

Unit 3, Lesson 2: Creating Accounts Using Columbus' Log

Lesson Overview

In this lesson students will analyze entries from the log of Christopher Columbus and create an account of his famous first voyage that takes the form of a storyboard. The storyboard will become the basis for a documentary about the 1492 voyage.

- **Pre-Planning Needed:** [Resource 2: Excerpts - The Log of Christopher Columbus](#) in this lesson has entries from the log of Christopher Columbus. You will want to have each dated entry cut into individual strips and placed in a small box or envelope so that students pull the entries out and have to place them in chronological order by date.
- **Potential Differentiation Strategy:** Grade 4 teachers who engaged in guided practice with this lesson suggested a differentiated option in which some students can be presented with fewer log entries and corresponding storyboard scenes (e.g., 4 of each). Teachers are trusted to use their professional judgment when considering options.

Delaware Standard(s)

- **History Standard 1a, 4-5 [Chronology]:** Students will study historical events and persons within a given time frame in order to create a chronology and identify related cause-effect factors.
- **History Standard 2a, 4-5 [Analysis]:** Students will draw historical conclusions and construct historical accounts from primary and secondary source materials

Big Ideas

- chronology, analysis

Essential Questions

- How might we decide whether a conclusion about a historic event should be believed?

Enduring Understandings

Students will understand that conclusions about historic events that are supported by primary source evidence are generally worthy of belief.

Resources

- [Lesson 2 Google Slides](#)
- [Resource 1: Blank Storyboard for Story of Columbus Enterprise of the Indies](#)
- [Resource 2: Excerpts - The Log of Christopher Columbus](#)
- [Resource 3: Columbus Log Entries \(October 12, 1492 - March 15, 1493\)](#)
- [Resource 4: Drawing Conclusions from Sources](#)

Procedures

Part I

Pre-Planning Needed: Resource 2 in this lesson has entries from the log of Christopher Columbus. You will want to have each dated entry cut into individual strips and placed in a small box or envelope so that students pull the entries out and have to place them in chronological order by date.

1. **Introduce the Lesson:** Explain, in this lesson I am going to ask you to create a storyboard for a short movie that provides viewers with information about the historic first voyage of Christopher Columbus. This movie will be more like a documentary. A documentary is a movie or a television or radio program that provides a factual record or report.

Scenario:

- a. Someone has discovered what they now know to be pieces of paper that contain parts of Christopher Columbus' log or journal from his famous voyage in 1492. You will have an opportunity to read Columbus' own words - the words he wrote down so that people would know about his famous voyage.
 - b. The papers are currently a scrambled mess! You have been asked to organize the papers in chronological order so that we can know some of the things that happened during the historic 1492 voyage known as the Enterprise of the Indies, and when it happened.
2. **Explain the Storyboard Task:** Project or hold up copies of [Resource 1: Blank Storyboard for Story of Columbus Enterprise of the Indies](#). Draw attention to the images and the Scenes 1-6 with lines underneath. As students read through the excerpts from Columbus' log, students should be thinking about 6 scenes that should be part of the video documentary. They will be asked to choose 6 scenes from the log then write about them on the storyboard (Resource 2). The ideas for scenes should come from the log entries and the visuals on Resource 2.
 3. **Arrange Historic Materials in Chronological Order:** Organize students into groups of four. Distribute the cut-out strips of [Resource 2: Excerpts - The Log of Christopher Columbus](#) that contain excerpts from Columbus' log. Remind students of their tasks that include the following:
 - a. Arrange the log entries into chronological order.
 - b. Divide the strips among members of the group. Students should read what is on their strips, including dates, in chronological order for everyone else in the group to hear. Someone else in the group should paraphrase the information on the strip (take turns being the paraphraser) after each is read aloud.
 4. **Create Storyboard Accounts of Columbus' Historic Trip:** After going through all of the strips, tell students to discuss then select 6 notable scenes that should be part of the storyboard.
 - a. Encourage students to include dates and brief quotes from the log entries on their Storyboards.
 - b. Model how to complete one storyboard scene with the whole class then let the students complete the remaining scenes on their own.
 5. **Present Storyboards:** Invite individuals or groups to present their storyboards. Consider a vote for best storyboard.

Part II

1. **Introduce Part II of the lesson:** Distribute copies of [Resource 3: Columbus Log Entries \(October 12, 1492 - March 15, 1493\)](#). Tell students that they are now going to hear and read excerpts from Columbus' log that he wrote AFTER landing in the New World for the first time. Tell students that after hearing about what Columbus thought and saw, they will be asked to decide whether certain conclusions were supported by what Columbus wrote.
2. **Dramatic Reading - Recommended Strategy:** Ask 8 volunteers to read dates/sections of Columbus' log. Teachers should start the procedure by reading the excerpt from **Friday, 12 October 1492**. Then have the volunteers follow and read the excerpts from the dates that you assigned.
 - a. **Pause Points:** stop after each date and ask others in the class to paraphrase what each entry means and explain what is most significant about each entry.

Note to Teachers

Among other noteworthy remarks that Columbus makes in his log, there are two particularly notable entries on October 12 and 17.

- October 12 - he writes that "*They ought to make good and skilled servants*" - a first encounter indication that he intends to enslave indigenous people.
- October 17 - we find Columbus using the term "Indians" in reference to the indigenous peoples...evidence that he believed he was in the Indies and unaware that this was a new continent.

3. **Evaluating Conclusions:** After the excerpts are read, pair students up or have them work in small groups and distribute copies of [Resource 4: Drawing Conclusions from Sources](#). Tell students to keep Resource 3 out (to refer back to).
 - a. Tell students to read the conclusion on Resource 4, discuss with their partner whether they are or are not supported by the information in the log (circle Yes or No in Column 2 of Resource 4), and record any date from the log that supports a conclusion in Column 3 on Resource 4.
4. **Four Corner Discussion:** Preparation: ask students to write their name on a small piece of paper. Then have them write which of the following best describes their initial impression of Columbus based on his log entries. The options are:
 - a. very positive
 - b. somewhat positive
 - c. somewhat negative
 - d. very negative

Post little signs with each of the four positions in the four corners of the room. Invite students to stand under the position that they wrote was their initial impression of Columbus.

Rotate around each of the four corners inviting volunteers to explain reasons for their stances or impressions.

Debrief

Push students thinking a bit. Ask, why might there be different points of view and interpretations of Columbus?

Video Resource to Consider

PBS World Explorers Video - Christopher Columbus [here](#) (4:47) One option is to show this video as part of this lesson or save it for one coming up in which students are asked to evaluate Columbus in positive or negative ways...or both as another example of a complex human being.