

Amerigo Vespucci | Lesson Plan

How did Amerigo Vespucci use his knowledge and skills to successfully explore the New World?

Students will gain a comprehensive understanding of Amerigo Vespucci, the Italian explorer who named America. They will explore how Vespucci, during his voyages, recognized the New World as a distinct continent, using his expertise in astronomy, navigation, and cartography.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify the skills and knowledge that helped Amerigo Vespucci accomplish a successful expedition to the New World.
- Analyze the effects of Amerigo Vespucci's expedition on Western civilization.
- Apply geography knowledge and skills to follow Amerigo Vespucci's expedition.

Key Vocabulary:

- **The New World:** A name European explorers used for the American continents.
- **Expedition:** A long journey with a specific purpose, such as exploration, research, or war.
- **Cartographer:** Someone who draws maps.
- **Constellations:** A certain grouping of stars. Navigators, like Amerigo Vespucci, used these to guide their expeditions.
- **Telescope:** A tool that makes things that are far away appear closer.

Educational Standards: CCRA.L.1, CCRA.L.2, CCRA.L.4, CCRA.W.4, CCRA.R.7, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.2, CCRA.SL.4, CCRA.W.2

Academic Subject Areas: Biography, Western Civilization

What You'll Need

- Video: [Amerigo Vespucci: The Explorer Who Gave America Its Name](#)
- Worksheet: [Amerigo Vespucci](#) (Click [Here](#))

Lesson Plan (45 minutes)

Warm-Up: (15 minutes)

1. Initiate a discussion about planning a trip to an unknown destination. Encourage students to think creatively and choose a destination as a class—prompt students to list what they would need to plan the trip to ensure its success. List ideas on the board.
2. Guide the discussion towards historical exploration by mentioning a time when much of the world was still uncharted. Explain that European explorers referenced North and South America as 'The New World.' Ask students why they think the explorers called it that.



3. Explain that today's lesson is about exploration before modern technology like GPS and printed maps. Encourage students to think about what tools and skills early explorers might have used for exploration. Allow students to share their ideas with the class.
4. They will watch a video about Amerigo Vespucci, an Italian explorer. Hand out the *Amerigo Vespucci Worksheet* to the students. Go through the first item on the "Map Activity" checklist together as a class. Preview the rest of the worksheet so the students know what to look for while watching the video.

Watch and Complete: (20 minutes)

1. Show the video to the class.
2. Students will complete the worksheet as they watch the video. Depending on the age of students, pause throughout the video to allow students to answer questions—especially short answer responses.

Wrap-Up: (10-15 minutes)

1. Give students time to wrap up their worksheets. Then, decide whether to collect them for assessment or dive into a class discussion.
2. Discuss the video's focus on the value of quality education, especially in the context of American opportunities. Ask students to think about how ongoing learning can impact their futures, just like it did for Amerigo Vespucci.
3. Invite students to share their thoughts, specifically what they wrote for question #7b on the worksheet.

Don't have time for the full lesson? Quick Activity (15-20 minutes)

Distribute the worksheet and allow students to complete it while they follow along with the video.