

Name: _____

Ferdinand Magellan

by Kelly Hashway

When we think of explorers, one of the first names that comes to mind is Christopher Columbus. But there are many other explorers who did great things, one being Ferdinand Magellan. Magellan was a Portuguese sailor who proved it was possible to sail around the globe.

In 1492, Christopher Columbus had sailed west trying to reach the Indies in hopes that Spain would be able to trade with Asian kingdoms on the other side of the world. But as you know, Columbus discovered America and never really made it to the Indies.

Later, eastern routes to the Far East were discovered, but Spain wanted to find a quicker route by water. So in 1519, Ferdinand Magellan set sail from Seville, Spain under the rule of King Charles I. His goal was to discover a westward route to the Spice Islands in Indonesia. The Spice Islands were named for the spices produced there, which were in great demand in Europe.

Magellan took five ships and approximately 270 men with him on his expedition. During the trip, Magellan explored the eastern coast of South America, looking for a water passage through the continent. He discovered a body of water that cut through the southern tip of South America, connecting the Atlantic Ocean and Pacific Ocean. This body of water was named the Strait of Magellan.

The journey wasn't an easy one for Magellan or his men. The rough waters caused one of the five ships to be separated from the others and eventually return to Spain. Another ship



crashed into a rocky island. With only three ships left, Magellan continued for months, making it to the Philippines. Here, Magellan was killed during a religious dispute with a local tribal king on the island of Mactan. This was later called the Battle of Mactan.

The remaining crew members were led by Juan Sebastian Elcano. Because there weren't enough men to sail all three ships, Elcano ordered the men to burn one of the remaining ships. They then sailed two ships to the Maluku Islands, better known as the Spice Islands. There they loaded up on valuable spices before attempting to return to Spain.

Near the end of the voyage one of the two remaining ships was captured by the Portuguese and wrecked in a storm. In 1522, three years after the expedition began, Elcano returned to Spain with only 17 crew members and only one of Magellan's five ships.

While the voyage cost the lives of many men, it was important to our history. Magellan was the first European explorer to sail from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific, and he was also the first to cross the Pacific Ocean. But more than that, Ferdinand Magellan proved that a ship could sail around the globe.



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Use information from the article and map illustration to answer the questions.

1. What was the purpose of Ferdinand Magellan's expedition?
- a. to explore South America
 - b. to find a water route to Indonesia
 - c. to find gold in India
 - d. to find a land route to the Indies

2. Did Magellan sail around the world? Explain.

3. How long did it take Magellan to sail from Spain to the Strait of Magellan?
- a. about three years
 - b. a little less than two years
 - c. about a year
 - d. just under six months

4. Why did Elcano order his men to burn one of the ships?

5. What fraction of Magellan's ships returned to Spain at the end of the voyage in 1522?
- a. one-fifth
 - b. two-fifths
 - c. two-thirds
 - d. fourth-fifths

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Match each vocabulary word from the article with the correct definition.

_____ 1. explorer

_____ 2. globe

_____ 3. Indies

_____ 4. kingdoms

_____ 5. spices

_____ 6. demand

_____ 7. dispute

_____ 8. valuable

a. worth a lot of money

b. person whose job it is to discover new lands and routes

c. world

d. disagreement

e. desire to have something

f. Asian lands in or along the Pacific Ocean

g. seasonings for food

h. lands ruled by kings

◆ Now try this: On a sheet of lined paper, use each vocabulary word from above in a sentence.

ANSWER KEY

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Use information from the article and map illustration to answer the questions.



1. What was the purpose of Ferdinand Magellan's expedition? **b**
- a. to explore South America
 - b. to find a water route to Indonesia
 - c. to find gold in India
 - d. to find a land route to the Indies

2. Did Magellan sail around the world? Explain.

No he did not. He died during a religious dispute on the island of Mactan.

3. How long did it take Magellan to sail from Spain to the Strait of Magellan? **c**
- a. about three years
 - b. a little less than two years
 - c. about a year
 - d. just under six months

4. Why did Elcano order his men to burn one of the ships?

There weren't enough men to sail all three ships back to Spain.

5. What fraction of Magellan's ships returned to Spain at the end of the voyage in 1522?
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