An illustration of Christopher Columbus in a red tunic and blue cape, holding a small flag with a red cross. He is standing on the deck of a sailing ship with large white sails, navigating through a stormy sea with dark clouds and lightning. The ship is tilted, suggesting rough seas.

The Story of Christopher Columbus

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Christopher Columbus was born in the busy port of Genoa in Italy, in 1451 – that's 570 years ago. His father wove and sold wool, and hoped to get rich by selling it to others.

Christopher was just 13 years old when he went to sea, hoping to return home a rich man after selling the family wool. While at sea, he learned about the winds and the tide. He also learned how to find his way by looking at the stars and the Sun.

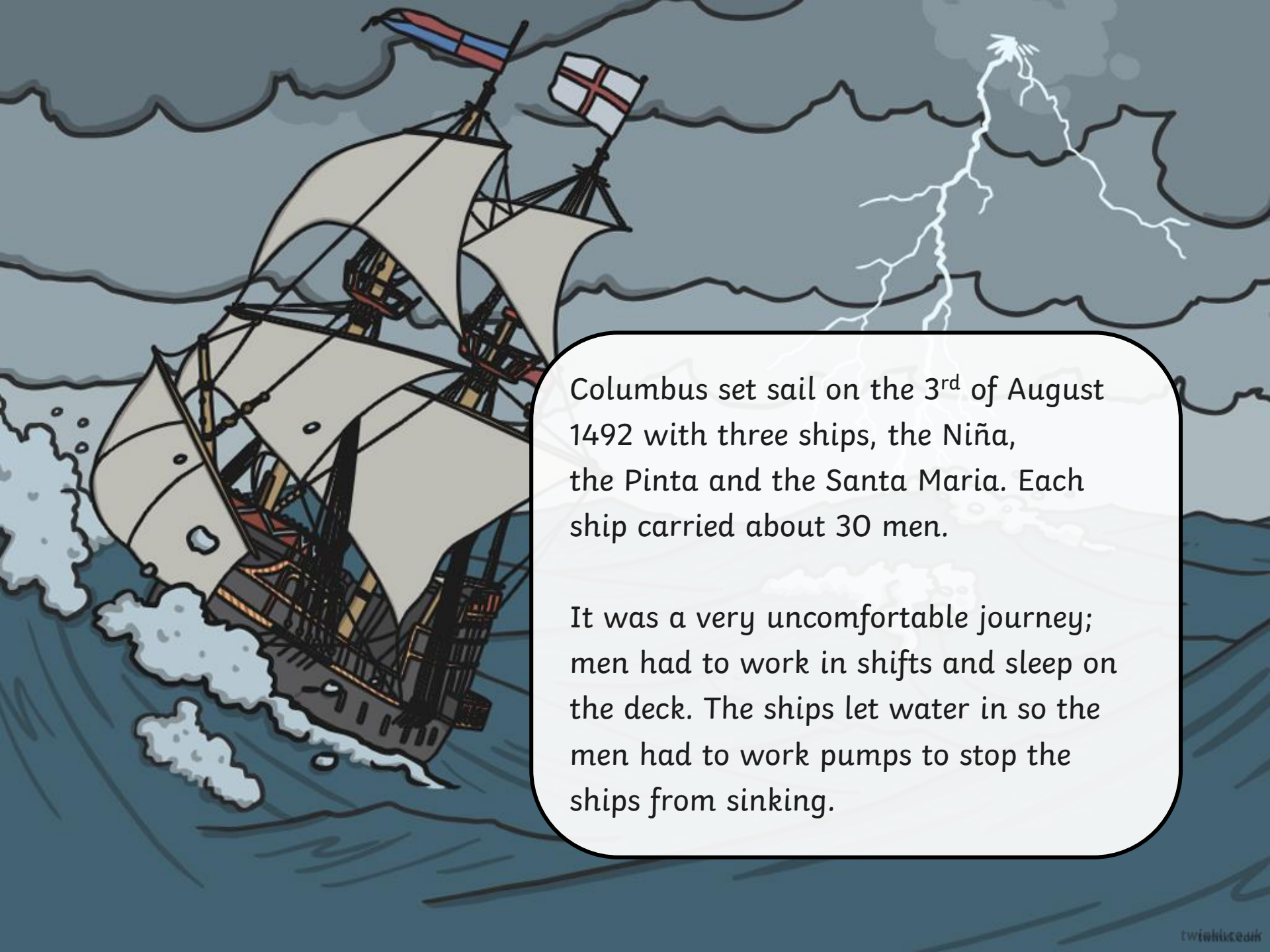


Later on, Columbus realised that people wanted to buy and sell things with countries in the east, such as China and India. Nobody was quite sure of the fastest way to get there. Columbus was an expert map reader who believed that sailing west to China would be best, but most people thought that this was a ridiculous idea. Many people still believed the earth was flat! He tried to persuade rich people to help him but they laughed at his plan.



Finally, the King and Queen of Spain gave Columbus the money that he needed for ships and promised him royalties on his return.



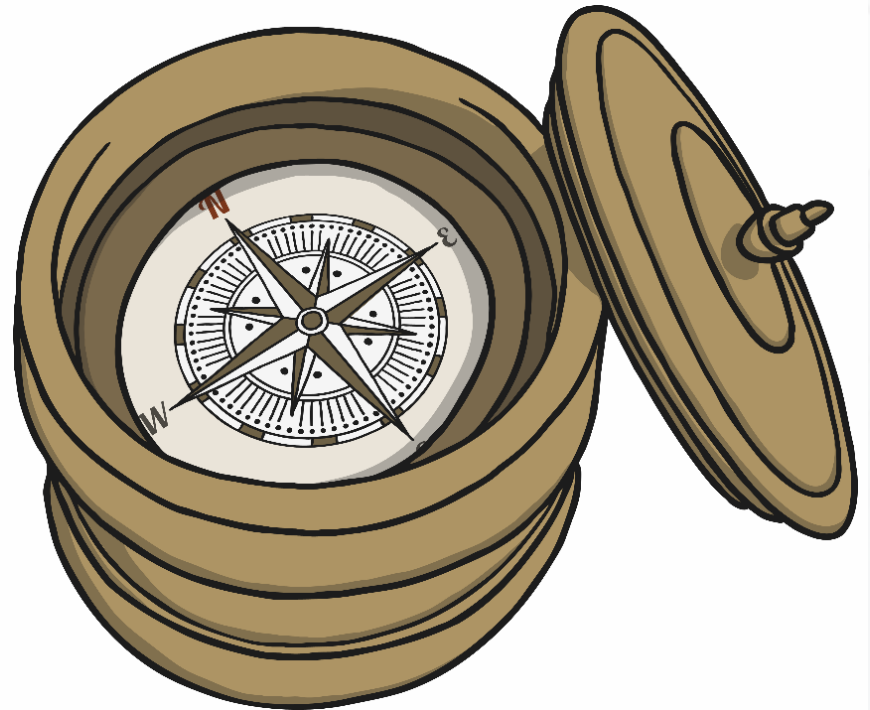


Columbus set sail on the 3rd of August 1492 with three ships, the Niña, the Pinta and the Santa Maria. Each ship carried about 30 men.

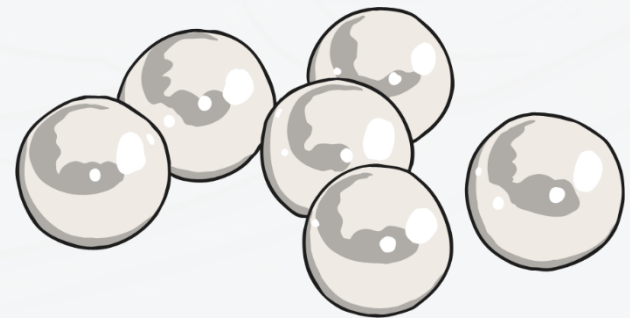
It was a very uncomfortable journey; men had to work in shifts and sleep on the deck. The ships let water in so the men had to work pumps to stop the ships from sinking.

Using a compass, Columbus navigated the way but the journey was taking much longer than anyone had thought. The men got scared because their food and water supplies were running very low.

36 days after setting sail, an island was spotted in the distance. Columbus named the island San Salvador; it was an island in the Bahamas.



For months, Columbus sailed around the nearby islands looking for 'gold, silver, pearls, precious stones, spices and other expensive objects' that he had promised the Spanish King and Queen on his return. However, he did not find much.



Christopher was the first person from Europe to explore these islands, which became known as the 'New World'.

There were people already living on the islands and they weren't very happy as Columbus took these islands from the people and claimed them for Spain.

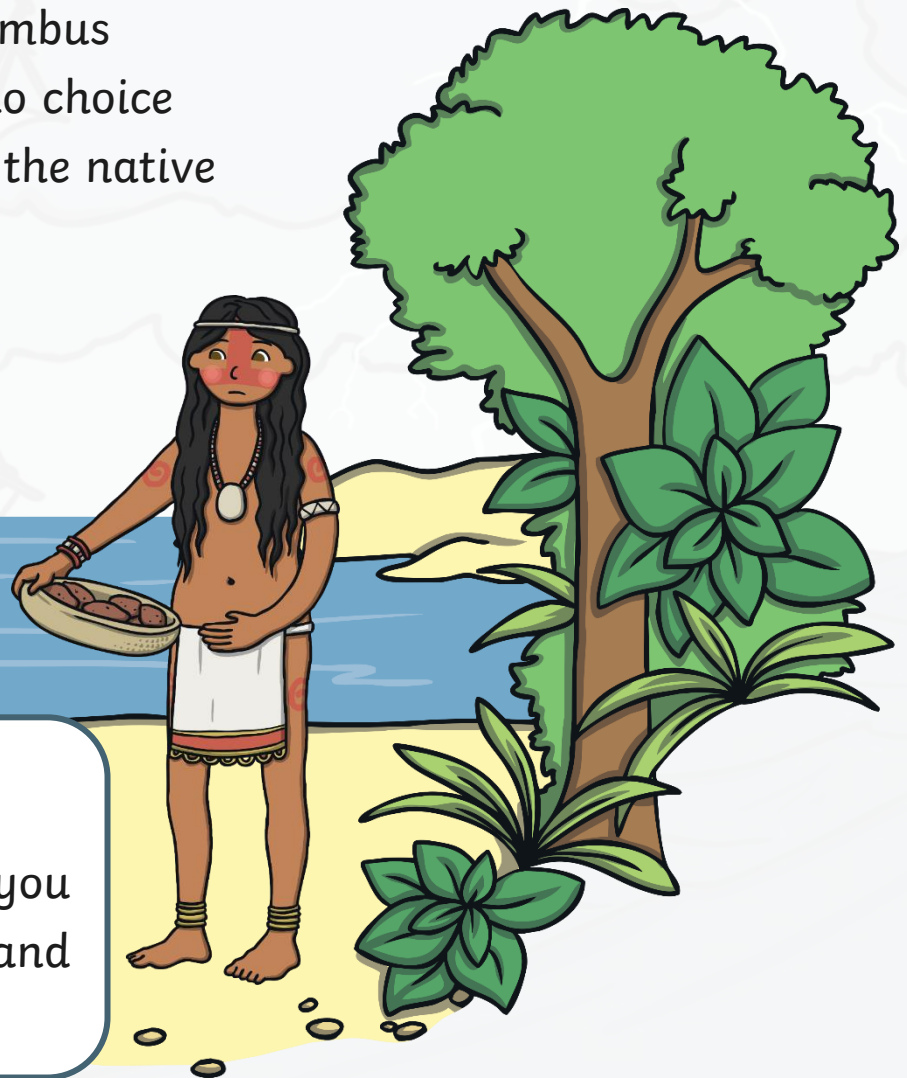


Think About It

Do you think it was fair that the islands became known as the 'New World'?

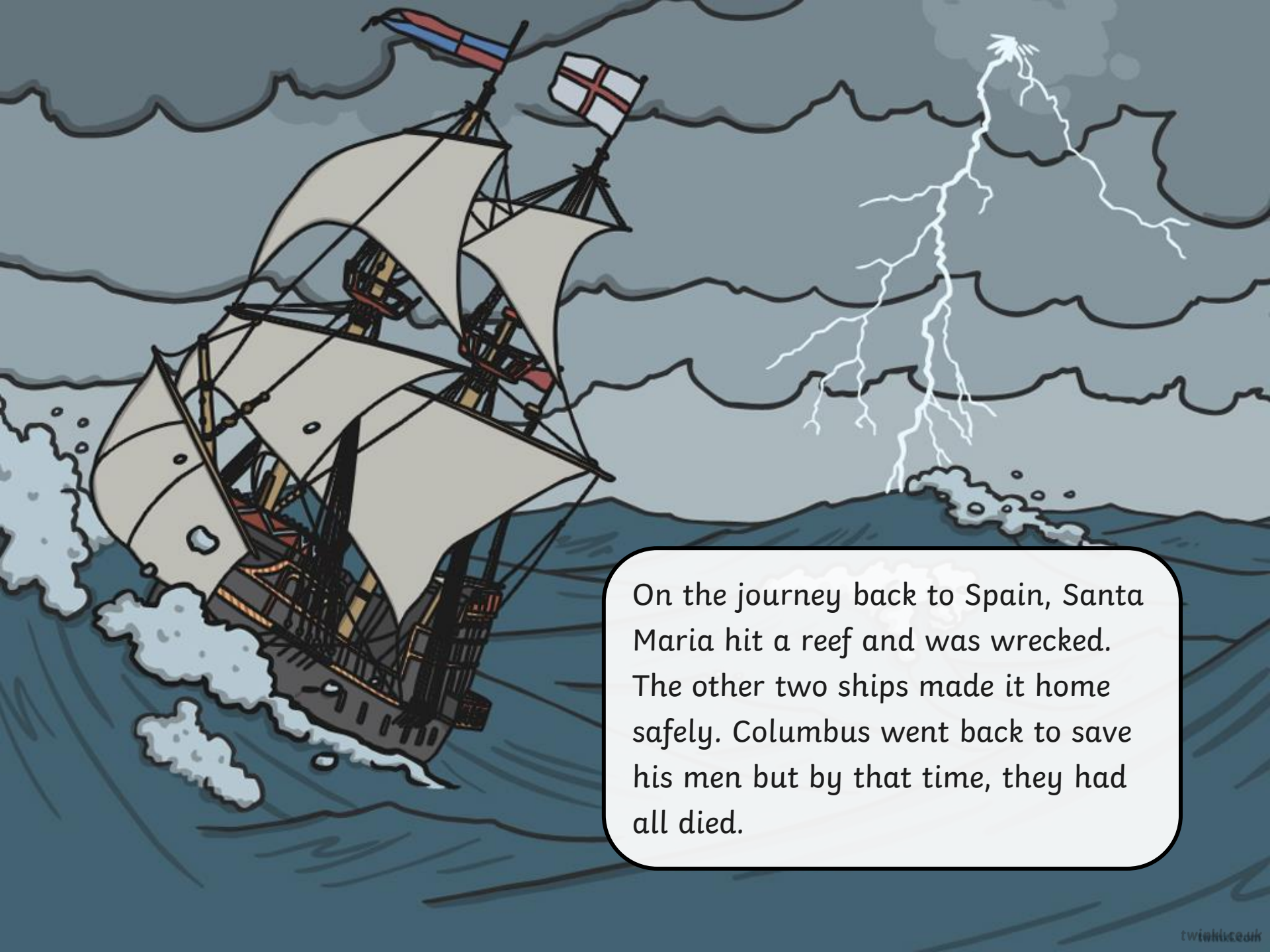


Sadly, the islanders had no weapons to defend themselves and when Columbus showed them a sword, they had no choice but to surrender. He took some of the native people back with him, where they became slaves.



Think About It

What would you have done if you were travelling with Columbus and saw him acting this way?



On the journey back to Spain, Santa Maria hit a reef and was wrecked. The other two ships made it home safely. Columbus went back to save his men but by that time, they had all died.



Spain now ruled over the islands which he discovered.

Columbus returned a number of times and eventually visited **South America.**

Think About It

Do you think Columbus is a hero, villain or something in-between? Why?

By the time he returned to Spain, Columbus had arthritis and was in great pain.

The King and Queen did not reward him as promised because they thought he was mentally unwell.

Columbus died in the year 1506 when he was 54 years old.

Today, he is remembered as a explorer who transformed the 'new world'. However, his actions created changes that would devastate native populations.



Think About It

There is a Columbus Day to celebrate his achievements. Do you think Columbus should be glorified?

How old was Columbus when he first went to sea?

A

15

B

10

C

13



**Never mind,
Keep trying!**



Correct!

Who gave Columbus the money for his exploration?

A

his parents

B

The King and Queen of Spain

C

his friends



**Never mind,
Keep trying!**



Correct!

How many men could fit aboard the Santa Maria?

A

30

B

300

C

3000



**Never mind,
Keep trying!**



Correct!

What did Columbus use to navigate his journey?

A

binoculars

B

a compass

C

a watch



**Never mind,
Keep trying!**



Correct!

**What did Columbus name the new islands
he discovered?**

A

'New Islands'

B

'New Land'

C

'New World'



**Never mind,
Keep trying!**



Correct!

**What was the name of the ship that was wrecked
when it hit a reef?**

A

Santa Maria

B

Santa Marie

C

Santa Margot



**Never mind,
Keep trying!**



Correct!

Who took over the rule of the Islands that Columbus discovered?

A

South America

B

Great Britain

C

Spain



**Never mind,
Keep trying!**



Correct!

