

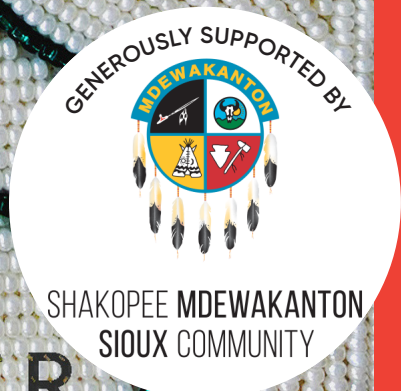
EDUCATOR GUIDE

Real History of Christopher Columbus

EVERYTHING
YOU WANTED
TO KNOW
ABOUT INDIANS
BUT WERE
AFRAID TO ASK

ANTON TREUER

YOUNG READERS EDITION



Real History of Christopher Columbus

In this lesson plan, students will learn about the real story of Christopher Columbus and the myths surrounding his history. They will research primary sources and explore the motivations and actions of Columbus, as well as the impact of his explorations on Indigenous Peoples and cultures. Through discussion, readings, and activities, students will gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of historical narratives and the importance of critically evaluating sources. By the end of the lesson, students will have a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of Columbus.

RELEVANT TEXT

Treuer, A. (2024). *Everything You Wanted to Know About Indians But Were Afraid to Ask: Young Readers Edition*, pp. 43-56.

OBJECTIVES

- Recall the objectives and motivations behind Columbus's explorations (remember)
- Comprehend the experiences and reactions of Indigenous Peoples upon encountering Columbus (understand)
- Use authentic sources to learn about Columbus's voyages and their impact (apply)
- Dissect the narrative around Columbus, differentiating between myths and facts (analyze)
- Assess the lasting effects of Columbus's explorations on Indigenous cultures and people (evaluate)
- Formulate a nuanced perspective on Columbus (create)

ACCOMMODATIONS TO CONSIDER MEETING STUDENT NEEDS

Visual Aids, Graphic Organizer, Preview Vocabulary, Oral Directions, Repeat/Clarify Directions, Reader, Text to Speech, Note Taker, Large Print, Audiobooks, Memory Aids, Visual Cues, Oral Response, Typed Response, Non-verbal Response, Speech to Text, Increased Wait Time, Verbal Prompts, Manipulatives, Graph Paper, Write in Book, Scribe, and others appropriate for the learner(s).

RELEVANT STANDARDS

MN Tribal Nation Essential Understandings		MN State Standards Social Studies			MN State Standards ELA		
1.1.3	2.3.3	9.1.6.1	9.1.6.4	9.3.14.1	9.1.2.1	10.1.2.1	11.1.2.1
4.1	5.1	9.3.15.1	9.3.15.3	9.3.15.6	9.1.2.2	10.1.2.2	11.1.2.2
		9.3.15.7	9.3.15.8	9.3.17.1	9.1.2.3	10.1.2.3	11.1.2.3
		9.3.17.2	9.3.17.3	9.3.17.4	9.1.3.1	10.1.3.1	11.1.3.1
		9.4.18.1	9.4.18.2	9.4.18.3	9.1.6.1	10.1.6.1	11.1.6.1
		9.4.18.4	9.4.18.5	9.4.18.6	9.1.6.2	10.1.6.2	11.1.6.2
		9.4.18.8	9.4.18.9	9.4.18.11	9.1.6.3	10.1.6.3	11.2.1.1
		9.4.18.12	9.4.18.13	9.4.18.14	9.1.9.1	10.1.9.1	11.2.1.2
		9.4.18.15	9.4.19.1	9.4.19.2	9.1.9.2	10.1.9.2	11.2.3.1
		9.4.19.5	9.4.19.7	9.4.19.8	9.2.1.1	10.2.1.1	11.2.3.2
		9.4.19.10	9.4.19.12	9.4.20.1	9.2.1.2	10.2.1.2	11.2.4.1
		9.4.20.2	9.4.20.4	9.4.20.5	9.2.1.3	10.2.1.3	11.2.4.2
		9.4.20.6	9.4.20.7	9.4.20.8	9.2.3.2	10.2.3.2	11.1.5.1
		9.4.20.10	9.4.20.12	9.4.20.14	9.2.4.1	10.2.4.1	11.2.5.2
		9.4.21.3	9.4.21.4	9.4.21.6	9.2.4.2	10.2.4.2	11.3.1.1
		9.4.21.7	9.4.21.8	9.4.21.9	9.2.5.1	10.2.5.1	
		9.4.21.11	9.4.21.12	9.4.21.13	9.2.5.2	10.2.5.2	
		9.4.22.1	9.4.22.3	9.4.22.7	9.2.7.1	10.2.7.1	
		9.4.22.8	9.4.22.10	9.4.22.14	9.2.7.2	10.2.7.2	
		9.4.23.1	9.4.23.3	9.4.23.4	9.3.1.1	10.3.1.1	
		9.4.23.6	9.4.24.2	9.4.24.3	9.3.1.2	10.3.1.2	
		9.4.24.4	9.4.24.5		9.3.1.3	10.3.1.3	

ACTIVITY 1**Introduction—Identifying Myths vs. Facts****READINESS LEVEL: Awareness**

Overview: Discuss the popularly known narrative of Columbus, then establish a “Myths vs. Facts board. This provides a visual framework to address and discuss misconceptions during the lesson.

- A. Start the activity by revisiting the commonly known narrative of Columbus. Present this narrative to the learners without any interpretation or bias.
- B. Encourage learners to share what they already know or what they’ve heard about Columbus. Capture these responses effectively.
- C. Introduce the notion of myths and facts. Explain the concept clearly, emphasizing that myths are commonly held stories or beliefs but not necessarily true, while facts are true and can be proven.
- D. Introduce the “Myths vs. Facts” board. Ensure to explain its purpose and how it will function in the rest of the activity.
- E. Discuss each statement or idea presented by the learners as a group, passing it through a “myths or facts” filter.
- F. Highlight the objective behind Columbus’s explorations and discuss the motivations as part of the information about him.
- G. Encourage learners to use communication, curiosity, grit, and perseverance as they sift through different narratives. Also important will be their global citizenship and cultural competencies to appreciate the different perspectives about Columbus.
- H. Allow learners to question each narrative, fostering a healthy skepticism and curiosity.
- I. Foster a collaborative environment. Guide the learners towards recognizing their biases, challenging them, seeking truth, and understanding the larger impact their perspectives might have on their worldview.
- J. Finally, engage the learners in a reflective discussion about the activity; the myths and facts they identified; the process they went through; the skills they used; and what they learned about Columbus.

SKILLS

- Communication
- Curiosity
- Global Citizenship and Cultural Competence
- Grit and Perseverance

ACTIVITY 2

Demonstrate and Explain— Cultural Exchange Brainstorm

READINESS LEVEL: Understand

Overview: Create two columns on the board, one for the Europeans and one for the Indigenous Peoples. Together, discuss and list what each group gained and lost from Columbus’s voyages and their interactions.

- A. Divide learners into two groups representing the Europeans and the Indigenous Peoples respectively. Have learners use their research to list what their assigned group gained and lost from Columbus’s voyages and the interactions with Indigenous people.
- B. Guide learners to research the experiences and reactions of the Indigenous Peoples upon encountering Columbus. Have the same done for the Europeans. This research process should aim to highlight the skills of negotiation and perseverance.
- C. Encourage learners from both groups to empathetically connect with their assigned perspectives. This will invoke the skills of empathy and kindness.
- D. Facilitate a discussion activity where learners from both groups communicate and interact with each other to better understand the different experiences. The discussion should not only challenge their negotiation skills but also their cultural competence, thereby developing their skills towards global citizenship.
- E. Utilize a preferred graphic organizer for this activity as well as a smart board, whiteboard, or chalkboard.
- F. To conclude the activity, engage the learners in drawing connections between the past and present—assessing the lasting effects of Columbus’s explorations on Indigenous cultures and people.

SKILLS

- Negotiation
- Empathy and Kindness
- Global Citizenship and Cultural Competence
- Grit and Perseverance

ACTIVITY 3

Student Task— Report from Different Perspectives

READINESS LEVEL: Application

Overview: Assign each student to write a journal entry or news report detailing a specific event from Columbus’s voyages from the perspective of different individuals involved (e.g., Columbus, a member of his crew, an Indigenous person). This task encourages empathy and understanding.

- A. Review the collected authentic sources and information on Columbus’s voyages, including primary and secondary sources. Gather a comprehensive understanding of the events, their impact, and the key individuals involved.
- B. Each student is assigned a role from a specific event during the voyages. The role could be of Columbus, a member of his crew, or an Indigenous person. Ensure that each student understands the role and its historical context in depth.
- C. Based on the role assigned, students are required to write a journal entry or a news report. The content should detail the specific event as it would have been experienced and perceived by the assigned role.
- D. The students must critically analyze the various sources and evidence, identifying the differing narratives that exist concerning these events. This includes distinguishing between the facts and myths surrounding these events.
- E. Using these insights, students must formulate their guided viewpoint about the impact of Columbus’s voyages and their overall historical significance—highlighting the different perspectives of the involved individuals.
- F. The written entry should not simply present the facts but also reflect the emotional experience and reactions of the individual enduring the event. This encourages empathy and understanding.
- G. Finally, students should communicate their nuanced perspectives in a large group/class discussion, integrating their own comprehension with the collective understanding developed by the class. This should include a reflection on their personal learning journey during this activity.
- H. Ensure each student is respectful during these discussions and displays global citizenship and cultural competence—appreciating the cultural diversity and historical complexity surrounding Columbus’s voyages.
- I. Repeat the process with a different event from Columbus’s voyage until all the major points of view have been explored.

SKILLS

- Critical Thinking
- Empathy and Kindness
- Global Citizenship and Cultural Competence
- Communication

ACTIVITY 4

Reflection—Rewriting the Narrative

READINESS LEVEL: Application

Overview: Have students rewrite the common narrative of Columbus, incorporating the realities and complexities they’ve learned. This helps reinforce what they’ve learned and further develops their critical thinking skills.

- A. Begin by revisiting the traditional narratives around Columbus, especially the ones proliferated in popular culture and textbooks. Identify key events and notions associated with these narratives.
- B. Carry out comprehensive research on Columbus and the period he lived in. Gather as many sources as possible, ensuring a good blend of primary and secondary sources. Aim to find information that differs, disputes, or elaborates on the traditional narratives.
- C. Analyze the acquired information and critically examine the source of these narratives and their respective socio-political contexts. Extract the facts from these sources by differentiating between substantiated information and popular myths.
- D. Discuss your findings with a partner or a small group. Use your communication skills to present your perspective, while also understanding and respecting others’ views.
- E. Given your research, discussions, and critical analysis, rewrite the narrative of Columbus. Make sure to blend both popular myths and uncovered facts to create a nuanced perspective of Columbus.
- F. Practice initiative and proactiveness by delving deeper into any elements of the narrative that captivate your curiosity. Research further to fully understand the context and implications of Columbus’s actions.
- G. Share your rewritten narrative with the entire class or in smaller learning groups. Compare the different perspectives and discuss how historical narratives can greatly impact our understanding of events or individuals, thus facilitating an environment of curiosity, respect, and openness.

SKILLS

- Critical Thinking
- Communication
- Curiosity
- Initiative

Resources

Lies My Teacher Told Me About Christopher Columbus

<https://www.zinnedproject.org/materials/lies-my-teacher-told-me-about-christopher-columbus/>

In *Lies My Teacher Told Me About Christopher Columbus*, the bestselling author of *Lies My Teacher Told Me* offers a graphic corrective to the Columbus story told in so many American classrooms. First published over fifteen years ago and long out of print, the poster and accompanying paperback book summarize the mistellings—and reveal the real story—in a graphically appealing and accessible format.

Rethinking Columbus: Expanded Second Edition

<https://rethinkingschools.org/books/rethinking-columbus-expanded-second-edition/>

In its “9 Teaching Resources that Tell the Truth About Columbus,” *Indian Country Today* lists *Rethinking Columbus* as its “most highly recommended.” The original edition made educational history by introducing a startling new view of Columbus. In the revised edition we get even richer material, a marvelous compendium of history, literature, original sources, commentary, and more.

Teaching Kids about Thanksgiving or Columbus? They Deserve the Real Story

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/education/teaching-kids-about-thanksgiving-or-columbus-they-deserve-the-real-story>

The season four premiere of ABC’s hit sitcom *Black-ish* pushes back against the narrative that Columbus “discovered” America. Real-life educators and students are grappling with this as well. They deserve the real story. Nov 15, 2017, 1:16 PM EST.

Glossary

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS: An Italian explorer who completed four voyages across the Atlantic Ocean, opening the way for the widespread European exploration and colonization

PRIMARY SOURCES: Original materials or records that have not been altered or distorted and have survived from the time under study; first-hand testimonies or direct evidence concerning an event, person, or topic

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES: Natives of an area who were dispossessed of their lands by European settlers or colonizers and have been subjected to marginalization and inequality

HISTORICAL NARRATIVES: A story based on historical events or happenings; a portrayal or depiction of the past

EXPLORATIONS: Traveling in or through a new or unfamiliar area to learn about or familiarize oneself with it

VOYAGES: A long journey or trip by sea or in space

MYTHS: Popular stories or beliefs that are commonly held but not necessarily true

FACTS: True information or statements that can be substantiated and proved

HISTORICAL LEGACY: The tangible and intangible impact or visible and invisible influence left by a person or event in history

EUROPEAN SETTLERS: People from Europe who established colonies in other parts of the world

REFLECTION: A thought or consideration about something

NEGOTIATION SKILLS: The ability to achieve profitable or beneficial agreements through discussion

CULTURAL COMPETENCE: An ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP: Recognition of one's role, duties, and responsibilities within the larger global community

JOURNAL ENTRY: A written record of events or thoughts on certain topics

EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE: A person's inner feelings that may result in physical and psychological changes

TRADITIONAL NARRATIVES: Stories or beliefs handed down through generations, often rooted in tradition and culture

POPULAR CULTURE: Common ideas, beliefs, perspectives, attitudes, images, and other phenomena that are mainstream in a society at a certain time

CRITICAL ANALYSIS: An evaluation of an issue to understand its nature and determine its importance

SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT: The intersection of social and political factors that influence and shape an event, situation, or behavior

SUBSTANTIATED INFORMATION: Knowledge that is supported by proof or evidence

IMPLICATIONS: The possible outcome, impact, effect, or consequence of an action or decision

PRAISE FOR

EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT INDIANS BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK (YOUNG READERS EDITION)

GOLDEN KITE AWARD WINNER • CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY'S BEST OF THE BEST
• KIRKUS' BEST OF THE YEAR • ABC GROUP BEST BOOKS FOR YOUNG READERS •
TLA'S 2022 TEXAS TOPAZ READING LIST • CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY'S BEST TEEN BOOK
COVERS OF THE YEAR • ILLUMINATIVE CHILDREN'S BOOK GIFT GUIDE • AICL'S BEST
BOOKS OF 2021 • A JUNIOR LIBRARY GUILD SELECTION • 2022 TEXAS TOPAZ SELECTION
• CYBILS AWARDS FINALIST • CCBC CHOICES



Anton Treuer, Photo credit: Greene Photography

ANTON TREUER (pronounced troy-er) is Professor of Ojibwe at Bemidji State University and author of many books. His equity, education, and cultural work has put him on a path of service around the nation and the world.

Visit levinequerido.com to buy a copy of
Everything You Wanted to Know About Indians But Were Afraid to Ask:
Young Readers Edition.

Available in hardcover and paperback.

Also by Anton Treuer
[*Where Wolves Don't Die*](#)

Educator guide developed by Anjanette Parisien.

Designed by Suet Chong.