

Unit 3, Lesson 6: One Event and One Big Change

Lesson Overview

In this lesson, students learn why 1492 and Columbus are considered significant, largely due to the changes that are associated with each.

Pre-Planning: have students' birthdates accessible.

Delaware Standard(s)

- **History Standard 1a, 4-5a:** 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 2b, 4-5:** Students will examine historical materials relating to a particular region, society, or theme; chronologically arrange them; and analyze change over time.

Big Ideas

- cause, effect, change over time, significance

Essential Questions

- What changed over time?
- What caused the change and why is that change significant?

Enduring Understandings

Students will understand that the voyages of Christopher Columbus to the “New World” led to a significant change in people’s mental maps of the world as people in the Old and New Worlds became aware of one another’s existence.

Resources

- [Lesson Google slides](#)
- [Resource 1: Two Maps](#)
- [Resource 2: One Event and One Big Change](#)

Procedures

1. **Warm-Up:** Begin with a Mindfulness exercise. Have students close their eyes and imagine that they are floating in a very calm ocean on a very beautiful day. Perhaps you can play ocean sounds as they imagine themselves afloat.
2. **Map Analysis:** See [Resource 1: Two Maps](#). Cut the resource page in half horizontally so that students can organize the two maps chronologically. Distribute or display the two maps: one with North and South America, one without. Do not mention any differences in the maps i.e., that America is missing from Map 1.
 - a. Ask, what is the most significant difference between the two maps? [America - north and South - are missing]

- b. Which map of the world is probably older? Why? [one without America because the people who drew the map did not know it existed. At some point people]
 - c. Why might there be a map that does not show America? [at some point in history, much of the world's people did not know it existed]
3. **Understanding Significance:** Without explaining the significance of the dates, show or project students' birthdates in random order.
 - a. Ask students if any of them recognize any of the dates? Tell them to raise their hands, do not shout out. Call on someone who raised his or her hand to respond. Let others respond as well. [it shows everyone's birthdays]
 - b. Why are these dates significant? Because they are the dates when very special people came into this world. And every one of you are destined to do something special someday.
 - c. Ask, in which year were most of the students in our class born?
4. **Birthday Chronology:** In letters large enough for others in class to see, have each student write their birthdate on a piece of paper (feel free to do so yourself). Then, have small groups of students e.g., those sitting in a certain group or "table," come up to the front of the room. Instruct them to organize themselves chronologically left to right by birthdate in the order that they were born. Ask the rest of class if their ordering is correct. If not, explain what the chronology should look like. If correct, ask everyone to give them a round of applause, have those students sit down and call up another group.
5. Check to see which student's birthday is coming up next. Say that date or project it so that everyone can see.
 - a. Ask students to raise their hand (not shout out), why is that date significant? [because _____ was born that day]
 - b. Draw positive attention to the student whose birthday is coming up.
6. **Date Guessing:** Project the year **1451** for all to see.
 - a. Ask students to work in pairs or in a small group to discuss the question...why might that year be significant? [anticipate that no one will know but it will be interesting to hear their answers].
 - b. Have a little fun at some point by asking, "do you think it was the year that I – or the principal if you prefer - was born?).
 - c. Invite each pair or small group to share what they decided was their best guess and explain the reasoning behind that guess.
 - d. Give them a clue after they have had time to struggle a bit [the clue... tell them to refer back to Map 1 - the map without America on it].
7. **Reveal:** 1451 is the year that Christopher Columbus was born. Then ask the following questions:
 - a. Does anyone not know who Christopher Columbus was?
 - b. Does anyone know what the word *significant* means [for grade 4 it might be something like "it refers to something really important, something that had a big effect."]
 - c. What did Columbus do to make many people believe that he is a significant person in history? [highlight that Columbus is credited with "discovering" America in 1492. An

important effect - people in the “Old World” came to realize that there was a “New World” that they never knew about]

- d. How might what we know about Columbus help to explain why which map is probably older? Why? [causation – because it was drawn before Columbus “discovered” America. People in the “Old World” did not know it existed]

8. **Map Analysis 2:** Ask student,

- a. if they were to put the two maps in chronological order, which one would go on the left? Why? [it’s older]
- b. Using the maps as your evidence, what was one **effect** of Columbus’ voyage? [people slowly began to realize that there was, from their perspective, an entirely new world (America)]
- c. What changed over time as a result of Columbus voyages? [a lot of things but, from this lesson, people’s understanding of the world...their “mental maps”]

9. **ReaDiWrite:** Distribute [Resource 2: One Event and One Big Change](#). Engage students in a “ReaDiWrite” in which they Read, Discuss, then Write.

- a. Read the two paragraphs on the handout.
- b. Discuss: discuss the answers to the two questions at the bottom of the page.
- c. Write: How did people’s understanding of the world change after 1492 and why?

10. **Debrief:** share the enduring understandings for this lesson and the targeted standards.

Ask the following:

- What is meant when people say “Old” and/or “New World?”
- What places do they have in mind?
- Why is Columbus considered a significant person in history?

This lesson is designed in part to help students understand that:

- a. Organizing events into chronological order can help us understand that things change over time, why they change, and what changes might be significant.
- b. If we know things change, we will be better prepared for, and less disturbed by, changes when they occur.
- c. If we know why things change, we might be better able to predict future consequences of our actions as individuals and as groups (e.g., our country).

11. **Journal/writing assignment:**

- a. Name one other person in history who is considered significant and why?
- b. What might you [student] do someday in the future that will be considered significant?