

Myths About Explorers

Most people think ...

... Christopher Columbus discovered America.

In fact, the Vikings, led by Leif Ericson, were the first Europeans to land on the coast of North America in the year 1000. Christopher Columbus landed on the island of San Salvador in 1492, thinking he had reached the East Indies.

... Ferdinand Magellan was the first to sail around the world.

In fact, he was dead before the voyage was over. Magellan set sail from Spain in 1519 with five ships and 270 men and was killed in a fight with the natives of Macatan Island in the Pacific Ocean in 1521. In 1522, one of his ships, with 18 original crewmen, completed the journey.

... Phineas Fogg traveled around the world in 80 days.

In fact, he was an imaginary character in a Jules Verne novel, *Around the World in Eighty Days*. Nellie Bly, an American journalist, accepted a challenge to go around the world in fewer than 80 days. In 1889, she made the journey in 72 days.

... Charles Lindbergh was the first to fly across the Atlantic Ocean.

In fact, he was the first to fly solo (alone) across the Atlantic in 1927. The first nonstop flight across the Atlantic was made by Alcock and Brown, two British aviators, in 1919.