

Ferdinand Magellan

by Katie Clark

Ferdinand Magellan was an explorer from Portugal. He lived over five hundred years ago. He is credited with being the first European to sail completely around the globe—an amazing accomplishment!



Born around 1480, Magellan came from a noble family. This made it possible for him to travel. In his twenties, he entered the service of his home country, Portugal.

During this time, he learned to navigate and to use instruments like the compass.

The islands were called the Spice Islands. This was because the rulers in Europe wanted to get to these places.

The ships Ferdinand Magellan used were called the

was because the lands and the seas were controlled by enemy nations. If Europeans wanted easier access to these treasures, they needed to find another way.

Explorers such as Christopher Columbus had already discovered the new world called the American continent. However, no one had yet discovered a westward passage from Europe to Asia.

Magellan did this on behalf of

Spain and sailing ships. He

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treasures, and the

get to these places. This

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Ferdinand determined that he could accomplish this amazing mission. First, he went to the rulers of his home country, Portugal. The king refused to help him.

Next, Ferdinand went to the rulers of Spain. This time he was successful. The rulers agreed to fund his trip. He was given five ships, and they set sail on September 20, 1519. They sailed south toward Africa, then they headed southwest toward the tip of South America. The journey was long. It took many months.

Off the coast of Africa, the crew from one of the ships was able to stop it. They had to turn back. Now instead of five ships,

On October 20, 1492, Columbus first left Spain. The crossing took for a long time. One of the ships left.

The sailors encountered many problems. At last, the sailors landed on an island with fresh food and water, and rest.

There was much excitement. Ferdinand had proved that Europeans could reach the Asian lands by sailing westward! He sent a message to the king of Spain to tell him what he had found. Then, he continued exploring the islands in the area.

and some trouble. The crew was a fight, but he was able to keep sailing.

the tip of South America. It had been more than a year since they had been short on food. There were only three ships

heading north then westward. They were able to get

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This ended up being a bad choice. During a fight with the native people, Ferdinand was killed in battle.

His people were left to return to Spain without him. There were now only two ships, and the journey would be dangerous. On their way back, one of the ships became ruined. It could no longer sail. Now there was only one ship left out of five to get back to Spain.

The last ship finally returned to Spain on September 8, 1522. It had been three years since it left.

Ferdinand Magellan's voyage around South America and the passage through the Strait of Magellan. His journey proved other theories wrong. It also showed that the world was not flat.

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Ferdinand Magellan

- 1) Which is the main idea of the passage?
 - a. The turmoils that Magellan and team were confronted with during his journey
 - b. How Magellan discovered a westward passage from Europe to Asia
 - c. The tragic death of Magellan
 - d. Magellan's endeavors to help Europeans gain access to Asian spices.

- 2) Why was it important for the Europeans to find another way to the 'Spice Islands'?

- 3) Write two difficulties faced by Magellan and his crew while they were on the historic voyage.

- 4) In which ways, was the voyage of Magellan's expedition unique? Do you think it was worth the cost?

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Ferdinand Magellan

5) Find out which words from the passage mean the definitions a to f.

a. direct the course of a ship

b. a person who discovers a new place

c. a group of people who work on a ship

d. a person who betrays someone or something

e. to leave someone who needs or counts on you

f. a narrow passage

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