TEACHING WITH PRIMARY SOURCES—MTSU
Lesson Plan:
Culture Clash: Three Views of Columbus

Grade: 10th
Subject: World History, English/Language Arts
Time Required: 2 45-minute class periods
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Overview
Students will analyze three images of Columbus’s landing in the New World. Using these images and selected textual resources, they will determine how the clash of cultures has been depicted over time. Learners will use Primary Source Analysis Tool, Investigative Questions, and a Venn Diagram to record information.

Understanding Goal
Students will exhibit understanding of the importance of the clash of cultures, listing both immediate interactions and long-term consequences.

Objectives
The learner will:
- Analyze three images to determine how Old and New World cultural interaction has been depicted.
- Read primary source excerpts and interpret information.
- Consider long-term consequences, both positive and negative, of the culture clash that resulted from European exploration.

Investigative Questions
What differences in the primary sources reflect the clash of cultures? How did the initial encounters between European explorers and settlers on the one hand and Native American tribes on the other influence future relations between the two groups?

Materials
- Computer access or print-outs of primary sources
- Primary Source Analysis Tool
- Information Worksheet (see p. 4)
- Venn Diagram Worksheet

Primary and Secondary Sources
IMAGES:
- The Coming of white man [1914]
- Landing of Columbus [between 1860 and 1880]
- Columbus taking possession of the new country [1893]

TEXTS:
- Christopher Columbus by John S.C. Abbott (New York, 1875), excerpt from Chapter III, pp. 70-76
- A letter of Christopher Columbus [1493], excerpt, pp. 17-18

VIDEO:
- “Columbus’s Most Prized Possession” (2min 14sec), a.k.a. Book of Privileges
CURRICULUM STANDARDS

Literacy in History/Social Studies (Common Core)

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.3 Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.6 Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

English/Language Arts (Common Core)

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7 Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.¹

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.8 Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.9 Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.7 Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person’s life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.7 Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.8 Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

PROCEDURE

Day 1

Step 1 PREPARATION: Divide students into three groups. Determine if computer access is available. If not, save and print copies of the three images and two written sources for each group. Also print copies of the Primary Source Analysis Tool (with a copy of the accompanying Teacher’s Guide for yourself), Information Worksheet, and Venn Diagram Worksheet for each student. Distribute printed materials.

Step 2 Ask students to think about their experiences going to a new place for the first time. What was different from being at home, and what was similar? Did the people they met have different ways of speaking? What customs or foods were different? What were their impressions of the people there? Tell students you will be examining Columbus’s impressions upon first visiting the New World.
Step 3  Show the video “Columbus’s Most Prized Possession” about Columbus’s Book of Privileges (see pages from the Book here). Discuss the meaning of “privilege” according to Columbus. Emphasize the importance of primary sources for historians. Why would this particular primary source need an armed guard?

Step 4  Each group will examine one of the three images, making observations on key components, such as physical descriptions, technology, clothing, and weapons. Each student will then complete the Primary Source Analysis Tool. (If students are filling out the Analysis Tool as a photocopied worksheet, provide them with prompt questions from the Teacher’s Guide.) Discuss findings in groups.

Step 5  Each group will choose a speaker, who will present information and conclusions from the Analysis Tool to the class. Students will write down answers for question #1 of the Information Worksheet during presentations. The teacher will direct students on how to fill out the Venn Diagram Worksheet based on information presented.

Day 2

Step 6  Ask students to work individually to read and analyze assigned textual sources and complete the Information Worksheet. Lead class discussion on these questions. Compare the three images to written documents. (Explain that sources from the 19th century are not primary sources for Columbus’s time, but they are primary sources for how Americans remember Columbus’s encounter with the natives.) Which of the images most closely matches the account from Columbus’s letter of 1493? The narrative text from 1875?

Step 7  Reflect on the culture clash between Europeans and Native Americans during Columbus’s explorations. How did the initial encounters between Europeans and Native Americans influence future relations between the two groups? Give specific examples.

EXTENSION:

This approach to cultural encounters can be applied to the topic of space exploration. Compare modern astronauts to Columbus. Imagine meetings between humans and other civilizations. How do you think humans will react?

Columbus taking possession of the new country
[1893, detail]

EVALUATION:

Use the following rubric to evaluate student participation in research and discussion.

93-100  Displays understanding of Investigative Questions. Completes Primary Source Analysis Tool, Information Worksheet, and Venn Diagram Worksheet. Participates in group work and class discussion.

85-92  Displays partial understanding of Investigative Questions. Shows limited attempt at completing Primary Source Analysis Tool, Information Worksheet, and Venn diagram. Participates in group work and class discussion.

75-84  Displays partial understanding of Investigative Questions. Shows limited attempt at completing Primary Source Analysis Tool, Information Worksheet, and Venn diagram. Shows limited involvement in class discussion.

70-74  Does not understand Investigative Questions. Shows limited attempt at completing Primary Source Analysis Tool, Information Worksheet, and Venn diagram. Makes no contribution to class discussion.

Below 70  Makes little or no attempt to complete assignment.
1. How are the two cultures depicted in each image? Examine physical characteristics and technology.
   a. ______________________________________________________________________________
   b. ______________________________________________________________________________
   c. ______________________________________________________________________________

2. What view of the Native Americans is espoused in Columbus’s letter of 1493?
   ______________________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________________

3. Does the information from the 1875 text match Columbus’s 1493 account? Explain.
   ______________________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________________