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EEDUC 5136  
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# **The Real Christopher Columbus Unit**

(Designed for a combined 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade classroom)

Christopher Columbus a national hero? Most Native Americans are offended by this notion and are adamant about abolishing a national holiday that honors a man who was responsible for the spread of greed, cruelty, and eventually genocide. This unit on Christopher Columbus is designed to enhance students' ability to critically think and analyze material presented in a classroom. They will be presented with a wide array of facts from a multitude of sources as well as differing perspectives so that they can form their own opinions about whether Columbus Day deserves to be one of our eight national holidays. Some of the expected outcomes are:

- ✓ Students will be able to read and interpret a historic primary source and formulate their own ideas about Christopher Columbus.
- ✓ Students will be able to better appraise the veracity and reliability of resources.
- ✓ Students will be able to express their opinions both written and verbally in a well-organized and mature manner.
- ✓ Students will learn to critically analyze information presented in a traditional school setting, recognizing bias and perspective influences an author's writing.

## The Columbus Day Dilemma

Is Christopher Columbus deserving of a national holiday? If not, how should educators approach the popular yet controversial subject in the classroom?

Columbus Day has raised eyebrows since 1971 when President Nixon declared the second Monday of October a national holiday in honor of an Italian-born explorer who sailed under the Spanish flag (History.com, 2007). If Columbus had actually discovered America, which he did not, the issue of whether to honor him with a national holiday despite his questionable character might be a really difficult decision. Yet not only did Columbus never set foot on mainland North America (a Norwegian Viking by the name of Leif Erickson did so in the late tenth century), but he thought he had reached India, not some “new world” as it was referred to. Credited with “discovering” a place already flourishing with a peaceful native people, he called them “Indians” because of his ignorance and serious underestimation of the earth’s circumference (by a factor of five).

Columbus is credited with many other achievements for which he is undeserving. For example, Greek geography Ptolemy of the second century AD, proved the earth was round, not Columbus. Ptolemy did this by pointing out that the shadow of the earth on the moon is always round during an

eclipse and that you can see the mast of a ship even after the hull is gone over the horizon. Students who attended medieval university were taught the spherical globe, even though a large portion of the uneducated population still thought of the world as flat. In addition, Columbus embarked on his first voyage thinking there were no continents left to be discovered. That is why he assumed the Native Americans he encountered were Indian, not a people unknown to Europeans (Morison, 1965).

Myths aside, history books show a quite different side to the man who explored under the banner of Christ. Columbus's personal journal entries indicate that his quest for gold and power may have been his primary motivation for his exploration. Perhaps harder to ignore are accounts of his mistreatment of natives who had graciously welcomed him and his men. As Columbus wrote to Queen Isabella, "They invite you to share anything they possess, and show as much love as if their hearts went with it." He went on to write that the natives could be "subjugated and compelled to anything one wishes." As it turned out, he wished they would find him large amounts of gold that simply did not exist in those regions. Not only did he enslave the native peoples, but his relentless pursuit of riches later inspired him to start the North American slave trade from Africa (Morison, 1965).

Under Columbus's governance, atrocities that do not show up in many school textbooks occurred with regularity. Failure to meet a quota meant losing a hand (many bled to death). Others were crucified, in rows of thirteen - one for Christ and his twelve apostles. There are even horrific accounts of Columbus's men feeding native babies to their dogs during times when food became scarce. In addition to the intentional harm unleashed upon the peaceful natives, Europeans brought diseases with them to the Americas for which the natives had no immunity or treatment. Only a few decades later, millions of natives had been wiped out, leaving only a scattering of a culture that had existed for centuries before Columbus's arrival (Davis, 2003).

So why does the United States celebrate this man when there are so many other men and women who truly deserve a national holiday? Benjamin Franklin has no holiday, but his contributions were both civically and scientifically monumental. Unlike Columbus, Franklin is a true American hero in every sense of the word. What should concern educators, parents, and lawmakers alike is the message that a holiday like this sends to American children. Revering a man whose cruelty was oftentimes on par with Adolph Hitler's, is a disturbing reality. In the classroom, students need to be given all the facts that social studies lessons can provide so they can make their own determination about what kind of a man Columbus really

was and if we should continue to honor him with a national holiday, or at all.

## Bibliography

Morison, S.L. (1965). *The Oxford History of the American People*. New York: Oxford Press.

Davis, K.C. (2003). *Don't Know Much About History*. New York: Harper Collins.

*History Channel*. (Retrieved July 25, 2007)

[http://www.history.com/minisite.do?content\\_type=Minisite\\_Generic&content\\_type\\_id=152&display\\_order=1&mini\\_id=1044](http://www.history.com/minisite.do?content_type=Minisite_Generic&content_type_id=152&display_order=1&mini_id=1044)

## Lesson One

# Discovery Education Columbus Video

### OVERVIEW:

Students will watch a high quality, historically accurate video as an engaging activity at the beginning of their Columbus unit. After the 20-minute video is over, students will draw pictures of some of the supplies necessary for a 15-century transatlantic journey.

### MA STATE SOCIAL STUDIES FRAMEWORK STRAND(S) AND OR NCSS STRANDS:

#### *Grade 5 Learning Standard 5.3:*

Explain why trade routes to Asia had been closed in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and trace the voyages of at least four of the explorers listed below. Describe what each explorer sought when he began his journey, what he found, and how his discoveries changed the image of the world, especially the maps used by explorers. (H, G, E)

- A. Vasco Nuñez de Balboa
- B. John and Sebastian Cabot
- C. Jacques Cartier
- D. Samuel de Champlain
- E. Christopher Columbus
- F. Henry Hudson
- G. Ferdinand Magellan
- H. Juan Ponce de Leon
- I. Amerigo Vespucci

**TECHNOLOGY OBJECTIVE:** By showing a 2006 Discovery Education re-enactment video as the activating activity, students will be transported back to the late 15<sup>th</sup> century.

**STUDENT OBJECTIVE:** Through the use of this historically accurate visual aid, the students will be able to recognize and assess the enormous challenges and primitive conditions that early explorers faced. They will be able to appreciate the danger and uncertainty that existed with ocean travel and the motivation behind such an endeavor. They will begin to identify the materials required to make such a voyage and compare the technology of the 15<sup>th</sup> century to that of today.

### **MATERIALS/RESOURCES:**

1. A television or projection screen set up to play a video from a computer.
2. Access to the video: *Christopher Columbus: Voyager to a New World*. Discovery Channel School(2006). Retrieved August 6, 2007, from unitedstreaming: <http://www.unitedstreaming.com/>
3. Supplies for Columbus Coloring Sheet

### **METHODS:**

1. Tell the students that when the lights go off, you will be entering a time machine that will take you back over 500 years, to the great age of exploration.
2. Ask them to pay close attention to the kinds of objects, equipment, provisions, etc. that were required for a successful voyage across the unknown sea. They should jot down notes about these items as they will be drawing pictures of them after the video.
3. Show the short video (22 minutes) *Christopher Columbus: Voyager to a New World* from Discovery Channel School ([www.unitedstreaming.com](http://www.unitedstreaming.com)).
4. Show the video.
5. When it's finished, invite the class to discuss their impressions of the video. Get them to compare how different life was then as compared to now.
6. Hand out the Supplies for Columbus Coloring Sheet and give them 20 minutes to draw as many items from the voyage as they can remember.
7. After 20 minutes have the students meet together. Go around the room and have students share one of their items with the class until there are no more new items to share.

**ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION:** Because this is meant to be an engaging activity, there will be no assessment other than students' behavior during the video.

**ADAPTATIONS:** For ESL students, the video is available in subtitles.

## Lesson Two

# Differing Columbus Perspectives

### OVERVIEW:

Students will read two differing accounts of Columbus's first landing in the Americas and then write a short story about what it would be like if aliens landed nearby.

### MA STATE SOCIAL STUDIES FRAMEWORK STRAND(S):

*Grade 5 History and Geography Concept 2:*

Interpret timelines of events studied. (H)

*Grade 5 Learning Standard 5.3:*

Explain why trade routes to Asia had been closed in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and trace the voyages of at least four of the explorers listed below. Describe what each explorer sought when he began his journey, what he found, and how his discoveries changed the image of the world, especially the maps used by explorers. (H, G, E)

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- H. Juan Ponce de Leon
- I. Amerigo Vespucci

### MA STATE ELA FRAMEWORK STRAND(S):

#### Language Strand:

**Standard 6: Formal and Informal English:** *Students will describe, analyze, and use appropriately formal and informal English.*

- Write stories using formal language in prose.

#### Reading and Literature Strand:

**Standard 9: Making Connections:** *Students will deepen their understanding of a literary or non-literary work by relating it to its contemporary context or historical background.*

**Standard 11: Theme:** *Students will identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of theme in a literary work and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.*

- Apply knowledge of the concept that theme refers to the main idea and meaning of a literary passage or selection.



### Composition Strand:

**Standard 19: Writing:** *Students will write with a clear focus, coherent organization, and sufficient detail.*

### STUDENT OBJECTIVE:

Students will recognize the differing perspectives of European and Native Americans concerning European colonization. They will extrapolate this perspective to create a well-organized and reasonably plausible short story.

### MATERIALS/RESOURCES:

- ✓ *Encounter (1992)* by Jane Yolen, illustrated by David Shannon
- ✓ An American textbook with information about Columbus discovering the New World or another picture book with a Euro-centric view of Columbus (such as *Columbus (1955)* by Ingri & Edgar Parin)
- ✓ A book of optical illusions (with a picture that has two images based on how you look at it)
- ✓ Question/parameter sheet for short story.

### METHODS:

1. **Anticipatory Set (Lead-In):** Show a small portion of the class the optical illusion from one view. Show the rest of the class the optical illusion from the other view.
2. Ask the class what they saw and point out the discrepancy between the two groups. Explain perspective.
3. Read aloud from the textbook or other picture book about Columbus discovering America.
4. Read aloud *Encounter* by Jane Yolen, and point out the characterization of Columbus and the welcome he received from the Taino.
5. Discuss the differences in the two texts and the perspective of each.
6. Read aloud the author's note in *Encounter*. Discuss the impact of Columbus' "discovery" of America on the Taino and on Europeans.

**Plan for Independent Practice:** Have children read other books about Columbus, Native Americans and colonization of America.

7. **Creative Writing (Reflect Anticipatory Set):** Have the students create a short story addressing the following questions:

- ✓ What would happen if aliens landed several large spaceships in Boston (or whatever major city is closest) today?
- ✓ What might they look like?
- ✓ How would they be received by the locals?
- ✓ What if they have weapons?
- ✓ What are some of the things think they might want?

Students should make their story as realistic as possible based on Boston's current technology, geography, population, government, etc. Tell them the story must be descriptive, well-organized, and coherent.

- 8. Draw a Book Cover:** Ideally, students should be given some time in class shortly thereafter to draw a picture for the front cover of their book.

**ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION:**

Students will be assessed based on whether the students integrate the parameters of the writing assignment and whether the piece shows an understanding of *perspective*. In addition, they will be graded on their organization, grammar usage, spelling, vocabulary choice, and overall creativity within the guidelines.

**ADAPTATIONS:**

ESL or learning disabled students may opt to tell their story entirely from pictures instead. The book should include some bits of text if possible, but should tell the same story regardless.

**REFERENCE:**

<http://www.lessonplanspage.com/SSLATwoPerspectivesColumbusDay46.htm>



# Lesson Three

## Columbus Primary Source Lesson

### OVERVIEW:

Students will determine why Europeans wanted to colonize the Americas by analyzing 3 types of sources, a letter from Columbus to the king and queen of Spain, footage from the film *1492: Conquest of Paradise* by Ridley Scott, and an encyclopedia excerpt.

### MA STATE SOCIAL STUDIES FRAMEWORK STRAND(S) AND OR NCSS STRANDS:

5.3 Explain why trade routes to Asia had been closed in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and trace the voyages of at least four of the explorers listed below. Describe what each explorer sought when he began his journey, what he found, and how his discoveries changed the image of the world, especially the maps used by explorers. (H, G, E)

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### PRIMARY SOURCE:

- ✓ Christopher Columbus's letter to the king and queen of Spain.

**STUDENT OBJECTIVE:** Students will be able to read and interpret an historic primary source and formulate their own ideas about Christopher Columbus. Students will recognize the reliability differences between primary and secondary source material. Students will be able to better appraise the veracity and reliability of resources.

### MATERIALS/RESOURCES:

- ✓ A letter from Christopher Columbus to the king and queen of Spain.
- ✓ A scene from the film *1492: Conquest of Paradise* by Ridley Scott.
- ✓ An encyclopedia excerpt.

### METHODS:

The central question of the activity is: Why did Europeans want to colonize the Americas?

**Use three different kinds of sources:**

- Christopher Columbus's letter to the king and queen of Spain.
- A clip from the movie *1492: Conquest of Paradise* by Ridley Scott.
- An encyclopedia excerpt.

**DAY ONE:**

1. **Class discussion (10 min).** Columbus stumbled on America while searching for Asian spices. Why did Europeans choose to colonize the Americas despite the fact that no spices were found? Students are asked to theorize and make suggestions. Suggestions are written in student journals or on the chalkboard.

2. Teacher presents the letter from Columbus to the king and queen of Spain. (*Written in approximately 1494, the letter offers suggestions about the colonization of lands in America. While the letter considers several issues, it displays an overwhelming preoccupation with gold*)

The letter contains 17 sections of suggestions made by Columbus. **Students are asked to read the letter and to place a symbol in front of each section to designate the main content of the section (30-40 min).** The symbols and their related content are written on an overhead transparency or chalkboard for the students to see and refer to during the exercise:

- N - dealing with Native Americans
- T - organizing Towns
- G - dealing with Gold
- P - setting up Ports
- R - promoting Religion

Ask students to mark only the main issue or issues in each section. Because a section mentions priests, the section isn't necessarily about religion. When the students have finished, choose a few students and tally their results on the chalkboard. The issue of gold should end up with the biggest score by a wide margin.

*NOTE:* If they cannot finish in the time period, tell them it will become homework.

**DAY TWO:**

3. **Students are given a blank Source Analysis Form (10 min)** and asked to complete it with regard to the letter from Columbus. For now, leave blank the sections that ask what other sources agree with or contradict this source.

4. **View the scene from the film *1492: Conquest of Paradise* (5-15min)** in which a Native American asks Columbus why Columbus intends to send more men to the island-- more than the leaves on a tree. Columbus offers several lame excuses until the American states that he knows the real reason is gold; then he walks away in disgust.

(Ridley Scott is a master of visual imagery. Earlier sequences in the film depicting Columbus's first voyage to America and the first encounter with Americans are wonderful and worth showing to your students. I usually show these preliminary sequences at the beginning this activity to set the stage for what comes later. Unfortunately, this long film eventually bogs down.)

5. **Class discussion (10 min).** Students discuss the scene from the movie. What is the reason given here for European colonization? Is this reason and this source believable? Students complete a Source Analysis Form for the film.

6. **Teacher presents the encyclopedia excerpt and distributes a copy to students (10 min).** Students complete a third Source Analysis Form for the encyclopedia passage, and they should now complete all sections on all three forms. Class discussion: Are students confident they have found the real reason for the early European colonization of the Americas? Why or why not?

7. **Assign the Christopher Columbus essay question (10 min).** Discuss the four steps in answering an essay question paying special attention to step 3, finding all requirements in the question. After students have completed this exercise, discuss student responses regarding their level of confidence about the sources. Why are students confident they have found the real reason for colonization?

*NOTE:* According to one source, in 1492 eight million Native Americans were living on Hispaniola, the island where Columbus first landed. In 1535 there were none.

**MOTIVATIONAL TECHNIQUES:** Tell them if they focus and work efficiently there might be more time to watch the movie. You can always show more of the film later when there is some free time.

**ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION:** Assessment would be based on whether the groups accurately interpreted the basic meaning of the text by placing the symbols correctly.

**ADAPTATIONS/MODIFICATIONS:**

Students of different abilities may each contribute in their own way to the analysis. The teacher might provide a simpler version of the text without changing the meaning. Copies of the document are available in other languages as well.

**REFERENCES/CREDIT:**

[studentsfriend.com/aids/curraids/analysis/sourceex.html](http://studentsfriend.com/aids/curraids/analysis/sourceex.html)  
<http://studentsfriend.com/aids/curraids/analysis/sourcecan.pdf>

Christopher Columbus,  
letter to the King and Queen of Spain (Undated, probably 1494)

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Most High and Mighty Sovereigns,

In obedience to your Highnesses' commands, and with submission to superior judgment, I will say whatever occurs to me in reference to the colonization and commerce of the Island of Espanola, and of the other islands, both those already discovered and those that may be discovered hereafter.

In the first place, as regards the Island of Espanola: Inasmuch as the number of colonists who desire to go thither amounts to two thousand, owing to the land being safer and better for farming and trading, and because it will serve as a place to which they can return and from which they can carry on trade with the neighboring islands:

1. That in the said island there shall be founded three or four towns, situated in the most convenient places, and that the settlers who are there be assigned to the aforesaid places and towns.
2. That for the better and more speedy colonization of the said island, no one shall have liberty to collect gold in it except those who have taken out colonists' papers, and have built houses for their abode, in the town in which they are, that they may live united and in greater safety.
3. That each town shall have its alcalde [Mayor] ... and its notary public, as is the use and custom in Castile.
4. That there shall be a church, and parish priests or friars to administer the sacraments, to perform divine worship, and for the conversion of the Indians.
5. That none of the colonists shall go to seek gold without a license from the governor or alcalde of the town where he lives; and that he must first take oath to return to the place whence he sets out, for the purpose of registering faithfully all the gold he may have found, and to return once a month, or once a week, as the time may have been set for him, to render account and show the quantity of said gold; and that this shall be written down by the notary before the alcalde, or, if it seems better, that a friar or priest, deputed for the purpose, shall be also present
6. That all the gold thus brought in shall be smelted immediately, and stamped with some mark that shall distinguish each town; and that the portion which belongs to your Highnesses shall be weighed, and given and consigned to each alcalde in his own town, and registered by the above-mentioned priest or friar, so that it shall not pass through the hands of only one person, and there shall be no opportunity to conceal the truth.
7. That all gold that may be found without the mark of one of the said towns in the possession of any one who has once registered in accordance with the above order shall be taken as forfeited, and that the accuser shall have one portion of it and your Highnesses the other.
8. That one per centum of all the gold that may be found shall be set aside for building churches and adorning the same, and for the support of the priests or friars belonging to them; and, if it should be thought proper to pay any thing to the alcaldes or notaries for their services, or for ensuring the faithful perforce of their duties, that this amount shall be sent to the governor or treasurer

who may be appointed there by your Highnesses.

9. As regards the division of the gold, and the share that ought to be reserved for your Highnesses, this, in my opinion, must be left to the aforesaid governor and treasurer, because it will have to be greater or less according to the quantity of gold that may be found. Or, should it seem preferable, your Highnesses might, for the space of one year, take one half, and the collector the other, and a better arrangement for the division be made afterward.
10. That if the said alcaldes or notaries shall commit or be privy to any fraud, punishment shall be provided, and the same for the colonists who shall not have declared all the gold they have.
11. That in the said island there shall be a treasurer, with a clerk to assist him, who shall receive all the gold belonging to your Highnesses, and the alcaldes and notaries of the towns shall each keep a record of what they deliver to the said treasurer.
12. As, in the eagerness to get gold, every one will wish, naturally, to engage in its search in preference to any other employment, it seems to me that the privilege of going to look for gold ought to be withheld during some portion of each year, that there may be opportunity to have the other business necessary for the island performed.
13. In regard to the discovery of new countries, I think permission should be granted to all that wish to go, and more liberality used in the matter of the fifth, making the tax easier, in some fair way, in order that many may be disposed to go on voyages.

I will now give my opinion about ships going to the said Island of Espanola, and the order that should be maintained; and that is, that the said ships should only be allowed to discharge in one or two ports designated for the purpose, and should register there whatever cargo they bring or unload; and when the time for their departure comes, that they should sail from these same ports, and register all the cargo they take in, that nothing may be concealed.

\* In reference to the transportation of gold from the island to Castile, that all of it should be taken on board the ship, both that belonging to your Highnesses and the property of every one else; that it should all be placed in one chest with two locks, with their keys, and that the master of the vessel keep one key and some person selected by the governor and treasurer the other; that there should come with the gold, for a testimony, a list of all that has been put into the said chest, properly marked, so that each owner may receive his own; and that, for the faithful performance of this duty, if any gold whatsoever is found outside of the said chest in any way, be it little or much, it shall be forfeited to your Highnesses.

\* That all the ships that come from the said island shall be obliged to make their proper discharge in the port of Cadiz, and that no person shall disembark or other person be permitted to go on board until the ship has been visited by the person or persons deputed for that purpose, in the said city, by your Highnesses, to whom the master shall show all that he carries, and exhibit the manifest of all the cargo, it may be seen and examined if the said ship brings any thing hidden and not known at the time of lading.

\* That the chest in which the said gold has been carried shall be opened in the presence of the magistrates of the said city of Cadiz, and of the person deputed for that purpose by your Highnesses, and his own property be given to each owner. -

I beg your Highnesses to hold me in your protection; and I remain, praying our Lord God for your Highnesses' lives and the increase of much greater States.

from: [www.studentsfriend.com](http://www.studentsfriend.com)



**Source Analysis Form**  
**World History & Geography**

Student name \_\_\_\_\_

Topic or Issue \_\_\_\_\_

1. **Source No** \_\_\_\_\_. 2. Name of the source: \_\_\_\_\_

3. When was it made? \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_ Primary Source \_\_\_\_ Secondary Source

5. Type of source: (document, photo, object, video, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

6. Who made the source? (Person and organization, nation, or culture) \_\_\_\_\_

7. Who was the intended audience? \_\_\_\_\_

8. Why was it made? (To inform? To persuade? To entertain? Other?) \_\_\_\_\_

9. Summary. What is the main point or points this source is making? \_\_\_\_\_

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10. What is the source's point of view? (Social class, gender, job, political or cultural beliefs, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

11. Is the source biased? (Does the source's point of view interfere with the truth?) Explain. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

12. What other evidence supports this source? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

13. What other evidence contradicts this source? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

14. Is this a good source? Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Christopher Columbus: Explorer

Christopher Columbus (1451-1506) was an Italian explorer who sailed across the Atlantic Ocean in 1492, hoping to find a route to India (in order to trade for spices). He made a total of four trips to the Caribbean and South America during the years 1492-1504.

## The First Trip:

Columbus sailed for King of Spain. On his first trip, with three ships, the Niña [Pinzon](#), the Pinta (owned [Pinzon](#)), and the Santa Maria about 90 crew members.

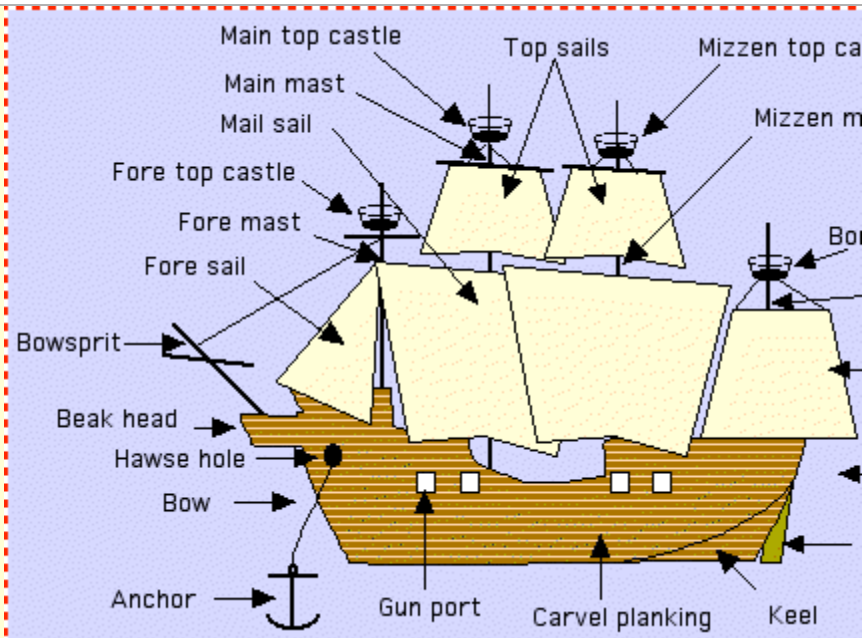


Ferdinand II and Queen Isabella Columbus led an expedition (captained by [Vicente Yáñez](#) and captained by [Martin Alonzo](#) (captained by Columbus), and They set sail on Aug. 3, 1492

from Palos, Spain, and on October 11, 1492, spotted the Caribbean islands off southeastern North America. They landed on an island they called Guanahani, but Columbus later renamed it San Salvador. They were met by the local Taino Indians, many of whom were captured by Columbus' men and later sold into slavery. Columbus thought he had made it to Asia, and called this area the Indies, and called its inhabitants Indians.

While exploring the islands in the area and looking for gold to loot, Columbus' men traveled to the islands of Hispaniola (now divided into Haiti and the Dominican Republic), Cuba, and many other smaller islands. On the return trip, the Santa Maria was wrecked and the captain of the Pinta sailed off on his own to try to beat Columbus back. Columbus returned to Spain in the Nina, arriving on March 15, 1493.





In 1492, Columbus sailed from Spain with three ships. Two of the ships, the Niña and the Pinta were smaller, and were captained by Columbus. The ships were from 1

### The Second Trip:

On a second, larger expedition (Sept. 25, 1493-June 11, 1496), sailed with 17 ships and 1,200 to 1,500 men to find gold and capture Indians as slaves in the Indies. Columbus established a base in Hispaniola and sailed around Hispaniola and along the length of southern Cuba. He spotted and named the island of Dominica on November 3, 1493.

### The Third Trip:

On a third expedition (May 30, 1498-October 1500), Columbus sailed farther south, to Trinidad and Venezuela (including the mouth of the Orinoco River). Columbus was the first European since the Viking [Leif Ericsson](#) to set foot on the mainland of America.



Captain Christopher Columbus' ensign (banner) pictured a cross and the crown-topped initials F (for King Ferdinand of Spain) and Y (for Queen Isabella of Spain).

### The Fourth Trip:

On his fourth and last expedition (May 9, 1502-Nov. 7, 1504), Columbus sailed to Mexico, Honduras and Panama (in Central America) and Santiago (Jamaica). Columbus is buried in eastern Hispaniola (now called the Dominican Republic).

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/explorers/page/c/columbus.shtml>

## Lesson Four

# Christopher Columbus Timeline

### OVERVIEW:

Using a handout as a guide, students will identify eight of the most significant events in Columbus's life and create a timeline on Timeliner or Inspiration software.

### MA STATE SOCIAL STUDIES FRAMEWORK STRAND(S) AND OR NCSS STRANDS

*Grade 5 History and Geography Concept 2:*

Interpret timelines of events studied. (H)

*Grade 5 Learning Standard 5.3:*

Explain why trade routes to Asia had been closed in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and trace the voyages of at least four of the explorers listed below. Describe what each explorer sought when he began his journey, what he found, and how his discoveries changed the image of the world, especially the maps used by explorers. (H, G, E)

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- E. Christopher Columbus
- F. Henry Hudson
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- H. Juan Ponce de Leon
- I. Amerigo Vespucci

**TECHNOLOGY OBJECTIVE:** Students will be given a summary of the major events that took place in Christopher Columbus's life. Students will each choose 8 events and place them on a timeline using Inspiration (or Timeliner). For each event, they should type the date in the date text box and a brief description of the event in the event text box. They should also choose a picture to cut and paste onto their timeline. Teacher should be able to assist students with any technological difficulties they might encounter.

**STUDENT OBJECTIVE:** Student will be able to analyze historical data for relevance and importance, produce logical timelines that demonstrate their understanding of the subject matter, and effectively utilize educational technology with minimal assistance. They will be able to explain to the class their rationale for including the events chosen.

**MATERIALS/RESOURCES:** *As part of a prior lesson or homework assignment, students should have read an in-depth account of Columbus's life. If not, then make sure they have the appropriate background knowledge before attempting to create this timeline.*

- ✓ Columbus handout (<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/explorers/page/c/columbus.shtml>)
- ✓ Use of computer lab with Inspiration (or Timerliner) installed
- ✓ *Internet connection is not necessary if you have Columbus photos for students to access on their computer*

**METHODS:**

1. Make sure students have a chance to read the Columbus handout before you scheduled time in the computer lab. They should be given time to choose and order their 8 events so they are not wasting time or rushing while at the lab.
2. With their handouts, take students to the lab.
3. Make sure each student is properly set up on Inspiration and then have them create their timeline by filling in all 8 date boxes, all 8 event boxes, and a picture to go in the center.
4. Circulate around the room and assist with any technical issues that arise.
5. When students are finished, they should print their timeline. If time is running short teacher may ask them to assist classmates who are still working.
6. Go back to the classroom and if time permits have the students briefly present their timelines to the class.

**ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION:** Students will be assessed on the accuracy and neatness of the timeline, behavior in the computer lab, the importance and relevance of their 8 chosen events, as well as their ability to explain their rationale with the class.

**ADAPTATIONS:** Students who have difficulty using computers may be teamed with a technologically proficient student. In addition, teacher may have some students fill in 4 or 6 events rather than 8.

## Lesson Five

# Town Hall Debate

### OVERVIEW:

Students will apply all of their acquired skills from the unit toward a debate about whether we should celebrate Columbus Day. Students who are unable to participate in the debate may create “exhibits” to present as supporting evidence for their team.

### MA STATE SOCIAL STUDIES FRAMEWORK STRAND(S) AND OR NCSS STRANDS

#### *Grade 5 Learning Standard 5.3:*

Explain why trade routes to Asia had been closed in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and trace the voyages of at least four of the explorers listed below. Describe what each explorer sought when he began his journey, what he found, and how his discoveries changed the image of the world, especially the maps used by explorers. (H, G, E)

- A. Vasco Nuñez de Balboa
- B. John and Sebastian Cabot
- C. Jacques Cartier
- D. Samuel de Champlain
- E. Christopher Columbus
- F. Henry Hudson
- G. Ferdinand Magellan
- H. Juan Ponce de Leon
- I. Amerigo Vespucci

**STUDENT OBJECTIVE:** Students will utilize their acquired literacy skills to evaluate the reliability of source material on Columbus. They will use problem-solving skills to create a solution to an ill-constructed problem that has no clear right or wrong answer. And they will work in cooperative teams to gather information, discuss a problem, and come to a conclusion. They will transform this knowledge into a verbal argument that will be presented in a thoughtful and mature way.

### MATERIALS/RESOURCES:

- ✓ a wide variety of literature or history texts with background information on Columbus
- ✓ Internet access (optional)

## **METHODS:**

1. Students will draw upon their knowledge acquired during the unit. They will meet together as a group to discuss facts and strategies for the debate. Team members may also contribute to the debate by creating exhibits (posters, models, etc.) to compliment the arguments put forth by team members, thereby giving students another way to contribute and demonstrate understanding of the unit.
2. Students should be given ample time to meet in their groups to divide up research and to determine who will verbally present arguments and who will present artwork as visual evidence. This should be done whenever time is available.
3. **Debate Question:** You are residents of the town of Pride, USA. A petition has been signed to abolish Columbus Day as a holiday and change it to honor someone more deserving. The question that will be debated at the town meeting is whether or not Christopher Columbus is worthy of a national holiday.

*Methods and setup for this debate may vary depending upon the number of students participating and the level at which they can compete. For information about how to structure a debate that's right for your class, go to: [http://www.educationworld.com/a\\_lesson/lesson/lesson304b.shtml](http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/lesson/lesson304b.shtml)*

*Regardless of the debate structure, each team should be prepared to address the following issues:*

- ✓ Which country was he loyal to and for what reasons?
- ✓ What were Columbus' motivations for reaching the Indies?
- ✓ How did he treat the natives who welcomed him?
- ✓ Were any atrocities committed under Columbus and how might they (or might they not) have been justified?
- ✓ How was Columbus involved with the slave trade?
- ✓ How did Columbus positively and negatively impact the world?
- ✓ Should America celebrate Columbus Day?

**ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION:** Students will be assessed based on the debate rubric as well as their artistic contributions to the team.

**ADAPTATIONS:** Because there is an option to contribute to the team by presenting visual evidence, all students will have an active role.



## CLASSROOM DEBATE RUBRIC

	Levels of Performance			
Criteria	1	2	3	4
<p><b>1. Organization and Clarity:</b></p> <p>viewpoints and responses are outlined both clearly and orderly.</p>	Unclear in most parts	Clear in some parts but not over all	Most clear and orderly in all parts	Completely clear and orderly presentation
<p><b>2. Use of Arguments:</b></p> <p>reasons are given to support viewpoint.</p>	Few or no relevant reasons given	Some relevant reasons given	Most reasons given: most relevant	Most relevant reasons given in support
<p><b>3. Use of Examples and Facts:</b></p> <p>examples and facts are given to support reasons.</p>	Few or no relevant supporting examples/facts	Some relevant examples/facts given	Many examples/facts given: most relevant	Many relevant supporting examples and facts given
<p><b>4. Use of Rebuttal:</b></p> <p>arguments made by the other teams are responded to and dealt with effectively.</p>	No effective counter-arguments made	Few effective counter-arguments made	Some effective counter-arguments made	Many effective counter-arguments made

<p><b>5. Presentation Style:</b></p> <p>tone of voice, use of gestures, and level of enthusiasm are convincing to audience.</p>	<p>Few style features were used; not convincingly</p>	<p>Few style features were used convincingly</p>	<p>All style features were used, most convincingly</p>	<p>All style features were used convincingly</p>
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# Evaluation

In addition to the **individual lesson assessments**, **students' overall understanding of the unit will be evaluated** with a non-traditional assessment - a classroom debate.

As a final assessment for their Columbus Unit, students will have a team debate over whether Columbus Day should continue to be observed as a holiday or whether it should be abolished.

Students will draw upon their knowledge acquired during all phases of the unit as well as outside research. Debate teams will meet together as a group to discuss facts and strategies for the debate. Team members may also contribute to the debate by creating "exhibits" (posters, models, etc.) to compliment the arguments put forth by team members, thereby giving students another way to contribute and demonstrate understanding of the unit.

Using debates in the classroom can help students grasp many essential critical thinking and presentation skills. Among the skills classroom debates can foster are:

- ~ abstract thinking
- ~ analytical thinking
- ~ citizenship/ethics/etiquette
- ~ cross-examination/questioning
- ~ point of view
- ~ distinguishing fact from opinion
- ~ identifying bias
- ~ organization of information
- ~ persuasion
- ~ public speaking
- ~ research
- ~ teamwork/cooperation

[http://www.kyrene.org/schools/brisas/sunda/debate/teaching\\_debate.htm](http://www.kyrene.org/schools/brisas/sunda/debate/teaching_debate.htm)

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