

Ferdinand Magellan

A classroom play by Team HOPE

Cast List

Antonio Pigafetta (PIGA).....crew member on Magellan’s ship

Elijah Lovejoy (ANCH).....anchor of “The History News Report”

Margaret Fuller (R1).....reporter for “The History News Report”

Nellie Bly (R2)reporter for “The History News Report”

Ernie Pyle (R3).....reporter for “The History News Report”

TEACHER NOTES

SETTING: A contemporary classroom. It is advised to set up the anchor in the front of the room facing the class, in front of some sort of background with “The History New Report.” You may choose to set up the different reporters conducting the interviews around the classroom and have the historical figures come to them. This way it gives the appearance of different locations. A name plate in front of each cast member is highly recommended. A 5x8 index card folded in half works great for this purpose.

COSTUMES: Although not necessary, any period costumes for the historical figures are a great addition. Even a simple hat or wig is excellent.

MASKS: Masks are an easy addition that will add to the drama and make the entire event more fun for the students. First, go to www.google.com and click on “image search.” Type in the historical figure’s name and find an image of the person. Copy and paste the picture in a Word document. You may need to crop and then enlarge the photo so you get a picture large enough to be used as a mask. Portraits obviously work best for this use. Print out the picture and paste it onto a cardboard backing. You can tape a plastic spoon or popsicle stick to be used as a handle. You may decide to make masks for the student correspondents as well, using pictures of television news personalities for the masks.

Note: If there is a historical person you cannot find a picture for, don’t despair! Almost any random “period” person’s picture (as long as it not someone easily recognizable) would work as a mask.

ROLES: Encourage students to act out the roles with as much energy as possible. Do not be too terribly concerned that the sex of the historical figure matching with the sex of the student.

The teacher may decide to take a part in the play, role-modeling one of the historical figures. It is recommended that five copies of the scripts are specifically set aside for each character in the play. For each character, *highlight all their lines* in order to facilitate a faster pace of dialogue. All other students should receive an unmarked copy of the play to read as the play is performed.

ANCHOR AND REPORTERS: In order to facilitate the historical discussions that exist in the plays, actual famous journalist names have been used in the plays. Teachers should point out that these journalists come from different times in American history and do not necessarily reflect the period they report on. It is as if they can travel in time to deliver “The History News Report.” A teacher may also decide to substitute the names given in the script for student names if desired. A brief description of the journalists is as follows:

- **Elijah Lovejoy** (1802-1837) A minister and journalist for the *St. Louis Observer* and later editor of the abolitionist newspaper the *Alton Observer* of Alton, Illinois. In 1837, pro-slavery forces attacked his warehouse in order to destroy his printing press and he was murdered on the scene.
- **Margaret Fuller** (1810-1850) An early woman rights activist, Margaret was the first female journalist to work on the staff of a major American newspaper, *The New York Tribune*. She was a widely read literary critic who was also sent on overseas assignments to Europe.
- **Nellie Bly** (1864-1922) After a writing a fiery rebuttal to a sexist column in the *Pittsburgh Dispatch*, Nellie was hired by a very impressed editor at the newspaper. She went on to become a famous investigative journalist on the plight of working women, and gained further fame for having faked insanity in order to investigate the treatment of the mentally ill.
- **Ernie Pyle** (1900-1945) An American journalist who was a roving correspondent for Scripps Howard newspaper chain. His articles were read in over 200 newspapers. He is most famous for having been a war correspondent during World War II. He led the charge for Congress to give soldiers “battle pay” while in combat. He died under heavy fire from a Japanese machine gun nest in the Pacific on April 18, 1945.

DISCUSSION: Use the accompanying worksheet to facilitate discussion before and after the play. Students who are not directly involved in the play can attempt to write preliminary answers as the play is performed. The audience should be told that they will be the primarily responsible for the discussion questions at the end of the lesson.

Ferdinand Magellan

(A Report by HNR News)

NOTE: All responses by historical figures reflect actual events and beliefs as closely as possible.

CAST ABBREVIATIONS

Antonio Pigafetta.....PIGA
Elijah LovejoyANCH
Margaret Fuller..... R1
Nellie Bly.....R2
Ernie Pyle.....R3

ANCH Welcome to the History News Report, I am your anchor Elijah Lovejoy. (pause) Spain, 1519: Ferdinand Magellan’s flotilla of ships set forth on an expedition to reach the famous Indonesian “Spice Islands.” They would head west, just like Columbus, with dreams of riches. We are honored to have with us in studio today is Italian adventurer Antonio Pigafetta, who took part in Magellan’s voyage. (*turning to Pigafetta*) Welcome Mr. Pigafetta!

PIGA Thank you for letting me share my story.

ANCH Our pleasure. Let’s first start with you describing the flotilla that sailed on September 20, 1519?

PIGA We left harbor with five creaking ships and our crews numbered 250.

R3 Your destination was the spice islands of Indonesia. What specific cargo did you hope to bring back?

PIGA We hoped to find supplies of clove, peppercorn, and nutmeg. They were spices that were virtually unavailable any other place on earth and that made their trade highly lucrative. We all dreamed of coming home heroes. Rich heroes.

R2 You sailed west like Columbus. What was your plan for dealing with the new continent?

PIGA We hoped to sail to the south until we found away around the southern tip of South America.

R2 But you ran into trouble there, didn’t you?

PIGA Yes, we wintered on the coast of Argentina and the men began to grumble. Three ships soon mutinied. Captain Magellan put down one mutiny by having the ship’s mutinous captain stabbed. Another he fired upon and took the captain prisoner. The revolt collapsed.

R1 How did Magellan treat this other mutinous captain?

PIGA He had his body quartered.

R1 Quartered?

PIGA Cut into four part and displayed throughout the fleet as a warning!

ANCH After the winter and mutiny, you pressed on?

PIGA Yes, we entered the straits that shall forever bear Captain Magellan's name. Hazards were all around us. Sudden storms, strong currents, and dangerous rocks. We lost two ships before we finally made it through.

R2 You reached the Pacific?

PIGA Yes, that is what Captain Magellan named it, the Pacific Ocean. It was calm, much unlike the terrible straits we just left behind.

R3 You now were in open water however.

PIGA Yeah, and we had no idea how large this ocean was. We thought we only had a short distance before we reached the spice islands. But we were so very wrong. We didn't realize it at the time, but we faced a journey twice the distance that Columbus took.

R1 Did you run low on supplies?

PIGA Oh, yes! We were three months and twenty days without any kind of fresh food. We ate biscuits which was no longer a biscuit but powder biscuit swarming with worms. It stank strongly of the urine of rats. We also ate ox hides (leather) and if one could find a rat, they fetched a man a fair amount of gold. But even then, we had trouble locating the rats...

R2 This must have taken a terrible toll on the crew!

PIGA We were ravaged by disease and starvation.

ANCH What did you do to keep your sanity?

PIGA We prayed. Regularly.

R3 Obviously your prayers were ultimately answered?

PIGA They were, specifically on March 6, 1521. We finally landed at what is today called Guam. I cannot describe the We were overwhelmed by swarms of friendly natives. We stayed only long enough to resupply and then we made for the Spice Islands.

- R1** Where did you land next?
- PIGA** Within a week we reached the Philippines Islands. Immediately the Captain wanted to claim the local natives and their land for the King of Spain and one of the local chiefs even converted to Christianity. However, no sooner did this native “Christian King” convert than he was asking us to fight in a war against a neighboring island.
- R2** What was Magellan’s reaction?
- PIGA** He felt like he couldn’t refuse help to another Christian, so we set off to war. Magellan hoped that by just showing off our muskets and cannon that the other natives would submit to the “Christian King’s” rule.
- ANCH** Did it work?
- PIGA** Well, the entire expedition was a disaster.
- ANCH** How so?
- PIGA** As soon as we arrived on the island, we were confronted by over one thousand five hundred natives. As soon as they saw us (our numbers consisted of only 49 sailors), they descended on us with ferocity. They shot so many arrows at us and hurled so many bamboo spears (some of them tipped with iron) that we could scarcely defend ourselves.
- R3** Did Captain Magellan order retreat at this point?
- PIGA** First, the captain sent some men to burn their houses in order to terrify them. When they saw their houses burning, they were roused to greater fury. Two of our men were killed near the houses, while we burned twenty or thirty houses. So many of them charged down upon us that they shot the captain through the right leg with a poisoned arrow. On that account, he ordered us to retire slowly, but the men took to fight, except six or eight of us who remained with the captain.
- R2** Did he continue to fight?
- PIGA** Until the very end. He was wounded by the native spears several times until the natives descended upon him. One of them wounded him in his left leg which caused him to fall face first. They rushed with bamboo spears and that is when they killed (*mourning him*) our mirror, our light, our comfort, and our true guide...seeing him dead, we retreated to the boats.
- R1** But the mission did not end, did it?

PIGA No, Captain Juan Sebastian took command of the *Victoria* and we abandoned the two other ships. We sailed west around the Cape of Good Hope and limped into Seville, Spain on September 8, 1522.

R3 Three years later!

PIGA And only eighteen sea-weary men. We immediately walked barefoot to the cathedral, each bearing a candle to do penance and give thanks for our survival.

ANCH (*facing the audience*) So after three long years, losing four ships and 232 men, the remainder of Magellan's crew became the first crew to circumnavigate the earth. Spain stood unchallenged as the leading sea power in the world. For History News Report, I am your anchor Elijah Lovejoy.

Bennett, William J., *America: The Last Best Hope*, Nelson Current, Nashville: 2006, p.17-19
"The Death of Magellan, 1521," EyeWitness to History, www.eyewitnesstohistory.com (2001).