



Finding Florida Instead of the Fabled Fountain of Youth

Ricky threw the frisbee as hard as he could. His dog ran along the sand and jumped up, catching the frisbee between his teeth just as the wave hit him. Ricky laughed and waited for his dad to catch up to him.

“Isn’t this great?” Ricky said, laughing as he tried to dodge the wave crawling up the beach. “Who knew the beach could be so fun?”

“It is fun, isn’t it? But I bet you don’t know the history of this beach.” Ricky’s father pulled the frisbee from the dog’s mouth and threw it toward the waves again.

Ricky dug his toes into the sand. “No, what do you mean?”

Ricky’s father smiled and sat, patting the sand next to him. Ricky sat and listened.

“Hundreds of years before you were born, in 1513, a man named Juan Ponce de León sailed from Spain to find the land called Bimini. Legend had it that Bimini was the location of the Fountain of Youth, which would restore the youth of all those who drank from or bathed in the water. But instead

of landing on the fabled Bimini, he landed on the sandy beach just south of Cape Canaveral, where we are sitting now. He named it Florida, probably because it was the Easter season (Pascua Florida), and there were flowers everywhere.

“Ponce de León did not find the Fountain of Youth. So a few months after arriving, he sailed back to Spain, where he told the king of the beautiful land he saw. Everyone in the king’s court believed that all Ponce de León had to do was return with more ships, and great treasures would belong to Spain. Ponce de León wanted to return to Florida for treasure, but many people think he also wanted to keep looking for the Fountain of Youth.

“Here’s something else I bet you didn’t know. Ponce de León had been to the New

World before he landed here in Florida. He sailed with one of the most famous explorers ever. Can you guess who?”

“Christopher Columbus?”

“That’s right. Ponce de León was part of the crew on Columbus’s second voyage to America in 1493.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2





SPANISH EXPLORERS

Finding Florida CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"Ponce de León was appointed governor of Florida. Many years later, in 1521, he set sail for Florida again. He formed a colony near the place where he landed on his first voyage. Soon he found out that Florida was part of a mainland, not an island. He and his soldiers explored the country for some time, but when they started founding a colony, they were met by a group of American Indians who were angry about the pale-face people taking their land. A large battle followed, where Ponce de León was injured badly in his thigh with an arrow. Many Spaniards were killed in the fight, and so they fled. Ponce de León was carried aboard the ship, and they sailed quickly to Cuba, where he soon died."

"Wow," said Ricky with a shocked look on his face as his dad finished the story. "I have always been used to Florida being part of America. I never thought about how it was discovered."

Ricky's father smiled and mussed up his son's hair. "There are many amazing things you don't know about this land we live on." Both stood up and dusted the sand off their shorts. The dog came back soaking wet with the frisbee in his mouth.

"Well, we have plenty of time," said Ricky as he took the frisbee and threw it down the beach again, running after it. "And I'm all ears."

Gold, God or Glory!

When Ponce de León and the other explorers returned to Spain, the Spanish were excited to hear their stories about the great American Indian cities said to be filled with gold. There were many others excited to spread the word of God. They left for Florida as missionaries. Others wanted the glory of land, colonies and a chance to be famous. Those who conquer others for gold and glory are conquistadors.

Panfilo de Narvaez

Have you ever had a day where nothing went right? One man who had many of those days was a Spanish explorer named Panfilo de Narvaez, sent from Spain in 1528 to check out the southeastern part of America. He landed in Tampa Bay, sittin' pretty, with 400 men and plenty of supplies. But one hurricane, one mutiny and a bunch of American Indian attacks later,

he sailed off into history on a homemade wooden barge and was never heard from again. His men searched for him for a year but never found him. Then one of the survivors of his misadventures, a man named Cabeza de Vaca (which is Spanish for "head of cow," by the way), wandered in the wilderness for eight years before he reached Mexico and was rescued. Cabeza de Vaca finally made it back to Spain (he was the only one in this group to return), where he met Hernando de Soto, governor of Cuba and next in line to set sail for America. He asked Cabeza de Vaca all sorts

of questions about America, but old Cabeza de Vaca clammed right up and wouldn't share much. What a tease! How do you feel when a friend keeps a secret from you? Well, de Soto just about went crazy with curiosity and finally sailed for the New World, with dreams of striking it rich.

Hernando de Soto

How far will a man go looking for riches? Well, we don't know how far any man would go, but we have a pretty good idea how far it took Hernando de Soto. He had already made a name for himself in Spain by bringing back tons and tons (really — thousands and thousands of pounds!) of gold from South America, so why should North America be any different, right? Many of his rich friends agreed, and his expedition sailed with supplies, soldiers and rich friends galore — even horses. Their trip was one adventure after another, and there are so many stories about de Soto in America that in the 1930s (400 years after de Soto lived), the government made a special study to sort out just where his journeys took him. In the spring of 1539, de Soto landed near the mouth of the Manatee River (near Bradenton). Shortly after landing, de Soto met a survivor of the Narvaez expedition named Juan Ortiz. By this time, Ortiz had learned the languages and customs of the natives, and he proved to be very helpful to de Soto's group.

The expedition went north

through Florida and Georgia and into the Carolinas, where they stopped to dig for gold. From there, they went west through Tennessee and then down again through Georgia and Alabama. Finally, they went all the way to the Mississippi River before it was all over. Whew! Some trip! He didn't find gold, but he did have one adventure after another. De Soto died of a fever without finding any gold, but he was still the first European to see the Mississippi River.

TIMELINE

Ponce de León arrives in Florida, 1513



Spanish explorers arrive in Florida, 1516-1560



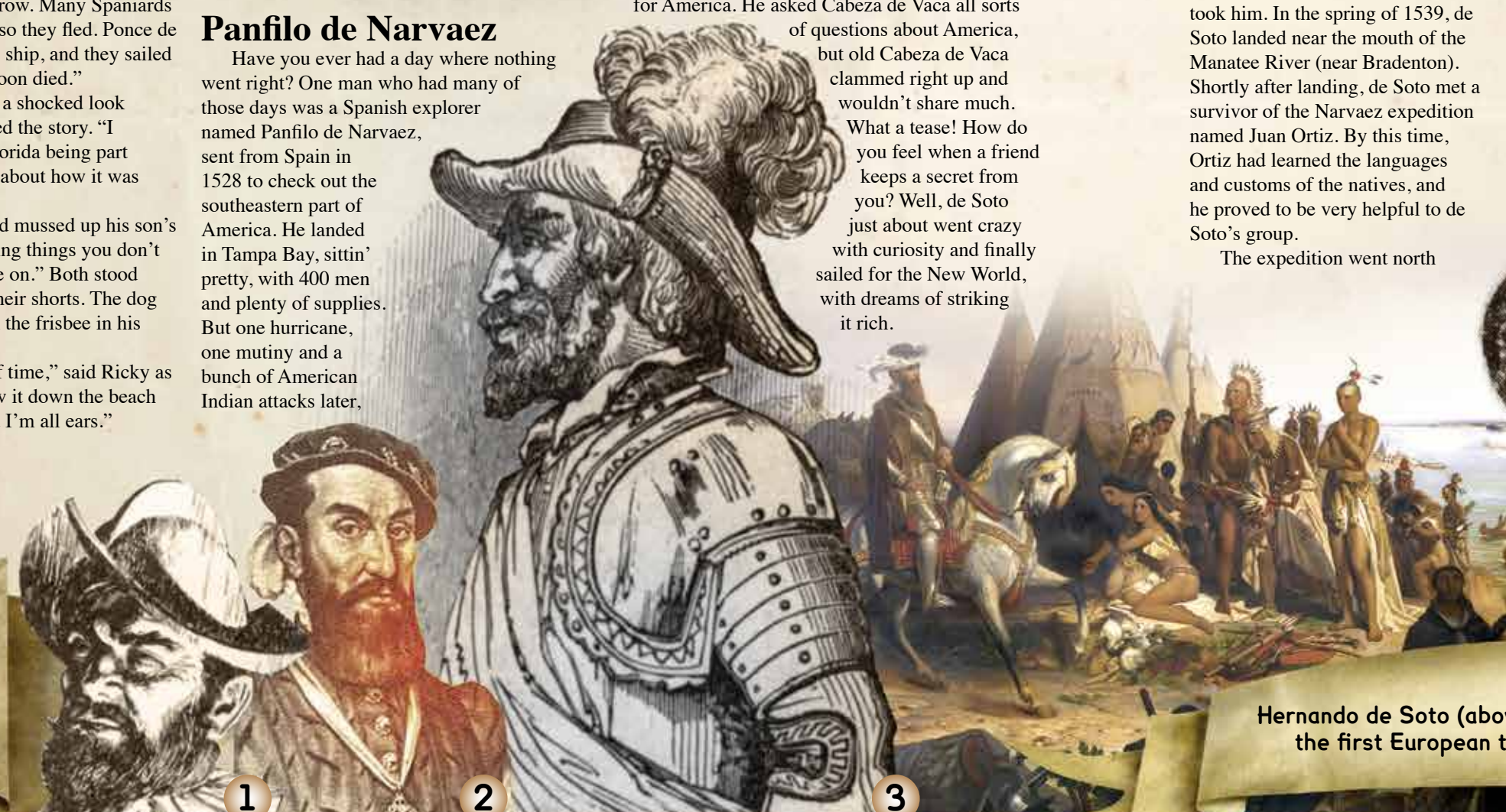
French explorers arrive in Florida, 1523



Hernando de Soto arrives in Florida, 1539



Pedro Menendez arrives in Florida, 1565



Hernando de Soto (above right) explored Florida and later became the first European to see the Mississippi River (above left).

1. Panfilo de Narvaez
2. Cabeza de Vaca
3. Ponce de Leon

1

2

3

American Civics

Respect

Showing respect is an important part of being a good citizen. Respect means showing consideration and understanding for people, places and things.

There is a Spanish proverb that states, "If you want to be respected, you must respect yourself." In other words, if you do not respect yourself or your property, then how can you possibly expect others to respect you? Take the time to notice the differences and similarities between yourself and your classmates. Look for the positives in yourself and others. Note that some of your peers are from many cultures, such as Spanish, French, African American, Asian American and European. Always remember other cultures have their way of doing things and may or may not be the same as yours, but often, their way may be as good or better.



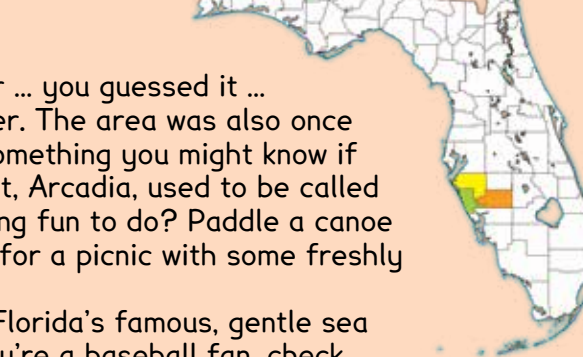
DeSoto, Manatee and Sarasota Counties

DeSoto County: This county is named for ... you guessed it ... Hernando de Soto, the famous explorer. The area was also once the site of phosphate mines. Here's something you might know if you live in this county: The county seat, Arcadia, used to be called "Tater Hill Bluff." Looking for something fun to do? Paddle a canoe 57 miles on the Peace River and stop for a picnic with some freshly grown watermelon for dessert.

Manatee County: You can see plenty of Florida's famous, gentle sea mammals in Manatee County. Or, if you're a baseball fan, check out a spring training camp here. Bradenton, the county seat, is where the Pittsburgh Pirates train. If you're hungry, get some fresh tomatoes or strawberries at a produce stand. Shortcake, anyone?

Sarasota County: This is a hot spot for snowbirds — you know, northerners who come here for the winter. Why Sarasota? Some of the best beaches in the country are here (just ask the people who live here)! Rent a kayak or visit the Big Cat Habitat to see lions and rare white tigers.

Florida Counties

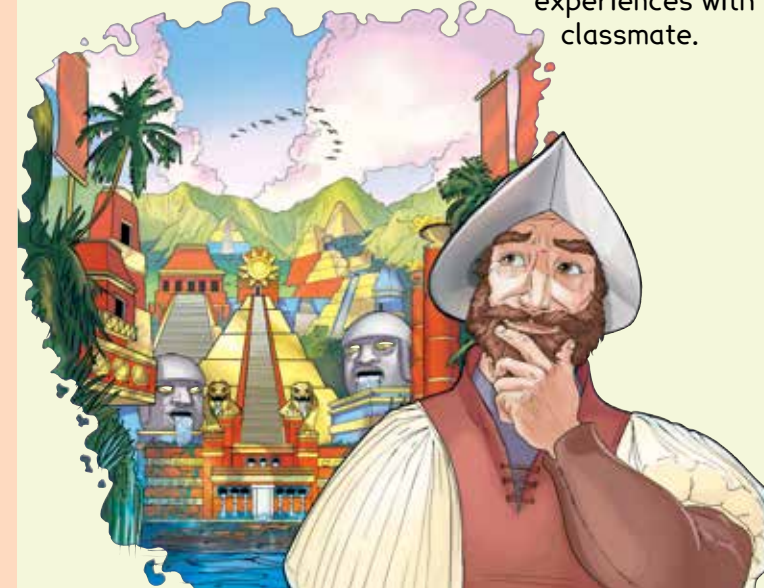


Why did the Spanish send explorers to Florida?

Spanish explorers like Ponce de León, Panfilo de Narvaez and Hernando de Soto had more than one reason for coming to Florida. One reason was to find gold and valuable resources. Another reason was to claim land for Spain. Some explorers were excited to spread Christianity. Some explorers simply liked the adventure of finding a new part of the world.

Think about a time when you had more than one reason for doing something. What did you do? What were your reasons for doing it? Share your experiences with a classmate.

This Week's Question



Dolphins and Porpoises

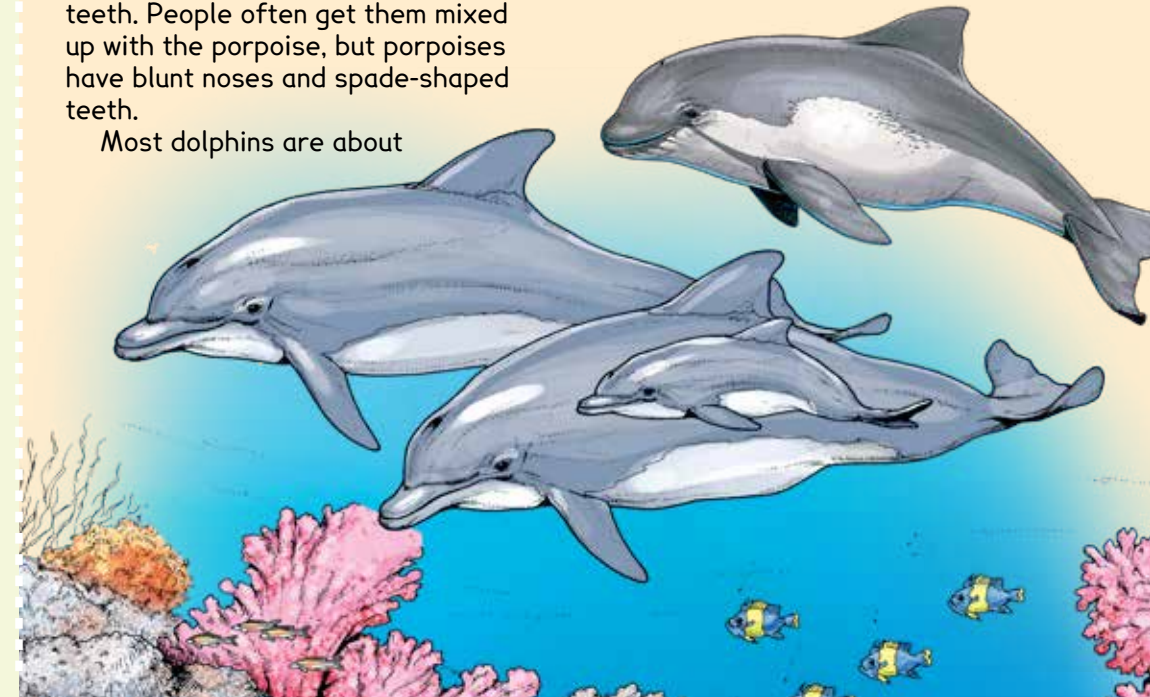
How many of you have a friend named Flipper? The movie "Flipper" was filmed in Florida because, as you probably know, Florida is the best place in the country to see dolphins.

The majority of small-toothed whales are called dolphins. There are about 50 different kinds of mammals in the dolphin family. All have a beak-like nose and sharp, cone-shaped teeth. People often get them mixed up with the porpoise, but porpoises have blunt noses and spade-shaped teeth.

Most dolphins are about

six feet long. The well-known bottle-nosed dolphin may reach nine feet in length. The largest dolphins of all are the orcas or killer whales. They can reach more than 29 feet!

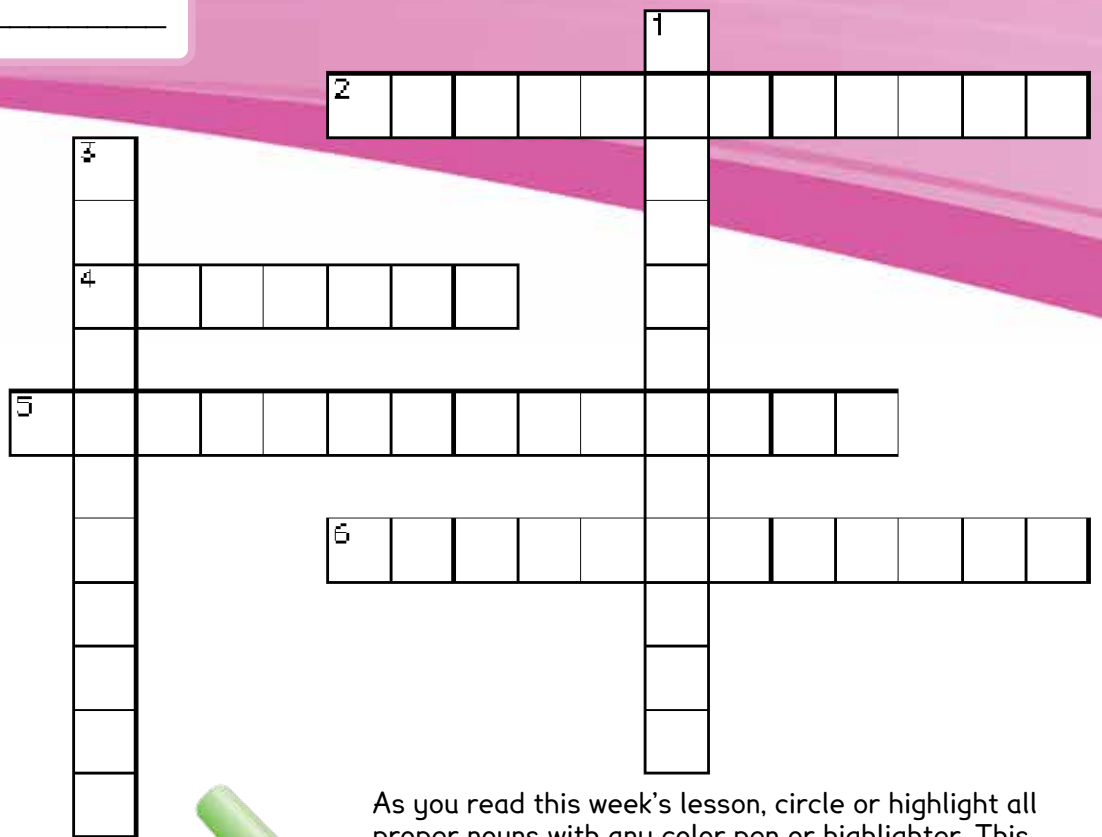
Dolphins and porpoises feed on live fish, like herring, mackerel and sardines. Keep a sharp eye out for them, and sooner or later, you'll see one (if you haven't already).



Florida Wildlife

Name _____

- ACROSS**
- three reasons explorers came to the New World
 - his men searched for him for a year but never found him
 - first European to find the Mississippi River
 - the only member of the Narvaez group to return to Spain after being a prisoner of American Indians
- DOWN**
- one who conquers other nations to get gold and glory
 - the explorer who named Florida



As you read this week's lesson, circle or highlight all proper nouns with any color pen or highlighter. This will help you find some of the crossword answers and get ready for this week's test.

Courage

Ponce de León showed courage as he chose to explore Florida. There are times when you have shown the courage to do something. Before you begin to write, think about a time you showed courage. Now write to tell about a time you showed courage.

Let's Write

Language Arts Connection

Use any color to highlight three relative adverbs (where, when, why) in this week's magazine. Underline the clause that contains the relative adverb and circle the noun that the clause modifies. (LAFS.4.L.1.1)

Use the timeline on page 3 to find the difference between each different Spanish explorer's arrival in Florida. Remember, finding the difference in math terms mean to

s _ b t r _ c _ !

(Fill in the missing letters.)

Teachers:
Your **FREE** Studies Weekly online subscription is waiting for you!
www.studiesweekly.com/register



Think & Review

- Who were the three most important Spanish explorers of Florida?
- Why did explorers come to the New World?
- Which explorer landed near the Manatee River and then explored La Florida, finally discovering the Mississippi River before he died?
- Did explorers find gold in Florida?
- Which European explorer was the first to find La Florida?
- What does respect mean?
- How are dolphins and porpoises alike? How are they different?
- Compare and contrast the Florida counties of Sarasota, DeSoto and Manatee.