

Table of Contents



Introduction	3
Using This Book	4
The Stories—New Words—The Writing Link—The Questions—The Test Link—The Thrill of Social Studies	
Meeting Standards	8
Social Studies Stories	
Saved by Underwear	9
Living in the White House	12
A Spy in America	15
A Trick to Stop an Attack	18
A State Test	21
Life-Saving Ice in the Hot Desert	24
A Slave Who Wrote Poetry	27
The Emperor’s Contest	30
The World’s First Submarine	33
How Earl Knew Not to Invest	36
A Joke for the Cabinet	39
Susan Butcher and the Iditarod	42
Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death!	45
The Golden Gate Bridge	48
A Terrible True Story	51
The Swamp Fox	54
The Dust Bowl	57
Shipwreck on Dry Land	60
Translating English to English	63
Houses Made of Nebraska Marble	66
A Daring Escape	69
A Secret Kept Till Death	72
Potato Names	75
The Lost Tomb of the Boy King	78
Two Sets of Records	81
Name That State!	84
What the Pads Were For	87
The Army Under the Ground	90
Tea Tales	93
How a Prank Led to a First	96
No Silly Questions	99
In Harm’s Way	102
When the President Is Sworn In	105
A Man, a Name, and a Continent	108
Arizona Camels	111
Willing to Face the Mob	114
An American Folktale	117
The Trail of Tears	120
The Brave Engineer	123
Country Neighbors	126
A Swimsuit and an Explosion	129
Reading When You Can’t	132
More Than a Sack of Potatoes	135
Funny Name Stories	138
Answer Sheets	141
Bibliography	142
Answer Key	144

A Man, a Name, and a Continent



Today we know that there are seven continents. Long ago, people in Europe thought there were only three. They believed that the only continents were Europe, Africa, and Asia. Christopher Columbus landed in the Bahamas in 1492. He did not realize, or fully understand, where he was. He thought the islands were part of Asia. He thought he had landed in India.

Who was the man who realized that the Bahamas and the other areas Columbus explored were not part of Asia? Who was the man who realized that the world had at least one extra continent? The man was Amerigo Vespucci. Today, two continents are named after Vespucci. One continent is North America. The other is South America.

Vespucci was born in Italy in 1454. Vespucci was an excellent navigator and skilled mapmaker. A navigator is someone who is skilled at figuring out the course of a ship. Vespucci was navigator on an expedition that set off in 1499. Its purpose was to explore south of the land Columbus had discovered. Vespucci sailed to the country we know today as Brazil.

Sailing south along its coast, the expedition came to an astonishing, or surprising, place. The ships were far out to sea, but the seawater tasted fresh! The astonished men ventured, or dared to go, closer to shore. They spotted a huge river. The river was too big to have come from an island. The men had spotted the river we know today as the Amazon River. Thinking they had reached China, the men got into rowboats. They ventured up the river. They looked for a place to land, but they could not find one. Vespucci wrote that the low land was “so thickly covered with trees that the birds could scarcely fly through them.”



Amerigo Vespucci

Vespucci began to suspect, or doubt, that they had reached Asia. Vespucci sailed even further south on his next expedition. He took more star sightings. He calculated, or figured out, distances. He calculated location. He no longer suspected that they had reached Asia. He knew they had not. They had reached a fourth continent.

A Man, a Name, and a Continent



After reading the story, answer the questions.

Fill in the circle next to the correct answer.

- This story is mainly about
 - Columbus and India.
 - how continents are named.
 - land south of the Bahamas.
 - an explorer and a new continent.
- From the story, you can tell that Vespucci thought
 - Columbus was not a good navigator.
 - the continent should be named after himself.
 - the Amazon River was the longest river in the world.
 - North American and South America were one continent.
- Where was Vespucci when the seawater tasted fresh?
 - off the coast of Asia
 - off the coast of India
 - off the coast of Brazil
 - off the coast of the Bahamas
- If one calculates something, one carefully
 - explores it.
 - suspects it.
 - figures it out.
 - navigates through it.
- Think about how the word *realize* relates to *understand*. What words relate in the same way?

realize : understand

 - sail : ship
 - suspect : doubt
 - explore : navigate
 - astonish : venture