

# *Profiles from History*

*Stories of Those Who Are Worthy of Remembrance*

*- Volume 1 -*



*by Ashley M. Wiggers*

Profiles from History - Volume 1  
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## *Dedication*

To all those I love, thank you for your encouragement and support.

My husband, thank you for your incredible love and friendship. You inspire my every creativity. My parents, thank you for teaching me how to write, and always telling me I could do anything. Linda, my editor and dear friend thank you for your patience and wisdom.

And my heavenly father to whom I owe all the glory, and praise.



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## Instructions

The greatest connection we can have throughout history is the human one. I tried to take a unique perspective on each historical figure by sharing some of the lesser-known facts that you may not have learned before. For instance, instead of focusing on Benjamin Franklin's many inventions, I focused more on his strength of character. As you read each profile it is my hope that you will connect with the person, not just the history.

In this book you will read about inventors, artists, statesmen, and explorers that made a significant difference in the world around them and forever changed the future. Beginning in the year 1200 and continuing through 1890, the exploits of many famous people are described with an eye to seeing their motivations and the impact their lives had on others.

Use *Profiles from History* either to enhance lessons in history and social studies or as a stand-alone book. Choose the fun projects in this book according to the interests of each student. Select as many or as few of the activities as you would like. Each profile can be used as a read-aloud, or your student can use the story for independent reading. To get the full benefit from each profile I recommend students use several of the following activities provided to tap into the different approaches taken:

*Discussion questions:* inspire critical thinking, and help the student relate to each historical figure.

*Follow-up activities:* relate to the accomplishments of each profile, connecting the child tactically to the importance of each person's story.

*Word games:* such as word searches, crossword puzzles, and cloze activities focus on key words to remember from the profile while increasing comprehension and vocabulary.

*Critical thinking activities:* include sequencing of events and determining true and false statements relating to the story.

*Maps:* help students visually pinpoint either the location where the historical figure came from, or the area in which the main event of their life took place.

*Timelines:* give the student an overview of the time period in which the historical figure lived and connect each person with other important events occurring at the same time. A reference timeline is included with each profile. Students are instructed to place timeline figures on a timeline. This timeline and the figures are located in the back of the book before the answer keys.



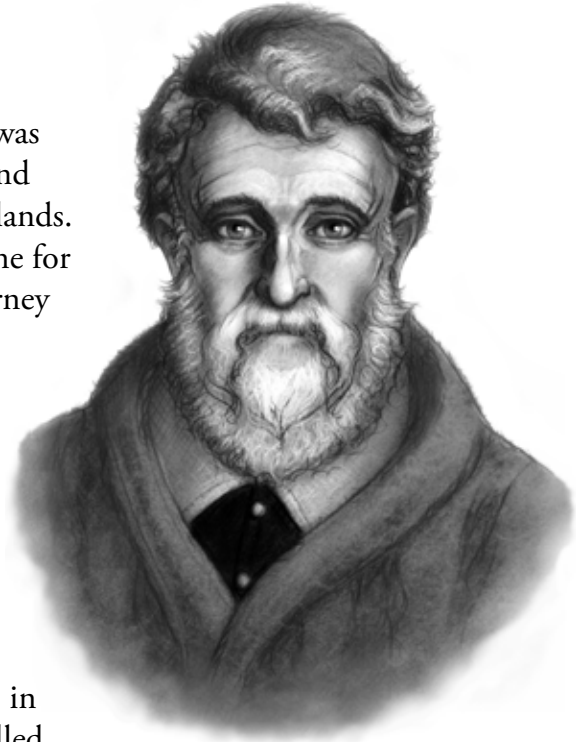
## Marco Polo

From the very beginning, Marco Polo was meant to be an explorer. His father and uncle made long journeys to faraway lands. These trips often kept them away from home for many years at a time. During one such journey Marco's mother died, and when his father finally returned, Marco was ready to join him in the family business. And so he left on his first journey when he was only 17.

While most young men at that time had responsibilities at home, Marco's life was filled with adventure. The Polos' travels took them through many countries in Europe and Asia. They started their trips in Italy and ended up in China, which was called Cathay at the time. The older Polos visited China's great leader, Kubla Khan, while they were there.

Kubla Khan took a liking to the Polo brothers when they first met. The brothers were given a golden tablet, which insured that they would be treated well wherever they traveled in China. Kubla Khan was a powerful leader of a rich and successful country. The cities of Cathay had many modern features such as canals that connected the cities, an elaborate system of messengers similar to the Pony Express, paper money, books and fancy clothes and dishes. There were many interesting and unusual things to see.

As a matter of fact, Marco's life was filled with seeing new things. He stayed in China for 17 years doing various jobs for Kubla Khan. Everywhere he went, he watched the people carefully and tried to learn as much as he could about them and their language, families, and how they lived and worked. When he left China to return home, he remembered all the people, places, and things he had seen.



After his return to Italy, something happened that would change the world. Marco was the captain of a ship involved in a war. He was captured and put into prison. Another man in the prison was a writer and heard Marco's stories. He encouraged Marco to tell him all about his travels so he could write them down. This became the famous book, *The Travels of Marco Polo*.

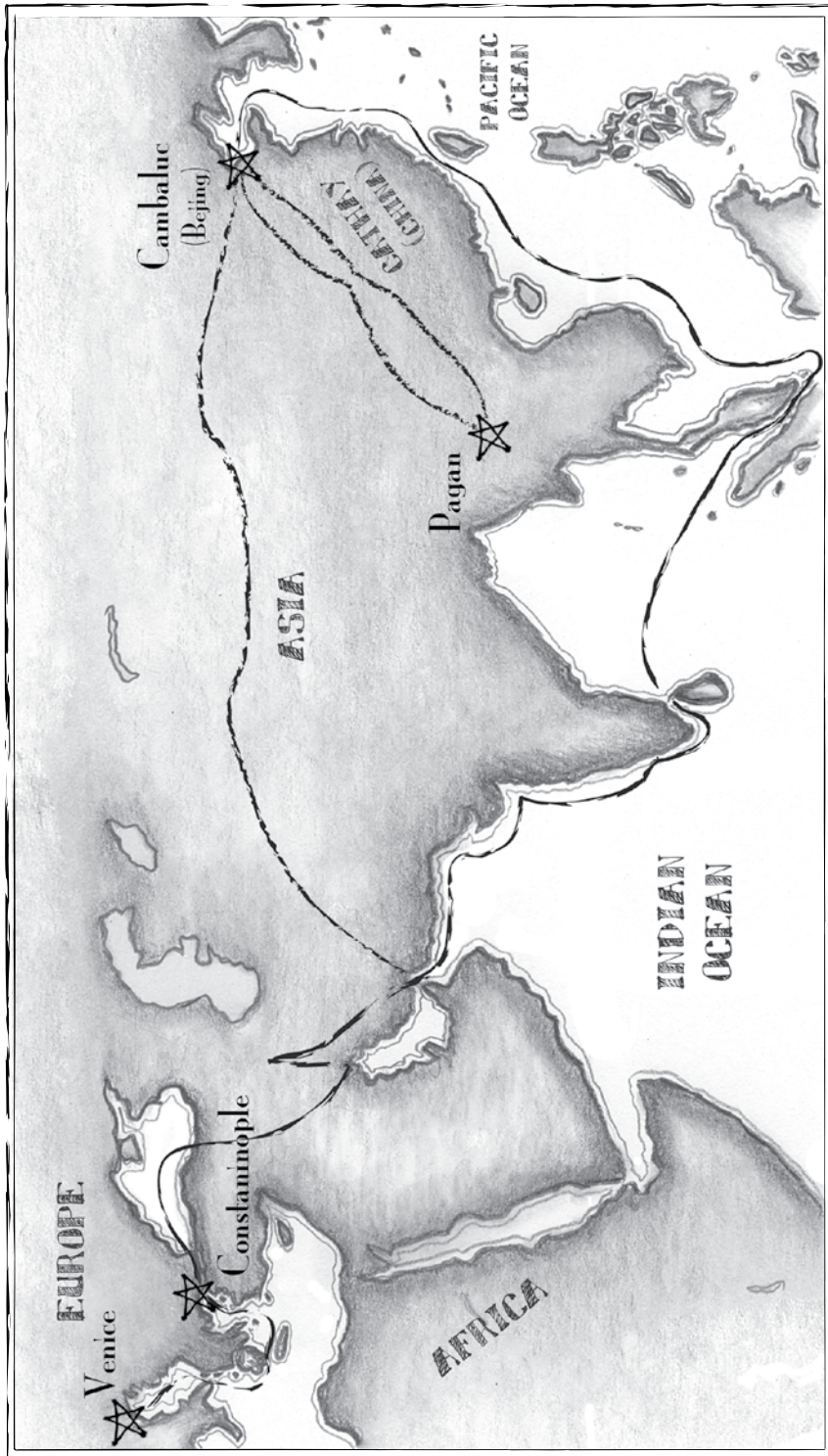
Even though many people who read Marco's book were not sure that all his adventures were true, the stories were full of new and exciting things and told of fantastic adventures. The book also included descriptions of the places Marco had been, which helped mapmakers make new maps.

To the people who did not travel far from home, Marco's book was like going on an adventure themselves. To those who longed to travel, it gave life to their dreams of visiting faraway places. One such reader was Christopher Columbus. With his love of travel and exploring, it is not hard to imagine how inspiring this book must have been.

Polo himself was inspired. He believed that it was God's will for him to return from China and tell others what he had seen. Even now, his book is a record of an amazing adventure and reflects on a journey of lasting importance. Who knows? Even hundreds of years later it may still be inspiring the next great explorer.

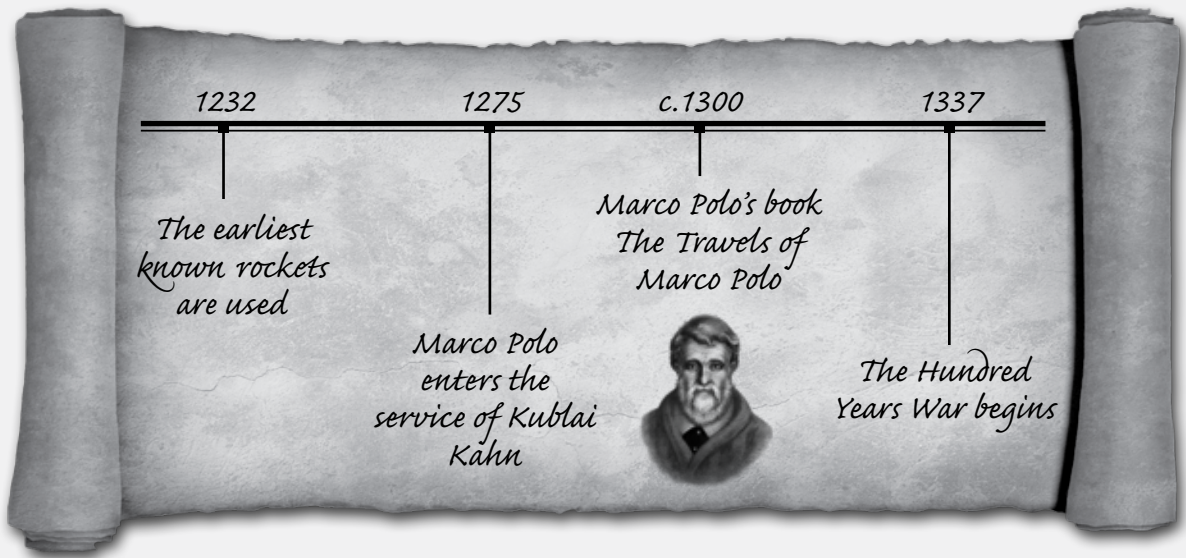
## *Discussion*

1. How do you think Marco Polo affected the life of Christopher Columbus?
2. Even today, sometimes people travel to strange, unknown places to learn about the people and things there. Tell how you would feel about doing something like that.



## Timeline Review

Put things in perspective. Place Marco Polo's figure on the timeline in the year 1300, which was around the time his book, *The Travels of Marco Polo*, became available. Look at the other events before, during, and after this year.



## Activity

1. Either by looking in a reference book, at the library or (with your parents' permission) online, find out what Chinese writing looks like. Try to draw one or two characters from their alphabet. Marco Polo must have seen this language. Do you think it would be difficult to learn? If so, tell why you think it would be difficult.
2. The food cooked and eaten in China is very unique. Look in the cookbook, *Eat Your Way Around the World* and find a recipe from China. Together with your family, make one or more recipes.

Have you ever eaten in a Chinese restaurant? How is the food different there from what you usually eat?

## Wordscramble

Here is a list of scrambled words that relate to the profile you read about Marco Polo. Unscramble the letters and write the words correctly.

- |                     |                   |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1. prxoeler _____   | 6. apncait _____  |
| 2. onjeyru _____    | 7. obko _____     |
| 3. aedvrunte _____  | 8. eampakmr _____ |
| 4. hatCya _____     | 9. maersd _____   |
| 5. balKu hnaK _____ | 10. fawayra _____ |

## *Cloze*

After reading the passage, try to fill in the blanks with words that make sense about Marco Polo. When you are finished, look at the story to find the words that were used in the passage.

As a matter of fact, Marco's life was filled with \_\_\_\_\_ new things. He stayed in \_\_\_\_\_ for 17 years doing various jobs for Kubla Khan. Everywhere he went, he \_\_\_\_\_ the people carefully and tried to \_\_\_\_\_ as much as he could about them and their language, \_\_\_\_\_, and how they lived and worked. When he left China to return home, he remembered all the \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ he had seen.

## *True or False*

After reading his profile, decide whether you think each of the following statements about Marco Polo and his travels is true or false.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Kubla Khan did not like the Polo brothers very much.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Marco Polo began his journeys when he was an old man.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Marco told his stories to a man he met in prison.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ The cities of Cathay had many modern features.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Marco stayed in Cathay for 17 years.

*Marco Polo Word Search*

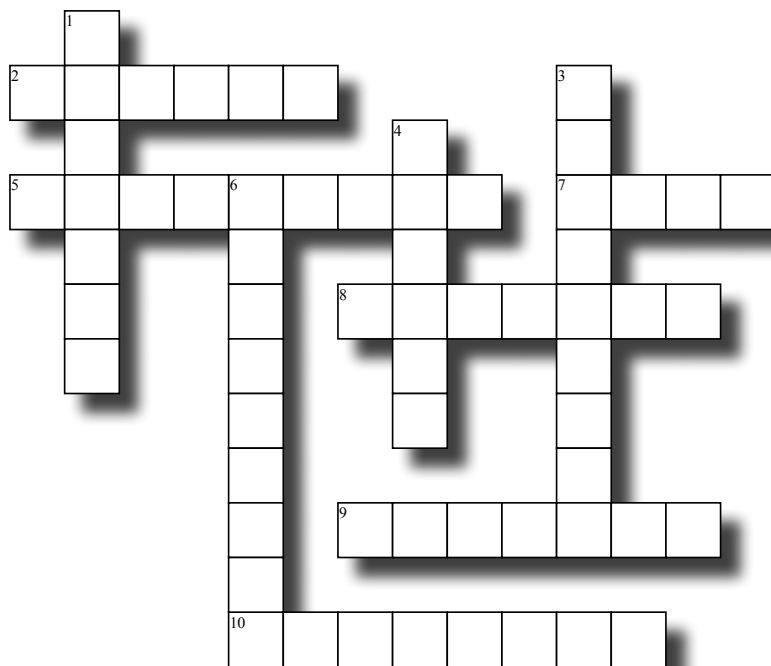
X M Y S Y V F A R A W A Y M S W B J J  
 M T K I E F S A P O B K B A B Q Q C V  
 K J O U R N E Y T O P M P P S B I U G  
 L S R M B P R N R O B M H M X D V O Q  
 S K U B L A K H A N K I A A F D E P C  
 Z D Q K T G C O C V X M P K O G U Q D  
 Z N P H I Z K K A X C A W E U Y W C O  
 Y G D V I A M E T J F R K R C E Y A C  
 E O D R E A M S H E M C R S H C B P Q  
 D U K G Z L J B A O Q O X I N S X T J  
 H P S H Y B U I Y G H P V M N K V A X  
 M B E V N O B E X P L O R E R X W I Q  
 K X D H A O R X M I X L W Y U U R N U  
 F H Z H F K C M J Q D O Q T G D T T W  
 K K L S A G R P V Z U L K N O P S E I

*Word Bank*

Captain  
 Cathay  
 Kubla Khan  
 Marco Polo  
 book

dreams  
 explorer  
 faraway  
 journey  
 mapmaker

## *Marco Polo Crossword*



### **Across**

2. The name China used to be known by
5. Marco's descriptions of the places he had been helped; these people do their job
7. One of these was written about Marco Polo's travels
8. The leader of a ship is called this
9. Another name for a long trip
10. Marco Polo was always meant to be this type of person

### **Down**

1. A word that means very distant
3. The leader of China when the Polo brothers went there
4. Another word for imaginings or hopes
6. Marco's life was filled with this