

Christopher Columbus



Born: Italy
Sailed for: Spain
Voyage: 1492
Reached Caribbean islands.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT

Crossed the Atlantic in 1492 and reached the Caribbean.

Vasco da Gama



Born: Portugal
Sailed for: Portugal
Voyage: 1497-1499
Sailed around Africa to India.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT

Opened the first European sea route around Africa to India.

Amerigo Vespucci



Born: Italy
Sailed for: Spain and Portugal
Voyages: 1499-1502
Described the coast of South America.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT

Helped Europeans recognize South America as a separate continent.

Ferdinand Magellan



Born: Portugal
Sailed for: Spain
Voyage: 1519-1522
Led the first voyage around the world.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT

Led the expedition that achieved the first voyage around the world.

Jacques Cartier



Born: France
Sailed for: France
Voyages: 1534-1542
Explored the St. Lawrence River.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT

Mapped the Gulf and St. Lawrence River for France.

Henry Hudson



Born: England
Sailed for: England and the Dutch
Voyages: 1607-1611
Explored the Hudson River and Bay.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT

Explored and mapped the Hudson River, Strait, and Bay.

Juan Ponce de León



Born: Spain
Sailed for: Spain
Voyage: 1513
Explored Puerto Rico and Florida.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT

Led the first recorded European expedition to Florida.

Pedro Menéndez de Avilés



Born: Spain
Sailed for: Spain
Voyage: 1565
Founded St. Augustine in Florida.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT

Founded St. Augustine, Florida, in 1565.

Giovanni da Verrazzano



Born: Italy
Sailed for: France
Voyage: 1524
Explored the Atlantic coast and New York Harbor.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT

Mapped much of the Atlantic coast, including New York Harbor.

Sir Walter Raleigh



Born: England
Worked for: England
Project: 1584-1587
Sponsored the Roanoke voyages; he did not sail there.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT

Sponsored the Roanoke voyages, an early English colonization effort.