

Christopher Columbus (Columbus and the “Discovery of the New World”)

Overview

Point of view of “Columbus” in Polish history textbooks

In Polish school textbooks the analysis of life and discoveries of Christopher Columbus is not a separate teaching module, but a part of a larger topic concerning expeditions of sailors and travellers in the 15th and 16th centuries, along with the consequences of their discoveries. Both the core curriculum and textbooks based on it focus on such issues as: the most important voyages of exploration and their reasons, inventions allowing for transatlantic travels, factors influencing individual countries' decisions about expansion to other continents and finally social, economical and cultural consequences of discoveries made in that period – both for European countries and the New World. Since Poland did not take part in voyages of discovery in the 15th and 16th centuries, nor in the consequential expansion of the Europeans to other continents, history teaching in Polish schools does not focus much on the relation between Christopher Columbus and later colonial expansion. Founding colonies and the rivalry between European countries in that matter is analysed in the context of the above-mentioned issue only as one of many consequences of the great geographical discoveries, including Christopher Columbus' expeditions.