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### Vespucci, Amerigo

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*CUNY Bernard M Baruch College*

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Tasman Bay, the Tasman Mountains, Tasman National Park and Tasman Glacier.

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Pacific Island Travel [http://www.pacificislandtravel.com/books\\_and\\_maps/abeltasman.html](http://www.pacificislandtravel.com/books_and_maps/abeltasman.html)

Dirk Reiser

*Vespucci, Amerigo*

Amerigo Vespucci was born in Florence, Italy, on 9 March 1451 and died in Seville, Spain, on 22 February 1512. From an early age he showed a great deal of interest in astronomy, mathematics and cartography. In 1492 Vespucci left Florence, where he had worked for the Medici family, and arrived in Seville, where he became the director of a company that supplied ships for long voyages. With this connection, he made five voyages to the American continent between 1497 and 1505, sometimes in the service of Spain and sometimes in the service of Portugal. On his voyages, Vespucci visited many new lands in the **Caribbean** and the Gulf of Mexico. He also made voyages to coastal areas from southern Argentina to the Labrador Peninsula, as well as to **Cape Verde** and the **Falkland Islands**.

Although **Columbus** is better known than Vespucci today, that was not the case in the early 16th century, when the narratives of the voyages of Vespucci were more widely disseminated, by far, than were those of the voyages of Columbus. Furthermore, Florence, his native city, was the centre for diffusion of news of discovery of the New World. Thus it is not surprising that when the **crew** of the ship he commanded in his fourth trip of 1504 returned back to Spain, they told the story of their discoveries to cartographers and, in 1507, Martin Waldseemüller, a German mapmaker, suggested calling the new lands America, a name that rapidly spread among other mapmakers. Thus, America was named after Amerigo Vespucci.

Aldemaro Romero  
Shelly Kannada

*von Humboldt, Alexander*

Alexander Freiherr von Humboldt (1769–1859), a German scholar, is the founder of physical

geography. Following a number of small excursions he organized to northern Italy (1795) and Switzerland, Salzburg and the eastern Alps (1797), he travelled through America from 1799 to 1804. In Venezuela, for 18 months Humboldt studied the coastal mountains and the Orinoko area, making numerous discoveries (for example, the electric eel and new tree types). A three-month trip to Cuba (1800–1801) led to the creation of a monograph of this island. In Quito, Ecuador (1802), Humboldt examined the local volcanic mountains. Afterwards, he travelled to Colombia and Mexico ('New Spain') in 1803. He returned to France in 1804. The gigantic sum of new – especially botanical – findings, measurements and observations procured him the admiration of the educated world and made him the centre of attention of the scholarly circle in Paris.

Von Humboldt returned to Berlin in 1827, where he lectured against Hegel's nature philosophy and published his four-volume work 'Cosmos', a unique encyclopedia of nature science at this time, which was translated into many different languages.

Alexander von Humboldt and his brother, Wilhelm (founder of the Berlin University, 1809–1810), are buried in the Tegel-Castle in Berlin.

Torsten Kirstgjes

**Externalities** Externalities are the knock-on effects that the activities of one agent of economic activity may have on the welfare of another agent, other than through the usual workings of the market mechanism. They can be related either to production or consumption decisions and can have either positive or negative welfare consequences. Negative externalities imply that external costs are generated, while positive externalities imply that external **benefits** are generated. These are not taken into account in the decision making of agents generating them and are thus 'external' to the market.

An example of a negative production externality is when a group of **whales** is disturbed due to the poor handling of a **whale-watching vessel**, resulting in reduced viewing opportunities for other skippers in the area. An example of a negative consumption externality is when inexperienced **scuba-divers** disturb the sea bed and reduce underwater visibility for others