

Name _____



Giovanni da Verrazano

By Sharon Fabian

Imagine growing up in your family's own castle. Your family lives in the beautiful land around Florence during the Italian Renaissance. You can imagine all sorts of possibilities for your future career because you are surrounded by people with amazing careers themselves. Artists, scientists, architects, and many more imaginative people from Florence are already making names for themselves.

Giovanni da Verrazano grew up in just that situation. His family included prosperous merchants and bankers, and Giovanni received a good education. From all of the possibilities available, he chose the field of navigation for his future career.

In 1507, he moved to Dieppe, where he could pursue a seafaring life. Soon, he was sailing the Mediterranean Sea.

Verrazano must have gained the reputation of being a good leader aboard ship, because in 1524, King Francis I of France chose him to lead an expedition across the Atlantic Ocean. King Francis wanted a navigator who might be able to find a sea route all the way to China and the East Indies.

Soon, Verrazano was making plans for his voyage. He had four ships and enough sailors to man them. He laid in supplies of food - enough to last eight months - and supplies of ammunition. Seafaring was a dangerous job in those days.

The voyage set off, but it had a rough start. Two of the ships had to turn back soon after they departed. Verrazano continued with his flagship, the *Dauphine*, and one other ship, the *Normanda*. Before they had left the waters of Europe behind, Verrazano's ships engaged in a little treasure hunting off the coast of Spain, by the method of harassing other ships. Soon the *Normanda*, loaded down with its prizes, returned to France.



The expedition had barely started and already Verrazano was down to just his flagship. With 50 men aboard the *Dauphine*, he began his Atlantic crossing.

Verrazano and his men battled high seas and stormy weather, but they made it safely across the Atlantic Ocean.

On March 1, 1524, they reached North America. Their first landing was at Cape Fear, North Carolina. From there, they turned south to begin their exploration of the coast. Before too long, they changed plans, and turned to sail north, maybe to avoid an encounter with unfriendly ships off the coast of Spanish territory to the south.

They sailed north towards New England, making stops along the way. At many stops, they were met by Native American tribes who helped them stock up on supplies and provided useful information.

The *Dauphine* continued up the coast. Verrazano and his crew explored the coastline of New York and New Jersey. They explored the New England coast all the way to Maine.

Along the way, Verrazano sent back letters to King Francis, informing the king of his discoveries. He described new plants and animals that had never been seen in Europe. He described the native people of North America. One thing that he couldn't describe was a way to cross through to the Pacific. Hopes were high for such a discovery, but it would not be made on this trip.

At one point early in his explorations, Verrazano must have gotten his hopes up. Exploring the Outer Banks of North Carolina, he noticed the narrowness of the strip of land and the water that seemed to continue further into the continent. Could this be it? No. It turned out not to be the anticipated passage across the continent to the Pacific.

Although he never found that passage, Verrazano did bring back much useful information. His detailed descriptions of the East Coast proved extremely helpful to future explorers and to mapmakers as well. His brother Girolamo, who also sailed on this voyage, drew an up-to-date world map in 1529 that included all of their new discoveries.

Once Verrazano had passed the coast of Maine, he sailed across to Newfoundland. From there, he made his way back to France. In the next few years, he would be chosen to lead two more voyages of



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discovery to the New World.

Giovanni da Verrazano

Questions

- _____ 1. Which answer choice lists the three events in the correct order?
- A. Giovanni leads the expedition, Girolamo creates a new world map, Giovanni moves to Dieppe
 - B. Giovanni moves to Dieppe, Girolamo creates a new world map, Giovanni leads the expedition
 - C. Giovanni moves to Dieppe, Giovanni leads the expedition, Girolamo creates a new world map
 - D. Girolamo creates a new world map, Giovanni leads the expedition, Giovanni moves to Dieppe
- _____ 2. The purpose of Giovanni da Verrazano's expedition was to _____.
- A. find a new route to Spain
 - B. find a new route to Asia
 - C. find treasure
 - D. colonize North America
- _____ 3. Verrazano was sent on his expedition by _____.
- A. the Dauphine
 - B. the king of France
 - C. his brother
 - D. the king of Italy
- _____ 4. _____ are names of Verrazano's ships.
- A. *Dieppe* and *Newfoundland*
 - B. *France* and *Italy*
 - C. *Dauphine* and *Normanda*
 - D. *Giovanni* and *Girolamo*

- _____ 5. Verrazano would probably describe the Native Americans he encountered on this first voyage as _____.
- A. dangerous
 - B. unfriendly
 - C. confusing
 - D. helpful
- _____ 6. Verrazano's voyage succeeded in finding a shorter route to China and the East Indies.
- A. true
 - B. false
- _____ 7. Girolamo da Verrazano drew _____.
- A. the first world map
 - B. a map of the Atlantic Ocean
 - C. a map of Europe
 - D. an up-to-date world map
- _____ 8. The supplies in Verrazano's ship probably included all of the following except _____.
- A. food
 - B. ammunition
 - C. tools
 - D. a GPS

Verrazano's brother, Girolamo the mapmaker, must have taken many notes and drawn many sketches during the voyage. Later, back in Europe, he would have used this information to create his new map. Create a page of notes and sketches that Girolamo might have made during their voyage.
