

TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY PROJECT

Lesson Title – Encounter with Christopher Columbus From Leslie Cicilline

Grade – 5

Length of class period –Two 60 minutes periods

- Inquiry – How does the story of Columbus “discovering” America change when it is told from a different point of view?

Objectives:

- Students will deduce both European and Native American perspective of the European colonization of America.

Materials:

- Optical illusions
- website for Columbus’s journal:
- <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/columbus1.html> (relevant entries attached)
- *Encounter* by Jane Yolen Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers; 1992
- Graphic organizer - mindlook
- Examples of partner poem

Activities:

Day One:

- Ask students to look at the optical illusion. Discuss the two different perspectives.
- Read aloud *Encounter* by Jane Yolen. Have student fill in a mind look with the thoughts/feelings of the Taino boy. Read the letter from the author.
- Read together Columbus’s journal. Highlight important parts. Fill out another mind look with the thoughts/feelings of Christopher Columbus.

Day 2: Show some examples of partner poems. In partners, have students use the ideas from their mindlooks to write a poem of two voices and share with the class.

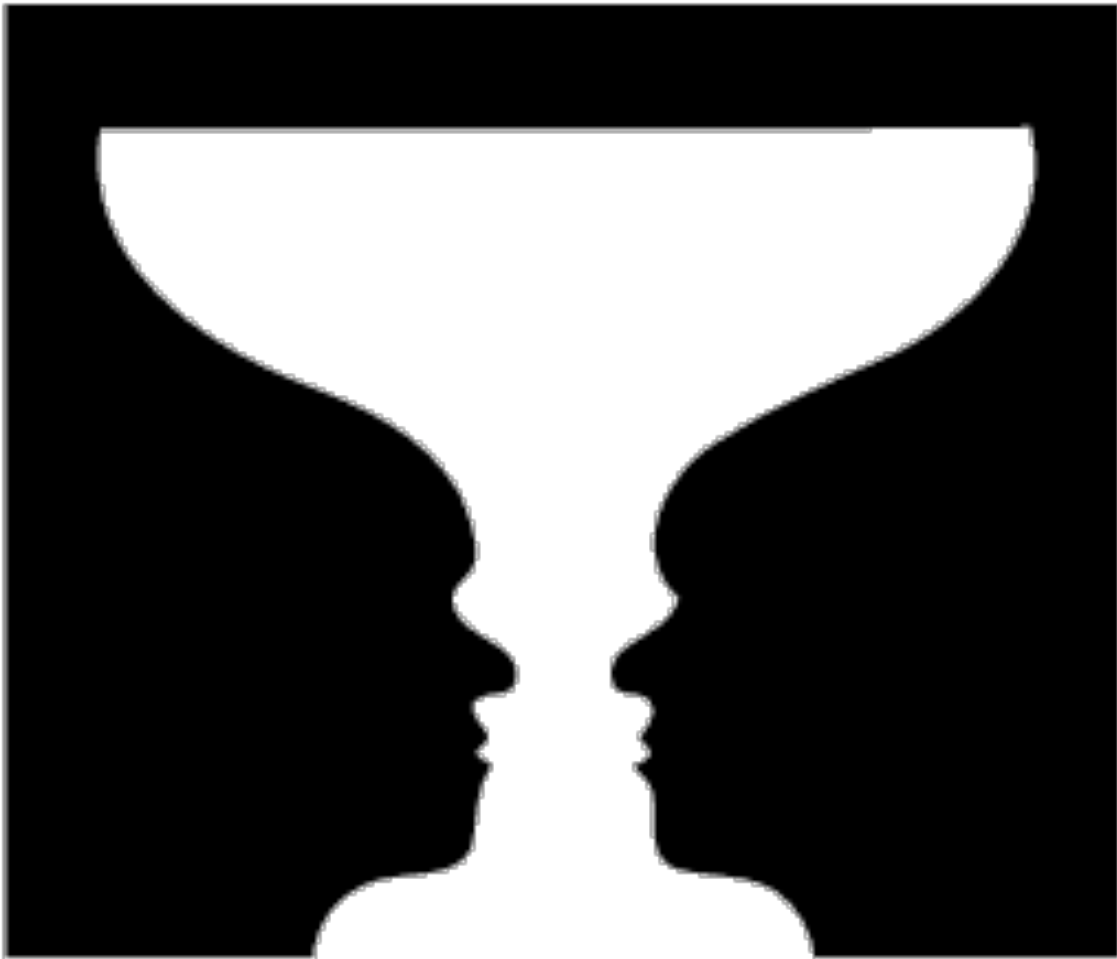
How will you assess what student learned during this lesson?

- Mindlook
- Partner poems

Connecticut Framework Performance Standards –

- Debate conflicting points of view on historical issues or events using evidence
- Compare and contrast information provided by primary and secondary sources
- Create written work from primary sources
- Organize information in outlines and graphic organizers

- Identify and explain different points of view about a historical event
- Describe views and feelings of people in the past using personal experiences and/or outside readings





Excerpts from Columbus's Journal

Thursday, 11 October. Steered west-southwest; and encountered a heavier sea than they had met with before in the whole voyage. Saw pardelas and a green rush near the vessel. The crew of the Pinta saw a cane and a log; they also picked up a stick which appeared to have been carved with an iron tool, a piece of cane, a plant which grows on land, and a board. The crew of the Nina saw other signs of land, and a stalk loaded with rose berries. These signs encouraged them, and they all grew cheerful. Sailed this day till sunset, twenty-seven leagues.

After sunset steered their original course west and sailed twelve miles an hour till two hours after midnight, going ninety miles, which are twenty-two leagues and a half; and as the Pinta was the swiftest sailer, and kept ahead of the Admiral, she discovered land and made the signals which had been ordered. The land was first seen by a sailor called Rodrigo de Triana, although the Admiral at ten o'clock that evening standing on the quarter-deck saw a light, but so small a body that he could not affirm it to be land; calling to Pero Gutierrez, groom of the King's wardrobe, he told him he saw a light, and bid him look that way, which he did and saw it; he did the same to Rodrigo Sanchez of Segovia, whom the King and Queen had sent with the squadron as comptroller, but he was unable to see it from his situation. The Admiral again perceived it once or twice, appearing like the light of a wax candle moving up and down, which some thought an indication of land. But the Admiral held it for certain that land was near; for which reason, after they had said the Salve which the seamen are accustomed to repeat and chant after their fashion, the Admiral directed them to keep a strict watch upon the forecastle and look out diligently for land, and to him who should first discover it he promised a silken jacket, besides the reward which the King and Queen had offered, which was an annuity of ten thousand maravedis. At two o'clock in the morning the land was discovered, at two leagues' distance; they took in sail and remained under the square-sail lying till day, which was Friday, when they found themselves near a small island, one of the Lucayos, called in the Indian language Guanahani.

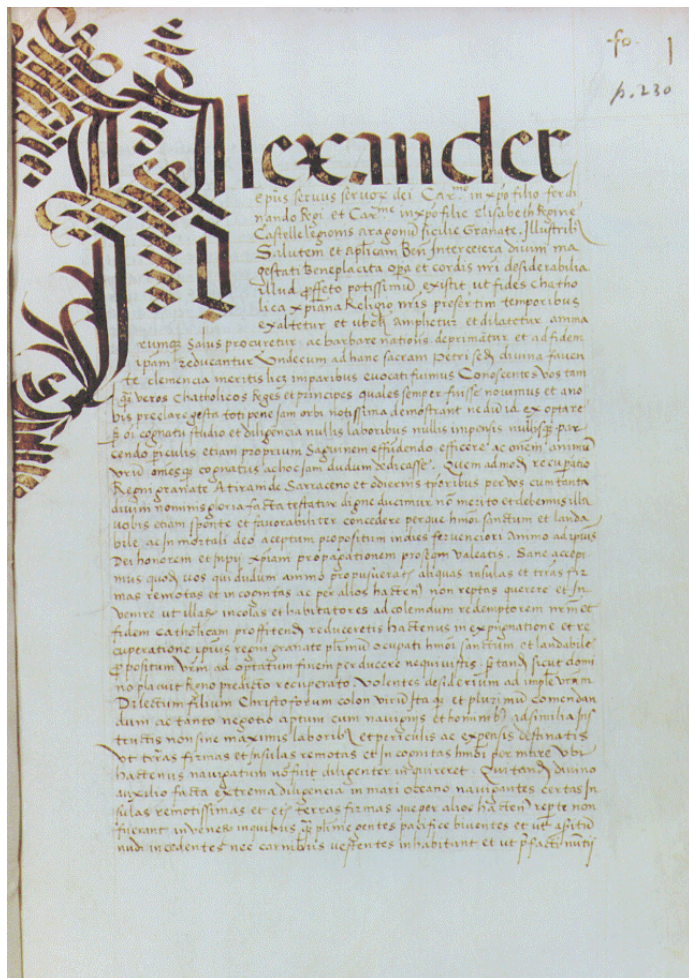
Presently they descried people, naked, and the Admiral landed in the boat, which was armed, along with Martin Alonzo Pinzon, and Vincent Yanez his brother, captain of the Nina. The Admiral bore the royal standard, and the two captains each a banner of the Green Cross, which all the ships had carried; this contained the initials of the names of the King and Queen each side of the cross, and a crown over each letter. Arrived on shore, they saw trees very green many streams of water, and diverse sorts of fruits. The Admiral called upon the two Captains, and the rest of the crew who landed, as also to Rodrigo de Escovedo notary of the fleet, and Rodrigo Sanchez, of Segovia, to bear witness that he before all others took possession (as in fact he did) of that island for the King and Queen his sovereigns, making the requisite declarations, which are more at large set down here in writing. Numbers of the people of the island straightway collected together. Here follow the precise words of the Admiral: "As I saw that they were very friendly to us, and perceived that they could be much more easily converted to our holy faith by gentle means than by force, I presented them with some red caps, and strings of beads to wear upon the neck, and many other trifles of small value, wherewith they were much delighted, and became wonderfully attached to us. Afterwards they came swimming to the boats, bringing parrots, balls of cotton thread, javelins, and many other things which they exchanged for articles we gave them, such as glass beads, and hawk's bells; which trade was carried on with the utmost good will. But they seemed on the whole to me, to be a very poor people. They all go completely naked, even the women, though I saw but one girl. All whom I saw were young, not above thirty years of age, well made, with fine shapes and faces; their hair short, and coarse like that of a horse's tail, combed toward the forehead, except a small portion which they suffer to hang down behind, and never cut. Some paint themselves with black, which makes them appear like those of the Canaries, neither black nor white; others with white, others with red, and others with such colors as they can find. Some paint the face, and some the whole body; others only the eyes, and others the nose. Weapons they have none, nor are acquainted with them, for I showed them swords which they grasped by the blades, and cut themselves through ignorance. They have no iron, their javelins being without it, and nothing more than sticks, though some have fish-bones or other things at the ends. They are all of a good size and stature, and handsomely formed. I saw some with scars of wounds upon their bodies, and demanded by signs the of them; they answered me in the same way, that there came people from the other islands in the neighborhood who endeavored to make prisoners of them, and they defended themselves. I thought then, and still believe, that these were from

the continent. It appears to me, that the people are ingenious, and would be good servants and I am of opinion that they would very readily become Christians, as they appear to have no religion. They very quickly learn such words as are spoken to them. If it please our Lord, I intend at my return to carry home six of them to your Highnesses, that they may learn our language. I saw no beasts in the island, nor any sort of animals except parrots." These are the words of the Admiral.

Saturday, 13 October. "At daybreak great multitudes of men came to the shore, all young and of fine shapes, very handsome; their hair not curled but straight and coarse like horse-hair, and all with foreheads and heads much broader than any people I had hitherto seen; their eyes were large and very beautiful; they were not black, but the color of the inhabitants of the Canaries, which is a very natural circumstance, they being in the same latitude with the island of Ferro in the Canaries. They were straight-limbed without exception, and not with prominent bellies but handsomely shaped. They came to the ship in canoes, made of a single trunk of a tree, wrought in a wonderful manner considering the country; some of them large enough to contain forty or forty-five men, others of different sizes down to those fitted to hold but a single person. They rowed with an oar like a baker's peel, and wonderfully swift. If they happen to upset, they all jump into the sea, and swim till they have righted their canoe and emptied it with the calabashes they carry with them. They came loaded with balls of cotton, parrots, javelins, and other things too numerous to mention; these they exchanged for whatever we chose to give them. I was very attentive to them, and strove to learn if they had any gold. Seeing some of them with little bits of this metal hanging at their noses, I gathered from them by signs that by going southward or steering round the island in that direction, there would be found a king who possessed large vessels of gold, and in great quantities. I endeavored to procure them to lead the way thither, but found they were unacquainted with the route. I determined to stay here till the evening of the next day, and then sail for the southwest; for according to what I could learn from them, there was land at the south as well as at the southwest and northwest and those from the northwest came many times and fought with them and proceeded on to the southwest in search of gold and precious stones. This is a large and level island, with trees extremely flourishing, and streams of water; there is a large lake in the middle of the island, but no mountains: the whole is completely covered with verdure and delightful to behold. The natives are an inoffensive people, and so desirous to possess any thing they saw with us, that they kept swimming off to the ships with

whatever they could find, and readily bartered for any article we saw fit to give them in return, even such as broken platters and fragments of glass. I saw in this manner sixteen balls of cotton thread which weighed above twenty-five pounds, given for three Portuguese ceutis. This traffic I forbade, and suffered no one to take their cotton from them, unless I should order it to be procured for your Highnesses, if proper quantities could be met with. It grows in this island, but from my short stay here I could not satisfy myself fully concerning it; the gold, also, which they wear in their noses, is found here, but not to lose time, I am determined to proceed onward and ascertain whether I can reach Cipango. At night they all went on shore with their canoes.

Other Related Primary Sources



- As a reward for his successful voyage of discovery, the Spanish sovereigns granted Columbus the right to bear arms. According to the blazon specified in letters patent dated May 20, 1493, Columbus was to bear in the first and the second quarters the royal charges of Castile and Leon -- the castle and the lion -- but with different tinctures or colors. In the third quarter would be islands in a wavy sea, and in the fourth, the customary arms of his family.

The earliest graphic representation of Columbus's arms is found in his **Book of Privileges** and shows the significant modifications Columbus ordered by his own authority. In addition to the royal charges that were authorized in the top quarters, Columbus adopted the royal colors as well, added a continent among the islands in the third quarter, and for the fourth quarter borrowed five anchors in fess from the blazon of the Admiral of Castille. Columbus's bold usurpation of the royal arms, as well as his choice of additional symbols, help to define his personality and his sense of the significance of his service to the Spanish monarchs.

- [Book of Privileges](#)



The **Book of Privileges** is a collection of agreements between Columbus and the crowns of Spain prepared in Seville in 1502 before his 4th final voyage. The compilation of documents includes the 1497 confirmation of the rights to titles and profits granted to the Admiral by the 1492 contract of Santa Fe and augmented in 1493 and 1494, as well as routine instructions and authorizations related to his third voyage. We know that four copies of his **Book of Privileges** existed in 1502, three written on vellum and one on paper.

All three vellum copies have thirty-six documents in common, including the Papal Bull *inter caetera* of May 4, 1493, defining the line of demarcation of future Spanish and Portuguese explorations, and specifically acknowledging Columbus's contributions. The bull is the first document on vellum in the Library's copy and the thirty-sixth document in the Genoa and the Paris codices. The Library copy does not have the elaborate rubricated title page, the vividly colored Columbus coat of arms, or the authenticating notarial signatures contained in the other copies. The Library's copy, however, does have a unique transcription of the Papal Bull *Dudum siquidem* of September 26, 1493, extending the Spanish donation. The bull is folded and addressed to the Spanish sovereigns.