



**Literacy Design
Collaborative**

What should we remember on Columbus Day?

★ TASK

by Janet R. Price

This is a short module, combining primary and secondary sources, that "explores" (pun intended) the voyages of Christopher Columbus and their consequences for the native peoples he "discovered." The student product is a proposal for a school assembly to be held just before or after the Columbus Day holiday. The focus is on Common Core standards RH.9-10.1 and WI.9-10.1

GRADES

8 - 10

DISCIPLINE

 **Social
Studies**

COURSE

 **Global
history or
humanities**

PACING

 **N/A**

Section 1: What Task?

Teaching Task

Task Template A4 - Argumentation

How should our school commemorate Columbus Day? After reading primary and secondary sources on Columbus' voyages and their effects on the peoples he encountered, write a proposal for a school assembly in which you argue about the appropriate way to commemorate the Columbus Day holiday. Support your position with evidence from the text/s. Be sure to acknowledge competing views.

Standards

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects

RH.9-10.1

Focus

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

W.9-10.1

Focus

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

RH.9-10.6

Focus

Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

Texts

- 🔗 1493 Letter from Christopher Columbus to King and Queen of Spain
- 🔗 Summary of life of Christopher Columbus
- 🔗 Excerpt from Bartoleme de Las Casas, Brief Account of the Devastation of the Indies. (1542)
- 🔗 Bartolomé de Las Casas (1542) read by Brian Quijada (video)
- 🔗 How Columbus Sailed Into U.S. History

Student Work Rubric - Argumentation Task - Grades 9-12

	Emerging	Approaches Expectations	Meets Expectations	Advanced
	1	2	3	4
Controlling Idea	Makes a general claim with an unclear focus.	Establishes a clear claim that addresses the prompt , with an uneven focus .	Establishes and maintains a clear, specific, and credible claim that addresses all aspects of the prompt.	Establishes and maintains a precise, substantive claim that addresses all aspects of the prompt. Acknowledges limitations and/or the complexity of the issue or topic .
Selection & Citation of Evidence	Includes minimal details from sources. Sources are used without citation.	Includes details, examples, and/or quotations from sources that are relevant to the claim . Inconsistently cites sources.	Includes details, examples, and/or quotations from sources that support the claim and supporting ideas . Consistently cites sources with minor formatting errors .	Includes well-chosen details, examples, and/or quotations from sources that fully support the claim and supporting ideas. Consistently cites sources using appropriate format .
Development / Explanation of Sources	Explanation of ideas and source material is irrelevant, incomplete, or inaccurate.	Explains ideas and source material to support the argument , with some incomplete reasoning or explanations .	Accurately explains ideas and source material and how they support the argument.	Thoroughly and accurately explains ideas and source material, using logical reasoning to support and develop the argument.
Organization	Lacks an evident structure. Makes unclear connections among claims, reasons, and/or evidence.	Groups ideas and uses transitions to develop the argument, with some lapses in coherence or organization .	Groups and sequences ideas to develop a cohesive argument . Uses transitions to clarify the relationships among claim(s), reasons, and evidence .	Groups and sequences ideas in a logical progression in which ideas build to create a unified whole . Uses varied transitions to clarify the precise relationships among claim(s), reasons, and evidence.
Conventions	Major errors in standard English conventions interfere with the clarity of the writing. Language or tone is inappropriate.	Errors in standard English conventions sometimes interfere with the clarity of the writing. Uses language and tone that are sometimes inappropriate for the audience and purpose.	Consistently applies standard English conventions; minor errors , while noticeable, do not interfere with the clarity of the writing. Uses language and tone appropriate to the audience and purpose .	Consistently applies standard English conventions, with few errors . Demonstrates varied syntax and precise word choice . Consistently uses language and tone appropriate to the audience and purpose.
Content Understanding (Generic)	Attempts to include disciplinary content in explanation or argument but understanding of content is weak; content is irrelevant, inappropriate, or inaccurate.	Briefly notes disciplinary content relevant to the prompt; shows basic or uneven understanding of content; minor errors in explanation.	Accurately presents disciplinary content relevant to the prompt with sufficient explanations that demonstrate understanding.	Integrates relevant and accurate disciplinary content with thorough explanations that demonstrate in-depth understanding.

Background for Students

Have you ever wondered why you have off from school on Columbus Day? Why Columbus and not some other early explorer? Does Columbus deserve the same honor as (in order of the holidays) Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, the casualties of war, the 4th of July, American labor, military veterans, and the thankful Pilgrims? Don't worry. No one expects you to advocate for ending a day off from school. However, it is time to go beyond "Columbus sailed the ocean blue" and delve more deeply into who he was, what he did, how we came to observe his birthday, and then to draw your own conclusions about what that observance should look like.

Extension

Students could combine their work into one unified proposal, present it to school leaders, plan and rehearse an assembly and actually present it to some or all of the school just before or after the Columbus Day holiday.

Section 2: What Skills?

Preparing for the Task

ACTIVATING PRIOR KNOWLEDGE: Identify what you already know and what you want to find out

Reading Process

ANNOTATION: Identify and highlight useful information as you read

NOTE-TAKING: Ability to select important facts and passages for use in one's own writing.

Transition to Writing

IDENTIFYING SIGNIFICANT ELEMENTS: Sharing ideas in a group discussion

Writing Process


ESTABLISHING THE CONTROLLING IDEA: Ability to establish a claim and consolidate information relevant to task.

BODY PARAGRAPHS: Develops points introduced in first paragraph


CONCLUDING PARAGRAPH: Brings the proposal to a satisfying conclusion.

REVISION AND EDITING: Strengthening arguments, Improving the organization, making the writing clearer and more interesting, making transitions smoother and correcting spelling, punctuation and grammar errors.



Section 3: What Instruction?

PACING	SKILL AND DEFINITION	PRODUCT AND PROMPT	SCORING GUIDE	INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES
Preparing for the Task				
10 mins	ACTIVATING PRIOR KNOWLEDGE: Identify what you already know and what you want to find out	KNOW AND FIND OUT Complete the T chart on the workspace indicating what you know about Columbus' explorations and their effects and what you want to find out.	Includes relevant entries on both sides of the T chart	Not Provided
	Standards: WHST.9-10.7 : Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.			
	Additional Attachments:  Workspace MT1			
Reading Process				
30 mins	ANNOTATION: Identify and highlight useful information as you read	READING AND ANNOTATING A PRIMARY SOURCE DOCUMENT: A LETTER FROM CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS Read excerpt from a 1493 letter from Christopher Columbus and answer the questions below. As you read, highlight anything that will help you answer these questions. Clarifying questions: What was Columbus asking for from the King and Queen of Spain? What was he promising them if he got what he was asking for? What did he tell them about his first voyage that might have helped persuade them ? Connecting question: What in Columbus' letter	Highlights relevant information Accurately answers questions Makes reasonable prediction based on text	Note that this module has students read the primary source documents BEFORE the helpful secondary source background material. The reasoning is that virtually all students have some background already on Columbus and that it is important to avoid letting the secondary sources do their thinking for them as they analyse the two primary sources. However, teachers may decide to change the order of the readings to better meet their students' needs. So, for instance, the summary could come before Las Casas.

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		might help predict his future actions and their consequences for the native peoples he encountered?		
	<p>Standards:</p> <p>RH.9-10.2 : Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.</p> <p>RH.9-10.1 : Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.</p> <p>Additional Attachments:</p> <p> workspace</p>			
30 mins	<p>ANNOTATION: Identify and highlight useful information as you read</p>	<p>READING AND ANNOTATING A PRIMARY SOURCE: EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT BY BARTOLEME DE LAS CASAS</p> <p>After reading an excerpt in the workspace from Bartoleme de Las Casas, <i>Brief Account of the Devastation of the Indies</i>. (1542) and listening to a video performance of this excerpt, briefly answer these questions, summarizing evidence from the text:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How does Las Casas describe the natives of the islands Columbus explored? 2. How does the author describe the treatment of these people by Spaniards? 3. What does the author say about the Spaniards' motive for this behavior? 4. How does the cacique explain the Spaniards' behavior before he is captured? 5. Compare this account to Columbus' 1493 letter. What in Columbus' letter is consistent with what Las Casas has to say, 	Answers questions completely using evidence from text.	<p>After students complete this Mini Task you may want them to return to Mini Task 1 and revisit their Know/Find Out T-chart. What have they learned? Do they have any new questions? (Some may wonder what was Columbus' role in the atrocities Las Casas describes.) They may find more answers in the next reading, a summary of Columbus' exploits.</p>

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		particularly in regards to questions 1-3?		
	<p>Standards:</p> <p>RH.9-10.9 : Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.</p> <p>RH.9-10.6 : Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.</p> <p>RH.9-10.3 : Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.</p> <p>RH.9-10.1 : Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.</p> <p>Additional Attachments:</p> <p> video performance of Las Casas text</p> <p> workspace</p>			
30 mins	<p>NOTE-TAKING: Ability to select important facts and passages for use in one's own writing.</p>	<p>TAKE NOTES ON SECONDARY SOURCE: A SUMMARY OF COLUMBUS' EXPLOITS Read this summary of Columbus' voyages and use the workspace to take notes on information you identify as potentially useful to convey in an assembly for Columbus Day.</p>	<p>Takes accurate notes in "what" column</p> <p>Identifies significance of factual information in "so what" column</p>	Not Provided
	<p>Standards:</p> <p>RH.9-10.2 : Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.</p> <p>RH.9-10.1 : Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.</p>			
30 mins	<p>NOTE-TAKING: Ability to select important facts and passages for use in one's own writing.</p>	<p>TAKE NOTES ON A SECONDARY SOURCE: AN NPR STORY ABOUT THE ORIGINS OF COLUMBUS DAY Read this story from National Public Radio about how Columbus Day came to be celebrated in the United States and take notes on the information you might include in your assembly.</p>	<p>Notes are accurate and relevant to the purpose of proposing an assembly</p>	<p>This is a rich resource that could form the basis for a lively class discussion or Socratic Seminar. Students will learn from this article that 1) the Columbus they may have heard about as young children is largely a figment of Washington Irving's imagination and 2) Columbus Day became a federal holiday because of the efforts of Catholic and Italian groups who were battling discrimination. Some students may see an irony in this or perhaps a lesson for other ethnic groups seeking better treatment. There is also a potential argument some students may wish to make for using a Columbus day assembly to celebrate Italian heritage or perhaps diverse ethnic heritages, rather than focusing specifically on Columbus and his exploits. Note that there are a number of links in this article to materials created for alternatives to Columbus Day. You may wish to encourage students to explore these links to get ideas for their proposal.</p>

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Standards:

RH.9-10.2 : Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

RH.9-10.1 : Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

Additional Attachments:

[🔗 how-columbus-sailed-into-u-s-history:NPR](#)

Transition to Writing

40 mins

IDENTIFYING SIGNIFICANT ELEMENTS: Sharing ideas in a group discussion

"SAVE THE LAST WORD FOR ME"-- SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

PROMPT: Select one brief passage from one of the readings that you think should be shared at the assembly. Then, in your small group, take turns sharing and discussing the passages you each selected, using the "Save the Last Word Protocol."

- Peer scoring:
 - classmate clearly explains choice of passage
 - classmate makes thoughtful comments about other people's choices
 - classmate follows the protocol--does not talk out of turn and does contribute when it is his/her turn

Make sure to give students some quiet time to select their passage or assign selection as homework before the discussion. Form groups of 3 to 5 students. Explain that the goal of the small group is to help each other identify what might be important or interesting to share in a school assembly. Go over the protocol with them carefully if this is the first time they are using it and reserve some class discussion time at end of class to debrief the pros and cons of this discussion method. (Do they want to use it again in another unit?) An extension of the discussion, time permitting would be in small groups or whole class, for students to briefly share possible themes for an assembly. Encourage creativity and diversity of ideas. (If they understand there is no one right answer, one student might propose a concert of Caribbean music while another opts for a celebration of Italian food and a third advocates putting Columbus on trial.)

Standards:

CCR.SL.1 : Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCR.SL.3 : Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

CCR.SL.4 : Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Additional Attachments:

[🔗 Save the Last Word for Me protocol](#)

Writing Process

30 mins

ESTABLISHING THE CONTROLLING IDEA: Ability to establish a claim and consolidate information relevant to task.

DECIDE ON THE THEME AND MAIN ELEMENTS OF YOUR PROPOSED ASSEMBLY
Draft an introductory paragraph that



- states the name and theme of your proposed assembly
- briefly explains why

The theme of proposal is clear.


The explanation is relevant to the theme and draws on at least one of the assigned readings.

Time permitting, students could post and share their themes and comment on each other's ideas either on a google doc or an old-fashioned museum walk in the classroom.


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		this is an appropriate theme for an assembly scheduled around Columbus Day.		
	<p>Standards:</p> <p>W.9-10.1 : Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.</p> <p>Additional Attachments:</p> <p> workspace</p>			
40 mins	<p>BODY PARAGRAPHS: Develops points introduced in first paragraph</p>	<p>PROPOSAL BODY PARAGRAPH(S) Write one or more body paragraphs using the scoring guide as an outline.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops points introduced in first paragraph, explaining more fully why this is an appropriate way to commemorate "Columbus Day" • Acknowledges one or two typical Columbus Day themes, as counter-claims. Describes them and explains why proposed assembly theme is better • Uses one or more of the texts to support points. • Describe what would happen during the assembly--who would do what and how long it would last 	Not Provided
	<p>Standards:</p> <p>WHST.9-10.1 : Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content.</p> <p>W.9-10.4 : Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</p> <p>W.9-10.1 : Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.</p> <p>Additional Attachments:</p> <p> Workspace</p>			
30 mins	CONCLUDING	CONCLUSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restates the name 	Not Provided

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	<p>PARAGRAPH: Brings the proposal to a satisfying conclusion.</p>	<p>Write a conclusion, using the scoring guide as a rough outline.</p>	<p>and theme of the proposed assembly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restates the main reasons why this theme is relevant, up-to-date, interesting, informative, entertaining or otherwise appropriate for a school assembly that takes place just before or after Columbus Day Summarize the benefits to the school of conducting such an assembly 	
	<p>Standards:</p> <p>W.9-10.4 : Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</p> <p>Additional Attachments:</p> <p> workspace</p>			
30 mins	<p>REVISION AND EDITING: Strengthening arguments, Improving the organization, making the writing clearer and more interesting, making transitions smoother and correcting spelling, punctuation and grammar errors.</p>	<p>REVISION AND EDITING Revise and edit your first draft using the scoring guide as a checklist of things to improve if possible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction includes hook to get readers interested and makes it clear what proposal is about Body includes clear and relevant information in a logical order Arguments for why this is an appropriate proposal are backed up with evidence from at least one of readings Reader gets a clear idea of what would happen at the assembly Other, more typical Columbus Day themes are 	<p>Here are some additional instructions to students:</p> <p>It's time to make your proposal clearer, more interesting and more persuasive. First, cut and paste your first draft (Mini Task 7-9) into your Mini Task 10 workspace. The version you include at the end of this workspace should include all the changes you've made on your first draft.</p> <p>Here are some tips on revision: read your proposal out loud to yourself. Sometimes when you read out loud, you will stumble over your own words. That happens when you're reading what's actually there but it's different from what you intended to say -those are little red flag stumbles, and they indicate when something is off. If something sounds off, awkward, or unclear, fix it. If you can make the hook more interesting, go for it. If you think it would be easier to follow if you switched around the sentences around, do it. If you the transition to a new paragraph seems too abrupt, add some transitional words. If you can make your conclusion more convincing or less repetitive, change it. Put yourself in the shoes of your intended audience. In this case, ask yourself, if I were the principal reading this proposal, would I want to accept it?</p> <p>Here are some tips on editing: check for spelling,</p>

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			<p>acknowledged and rebutted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Smooth transitions from sentence to sentence and from one paragraph to the next.• Conclusion clearly restates main idea of proposal, and summarizes its benefits for school• Few if any grammar and spelling mistakes	<p>punctuation and grammar mistakes and fix them. Read your proposal backwards, sentence by sentence, to make sure each sentence makes sense standing alone and is neither a run-on nor a fragment.</p>
<p>Standards:</p> <p>W.9-10.6 : Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.</p> <p>W.9-10.5 : Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.</p> <p>W.9-10.4 : Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</p> <p>W.9-10.2 : Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.</p>				
<p>Additional Attachments:</p> <p> workspace</p>				

Instructional Resources

Student Handout

 **Complete workspace for module**

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Section 4: What Results?

Student Work Samples

No resources specified

Teacher Reflection

Not provided