

Marco Polo



Who Was Marco Polo?

Marco Polo was born in Venice, Italy, in 1254. He died in 1324.

When did he start travelling?

When Marco Polo was 17, he sailed with his father and uncle to visit the Kublai Khan, who was the Emperor of China. They went through Israel and took a letter from the Pope.

Where else did he go?

When he was 21, Kublai Khan gave Marco a job. He went to different countries to meet leaders for the emperor. He visited India, Burma, Vietnam, Indonesia and Sri Lanka. Marco lived in China for 17 years and went all over the country and wrote about the places he visited and the people who lived there. The first time he saw a rhinoceros, he thought it was a unicorn!

What happened to him?

Marco lived away from home for 24 years. When he came back to Italy, his city was at war with another city. Marco led a ship to fight but was captured and put in prison.

Why is he important?

He travelled 24,000km and wrote about what he saw. Marco was one of the first people from Europe to visit lots of parts of China. Because he wrote about what he saw, people in Europe found out about paper money, porcelain (china) and maybe even glasses.

Reading task – can you answer these questions?

- 1) When did Marco Polo live?
- 2) Where did Marco Polo go on his travels? Can you find these places on a map or globe?
- 3) Why do you think Marco Polo thought a rhinoceros was a unicorn?
- 4) Marco Polo was a merchant. Can you find out what a merchant is?
- 5) Can you draw a picture of something Marco Polo did or saw?

Challenge Task

Many people think that Marco Polo brought Pasta to Italy from China. Can you ask your grown-ups how to cook pasta and then write some instructions for us to follow? Don't forget to use **imperative (bossy) verbs** and number each step.