

## Lesson Plan

# A MATTER OF PERSPECTIVE: COLUMBUS IN THE NEW WORLD

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**Grades:** 6, 8

**Subjects:** World History, U.S. History

**Time Required:** 1 50-minute class period



### PRIMARY SOURCES & MATERIALS USED

- [Columbus taking possession of the new country](#) (see image at right)
- [Teacher's Guide: Analyzing Photographs & Prints](#)
- [Student worksheet: Analyzing Photographs & Prints](#)
- [Medieval Sourcebook: Christopher Columbus: Extracts from Journal](#)
- Overhead projector
- Textbooks

### OVERVIEW

This lesson challenges students to reexamine their knowledge of Christopher Columbus by analyzing and comparing primary and secondary sources as well as their own prior knowledge. Additionally, students will learn to approach sources critically to detect bias.

### UNDERSTANDING GOAL

The way in which Americans think about Columbus has changed over time.

### OBJECTIVES

The learner will identify differences between primary and secondary source accounts of Columbus' landing in the New World. The learner will analyze a visual secondary source to identify examples of bias.

### INVESTIGATIVE QUESTION

Columbus has been portrayed as a hero and a villain. How do we sort out the facts from the fiction to find out what really happened?

### TN Curriculum standards:

8.5.02

1. Describe the immediate and long-term impact early European exploration had on Native populations and on colonization in the Americas.
2. List the characteristics of the Spanish and Portuguese exploration and conquest of the Americas.

### Process Standards:

The learner will

- A. detect bias in data presented in a variety of forms.
- B. read critically a variety of materials including textbooks, historical documents, newspapers, magazines, and other reference sources.

## PROCEDURE

### Step 1 **Connect**

Ask the students what they know about Christopher Columbus and record their answers on one side of a T chart. Ask the students what questions they have about Columbus. Record those on the T chart.

### Step 2 **Connect**

Divide students into groups. Give each group the following items:

- Copy of “Christopher Columbus: Extracts from Journal” for Wednesday, October 10—Saturday, October 13, from *Medieval Sourcebook* (online)
- Copy of bibliographic entry for “Columbus taking possession of the new country” from the Library of Congress Web site
- Color copy of “Columbus taking possession of the new country”

Give each group one of the following two worksheets:

- Copy of “Analyzing Photographs & Prints” worksheet
- Copy of “Teacher’s Guide: Analyzing Photographs & Prints”

### Step 3 **Investigate**

Give the students time to form initial impressions about the materials.

Instruct the students to choose one member of each group to read the journal extracts to the group.\*

*\*Take your students’ reading levels into consideration before beginning the assignment. You may want to read the journal aloud before dividing the students into groups.*

### Step 4 **Construct**

Ask the students to work together to note differences between the written and visual sources.

Have the students complete the Analysis Tool or discuss the questions on the Teacher’s Guide.

### Step 5 **Reflect**

Have the students share their observations about the two sources.

Lead a class discussion that includes the following points:

- What are the differences between the two sources?
- The illustration portrays Columbus in a heroic manner.
- The illustration was intended as an educational tool.
- Students viewing the illustration would view Columbus as a hero.
- Native Americans are missing from the illustration.
- The illustration was created in 1893. To what extent does it reflect events such as the purchase of Alaska, the annexation of Hawaii, the Open Door Policy in China, and the Spanish-American War?

**Step 6 Investigate**

Instruct students to read the section in their textbooks on Columbus. Ask them to note the differences between their textbook accounts and the two sources they have previously analyzed. If their books include pictures of Columbus, have them compare the pictures as well.

**Step 7 Reflect**

Lead a class discussion that includes the following points:

- Modern textbooks do not generally portray Columbus as a hero.
- Modern textbooks include information about the Native Americans Columbus encountered.
- Most textbooks focus on the devastating consequences that the arrival of Europeans had for Native Americans.
- Why would the conventional heroic view of Columbus as shown in the illustration begin to change in the 1960s? What was happening during that era that brought about this change?

**Step 8 Express**

Have the students reflect on how the picture would be different if created today.

Then allow them to choose one of the following activities:

- Draw a version of “Columbus taking possession of the new country” that reflects modern attitudes and historical understandings.
- Write a brief description of “Columbus taking possession of the new country” from the perspective of a Native American viewing the event.

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**EVALUATION**

Group Participation/ Class Discussion: Pass/ Fail, based on teacher observation and completion of “Analyzing Photographs & Prints” worksheet if assigned

Individual Project Rubric:	Historical accuracy	50 points
	Creativity	50 points

**EXTENSIONS**

Encourage students to examine other depictions of Columbus in old history textbooks, at museums, or among the primary sources on the Library of Congress Web site ([http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/list/080\\_columbus.html](http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/list/080_columbus.html)).