Seventh Grade Famous Explorer Project

During the 15th-17th centuries the earth’s mysteries began to be revealed. Urged on by an insatiable curiosity and a desire for wealth and power, explorers from Portugal, Spain, England, Holland and France set sail for waters and lands unknown. These expeditions were fraught with danger and many died on shores far from home. This push to discover a new route to Cathay and India opened up an entire hemisphere soon to be known as “The Americas”.

Your project is to research the life and discoveries of one of these explorers. Your research will be presented in three different ways:

1) A “final” journal entry - you will write a reflection of your subject’s life as if he was writing it on the day before he died. This entry could include recollections of his childhood and/or early training and experience as a sailor. It should answer the question: “What have I really achieved in my life?”

   Things to include:
   a) What country and which monarch/s sponsored him
   b) What was his mission/destination (if more than one, focus on main one)
   c) What type of sailing vessels did he use, size of his crew, number of ships, etc.
   d) Dates of his expedition (start to finish)
   e) Details of the voyage itself (rough weather, crew difficulties, loss of ship, etc.)
   f) What did he discover (land, people, riches)
   g) What was the outcome of his endeavor (for the natives, for him, for his country)
   h) The date of the journal entry should reflect a time just prior to his death

This journal entry should be concise and informative - about 3-4 pages in length for average handwriting.

2) Board Game - you are to make a board game based on your subject’s adventures as an explorer. I will give you instructions on how to make the board itself, but you will have to design the game. Some parameters:

   a) The game board should be about the size of a monopoly board (2x2 ft.)
b) It should be designed for 2-4 players with written instructions, as needed

c) It can be either 2 or 3 dimensional

d) The background of the game board should be a map of the part of the world your subject explored

e) The path across the game board should be his expedition route

f) Hazards should include those actually faced by your subject (lack of funds, equipment, loss of a ship, mutinous crew, getting lost, illness, death, bad weather, etc.)

g) Boons should be those he actually received (good weather, sturdy ships, money, equipment, food, discovered riches

h) You can use either dice, drawing action cards or a spinner to advance the game players

i) Game pieces could be ships, conquistador hats, or any other objects that seem appropriate (materials could include “sculpy”, plasticene, clay, paper, etc.)

3) Oral presentation of your game - you will be asked to present your game to the class. The explanation of your game should give the class a fairly accurate picture of who your subject was, what he discovered and what he had to overcome to achieve his goals. Once all of the games have been presented, we will invite the 6th grade to come in and play the games with us.

Time line:

Rough draft of journal entry Due October 20: (Please have parents proof read your rough draft for spelling, punctuation and capitalization) If you have questions about your entry's content or length ask me- before this due date.

Board game Due October 26:

Presentation of games will occur in chronological order over next few weeks

Final form of journal entry due along with rest of main lesson book- Oct. 30

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