

## Explorers and Exploration in Early American History: Shifting the Narrative, 1489-1609



Courtesy of the National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution

# Explorers and Exploration in Early American History: Shifting the Narrative, 1489-1609

BY CONNIE FINK

## CONTENTS

Lesson 1.....	4	Lesson 2.....	8	Lesson 3.....	11	Lesson 4.....	13	Lesson 5.....	15
Lesson 1 Handouts ..	17	Lesson 2 Handouts ...	26	Lesson 3 Handouts ...	34	Lesson 4 Handouts ...	37	Lesson 5 Handouts ...	44

## UNIT OVERVIEW

This unit is one of the Gilder Lehrman Institute’s Teaching Literacy through History™ resources, designed to align with the Common Core State Standards. These units were developed to enable students to understand, summarize, and evaluate original sources of historical significance. Through a step-by-step process, students will acquire the skills to analyze, assess, synthesize, and develop knowledgeable and well-reasoned viewpoints on primary and secondary source materials.

Students will engage in multiple critical-thinking activities to analyze maps, texts, and images. They will read and analyze the primary sources with the intent of inferring subtle meanings. Throughout each lesson students will better understand the impact early exploration had on Native Americans. They will use the knowledge gained through their analysis to select a work of art representing an early explorer’s “landing” moment and reimagine the experience from a Native American perspective.

## UNIT OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to

- Analyze primary sources representing multiple accounts
- Identify and explain keywords and important phrases in a historical text
- Draw conclusions about and discuss interpretations of the primary source materials
- Collaborate with classmates to develop and express different viewpoints
- Modify an original work of art and shift the central perspective highlighted in the piece

**GRADE LEVELS:** 3–5

**NUMBER OF CLASS PERIODS:** 5–6

## COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.1: Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.7: Use information gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.1: Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.2: Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.6: Compare and contrast a firsthand and secondhand account of the same event or topic; describe the differences in focus and the information provided.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.6: Analyze multiple accounts of the same event or topic, noting important similarities and differences in the point of view they represent.

## Hook, Maps, and Essential Question

### OVERVIEW

This lesson will serve as a hook for students while providing them some context for the lessons to follow. They will analyze three different maps portraying lands prior to and during the age of exploration to show how mapping territories evolved during this period of time. The theme of “power” driving this unit of inquiry will also be introduced and explored in the context of mapping territory and what it means.

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

#### The Age of Exploration

by Peter C. Mancall, University of Southern California

Humans, by their nature, are curious creatures, often looking for new adventures and opportunities. Many have gone in search of treasure, others to promote their religious views, and some for the honor they believed they would earn from being the first of their people to eye unknown territory. Travelers explored, as the saying goes, for gold, God, and glory.

Long distance exploration has existed for centuries. Polynesians, navigating by the stars, guided their long canoes across the vast expanse of the South Pacific, arriving in Hawai'i around 400 C.E. and Aotearoa (New Zealand) in the thirteenth century. Norse (or Viking) sailors piloted their narrow *knerrir* through the frigid waters of the North Atlantic, traveling from modern Norway via Iceland and Greenland to Newfoundland sometime around the turn of the first Christian millennium. We do not know what drove these intrepid European and Asian adventurers, but in each case some of the travelers remained behind and established colonies.

In the past, many historians have viewed the 1492 voyage of the Genoese pilot Christopher Columbus as initiating the “age of discovery.” But the European age of exploration began almost 200 years earlier when the Venetian Marco Polo traveled to China in the late thirteenth century, returning home with news about vast economic opportunities. His efforts led to the opening of the Silk Road. Others traveled far too. In 1325, the Muslim traveler Abu Abdallah ibn Battuta left Morocco bound for Mecca. He was on the road for thirty years, eventually traveling 73,000 miles. In the 1430s, the Ming admiral Zheng He, piloting a vessel that was five times larger than Columbus's flagship, led expeditions that included perhaps 28,000 travelers. In 1433, they reached the east coast of Africa, but after their return the Chinese abandoned such long-distance adventures. In the 1440s, Portuguese travelers explored the west coast of Africa. They came home with news of enormous gold reserves and wealthy African kingdoms. Unlike the Chinese, the Portuguese made a substantial commitment to further voyages, which set the stage for Columbus's desire to find the quickest route to the lucrative spice markets of the southwest Pacific.

News of Columbus's first voyage raced across Europe after his return in early 1493, inspiring many others to try their luck with a transatlantic voyage. A Venetian explorer named Johan Gabota (John Cabot) received support from King Henry VII of England to explore the northern parts of the Atlantic in 1497. Like many unfortunate explorers, he disappeared into the waters, though his son Sebastian led subsequent voyages. Spaniards following Columbus's lead traveled to Mexico in the 1510s and the Andes in the 1530s,

claiming American territory for their patrons. In 1519, the Portuguese mariner Ferdinand Magalhães (Magellan) sailed west across the Atlantic, through the strait that now bears his name, and across the Pacific. He died in a battle in the Philippines in 1521, but his shipmates and their vessel returned home, marking the first European circumnavigation of the Earth. From 1577 to 1580, the English explorer Francis Drake led the second circumnavigation. In the years that followed, other explorers tried to find the Northeast Passage, a water route north of Russia, and the Northwest Passage, a similar channel through modern Canada. Their efforts led to disappointment and proved fatal for the Dutch explorer Willem Barentsz and the English captain Henry Hudson. The passages existed, but they were frozen over in the era known as the Little Ice Age, which chilled much of the northern hemisphere from the fourteenth to the mid-nineteenth century.

By the time the English decided to establish a permanent American colony in Jamestown in 1607, many peoples of the world had some understanding of what lay beyond the borders of their communities, with news available in printed books and in the stories that travelers always told. Exploration followed by conquest and colonization changed the world—for the better for Europeans, and for the worse for most Native Americans and residents of sub-Saharan Africa.

*Peter Mancall is the Andrew W. Mellon Professor of the Humanities and professor of history and anthropology at the University of Southern California. He is the author of seven books, including Fatal Journey: The Final Expedition of Henry Hudson: A Tale of Mutiny and Murder in the Arctic (2009) and Hakluyt's Promise: An Elizabethan's Obsession for an English America (2007).*

## ESSENTIAL QUESTION

- In what ways do people use power?

## MATERIALS

- Map of the World of Christopher Columbus, by Henricus Martellus, ca. 1489, Yale University, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, [collections.library.yale.edu/catalog/2007580](http://collections.library.yale.edu/catalog/2007580).
- “America sive novus orbis respectu Europaeorum inferior globi terrestris pars,” by Theodor de Bry and John White, 1596, Boston Public Library, Norman B. Leventhal Map Center, [digitalcommonwealth.org/search/commonwealth:3f462s48h](http://digitalcommonwealth.org/search/commonwealth:3f462s48h). This has portraits of Christopher Columbus, Amerigo Vespucci, Ferdinand Magellan, and Francisco Pizarro in each corner.
- Handouts 1–4: Quadrants of the Map of the Americas, 1596
- Critical Thinking activity sheet
- “Insulae Americanae in Oceano Septentrionali cum Terris adiacenibus [Map of the Americas],” by Montanus, 1671, The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC09789, <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/collection/glc09789>.
- Device to project digital files onto a large-screen display
- Explorer Research activity sheet
- Optional: Magnifying glasses



## PROCEDURE

1. As a hook, start the lesson by asking students if they can name a popular game that's played in the pool during the summer. When they reply "Marco Polo," ask them what the object of the game is. They should respond that the "it" player has their eyes closed and tries to find the other players by calling out "Marco," then the other players call out "Polo." Share with students that Marco Polo was a "big Italian traveler" who did not know exactly how to get to the Indies due to inaccurate maps. After finally finding his way to the Indies via a land route, Polo wrote about his travels in a book that later inspired Christopher Columbus and other European explorers. Polo's book sparked a "spice fever" among the explorers. Columbus, with hopes of finding a fast and easier route to the Indies, ventured out to find a water route.
2. Ask the following questions to spark curiosity and gauge how much students know about early exploration:
  - What comes to mind when you think about exploration?
  - What kind of risks do you believe were involved with early exploration?
  - Why do you think the Europeans' motivations outweighed the risks involved with exploration?
3. Display on a large-screen the [Henricus Martellus map](#) from ca. 1489, or if students have devices, consider providing them with the link to the map. Tell students that there is strong evidence that Columbus may have studied this very map in order to find a faster route to the Indies. Ask students
  - What continents are present on this map?
  - Where are the Indies on this map?
  - Using this map as a guide, what possible water routes departing from Spain could Columbus take to reach the Indies?
  - In what ways could using this map be an obstacle for Columbus?

Inaccurate maps of the time made for a game of "Marco Polo" for explorers! You may want to display a modern world map to demonstrate the differences for the students.

4. Distribute one of the four sections of the 1596 map and the Critical Thinking activity sheet to each student. You may provide magnifying glasses to enable them to look closely at the details on the map. Allow time for the students to examine their quadrant of the map and answer the critical thinking questions on the activity sheet.
5. Students are now ready to mix and mingle. Tell them to find three other students, each with a different section of the map so that their group of four has all four sections of the map. They will then take turns sharing the information about their section of the map with the rest of the group.
6. Once the students have finished sharing, have them put the pieces of the map together and explore what new observations they can make. They should note that the map represents the American lands Europeans had claimed. Display the map on a large screen and have each group share their observations with the class.

7. In a guided class discussion, display on a large screen the [1671 map of the Americas](#) so students can develop some context about the land Columbus refers to in the letter that students will read in Lesson 2. Columbus was sure that he had landed in the Indies and refers to the native people as Indians. However, in reality, he was in the Caribbean Sea, nowhere near the East Indies. The chain of islands he landed on became known as the West Indies.
8. Ask the following guiding questions to prompt students to think critically about the map:
  - What looks familiar/unfamiliar?
  - Are the islands shown on the map located in the Indies?
  - Who is represented at the top left and bottom right corners of the map?
  - How are the Indigenous people portrayed? What about the Europeans? What can you infer from some of their facial expressions?
9. Power is an abstract idea, so it's a good idea to break down the concept with younger students. Write the word "power" on the board to introduce the unit's theme. Ask students to name different superhero powers (Superman flies, Spiderman casts a web, etc.). Tell students that everyone has their own special powers, not just superheroes. Typically, our power comes from activities or interests we excel at and enjoy. These activities fuel our confidence and courage. To tap into our personal power, we need to embrace our strengths. Share with the students areas where you personally feel you have power. Ask students to share where they feel power. Some examples may be writing, creativity, team sports, music, etc.
10. Power is needed to create change. However, change does not always benefit everyone. Write on the board, *In what ways do people use power?* Ask students to share how the maps they analyzed reflect power. In what way is the cartographers' or explorers' power represented in the map? Who did not benefit from the Europeans' arrival in the Americas? In the next few lessons, as students analyze different primary sources, they will do a deep dive into ways people used their power during the early exploration period.

## EXTENSION

Have students briefly research the explorers who were on the 1596 map section they analyzed earlier in the lesson: Christopher Columbus, Francisco Pizarro, Ferdinand Magellan, Amerigo Vespucci.

Ask each student to pick one of the explorers to research. Provide them with the research guide handout.

After researching their explorers, students will share their findings with the class.

## Textual Analysis of Columbus's Letter, 1493

### OVERVIEW

In this lesson students will work in small groups to analyze excerpts from a letter written by Christopher Columbus to Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand of Spain. They will focus on how Columbus used his power and make inferences about how his assumptions and actions affected the people living in the region. They will demonstrate their understanding by summarizing the excerpt, drawing the scene, and creating a headline. Students will explain each excerpt in a short oral presentation to the class.

### MATERIALS

- Taíno Territory Map from *Taíno: Native Heritage and Identity in the Caribbean* created by Smithsonian Exhibits, 2017. Shown in Ranald Woodaman, “Bringing Taíno Peoples Back into History,” *Smithsonian Magazine*, December 28, 2019, [smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/bringing-taino-peoples-back-history-180967637/](https://smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/bringing-taino-peoples-back-history-180967637/).
- Page 1 of a letter from Christopher Columbus to Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand of Spain reporting on his first voyage, 1493, The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC01427, [gilderlehrman.org/collection/glc01427](https://gilderlehrman.org/collection/glc01427).
- Activity Sheets #1–6 with excerpts from a translation of Christopher Columbus's letter to Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand of Spain, 1493 from *The Old South Leaflets*, 10th series (Boston, 1892), pp. 1–5.
- A large piece of butcher paper for each small group and colored markers
- Device to display digital files onto a large screen

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- In what ways does Columbus's sense of power impact his actions?
- How did the arrival of Europeans affect life in the Americas?

### PROCEDURE

1. You may choose to keep the same small groups from Lesson 1 or make new groups of 3–4 students.
2. Display the map Taíno Territory Map. Share with students that these were the islands that Columbus wrote about in his letter to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella.
3. Display Columbus's letter. Share that when Columbus returned to Spain he wrote a letter to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, who had paid for the trip. In this letter, Columbus reports what he has “discovered.” Note that the letter was printed in Latin, a language that could be read by most educated people everywhere in Europe at the time. Ask students what they think were the benefits of writing in

Latin and not in another language? Explain to students that for hundreds of years Latin was considered the international language of trade and scholarship that allowed people to communicate beyond national borders.

4. Write the following questions on the board:

- In what ways does Columbus’s sense of power impact his actions?
- How did the arrival of Europeans affect life in the Americas?

Explain to the students that they will be analyzing excerpts from Columbus’s letter. At the end of the lesson, students will share how their assigned excerpt reveals pieces of evidence that can be used to respond to these questions. You will do the first one together as a whole class.

5. Begin by explaining that primary sources can have tricky words. When there are limited context clues within the text, vocabulary definitions are provided on the activity sheet. Alert students that they might encounter other unfamiliar vocabulary in the text. Encourage students to work together using context clues to decipher the meaning of unfamiliar words.

6. Distribute Excerpt #1 to all the students. Explain to the class that the goal is to select keywords that will help to create a summary sentence reflecting their understanding of the text.

7. “Share read” Excerpt #1 with the class. To share read the text, have students follow along silently while you begin reading aloud, modeling prosody, inflection, and punctuation. Ask the class to join in with the reading after a few sentences while you continue to serve as the model.

8. Ask students to refer back to the text and independently identify keywords. Keywords are important to understanding the text. They are usually nouns or verbs. The students should not select “connector” words (*are, is, the, and, so, etc.*). As they identify the keywords, tell students to underline/circle them in the text.

The number of keywords depends on the length of the original selection. The number of keywords for each excerpt is provided on the activity sheets.

9. Explain that as a whole class they will agree on a final keyword selection to use to write a sentence that summarizes the main ideas in Excerpt #1. Survey the class for the most popular keyword choices and write the words on the board. Together you can select the best six keywords and write them in the Keywords section of the activity sheet.

10. Using the class keyword list, in a “shared writing” activity, the class will discuss, construct, and agree on a final summary sentence. Write the final summary sentence on the board and tell students to also write the summary sentence on their Excerpt #1 activity sheet.

11. Students will independently draw a picture that represents the Excerpt #1 scene on their activity sheet and then create a captivating headline. Ask for volunteers to share their visual interpretation and headline of the scene with their group members. Students will use these drawings again in Lesson 4.

12. Point to the essential questions on the board and lead a class discussion asking students to base their responses on the evidence in Excerpt #1:

- In what ways does Columbus’s sense of power impact his actions?
- How did the arrival of Europeans affect life in the Americas?

13. Distribute one of the five remaining excerpts to each small group. Students will work in their small groups to complete the activity sheet. Tell the students that they will share their analysis with the class along with their excerpt's relevance to the essential questions written on the board. As students work, circulate around the room.
14. Group members should silently and independently read their excerpt first, circling any unfamiliar vocabulary. As a group, they should work together to decode and decipher the meaning of any unfamiliar words.
15. Then, students should read the excerpt to themselves a second time to select keywords. Students will share their keyword choices with group members and explain why they made the selection. The group should reach a consensus on the final keywords selection.
16. In a "shared writing" effort, groups will draft a sentence using the keywords that best captures the main idea of their excerpt and write the final agreed summary sentence on their activity sheet.
17. The groups will discuss how the essential questions apply to their assigned excerpt.
18. Students will brainstorm and take turns sharing their ideas with group members on how to collectively create a mural that visually interprets their assigned excerpt. Provide each small group with a large piece of butcher paper and colored markers. Students will draw pictures that serve as symbols and/or metaphors capturing the essence of the scene depicted in their excerpt. They will then write a headline that captures the essence of the scene.
19. Each small group will give oral presentations to the class. Group members should agree ahead of time the leading role each person will take when sharing the summary, headline, mural, and their excerpt's relevance to the essential questions. Before each group's presentation, display the excerpt for the whole class to see and share read it or read it aloud, modeling prosody, inflection, and punctuation while students follow along.
20. Wrap Up: Students will write how they imagine their drawings would have been different if they had read a letter from an Indigenous perspective. This closing question starts to set the stage for the final unit of inquiry project.

## Doctrine of Discovery, 1493

### OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students will be challenged to think critically as they do a close read of a primary source text. They will identify the main ideas and use evidence to make inferences while taking different perspectives into consideration. In closing the lesson, students will show their understanding by responding to essential questions.

### MATERIALS

- Broadside of Pope Alexander VI's Doctrine of Discovery [Inter caetera], May 4, 1493, printed in Valladolid, Spain, The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GL04093, [gilderlehrman.org/collection/glc04093](http://gilderlehrman.org/collection/glc04093). Translation from Papal Encyclicals Online, <https://www.papalencyclicals.net/alex06/alex06inter.htm>.
- Kevin Gover, "The Doctrine of Discovery, C-SPAN Classroom," April 2020, [c-span.org/classroom/document/?10649](http://c-span.org/classroom/document/?10649).
- Doctrine of Discovery Excerpts #1–5 [Slides](#) or Handout
- Main-Side-Hidden: Doctrine of Discovery activity sheet
- Device to display digital files and to show a video clip on a large screen

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- In what ways does Pope Alexander VI use his power?
- What were the perceived rights of the explorers and how did they impact the rights of Native Americans?

### PROCEDURE

1. Display [Pope Alexander VI's Doctrine of Discovery](#), the primary source for this lesson. Ask students to look closely at the document's header. Do any of the words look familiar? If students don't recall the language it is written in, remind them that most educated Europeans could read in Latin. Students will be reading some excerpts from this document. It was issued by the Pope soon after Columbus returned from his first voyage to America. Show the short [video clip](#) from C-Span that explains the purpose of the broadside.
2. Display the slides with the [excerpts from the Doctrine of Discovery](#) or provide students with the handout. This lesson can be differentiated by choosing to use all or only a select few of the excerpts.
3. Tell students that they will work with a partner to analyze each excerpt with the intent of looking beyond the surface of the text in an activity called "Main-Side-Hidden." Distribute a "Main-Side-Hidden" activity sheet to each student.



4. You will guide students through a whole-class analysis for Excerpt #1 from the Doctrine of Discovery. Students will then work with a partner following the same steps with Excerpts #2–5 and record their findings on the activity sheet. Explain each column’s purpose as follows (these guiding questions are also on the activity sheet):
  - Main: Who is the main character? What is the text directly telling us? What is the main narrative or central message?
  - Side: Who/what on the sidelines is impacted by the actions being taken by the main character in the narrative? What’s their story/perspective? What else may be going on that’s not part of the narrative?
  - Hidden: What is happening below the surface? What is not obvious? What might be left out either intentionally or unintentionally? (Answering these questions can help reveal an overall theme).
5. Share read Excerpt #1 with the class as described in Lesson 2 and fill in the activity sheet as you discuss each section: Main, Side, and Hidden.
6. Continue share reading Excerpts #2–5, allowing time in between the readings so students can “turn and talk” with their partners. Let students discuss possible meanings of the unfamiliar words they encounter and only provide definitions or synonyms as a last resort. During this time, partners will process, discuss, and record their ideas on their activity sheet. Allow time for students to share their selected main, side, and hidden parts of the text with the whole class.
7. After all of the excerpts have been read, lead a class discussion prompting students to further critically analyze the text by asking the following questions:
  - How do the “hidden” parts help us to better understand the “main” purpose of the document?
  - Why might the “hidden” parts not be as obvious? Why might there be alternative motives not mentioned in the text?
8. Wrap up: Ask students to write a reflection using evidence from the Doctrine of Discovery to respond to the essential questions:
  - In what ways does Pope Alexander VI use his power?
  - What were the perceived rights of the explorers and how did they impact the rights of Native Americans?

## LESSON 4

# Visual Analysis of Explorers' Landings

### OVERVIEW

In this lesson students will observe how different artists portray European explorers. They will be prompted to think critically about different cultural perspectives and engage in new points of view beyond what is visible on the surface.

### MATERIALS

- Images
  - *Landing of Columbus*, based on a painting by John Vanderlyn, engraving by H. B. Hall, published by Martin, Johnson & Co., New York, 1856, The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History GLC08878.001, [gilderlehrman.org/sites/default/files/content-images/08878.0001.det\\_.jpg](http://gilderlehrman.org/sites/default/files/content-images/08878.0001.det_.jpg).
  - *The Discovery of the Mississippi by De Soto A.D. 1541*, based on a painting by William Henry Powell, published by Johnson, Fry & Co., New York, 1858, The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC08878.002, [gilderlehrman.org/sites/default/files/content-images/08878.0002.det\\_0.jpg](http://gilderlehrman.org/sites/default/files/content-images/08878.0002.det_0.jpg).
  - *Coronado's Expedition, 1540s*, based on a painting by Alfred Russell, engraving by J. W. Buel, 1904, New York Public Library, The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Picture Collection, [digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e0-f2f0-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99](http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e0-f2f0-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99).
  - *The Landing of Henrick Hudson, 1609*, based on a painting by Robert Weir, published by Martin, Johnson & Co., New York, 1857, The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC08878.003, [gilderlehrman.org/sites/default/files/content-images/08878.0003.det\\_0.jpg](http://gilderlehrman.org/sites/default/files/content-images/08878.0003.det_0.jpg).
- Analyzing an Image activity sheet
- Excerpts from Bartolomé de Las Casas, Brief Account of the Devastation of the Indies, 1542, published by J.F. Hurtel Filadelfia, 1821, Library of Congress via HathiTrust. Translation available from the Digital Public Library of America, [dp.la/primary-source-sets/exploration-of-the-americas/sources/408](http://dp.la/primary-source-sets/exploration-of-the-americas/sources/408).
- Sentence-Phrase-Word activity sheet
- Device to display digital files onto a large-screen

### ESSENTIAL QUESTION

- In what ways can artists use their power?

### PROCEDURE

1. Share with students that many other European explorers voyaged to the Americas following in Columbus's tracks. European countries competed with each other to find better routes to important trading destinations and to claim lands for themselves. Artists over time have captured what these "landings" might have looked like. Explain that art is often a reflection of one person's perspective about events or people and may not be a true representation of what happened.
2. Display the "Landing of Columbus" image on a large screen. The first observation is done silently for a couple of minutes to simply notice as much as possible.
3. Ask students to pull out their murals from Lesson 2 in order to compare and contrast their interpretation of Columbus's letter with the artist's "landing" image. Students will share their observations with their group members. What patterns are they noticing?

4. Engage students in a whole-class “Fact or Fiction” discussion activity. The purpose of this activity is to do a “close look” at the image to decipher the realities of the event from the thoughts and feelings portrayed by the artist. This activity will prompt students to consider other perspectives and to make deeper connections. Tell students that the “Fact or Fiction” comments should reflect the characters in the image, not their own thoughts and feelings. Share that we don’t always have all of the facts; sometimes we have to piece together clues to make informed inferences.
5. In a whole-class discussion, ask students the following questions:
  - What are the *facts* of this event?
  - What is the *message* being delivered in this image?
  - Who would *decide* to communicate this message? Why?
  - How else could this image be *interpreted*?
  - What do you *believe* is true in this image? What makes you say this?
6. You may choose to have students do the second part of this lesson with partners or in a small group of no more than three or four.
7. Students will be assigned one of three remaining images—DeSoto, Coronado, or Hudson. You may choose to provide them with a brief history of each of the explorers. These images can be printed out or provided as a digital file. After providing each group with an image, ask students to take three to five minutes to study the image. In order to capture their thinking, you may choose to insert a paper copy of the image into a sheet protector and provide students with dry erase markers. Another option is to upload a digital image into a note-taking app that allows students to mark up their observations. Have students use three different colors to mark up the image. A different color should be used for the people, objects, and actions they notice in the image.
8. Distribute the Analyzing an Image activity sheet to help guide students through further analysis of their image. Allow partners/groups time to analyze their images and complete the activity sheet.
9. You may choose to have the students research the explorer featured in their image to assess the accuracy of the scene depicted by the artist.
10. Wrap up: Ask students to write about what “Fact or Fiction” connections they made between the “Landing of Columbus” image and the DeSoto, Coronado, or Hudson images.

## HOMEWORK

For homework the students will read excerpts of a report from the perspective of a priest, Bartolomé de Las Casas. Provide the class with some historical background on Las Casas without revealing his stance on the treatment of the Native Americans by explorers. In this document, Las Casas reports how terribly the Spanish were treating the Indians in the New World. To promote a close reading of the text, students will use the “Sentence-Phrase-Word” activity sheet. Students will read the text twice. In the first reading, tell students to briefly “stop and jot” the main idea after reading each paragraph. In the second reading of the text, using the activity sheet, students will record

- a sentence, phrase (2–5 words), and word selection they find compelling
- an explanation of why they made those selections
- the connection between the evidence in the excerpts and the essential question: *In what ways do people use their power?*

## Shifting Perspective (2 days)

### OVERVIEW

In this two-day lesson the students will apply their learning from the previous lessons to include and understand the importance of a multi-perspective narrative. They will reframe a primary source image by shifting the focus from the explorer to uplift the perspectives in the background using creative techniques inspired by artist Titus Kaphar.

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- In what ways do people use power?
- How can we preserve history while honoring and being inclusive of multi-perspective narratives?

### MATERIALS

- *Curate 757*: Titus Kaphar, PBS, 2019 (9 minutes), [pbs.org/video/titus-kaphar-cyvmqu](https://pbs.org/video/titus-kaphar-cyvmqu)
- Images of Explorers from the US Capitol Rotunda
  - o John Vanderlyn, *Landing of Columbus*, 1847, Architect of the Capitol, <https://www.aoc.gov/explore-capitol-campus/art/landing-columbus>
  - o William Henry Powell, *The Discovery of the Mississippi by De Soto*, 1855, Architect of the Capitol, [aoc.gov/explore-capitol-campus/art/discovery-mississippi-de-soto](https://www.aoc.gov/explore-capitol-campus/art/discovery-mississippi-de-soto)
- Titus Kaphar’s website, [kapharstudio.com/work/](http://kapharstudio.com/work/)
- Titus Kaphar, *Columbus Day*, 2014. Oil and mixed media on canvas. 67.75 x 90.75 x 4 inches. © Titus Kaphar. Image courtesy of the artist.
- Display to project digital files and video on a large screen
- “Landing” images of Columbus, De Soto, Coronado, and Hudson (pages 38–41) from Lesson 4 printed onto cardstock
- Suggested art supplies: acrylic white paint markers, utility knives/cutting tools, watercolor paint, glue sticks, scissors, markers, cutting mats, paint brushes, water cups, metallic permanent markers, double sided tape, colored craft tape, surgical tape, paper towels, pipe cleaners

### PROCEDURE

1. Ask students to take out the Bartolomé de las Casas Sentence-Phrase-Word activity sheet they completed for homework from Lesson 4. Have them share why they selected some of the sentences, phrases, and words from the text. If students have access to technology, an option here would be to have students type in the “word” they selected from the document into a class word cloud. What kind of shift did they notice in reading de Las Casas’ report? How is power being used in a different way?
2. Share how explorers such as Columbus and De Soto are displayed in the US Capitol. Point out the dates the images were created (1847 and 1855) and the scale of the paintings (12 ft. x 18 ft.) along with the importance of the US Capitol building. How does knowing this information play a role in how you interpret the images?

3. What if we “shifted the gaze” and made the “side” or “hidden” characters the “main” focus? Tell students that in their final project they will shift the focus to the “side” and “hidden” stories. Remind students that people on the “side” are not the prominent/main figures portrayed in a story. The “hidden” is what is completely left out from the narrative. Students will rely on their learning from previous lessons to make these connections and inferences.
4. Titus Kaphar is an artist who does this kind of work. Introduce students to Titus Kaphar’s work by showing the [PBS video](#) from *Curator 757*. Kaphar mentions in the video that paintings are a type of “visual language.” Ask students what stood out to them from the video. In the video Kaphar says, “We can’t just simply demonize our Founding Fathers, but it’s important not to deify them. Let’s just find the truth in the middle.” What point is Kaphar making in this quote?
5. Focus in on Kaphar’s *Columbus Day* without revealing the title. Ask students if they recognize the painting. In what ways did Kaphar uplift the voices that have been silenced in history?
6. Students will select from one of the “landing” images that they analyzed in Lesson 4 to create their own Titus Kaphar–inspired art. Give them the option to choose from the Columbus, DeSoto, Coronado, or Hudson images.
7. Have students reflect back on the primary sources they have analyzed throughout the week. What kind of themes did they notice? Explain that the project goals are to visually
  - shift the gaze
  - reframe the narrative
  - focus on a lesser-known character(s)
  - deepen the story, not erase history
8. Challenge students to use visual symbolism and not to do the obvious as they modify the image. The creative reframing of the art piece should promote curiosity and challenge the viewer’s thinking so the image is reinterpreted from another perspective.
9. As a source of inspiration, use Titus Kaphar’s website to show how he uses different art techniques and write on the board the different techniques Kaphar uses in this work:
  - Cut out images from the painting then fill in space with a new image from behind or leave a void
  - Invert images to the backside of painting
  - Fold or crumple up the paper
  - White out characters
  - Create a diptych (two frames in one)
  - Breakout outside of the frame
  - Slice paper into strips and weave back together
  - Use a clear overlay
  - Frame characters
  - Create new imagery not originally part of the painting
  - 3-D effects, add strips/layers
  - Bind figures

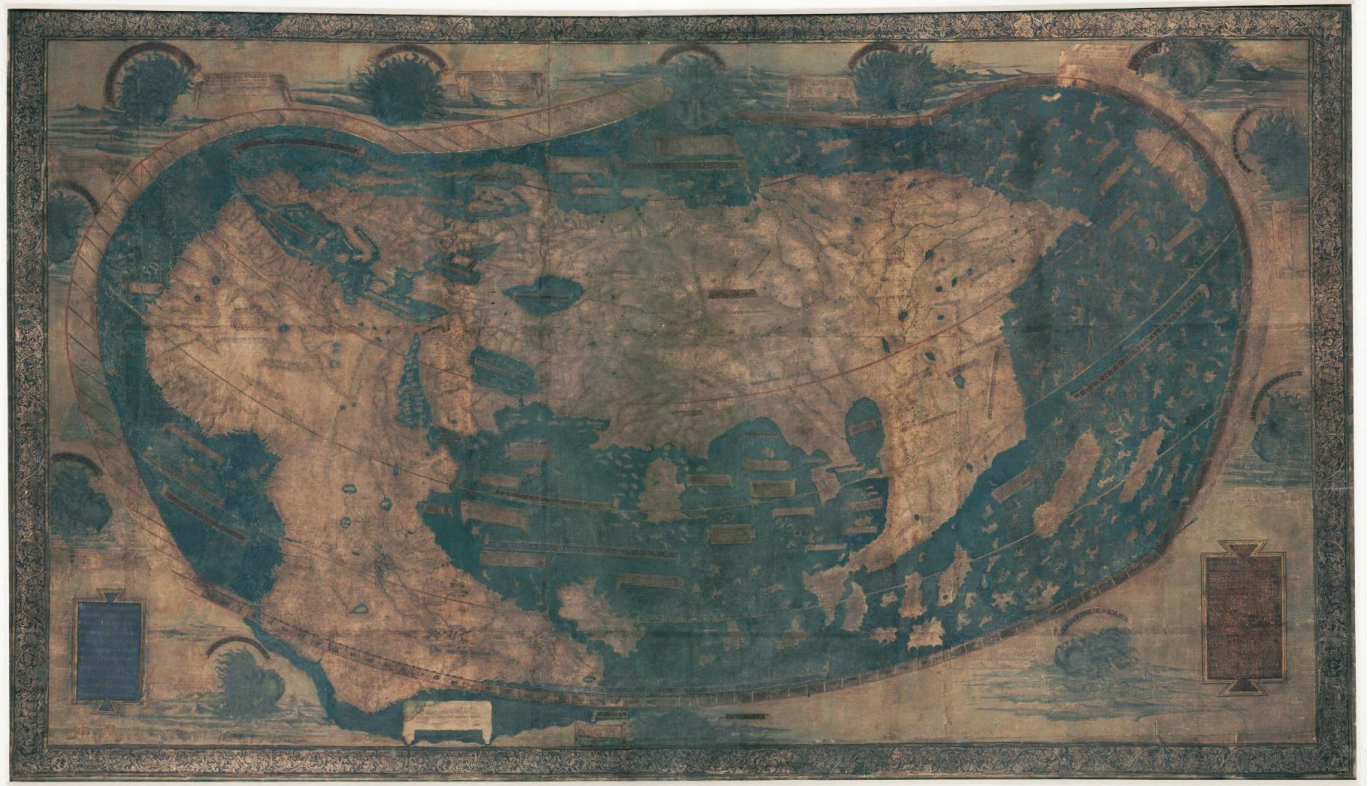
10. Distribute the “landing” images printed on cardstock and ask students to begin by asking themselves:
  - What’s the story I am trying to tell?
  - How do I plan to “shift the gaze”?
11. Set up an art supply station. If you are using utility knives, demonstrate how to safely use the tool. If students don’t feel comfortable using the utility knife, offer to cut the pieces out for them. As students work, circulate around the classroom to provide additional directions and monitor progress.
12. Once students have completed their image, they will create a placard for their artwork. Explain to students that in museums and art galleries, each artifact or art piece has a placard that provides background information or highlights certain aspects of the piece. Ask students to create a title that reflects the narrative they are revealing. Write the following questions on the board to help guide students in writing their placard:
  - What did they shift in the image? What side characters are now the main people in the image?
  - Why did they choose to shift the gaze to a particular person or part of the image? In doing this, how does the narrative represented in the image change? (Students should use their historical thinking skills here. Ask them to back up their reasons with evidence from the previous lessons.)
  - How did they accomplish their goal? What Titus Kaphar techniques did they use and why? (Here it’s all about their artistic expression choices.)
13. Wrap up: Class discussion
  - In what way does Titus Kaphar use his power through art?
  - How can we preserve history while honoring and being inclusive of multi-perspective narratives?

## EXTENSION

Read aloud from *The People Shall Continue* by Simon J. Ortiz. This picture book tells the story of the invasion and destruction of Native lands and how the Indigenous peoples’ struggle did not interfere with their resilience and determination to fight back and preserve their culture.



## Map of the World, ca. 1489



(Yale University, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library)



# Map of the Americas, 1596



(Boston Public Library, Norman B. Leventhal Map Center)



# 1. Map of the Americas, 1596



(Boston Public Library, Norman B. Leventhal Map Center)



## 2. Map of the Americas, 1596



(Boston Public Library, Norman B. Leventhal Map Center)



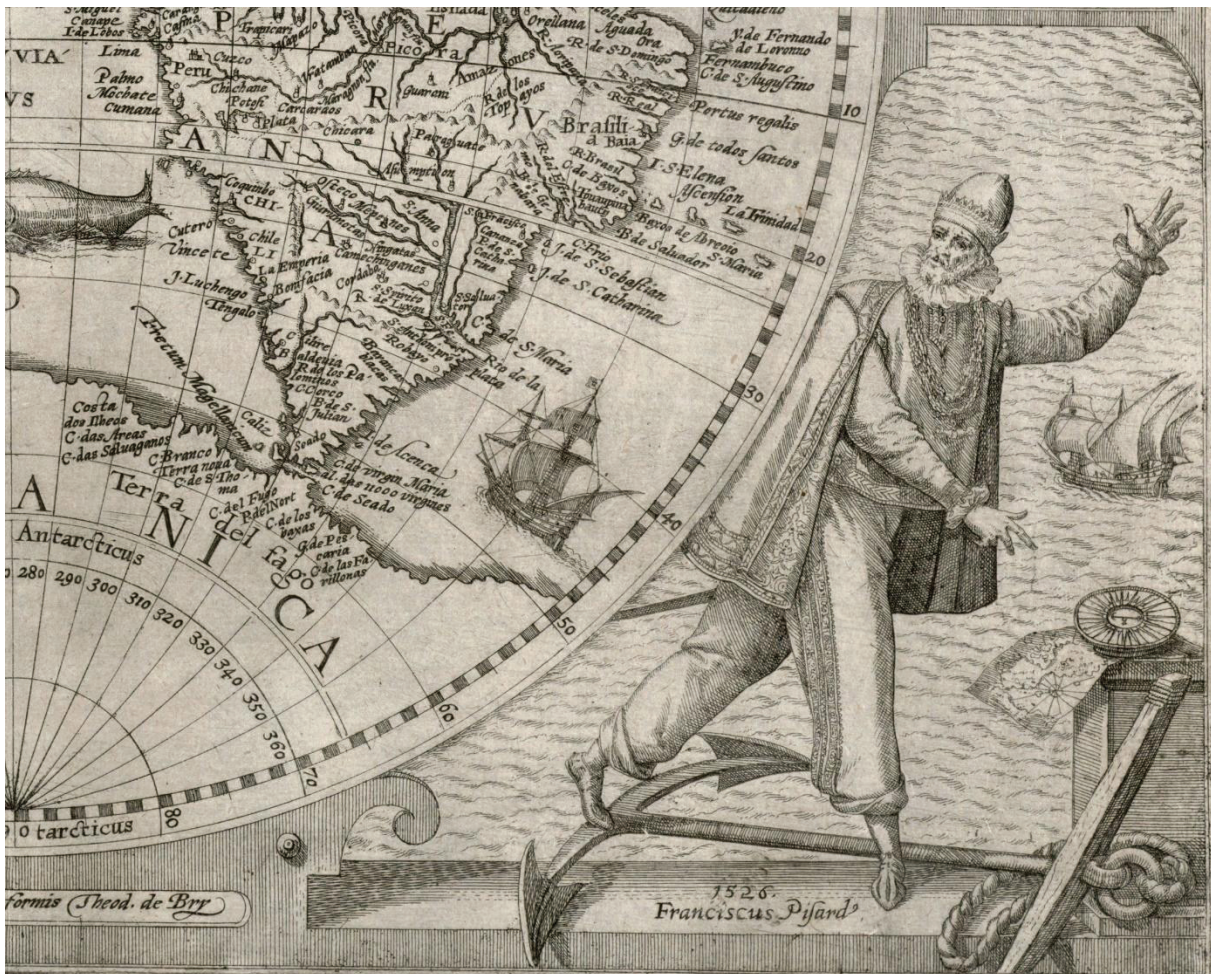
### 3. Map of the Americas, 1596



(Boston Public Library, Norman B. Leventhal Map Center)



## 4. Map of the Americas, 1596



(Boston Public Library, Norman B. Leventhal Map Center)





# Map of the Americas, 1671



(The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC09789)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Explorer Research

Choose ONE of the following explorers to research. Circle the name of the explorer you are choosing.

Christopher Columbus    Francisco Pizarro    Ferdinand Magellan    Amerigo Vespucci

### Fast Facts

Birthplace:

Country Sponsor:

Years of Exploration:

### Fast Facts

### Expedition Details

Purpose/Goal:

Accomplishments:

### Additional Information

### Route Taken

### Source

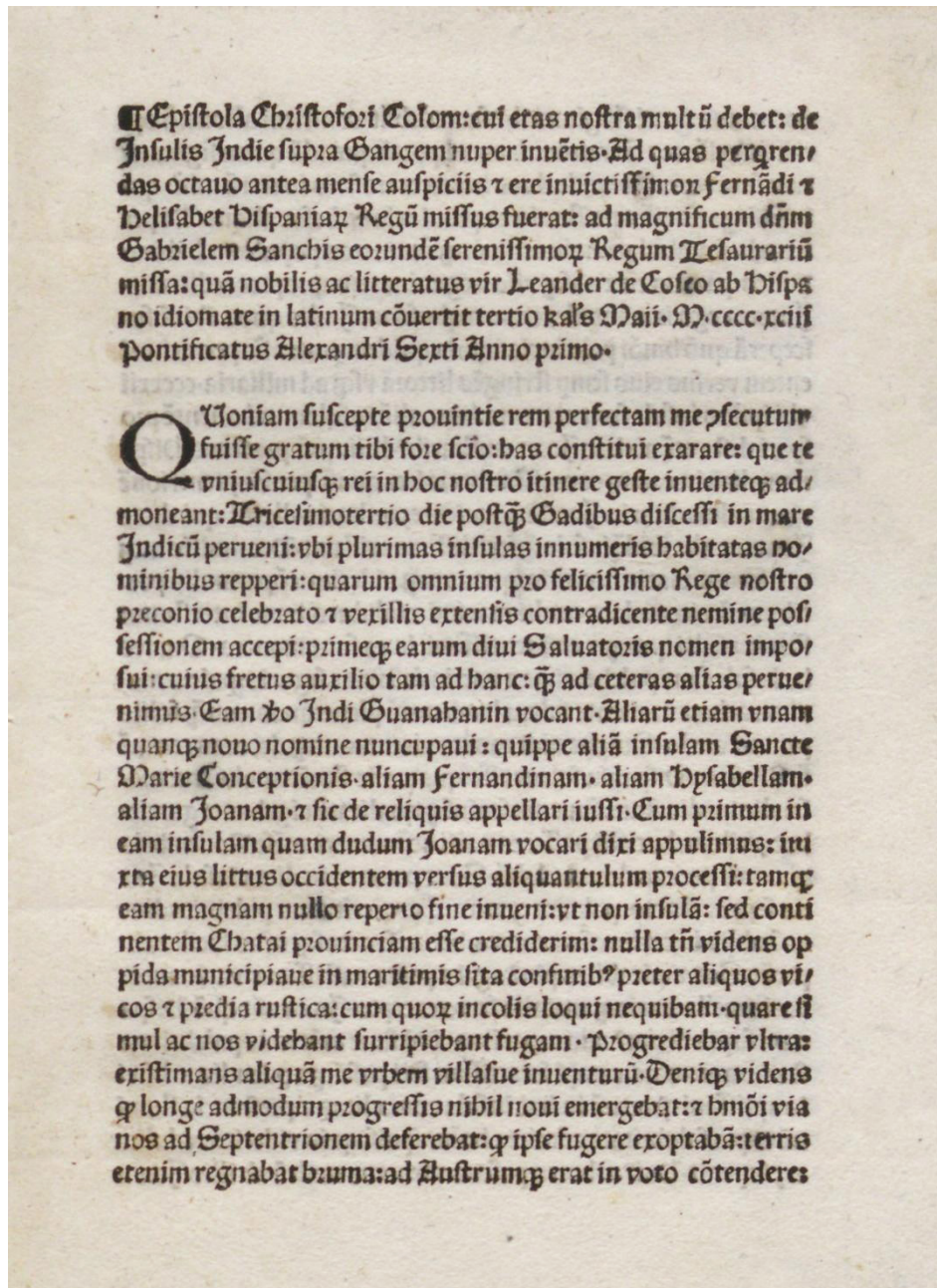
# Taino Territory Map



(Smithsonian Exhibits, 2017)



Page 1 of Christopher Columbus's Letter to  
Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand of Spain, 1493



(The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC01427)

## Columbus's Letter: Excerpt #1

**Vocabulary**

*proclamation* – official announcement

*unfurling his standard* – presenting his plan

... I have determined to write you this letter to inform you of everything that has been done and discovered in this voyage of mine. On the thirty-third day after leaving Cadiz I came into the Indian Sea, where I discovered many islands inhabited by numerous people. I took possession of all of them for our most fortunate King by making public **proclamation** and **unfurling his standard**, no one making any resistance. To the first of them I have given the name of our blessed Saviour, trusting in whose aid I had reached this and all the rest; but the Indians call it Guanahani. To each of the others also I gave a new name, ordering one to be called Sancta Maria de Concepcion, another Fernandina, another Hysabella, another Johana; and so with all the rest. . . .

**Keywords** (select up to six words)

**Summary**

**Headline**



## Columbus's Letter: Excerpt #2

### Vocabulary

*cultivation* – planting or farming

*pasturage* – land covered with grass, good for grazing animals

*salubrity* – good quality, clear, clean

. . . In the island, which I have said before was called Hispana, there are very lofty and beautiful mountains, great farms, groves and fields, most fertile both for **cultivation** and for **pasturage**, and well adapted for constructing buildings. The convenience of the harbors in this island, and the excellence of the rivers, in volume and **salubrity**, surpass human belief, unless one should see them. In it the trees, pasture-lands and fruits differ much from those of Johana. Besides, this Hispana abounds in various kinds of species, gold, and metals. . . .

Keywords (select up to four to five words)

Summary

### Columbus's Letter: Excerpt #3

**Vocabulary**

*destitute of arms* – not having weapons, guns  
*guileless* – innocent

. . . They are all, as I said before, unprovided with any sort of iron, and they are **destitute of arms**, which are entirely unknown to them, and for which they are not adapted; not on account of any bodily deformity, for they are well made, but because they are timid and full of terror. They carry, however, canes dried in the sun in place of weapons, upon whose roots they fix a wooden shaft, dried and sharpened to a point. But they never dare to make use of these, for it has often happened, when I have sent two or three of my men to some of their villages to speak with the inhabitants, that a crowd of Indians has sallied forth; but, when they saw our men approaching, they speedily took to flight, parents abandoning children, and children their parents. This happened not because any loss or injury had been inflicted upon any of them. On the contrary, I gave whatever I had, cloth and many other things, to whomsoever I approached, or with whom I could get speech, without any return being made to me; but they are by nature fearful and timid. But when they see that they are safe, and all fear is banished, they are very **guileless** and honest, and very liberal of all they have. No one refuses the asker anything that he possesses; on the contrary, they themselves invite us to ask for it. . . .

**Keywords** (select up to ten words)

**Summary**

### Columbus's Letter: Excerpt #4

**Vocabulary**

*abound* – to have in large numbers

. . . I gave them many beautiful and pleasing things, which I had brought with me, for no return whatever, in order to win their affection, and that they might become Christians and inclined to love our King and Queen and Princes and all the people of Spain; and that they might be eager to search for and gather and give to us what they **abound** in and we greatly need. . . .

**Keywords** (select up to four to five words)

**Summary**

### Columbus's Letter: Excerpt #5

#### Vocabulary

*notwithstanding* – in spite of, although

. . . As soon as I had come into this sea, I took by force some Indians from the first island, in order that they might learn from us, and at the same time tell us what they knew about affairs in these regions. This succeeded admirably; for in a short time we understood them and they us both by gesture and signs and words; and they were of great service to us. They are coming now with me, and have always believed that I have come from heaven, **notwithstanding** the long time they have been, and still remain, with us. . . .

Keywords (select up to six words)

Summary

Source: *The Old South Leaflets*, 10th series (Boston, 1892), pp. 1–5.

### Columbus's Letter: Excerpt #6

#### Vocabulary

*serene* – used as a term of respect for member of some European royal families

*prone* – likely to do

. . . In all these islands there is no difference in the appearance of the inhabitants, and none in their customs and language, so that all understand one another. This is a circumstance most favorable for what I believe our most serene King especially desires, that is, their conversion to the holy faith of Christ; for which, indeed, so far as I could understand, they are very ready and prone. . . .

Keywords (select up to four to five words)

Summary

Source: *The Old South Leaflets*, 10th series (Boston, 1892), pp. 1–5.



**Copia de la bula del decreto y concession q̄ hizo el papa**

Alexandro sexto al Rey y a la Reyna nuestros señores de las Indias conforme al capitulo,  
Per venerabilem. s. rationibus/qui filij sint legitimi/ y al cap. non. xxiij. q. iiii.



**I**n nomine dñi. Amen. Hauerint vniuersi hoc presens publicum trasumptū in specturi qđ nos Jaco-  
b<sup>o</sup> cōchillos di z apostolice sedis gra epus Lathaniensis: habuim<sup>o</sup>. vidim<sup>o</sup>. z diligēter insperim<sup>o</sup> infra scriptas literas felicis  
recondationis Alexandri pape sexti eius vera bulla plūbea cū cordulis sericis, croceisq; colorib<sup>o</sup> moze Romane curie impēden-  
tis bullatas sanas siquidē z integras ac oimoda suspitione carentes huiusmodi sub tenore. **ALEXANDER** epus seruus  
seruozū dī carissimū in xpo filio Ferdinādo Regi z carissime in xpo filie Elisabeth Regine Castellē Aragoni, Sici-  
lie z Granate illustrib<sup>o</sup> salutē z apostolicā benedictionē. Inter cetera diuine maiestati beneplacita opera z cordis nri dīdica  
bilia illud pfecto potissimū existit vt fides catholica z xpiana religio nris presertim tēporib<sup>o</sup> exaltetur ac vbi libet amplietur  
z dilatetur animarū qz salus pcuratur ac barbare nationes depimātur z ad fidē ipsam redūcantur. Unde cū ad hāc sacra pē-  
tri scđe diuina fauente clemētia (meritis licet imparibus) euocati fuerim<sup>o</sup> cognoscentes vos tanq̄ veros catholicos Reges  
z principes q̄les semp fuisse nouimus z a vobis preclare gesta toti pene iā orbi nouissima dmostrāt: necdū id exoptare sed omni  
conatu, studio z diligētia: nullis laboribus, nullis impēsis, nullisq; pcedo periculis etiā ppriū sanguinē cōfundēdo efficiere ac

omnē animū vestrū omnesq; conar<sup>o</sup> ad hoc iam dudū dedicasse que admodū recuperatio regi Granate a tirāide Saracenozi hodiernis tēporib<sup>o</sup>  
b<sup>o</sup> per vos cū tanta diuini nominis gloria facta testatur. Digne dicimur nō immerito z debem<sup>o</sup> illa vobis etiā sponte z fauorabiliter cōcedere per que  
huiusmodi sanctū z laudabile ac immortalī deo acceptū propositū in dies feruentiori animo ad ipsius dei honorem z imperij xpiani propagationē pro-  
sequi valeatis. Sane accepimus qđ vos qui dudū animū propositū aliquas insulas z terras firmas remotas z incognitas ac per alios hactenus  
nō reptas querere z inuēre vt illarū incolas z habitatores ad colēdū redēptozē nri z fidē catholicā pfitendū reduceretis: hacten<sup>o</sup> in expugnatiōe z  
recupatiōe ipsi<sup>o</sup> regi Granate plurimū occupati huiusmodi factū z laudabile ppositū vrum ad optatū finē pducere nequiuistis sed tandē sicut dño  
placuit regno pfecto recuperato, volētes desiderū adimplere vestrū dilectū filiū Christophozū colon virū vtiq; dignū z plurimū cōmendatū ac  
tanto negotio aptū cū nauigij z hominibus ad similia instructis nō sine maximis laborib<sup>o</sup> z periculis ac expēsis dīstinauit vt terras firmas z insulas  
remotas z incognitas huiusmodi per mare vbi hactenus nauigatū nō fuerat diligēter inquireret. Qui tandē (diuino auxilio facta extrema diligētia  
in mari oceano nauigantes certas insulas remotissimas z etiā terras firmas que per alios hactenus reperte non fuerant) inuenērunt in quib<sup>o</sup> q̄ plu-  
rimē gentes pacifice viuentes z vt asseritur nudi incedentes nec caribus vtescentes inhabitant, z vt presatū Francij vestrū possunt opinari gētes ipse  
in Insulis z terris p̄dictis habitantes credunt vñū deum creatozē in celis esse ac ad fidem catholicā amplectendū z bonis moribus imbuedū satis  
apti videntur speiq; habetur quod si erudirētur nomē saluatoris dñi nri Iesu xpi in terris z insulis p̄dictis facile induceretur. Ac presatus L. huius  
phozus in vna ex principalibus Insulis p̄dictis iam vñā turrim satis munitam in qua certos christianos qui secum ierāt in custodia z vt alias in-  
sulas ac terras firmas remotas z incognitas inquirerent possunt: construi z edificare fecit. In quibus quidē insulis z terris iam custodiā z vt alias in-  
sulas z alie q̄ plurime res p̄tiosē diuersi generis z diuersi q̄tatis reperuntur. Unde oibus diligēter z p̄sertim fidei catholice exaltationē z dilatatiō-  
ne (prouit dicit catholicos Reges z principes) cōsideratis: moze progeniozū vestrōzū clarē memoriē regū: terras firmas z insulas p̄dictas illarū qz  
incolas z habitatores vobis diuina fauente clemētia subicere z ad fidem catholicā redducere p̄posuistis. Hos igitur huiusmodi vestrū sanctum  
z laudabile p̄positū plurimū in dño cōmendantes accipientes vt illud ad debitū finē perducat z ipsam nomē saluatoris nri in partibus illis in-  
ducatur: hortamur vos q̄ plurimū in dño z per sacri lauacri susceptionē qua mādas apostolicas obligati estis z cetera misericordie dñi nri Iesu  
xpi attēte requirimus vt cū expeditionē huiusmodi omnino p̄sequi z assumere pronamente orthodoxe fidei zelo intendatis populos in huiusmodi  
insulis z terris degentes ad christianā religionē suscipiendū inducere velitis z debeatis nec pericula nec labores vilo vnq; tēporē vos deterrēat fir-  
ma spe fiduciaq; cōceptis qđ deus omnipotēs conatus vros feliciter p̄sequatur. Et vt tāti negotij prouinciā apostolice gracie largire poterat libe-  
rius z audacius assumatis. Ab omni proprio nō ad vestrā vel alterius pro vobis super hoc nobis oblate petitionis instātiā sed de nostra mera liberalita-  
te z ex certa sciētia ac de apostolice potestatis plenitudine omnes insulas z terras firmas inuentas z inueniendas dicitas z detegendas versus occi-  
dētē z meridiē fabricādo z construendo vñā lineā a polo arctico salicet septētrione ad polū antarcticū scilicet meridiē siue terre firme z insule inuente  
z inueniende sit: versus indiā aut versus aliā quācumq; ptem que linea distet a quibet insularū que vulgariter nūcupantur de los Azores z L. abo ver-  
de centum leucis versus occidentē z meridiem. Ita qz omnes insule z terre firme reperte z detegende a p̄dicta linea versus oc-  
cidentē z meridiē per alium regē aut principē christianū nō fuerint actualiter possessē vsq; ad diē nauitatis dñi nri Iesu xpi. prime p̄teritū quo  
incipit Annus presens millesim. q̄dringē. nonagesim. tertius q̄ndo fuerūt per Francios z Capitānos vestrōs inuente aliq; p̄dictarū insularū. Aucto-  
ritate omnipotētis dei nobis in beato Petro concessa ac vicariatus Iesu xpi qua fungimur in terris cū omnibus illarū dominijs ciuitatibus castris  
locis z villis iuribusq; z iurisdictionibus ac p̄sentijis vniuersis vobis hereditibusq; z successoribus vestrīs Castellē z Legionis regib<sup>o</sup> in perpetuum  
tenore p̄sentijū donamus concedimus z assignamus vsq; z heredes ac successores presatos illarū dominos cū plena libera z oimoda potestate au-  
ctoritate z iurisdictione facimus constituimus z deputamus. Decernentes nihilominus per huiusmodi donationē concessionē z assignationē nram  
nulli xpiano principi qui actualiter presatas insulas z terras firmas possiderit vsq; ad p̄dictum diē Matūritatis dñi nri Iesu xpi inuestitū sublatū  
intelligi posse aut auferri debere. Et insuper mandamus vobis in virtute sacre obedientie (vt sicut etiā pollicemini z nō dubitamus pro vestrā mari-  
ma deuotionē z regia magnanimitate vos esse facturos) ad terras firmas z insulas p̄dictas viros. p̄bos z deū nūmētes doctos p̄cios z expertos ad  
hibentes. Ac quibuscūq; personis cuiuscūq; dignitatis etiam imperialis z regalis status gradus ordinis vel cōditionis sub excommunicationis late se-  
ntentiē pena quam eo ipso si cōtra fecerint incurrant districtius inbibemus ne ad insulas z terras firmas inuentas z inueniendas detectas z detegendas  
versus occidentem z meridiē fabricādo z construendo lineam a polo arctico ad polū antarcticū siue terre firme z insule inuente z inueniende sit: ver-  
sus indiā aut versus aliam quācumq; partem: que linea distet a qualibet insularū que vulgariter nūcupātur de los Azores z L. abo verde centum le-  
ucis versus occidentem z meridiem vt presertim pro meritis habendis vel quavis alia de causa accedere p̄sumant absq; vestrā ac heredū z suc-  
cessozū vestrōzū p̄dictozū licentia speciali. Nō obstantibus cōstitutionibus z ordinationibus apostolicis ceterisq; contrariis quibuscūq; in illo  
a quo imperia z dominationes ac bona cuncta procedunt confidentes: quod dirigente dño actus vros si huiusmodi sanctū z laudabile p̄positū p̄se-  
quāmi breui tempore eius felicitate z gloria totius populi xpiani vestrū labores z conatus exitum felicissimū consequantur. Item quia difficile for-  
ret p̄sentēs literas ad singula queq; loca in quibus expediens fuerit dferri: volumus ac motu z scientia similibus decernimus: quod illarū trā-  
sumptis manu publici Notarij inderogati subscriptis z sigillo alicuius persone in ecclesiastica dignitate cōstitute seu curie ecclesiastice munitis ea pro-  
fus fides in iudicio z extra ac alias vbi libet adhibeatur que p̄sentibus adhiberetur si essent exhibite vel ostēse. Nulli ergo omnino hominum liceat  
hanc paginā nre cōmendationis, hortationis, requisitionis, donationis, concessionis, assignationis, constitutionis, deputatiōis, decreti, mandati,  
inhibitiōis z voluntatis, infringere vel ei ausu temerario cōtra ire. Si quis autem hoc attentare p̄sumperit indignationē opotētis dei ac bea-  
tozū Petri z Pauli apostolorū eius se noverit incursum. Datis Rome apud sanctum Petrum Anno incarnationis dñice millesimo quadringē-  
simo nono aegilino tertio quarto nonas maij pontificatus nri anno primo.

(The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC04093)



## Excerpts from Pope Alexander VI's Doctrine of Discovery, 1493

### Excerpt # 1

. . . that in our times especially in Catholic faith and the Christian religion be exalted and be everywhere increased and spread, that the health of souls be cared for and that barbarous nations be overthrown and brought to faith itself. . . .

### Excerpt # 2

. . . with the wish to fulfill your desire, chose our beloved son, Christopher Columbus, a man assuredly worthy and of the highest recommendations and fitted for so great an undertaking, whom you furnished with ships and men equipped for like designs, not without the greatest hardships, dangers, and expenses, to make diligent quest for these remote and unknown mainlands and islands through the sea, where hitherto no one had sailed; and they at length, with divine aid and with the utmost diligence sailing in the ocean sea, discovered certain very remote islands and even mainlands that hitherto had not been discovered by others; wherein dwell very many peoples living in peace. . . .

### Excerpt # 3

. . . In the islands and countries already discovered are found gold, spices, and very many other precious things of divers kinds and qualities. . . .

### Excerpt # 4

. . . should any of said islands have been found by your envoys and captains, give, grant, and assign to you and your heirs and successors, kings of Castile and Leon, forever, together with all their dominions, cities, camps, places, and villages, and all rights, jurisdictions, and appurtenances, all islands and mainlands found and to be found. . . . And we make, appoint, and depute you and your said heirs and successors lords of them with full and free power, authority, and jurisdiction of every kind; with this proviso however, that by this our gift, grant, and assignment no right acquired by any Christian prince, who may be in actual possession of said islands and mainlands prior to the said birthday of our Lord Jesus Christ, is hereby to be understood to be withdrawn or taking away. . . .

### Excerpt # 5

. . . we strictly forbid all persons of whatsoever rank, even imperial and royal, or of whatsoever estate, degree, order, or condition, to dare without your special permit or that of your aforesaid heirs and successors, to go for the purpose of trade or any other reason to the islands or mainlands. . . .

Source: Broadside of Pope Alexander VI's Doctrine of Discovery [Inter Caetera], Spain, May 4, 1493. (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GL04093). Translation from Papal Encyclicals Online, <https://www.papalencyclicals.net>.



Main-Side-Hidden: Doctrine of Discovery, 1493

MAIN	SIDE	HIDDEN
<p>Who is the main character being portrayed?</p> <p>What is the text directly telling us?</p> <p>What is the main narrative or central message?</p>	<p>Who/what on the sidelines is impacted by the actions being taken by the main character in the narrative?</p> <p>What's their story/perspective?</p> <p>What else may be going on that's not part of the narrative?</p>	<p>What is happening below the surface?</p> <p>What is not obvious?</p> <p>What might be left out either intentionally or unintentionally?</p>

## Landing of Columbus, 1492



(The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC08878.001)

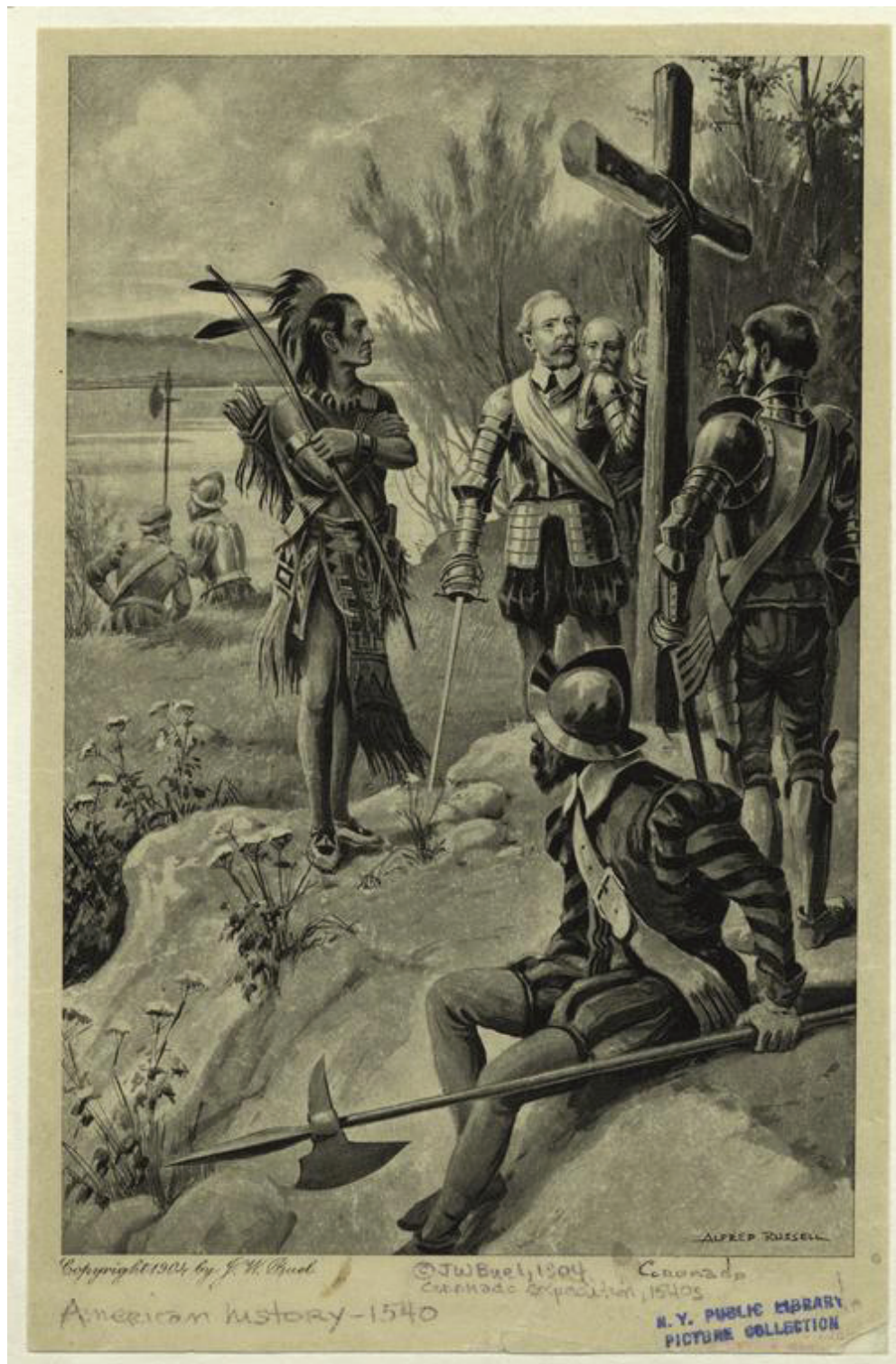


## The Discovery of the Mississippi by De Soto A.D. 1541



(The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC08878.002)

## Coronado's Expedition, 1540s



(New York Public Library)



## The Landing of Henrick Hudson, 1609



(The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC08878.003)

## Analyzing an Image

Circle the name of the explorer in the image your group is analyzing:

Coronado

DeSoto

Hudson

### PEOPLE

Describe the people in the image. Pay attention to their facial expressions, pose, clothing, etc.

### OBJECTS

Describe the objects in the image. Objects may also be symbolic.

### ACTIONS/ACTIVITIES

Describe what is occurring in this image. Focus on the evidence of power.

### OVERALL ASSESSMENT

I have learned the following from this image:

## Excerpts from Bartolomé de Las Casas' Account of the Spanish Conquest of Native Peoples of America, 1542

. . . And of all the infinite universe of humanity, these people are the most guileless, the most devoid of wickedness and duplicity, the most obedient and faithful to their native masters and to the Spanish Christians whom they serve. They are by nature the most humble, patient, and peaceable, holding no grudges, free from embroilments, neither excitable nor quarrelsome. . . .

Yet into this sheepfold, into this land of meek outcasts there came some Spaniards who immediately behaved like ravening wild beasts, wolves, tigers, or lions that had been starved for many days. . . . to such a degree that this Island of Hispaniola once so populous (having a population that I estimated to be more than three million), has now a population of barely two hundred persons. . . .

All the people were slain or died after being taken into captivity and brought to the Island of Hispaniola to be sold as slaves. When the Spaniards saw that some of these had escaped, they sent a ship to find them, and it voyaged for three years among the islands searching for those who had escaped being slaughtered, for a good Christian had helped them escape, taking pity on them and had won them over to Christ. . . .

Their reason for killing and destroying such an infinite number of souls is that the Christians have an ultimate aim, which is to acquire gold, and to swell themselves with riches in a very brief time and thus rise to a high estate disproportionate to their merits. It should be kept in mind that their insatiable greed and ambition, the greatest ever seen in the world, is the cause of their villainies. And also, those lands are so rich and felicitous, the native peoples so meek and patient, so easy to subject, that our Spaniards have no more consideration for them than beasts. . . .

For in the beginning the Indians regarded the Spaniards as angels from Heaven. Only after the Spaniards had used violence against them, killing, robbing, torturing, did the Indians ever rise up against them. . . .

And the care they took was to send the men to the mines to dig for gold, which is intolerable labor, and to send the women into the fields of the big ranches to hoe and till the land, work suitable for strong men. Nor to either the men or the women did they give any food except herbs and legumes, things of little substance. . . . And the men died in the mines and the women died on the ranches from the same causes, exhaustion and hunger. And thus was depopulated that island which had been densely populated.

Source: Excerpts from Bartolomé de Las Casas, *Brevisima Relacion de la Destruccion de las Indias* [Brief Account of the Devastation of the Indies], 1542, published by J.F. Hurtel Filadelfia, 1821, Library of Congress via HathiTrust. Translation available from the Digital Public Library of America, [dp.la/primary-source-sets/exploration-of-the-americas/sources/408](https://dp.la/primary-source-sets/exploration-of-the-americas/sources/408).



### Sentence-Phrase-Word: Bartolomé de Las Casas

After reading the text ONCE, do a SECOND reading to select a compelling sentence, phrase, and word from the excerpts.

**Sentence:** Record a sentence that was meaningful to you (captures the heart of the reading) and helped you gain a deeper understanding of the text.

**Phrase:** Identify a phrase from the text that moved, engaged, spoke to you, or was in some way meaningful to you.

**Word:** Record a word that captured your attention or struck you as powerful.

**WHY** did you choose this sentence?

**WHY** did you choose this phrase?

**WHY** did you choose this word?

In what ways does Bartolomé de Las Casas use his power?

*Landing of Columbus* by John Vanderlyn, 1847



(Architect of the Capitol)

*The Discovery of the Mississippi by DeSoto*  
by William Henry Powell, 1855



(Architect of the Capitol)



Artwork by Titus Kaphar



Titus Kaphar, *Columbus Day*, 2014. Oil and mixed media on canvas. 67.75 x 90.75 x 4 inches.  
© Titus Kaphar. Image courtesy of the artist.