

Christopher columbus' letter: its purpose and rhetoric



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Christopher Columbus had always dreamt of setting sail to Asia, but there was an obstacle: he needed financial support. At first, Columbus was unable to get funding for his trip, but then he approached the King and Queen of Spain, Ferdinand and Isabella, and they agreed. Finally, he was able to set sail from Spain to Asia in the year 1492. He was certain that he was headed to Asia but, his plan did not turn out as he had hoped. He ended up somewhere completely different, even though he was unaware. A few months after his voyage, Columbus decided to write his trip patrons a letter. In the letter that Columbus wrote to the King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, he explained why and how his voyage was a success. He wanted them to know that the voyage they financed had brought them riches and new land as promised and encourage them to fund future voyages; in sending the letter, he delivered both relevant information from his voyage and a carefully-crafted persuasive argument.

There were many reasons for which Christopher Columbus wrote that first letter to Ferdinand and Isabella. Naturally, he needed to let them know that he actually arrived and was able to give back to Spain. In the letter, Columbus states, " I discovered many islands...I took possession of all of them for our most fortunate King..." By saying this Columbus wants the King and Queen of Spain to know for a fact that he had taken control of all the places he went to and was able to gain them for Spain. In another paragraph he says, "...they might become Christians and inclined to love our King and Queen and Princes and all the people of Spain." With this quote, Columbus wants the King and Queen to understand that he is spreading Christianity to other parts of the world and is expanding Spain's territory by conquering

new land. He wants the King and Queen to know that Spain is leaving a mark with these people and that they will always be remembered.

Another main point of the letter was to point out that the voyage was a great success, as promised and providing reasoning for future voyages. Columbus convinces the reader in this letter by stating the positive aspects of the islands that he had encountered such as, " numerous harbors on all sides", " very broad and healthy-giving rivers", " exceedingly fertile fields", and " well adapted for constructing buildings." With these lines, Columbus is providing evidence of reasons to return and how his findings were successful.

Columbus wants to have future voyages and explore the world better. The only way he can do is so by the sponsorship of the Ferdinand and Isabella. Without them, he would not have even gone anywhere in the first place.

The main reason for the letter, however, is that Christopher Columbus wanted to receive credit for his findings and discoveries, even though Ferdinand and Isabela had already made an agreement with him. Columbus discovered a lot more than he thought he would. Even though he was unable to find what his original voyage goal was, the direct water route from Europe to Asia; he never actually reached Asia, and was unaware of this fact.

Throughout the letter, Columbus mentions " I" consistently, making it seem as though he is only responsible for all the positive aspects of his voyage.

Columbus wants to leave a mark and make sure that he receives some sort of credit for his voyage. Since all of the land and most of the riches were conquered by him but, are for Spain, the explorer, Columbus, does not end up with a big proportion of the findings but, being able to take credit for his

findings make a difference. Columbus wanted to make sure that Ferdinand and Isabela are not the only ones receiving credit for his explorations.

Columbus was successful in finding many new discoveries, land, and islands throughout his voyage. In this way, he could give back to the country of Spain for funding his voyage and future voyages since he did, after all, have a prosperous voyage. Columbus' main reason for the letter was to receive credit for his hard work, just like his inspiration, Marco Polo (although Marco Polo wrote a book to establish his prowess). His main goal was to find a direct water route west from Europe to Asia but, instead, he actually ended up attaining even greater discoveries in the New World.