatever Europeans had ventured that far in the past. The meeting of Europeans and the native peoples of the Americas on the tiny island of San Salvador was arguably the most momentous in the history of civilization. Although Dodge only touches on the treachery, mayhem, slavery, and genocide that followed that first peaceful encounter, such things are much on the minds of students today who see Columbus as the father of all of the evils of the world represented by dead, white, male Europeans. The flip side of the coin is the entirely new civilization that Europeans built in the New World on the ruins of their old one. The Columbus of Dodge's book is a man who made three voyages of discovery to the Americas, all of which were filled with high adventure and made possible by his uncanny seamanship. But he was also a man who died bitter and neglected, not to mention unaware that he had given Spain the foundation for a massive empire that would make it a world power. The book begins with the first voyage to the Americas and then goes back in time to tell how Columbus first tried to persuade the Portuguese to underwrite his enterprise to the Indies before getting the backing of the Spanish. Chapters are devoted to the rest of Columbus' voyages and then the attacks that targeted Columbus after disillusionment over the realities of the New World made him the devil incarnate to his opponents on Hispaniola. The last chapter on "The High Voyage" tells of how Columbus died hurt over the loss of his privileges and feeling he had been cheated by the Spanish crown. In the middle of the book you will find "Widening the Globe," a photo-essay in color of maps and paintings reflecting the world of Columbus. The rest of the book is illustrated with black & white paintings, etchings, woodcuts, maps, writings, and artifacts, most of which are fairly contemporary to the life of Columbus. This volume will provide young students with an understanding of who Columbus was and what he did in the context of the era in which he lived. Although some of the information about Columbus is now in doubt (that recent special on cable television convinced me that Columbus was really Spanish, not because of those failed DNA tests

but because most of what we have written in his own hand is in Spanish and none of it is in Italian), his voyages and what happened afterwards are the core of this book and remain solid. Other sources will certainly provide attacks on the consequences of what Columbus did, but understanding his accomplishments in the context of his time is a necessary foundation for all of the latter criticism as well as for any attempt to judge the man fairly. The World Explorers series of 33 volumes is divided into four categories that recount the exploits of the scientists and sailors, missionaries and soldier, mountain men and astronauts, whose journeys of exploration advanced human knowledge. The first looks at explorers of the ancient world such as the Vikings explorers of the 9th-11th centuries along with Marco Polo and the medieval explorers. The other three parts cover the three great ages of exploration. The first is the era of Columbus and Magellan in the 15th-16th centuries when the New World was discovered and explored. The second is the age of science and imperialism made possible by the scientific advances of the 17th century where the world's last two undiscovered continents, Australia and Antarctica, were discovered and the entire world was mapped. The final age looks at the ambitious quests of the 20th century with the exploration of the depths of the ocean and the final frontier of space.

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