



## **Understanding Perspective: Using Nonfiction Texts to Support Arguments through the Lens of the Encounter in the Americas**

by Ann Tapia, 2016 CTI Fellow  
Piedmont Open IB Middle School

This curriculum unit is recommended for:  
6th grade English Language Arts

**Keywords:** 6th grade, English language arts, International Baccalaureate, Christopher Columbus, Hispanic culture, nonfiction, text features, close read, annotation, Socratic seminar, writing, debate, main idea, argument, claim, supporting details

**Teaching Standards:** See [Appendix 1](#) for teaching standards addressed in this unit.

**Synopsis:** At the end of this unit, students will be able to gain a deeper understanding of perspective through the lens of Hispanic culture. Students will be asked to analyze the way that different points of view may influence the way that they think. Students will study foundational skills of reading informational text by using nonfiction passages about the early days of Hispanic culture—they will read about Christopher Columbus and the Encounter in the Americas as well as other early explorers and their long-term impact on Hispanic cultures. Students will learn and put into practice the skills of close reading, annotation, text features, main idea, and the unit will culminate in a discussion, where students are expected to take a side on a claim and debate in the context of a Socratic seminar, where they will use the informational texts that we have covered in class as well as their own research to find supporting details for their argument.

*I plan to teach this unit during the coming year to **130** students in **6th grade language arts classes**.*

*I give permission for Charlotte Teachers Institute to publish my curriculum unit in print and online. I understand that I will be credited as the author of my work.*

## **Understanding Perspective: Using Nonfiction Texts to Support Arguments through the Lens of the Encounter in the Americas**

*Ann Tapia*

### Rationale

As a Hispanic teacher teaching in a Charlotte school with a high level of student diversity, it has always been a part of my “hidden curriculum” to include texts by authors of varying backgrounds, cultures, ethnicities, races, and experiences into my teaching. Many of the passages that we pull are at our own discretion, and I think that it is important to include things other than the standard testing practice packages.

One of the most important things that we teach our students is to analyze each text they are given. They must understand the validity of each source, and we teach them strategies on how to differentiate between texts that are peer reviewed and credible to opinion pieces and sources that do not use proper citation methods. Students must also analyze *bias* and *perspective* in each thing that they read, be it nonfiction, fiction, or poetry. The author’s purpose in each piece of informational text is influenced by their resources and perspective on the issue, and each of our students is given the responsibility of determining the most accurate and ethical resources to use in order to construct their arguments.

### School/Student Demographics

Piedmont Open IB Middle School is located on 1241 E 10th St, Charlotte, NC 28205—within view of Uptown Charlotte. Our students come from locations in all regions and neighborhoods of Charlotte and all throughout Mecklenburg County; many are even from the Huntersville area. I teach one third of the population of 6th grade students at Piedmont with a total of 131 alongside my team of core teachers—Emily Swift, who teaches mathematics, Andrew O’Neill, who teaches Social Studies, and Karen Bailey, who teaches science. We are all responsible for the same group of students.

I am responsible for one section of students in honors language arts, who are also in honors math. I teach three sections of standard language arts, but one section is honors math (who also tend to perform higher in their other classes as well). We have identified 67 female students (51.1%) and 64 male students (48.9%). Our group contains 74 black students (56.5%), 15 American Indian students (11.5%), 15 Asian students (11.5%), 2 biracial students (1.5%), and 25 white students (19.1%). Ethnically, 16 of our students are Hispanic (the majority listed racially as American Indian and the other as black, making 12.2%) and the remaining 115 (87.8%) are Non-Hispanic. 49 (37.4%) of our students are Academically and Intellectually Gifted, 80 (61.8%) are Non-EC (Exceptional Children—students with learning disabilities), and one student with disabilities (.8%) who remains in a general education classroom. None of my students are of Limited English

Proficiency, but I have many multilingual students. Currently, none of my students are considered McKinney-Vento. I have 2 students with a 504 plan for disabilities in place (1.5%).<sup>1</sup>

Piedmont Open IB Middle’s curriculum is supplemented by the International Baccalaureate program, which focuses on global perspectives on education—while we are still responsible for teaching under the purview of Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools and for providing Common Core curriculum, the method in which we teach it is couched within a Global Context.<sup>2</sup>

### Unit Goals

My goal for this curriculum unit is to enhance my teaching of our early Informational Text unit. In the early months of each school year, we tackle foundational reading skills with our sixth graders, who come from many different elementary schools and varying levels of prior knowledge. Last year’s data points showed that my instruction was strong when aligned with the Common Core standards of Reading: Literacy due to the time spent on our fiction unit, something that I enjoy. I want to improve my Reading: Informational Texts instruction so that data points from our MAP testing and End of Grade assessments reflect that my students are testing on grade level, and that they grow from each of their previous scores at an even higher rate than they performed in the previous school year. I will do this by creating a more organized set of lessons and assessments pertaining to argument and claim in addition to reading and analyzing informational texts—I will incorporate the content that I have learned about and discussed in the seminar that I have taken part of with the Charlotte Teachers Institute.

My research focuses on the early European explorers who are responsible for the “discovery” of and, as many would argue, the systematic decimation of the people of the Americas. For my personal edification on the subject, I will be using the resources provided to me by my seminar leader, including the text *Born of Blood and Fire* by Michael Chasteen, in addition to translated texts contemporary to the explorations as well by Christopher Columbus.

In addition to that, I will also be using resources collected that are intended to accommodate the Lexile (as well as maturity) level of my students, who range in age from 10-12 years old, which I have obtained in physical copy from university libraries at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and Davidson College as well as from the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library system and online databases and resources.

My goals for the unit are to incorporate the International Baccalaureate Learner Profile attributes by encouraging students to be more **open-minded** and to be **inquirers**. We will be putting our studies in the Global Context of Fairness and Development.

We will also align to the Common Core standards CCSS.ELA - Literacy.RI.6.1 (Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.), CCSS.ELA - Literacy.RI.6.2 (Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.), CCSS.ELA - Literacy.RI.6.5 (Analyze how a particular sentence, paragraph, chapter, or section fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the ideas.), CCSS.ELA - Literacy.RI.6.8 (Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.) and CCSS.ELA - Literacy.RI.6.9 (Compare and contrast one author's presentation of events with that of another).<sup>3</sup>

Most importantly, I will be imparting unto students the knowledge of how to look at things from more than one perspective, hopefully teaching them that many times, the most important voice, that of the disenfranchised, is not always heard.

## **Content Research**

In our seminar, “Tracing the Legacy of Hispanic Cultures—1492 to Today,” we have discussed the concept of “perspectivism.” Modern day Hispanic cultures find their roots in the “discovery” of the New World by the Spanish. When seen through the eyes of the diplomats and royalty, Columbus’s journey was a simple expedition to obtain glory, spread God, and maybe possibly get some gold out of it, too<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, many primary sources contemporary to the Age of Exploration paint a highly favorable view of the expeditions while depicting the natives as timid; pushovers just waiting to be conquered. Some might take the lack of evident counterargument as a silence on the part of the natives that condones these actions. We shall never know—history has erased what little chance of this evidence there was.

The thesis of John Charles Chasteen’s text, *Born in Blood and Fire* (Norton) is explicit: that the birth of what we know now as Latin America was “born in blood and fire, in conquest and slavery;” the work is titled thus. Latin America is defined by its youth and by its diversity and devastated by the very history that conceived it—the European colonialization which forced the natives to sacrifice their history, their culture and their language to a decimating degree with profound consequences reverberating into the current century, built on the backs of systematic racism and subjugation of the working class.

It’s as things were—as Chasteen states, it’s not ours to judge the morality of the Europeans’ conquest (although, I hope, our responsibility to condemn their actions so that we may not repeat history). “The original sin,” he states, “lay in the logic...that assumed a right to conquer and colonize” (Ibid. 11).<sup>4</sup> Religion was the driving factor of the imperialists on surface level—monarchs of Spain and Portugal vied to keep up with one

another through continuing exploration. It is no coincidence that as a result, they had ample opportunity to collect literal boatloads of valuables.

We have studied the letters of supplication of the era (writings designed to ask for favors, in this case, European royalty) particularly focusing on the writings of Christopher Columbus, where we have placed importance on analyzing the context through which he writes his letters, and whose voices are being left out—in this case, those of the indigenous people. In context, the writings of the early explorers were benign requests for funds, but they have a slightly sinister undertone when put in context with the decimation of the native people and their resources.

My unit strives to help students to understand the importance of obtaining research from multiple perspectives. There is always more than one side to the story, and it is a matter of determining which side is bolstered by more facts and reason. When analyzing the facts, it becomes clear that there are holes in the story that very intentionally leave out an entire point of view—it is our job as active readers and critical thinkers to piece it back together, to give credence to our own arguments by analyzing bias and readjusting the narrative where it has been skewed in the favor of the powerful.

Many students learn early in life about how in 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue—even in my childhood at a Puerto Rican private school I recall spending at least a day discussing savior Christopher Columbus. The older that I get, the more that I realize that while Christopher Columbus Day was implied to be lauding our great hero, discoverer of the Americas, the truth becomes more sinister when you begin to analyze the context, motivations, and even the whitewashing of historical events. Yes, Christopher Columbus was instrumental in the creation of our modern America—but would the nations' stages have progressed differently, perhaps even better off, without him? Christopher Columbus was a sycophant at best and a murderer at worst, which poses the question: why does history not only let him off the hook, but name a day after him?

Here is a matter of perspective: Columbus paints himself a hero. Columbus's letter to Luis de Santangel (notably, in charge of King Ferdinand's funds) describing his first voyage from 1492-1493 is intended to describe what he has encountered on his voyage to the New World (<sup>5</sup> Columbus himself uses language that paints himself as a discoverer, as if he has stumbled across North America's best kept secret and claimed it for the Spanish. Upon his arrival, he names all the islands in ways that will demonstrate his good favor to the king and queen as thanks for their allowing him to travel. Columbus is well aware that the natives have already named said islands. But he is obsequious to his superiors, taking care to note that all that he discovers shall go back to enrich the king and country. Of course, he intends to continue the mission of spreading Christianity to the darker parts of the world, but he takes care to mention the expanse of the land itself, waxing poetic about its natural beauty but taking a hard stop every so often to mention the "mines of metals" or rivers abundant in gold. This leads him into an immediate segue

where he mentions that not only do the natives not have weapons, they are “extraordinarily timid” and seemingly distressed by their arrival (Ibid).

Columbus continues to play up their timidity while speaking at length about the natives’ generosity, how they “never refuse anything that is asked for...even offer it themselves, and show so much love that they would give their very hearts” (Ibid). Generous to a fault; in fact, almost stupid to the point where he must take pity on them after they continue to make foolish bartering decisions. He responds in turn with peace offerings, and determines that they are not actually an ignorant people, as they use their resources wisely, travel well, and express themselves with ease. Their largest downfall just seems to be the culture shock associated with seeing European men in extravagant ships and foreign clothing.

An interesting juxtaposition for Columbus: though he is attempting to share his Christian God with these silly heathens, they mistake him for a “man from heaven.” He seems to glean from this that their quickness in naming false idols means that they will be extremely receptive to Christianity. They are already inclined to think that these men and their accoutrements are special and foreign, they are already inclined to think that they should give up their treasures both insignificant and ornate, why should they not be inclined to worship the new deities to whom they have been introduced? Columbus proceeds to remind his audience that he has taken possession of these convenient islands for the king and queen. He also made sure to fortify the most strategic island locations, and reminds his audience again of how mystified the natives are with the customs of their culture. Columbus then gives a lay of the land and describes the potential threats—another people prone to cannibalistic tendencies and are slightly more ferocious than their current friends. Fortunately, another island nearby has the resources for Columbus to keep the king and queen in as much gold as they would like (Ibid).

Columbus’s tone is as if he were simply writing an update home, but what he chooses to emphasize makes it clear that he is attempting to fund more voyages by persuading the royalty that his journeys are worthwhile. The emphasis he puts on the resources of the land and the behavior of the people make it clear that there are ulterior motives to his travels. He posits a mutually beneficial relationship for all involved—the natives get God, and the Spanish get gold. It is a perfect example of an established claim with supporting details tailored to a specific audience.

Columbus’s letter wouldn’t have cause to mention any of the potential ramifications of his journey. Why would it? In the end, his king and queen will obtain the land and the resources and have the glory of a noble religious expedition. The simple natives only have something to gain out of this transaction. But the cost for these natives ends up being high.

Centuries later, the Eurocentric narrative that much of the Western world has taken for granted comes more into question in the mainstream. Christopher Columbus

Day is a fairly recent holiday and is seen as a celebration of Italian-American culture, considering Columbus's heritage. The holiday's controversies have been numerous, and different elements of it have been emphasized through the last century. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, many Americans were unforgiving of the holiday in the United States because of a disdain for Catholicism. Ironically, the reason these Americans were intolerant of Catholicism was because it was a religion associated with immigrants—people who intended to find freedoms not found in their own countries by traveling to a new world. Apparently, deep in the cultural unconsciousness of the American continents lies resentment of newcomers expecting to take part in resources and practice their religion.<sup>6</sup>

There is a recent push from social rights activists to reconsider the name of Christopher Columbus Day considering his unsavory legacy. The strongest contender on the renaming front is Indigenous Peoples' Day, in deference to the Native Americans who had settled the North American continent well before the arrival of the Europeans. The strongest argument is that Columbus is, in reality, a murderer who catalyzed the decimation of the natives, and is unworthy of laudation, especially in the form of that entire bank holiday, and that power of name should be given back to the people from whom it was stolen. "The goal is to change the conversation to talk about [Columbus's] impact on present-day indigenous communities as part of the healing process," states a CNN article by Marilia Brocchetto and Emanuella Grinberg, referring to healing of the deep wound years of continuously downplaying the plight of the natives in favor of European narratives has caused the native communities over centuries. Auspiciously, several communities in the United States have already made the switch to the title of Indigenous Peoples' Day, or at least recognize it in addition to Columbus Day—a title which is seen to "mock" the genocide inflicted upon the indigenous and "glorify colonialism and imperialism."<sup>7</sup>

Each indigenous population in the time before the arrival of Columbus was its own distinct microcosm, and the land was densely populated with each one. There were three major categories under which the indigenous fell: for example, the nonsedentary peoples, small groups of nomads who resided in deserts and plains to hunt and gather. In contrast, there were also the semisedentary peoples who resided mostly in the rainforests that yielded their crops. They were wont to settle down, but not for long, as they practiced slash and burn to turn over their crops. The third type, the fully sedentary, were responsible for the greatest empires of the era—the Aztec, the Inca, and the Maya. On their high plateaus, they built their permanent settlements around sustainable farming techniques and in time began to separate themselves more by class structure (Chasteen, Norton).

Unfortunately, these thriving civilizations would be for centuries more essentially silenced—if the Europeans had cared to know their counterclaim to the invasion of their land, its voice is lost among the louder voices praising colonialization. Groups—especially not those so separate as the indigenous peoples and the Europeans—are separated by their own lived experiences. It is our responsibility as researchers of history

and of educators of youth to understand that firstly, each individual person and each individual group will have its own perspective of events that is based on the lives they have lived, the injustices and celebrations they have experienced, and the intentions, perceived or intended, of an opposing group. History favors the powerful and, in proverb, is written by the victors. But, as perspectivism encourages, anyone suited to defend a claim must be willing to look at the other point of view.

### **Instructional Implementation**

Throughout our informational text unit, I am going to provide students with vetted resources regarding the early explorers of the Americas and the Encounter. Students will be asked to argue based on their research (an article given as a homework assignment in class)<sup>8</sup> if we should rename “Christopher Columbus Day” into something more appropriate—they are going to determine who the most influential figure in the Encounter of the Americas truly is and justify it using textual evidence and counterargument. Students will culminate their work in a large Socratic discussion.

In teaching these skills, I make use of many visual resources, such as my whiteboard and projector and document camera, to model texts and the best ways in which to analyze and annotate them. We will use articles I have obtained through research to teach and apply concepts such as central idea, text features, and textual evidence. The focus of my unit, though, will be on argument and claim—we will discuss in depth how to identify and then to create an argument with a strong claim, and learn how to identify credible sources along with where bias and perspective fits in in each individual author’s compositions.

I teach four classes that are approximately 54 minutes each. On normal class days, my daily class routine begins with a 5-15 minute warm-up in as students enter the room. This warm-up alternates between grammar practice and review and writing prompts. On Tuesdays, my class is expected to review their stem root vocabulary words. After we have reviewed our warm-ups, we proceed into the “entree” part of the lesson, where I spend time introducing new content or reviewing, or give the students an activity or allow them independent work time, as we have many projects. The last 5-10 minutes of class are normally reserved for a short review or assessment, such as an exit ticket, where students are expected to give demonstrate mastery of their content knowledge.

For the purposes of this unit, all my warm-ups will be writing, to survey my students’ notions on the content and ideas that we are going to cover throughout the unit. In writing prompts, students are expected to compose at least one to two paragraphs that answer all questions posed, but are always welcome to write more and continue from previous narratives with creative assignments. After students have been allotted time to write, we reserve a few minutes of class for a few select students to share what they have written.



## LESSON PLANS

### *Day One*

The warm up on the first day of my unit is intended to survey students' ideas on the prototypical dynamic between heroes and villains in preparation for a discussion on Christopher Columbus.

“What is the definition of a hero? What kinds of actions are heroes known for doing? In contrast, what is a villain? What kinds of actions are villains known for doing? Write about some examples of heroes and villains that immediately come to mind. Is the way that they think and act always necessarily ‘black and white?’—that is, is each side necessarily completely ‘right’ or ‘wrong?’ What does it take for a hero to be perceived as a villain, and vice versa?”

Each day after I allow the students to write and to reflect, I allow several students “share time,” a much coveted slot in the daily classroom routine. For each of my four classes, I have a cup that contains the names of each student in the class from which I pick people to answer questions, share, and perform small errands or tasks. After I select a student, I section their popsicle stick away in a rubber band, as their turn for the time period has been used up in order to keep it fair for the students who have not yet had the opportunity to share. About once a week, when all students have been selected, I reset the popsicle stick cup so that each student's name returns to the pool to be chosen again. (Incidentally, “Magical Popsicle Stick Cup” only continues to operate if students are being quiet, compliant, and, most especially, respectful of their peers.)

The purpose of today's share time is to assess whether students believe that there is only one perspective on any given issue. I predict that many students will mention many specific fictional heroes and villains, which are all valid answers. My goal is for a lot of students also to mention real life examples of heroes and villains—from public servants to individuals in armed forces to political figures. (In this election year, my current students are fond of outlandish political pastiche, although some will also probably mention clowns, which seem to have captured their imaginations inordinately—they are pretty in tune with current events for the most part.) I am expecting that many students will be opinionated about the topic, and I anticipate that at least one student per class will expand on how there are two sides to every story, which means that “heroes” and “villains” may not necessarily be deemed as such in every context. I will lead students into a brief discussion about perspective and point of view, and tell them that our upcoming assignments and homework are related to a discussion on how multiple people can view the same sequence of events in different ways.

From there, I will transition into our main lesson for today, which is a review on text features—design elements of a text that are meant to emphasize information, such as titles, subtitles, footnotes, and particularly graphic aids (which include all embedded

images, like pictures, drawings, maps, charts, timelines, etc.) and captions. For this, I will use the timeline and the map from the introduction of Ronald Reis's *Christopher Columbus and the Age of Exploration for Kids*<sup>9</sup> to demonstrate examples of how text features are used to relay information—I will have this projected as I show students on my document camera. We will also flip through the rest of the text to take a look at some other examples of text features, and I will ask students to make predictions about the text based on what we have surveyed before we have actually read, and surmise why the things that are emphasized are important.

In closure, I will have students complete an exit ticket that will ask them for the definition of text features and then ask them to give me two examples of text features that we have talked about in class today, for which they will receive an informal grade.

### *Day Two*

The second day of my unit will begin with another writing warm-up projected on the white board. In this one, students will be asked to take the perspective of a person native to their terrain:

“You are native to a planet that is filled with other people like you who share common experiences, hardships, and beliefs, and you’ve never met anyone else who isn’t like that too. One day, settlers from another planet arrive hoping to share some of your resources. How do you and your people react, and why do you do this? What would you do if they were much more threatening?”

From there, our lesson will be about close reading—a reading strategy used to facilitate deeper comprehension of texts. Students are asked to read through a text once without stopping, taking in the text features and other major details. Students are then asked to read the text again, this time making annotations. I will demonstrate to students good strategies for annotation, which include underlining the key details of each paragraph or section and making notes in the margins pertaining to the text, such as their reactions or questions (but not highlighting everything!). Students at Piedmont have been given a set of annotation symbols that is vertically aligned through grade levels so that they can be consistent when reading and annotating texts. Finally, they will read once more, making sure that they can summarize the text and give main ideas (the who, what, when, where, why, and how). For this lesson, I will use a text to model with Christopher Columbus's Letter to Santangel, adjusted to Lexile level courtesy of Newsela.<sup>10</sup>

After that, students will be asked given a text for independent practice and asked to close read it in class from *A Brief Political and Geographic History of Latin America*, from the first chapter, “Mundus Novus: Opening the New World,” which they will work on until the end of class.<sup>11</sup> They will be given a supplementary article on the computer with a biography of Christopher Columbus, explorer.<sup>12</sup>

### *Day Three*

Students will come into class with this warm-up:

“There are two sides to any story. Consider: what are the qualities of the side of the story that gets heard first and is believed more? i.e., what (or who) makes stories believable? Think about a time in which you needed someone to believe that you were in the right, and someone else was trying to state that it was actually *them*. What happened? What could have gone differently?”

Today’s activity includes a brief overview of the content that we have already discussed, so that I can assess what skills my students need more help with in the coming days. In addition to that, we will wrap up work on the reading passage from the previous day in class.

I will allow students some time at the end of class to work on their homework assignment, which is to finish composing their discussion questions for our Socratic seminar/debate, for which they will receive a formal grade. They are to take a stance on whether the early explorers were heroes or whether they were villains for what they did, and find at least two credible sources to support their argument. They must have at least two questions—at the end of class now is a good time to discuss their questions with a classmate and to confirm with me if they need to whether it is a good example or not.

### *Day Four*

Today’s warm-up is meant to gauge their knowledge about recent controversies regarding the renaming of Christopher Columbus Day:

“What do you know about the origins of Columbus Day? Using the resources that we have read in class, do you think that it is an appropriate title? What are some other possible names for the holiday that could potentially be more appropriate? Why do you think it remains a national holiday?”

The meat of our class today will be taken up by a large socratic seminar and group discussion, which will mostly be student directed where I play the role of a moderator and facilitator—I am anticipating that students will at least touch the conclusion that perhaps renaming the holiday is the correct course of action in the United States. In order to receive a grade for their discussion, students will all have to turn in their pre-written discussion questions, then bring an original viewpoint to the discussion in class. With the number of students that I have per class, it is unlikely that we will finish the discussion in its entirety, so I will end class asking for students to reflect on the discussion today and edify their discussion questions if necessary so that they can continue discussing during the next class period.

### *Day Five*

The students' warm-up today will be to create a reflection on their progress in the discussion thus far.

“If you have already spoken, what did you say? How did you feel about the responses you received from their classmates? Did you have anything else to say that you did not have time to mention? Did someone say something that made you change your mind or maybe start to form a different opinion than maybe you had previously? If you haven't spoken: you are going to be asked to contribute first before we continue where we left off in the discussion. What is your game plan for today? What new thoughts are you going to introduce?”

We will continue our discussion with students who did not get an opportunity to speak the previous day getting precedent over other overeager students. I anticipate that we will start rehashing the same topics over and over again about halfway through class, so at that point, I will have students vote on their conclusion through show of hands. There are three options with which students can align themselves: that the name Christopher Columbus Day is perfectly valid, that it should be renamed to Indigenous Peoples' Day, or that it should perhaps be renamed to something else entirely. I will hear specific responses from students, encouraging them to back up their opinions using specific pieces of evidence. This will conclude our discussion.

## Appendix 1: Implementing Teaching Standards

This unit will cover:

CCSS.ELA - Literacy.RI.6.1 by allowing students to cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the texts they are given say explicitly as well as make inferences.

CCSS.ELA - Literacy.RI.6.2 - Students will determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through details of the informational passages concerning Christopher Columbus; they will provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments by creating an unbiased recap of information that lends itself to their argument in their Socratic seminar.

CCSS.ELA - Literacy.RI.6.5 - Students will analyze how each individual part of their own arguments as well as the arguments presented in the passages they read.

CCSS.ELA - Literacy.RI.6.8 – Students will trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.

CCSS.ELA - Literacy.RI.6.9 – Students will compare and contrast one author's presentation of events with that of another by looking at the perspective of Christopher Columbus as a hero versus the perspective of the indigenous peoples.

LIST OF MATERIALS FOR CLASSROOM USE

**Language & Literature Assessment Rubric**

**MYP Year 1 – Grade 6**

**Criterion A: Analyzing**

At the end of year 1, students should be able to:

- i. Identify and comment upon significant aspects of texts.
- ii. Identify and comment upon the creator’s choices.
- iii. Justify opinions and ideas, using examples, explanations and terminology.
- iv. Identify similarities and differences in features within and between texts.

Achievement Level	Level Descriptor
0	The student <b>does not</b> reach a standard described by any of the descriptors below.
1-2	<p style="text-align: center;">The student:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Provides <b>minimal</b> identification and comment upon significant aspects of texts.</li> <li>ii. Provides <b>minimal</b> identification and comment upon the creator’s choices.</li> <li>iii. <b>Rarely</b> justifies opinions and ideas with examples or explanations; uses <b>little or no</b> terminology.</li> <li>iv. <b>Identifies few</b> similarities and differences in features <b>within and between texts</b>.</li> </ol>
3-4	<p style="text-align: center;">The student:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Provides <b>adequate</b> identification and comment upon significant aspects of texts.</li> <li>ii. Provides <b>adequate</b> identification and comment upon the creator’s choices.</li> <li>iii. Justifies opinions and ideas with <b>some</b> examples and explanations, though this may not be consistent; uses <b>some</b> terminology.</li> <li>iv. <b>Identifies some</b> similarities and differences in features <b>within and between texts</b>.</li> </ol>

5-6	<p style="text-align: center;">The student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Provides <b>substantial</b> identification and comment upon significant aspects of texts.</li> <li>ii. Provides <b>substantial</b> identification and comment upon the creator's choices.</li> <li>iii. <b>Sufficiently</b> justifies opinions and ideas with examples and explanations; use accurate terminology.</li> <li>iv. <b>Describes some</b> similarities and differences in features across and <b>within and between texts.</b></li> </ul>
7-8	<p style="text-align: center;">The student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Provides <b>perceptive</b> identification and comment upon significant aspects of texts.</li> <li>ii. Provides <b>perceptive</b> identification and comment upon the creator's choices.</li> <li>iii. Gives <b>detailed justification</b> of opinions and ideas with a range of examples, and thorough explanations; uses <b>accurate</b> terminology.</li> <li>iv. <b>Compares and contrasts</b> features <b>within and between texts.</b></li> </ul>

This is the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program Year 1 Rubric for Criterion A: Analyzing in Language and Literature, designed for 6<sup>th</sup> grade language arts. It will be used to determine the strength of each student's statements in their Socratic seminar and will also factor in their writing warm-ups as well in their final IB grade, which assesses their ability to find similarities and differences and primarily justify their own claims.

## Bibliography for Students

Columbus, Christopher. "Primary Sources: Columbus' Letter to the King and Queen of Spain." Newsela | Primary Sources: Columbus' Letter to the King and Queen of Spain. Accessed October 12, 2016. <https://newsela.com/articles/primary-source-columbus-letter/id/18386/>.

"The Explorers: Christopher Columbus." Newsela | The Explorers: Christopher Columbus. 2016. Accessed November 22, 2016. <https://newsela.com/articles/bio-explorer-christopher-columbus/id/18780/>.

Mazin, Sidahmed. "Protesters Take Exception to Teddy Roosevelt Statue and Columbus Day." Newsela | Protesters Take Exception to Teddy Roosevelt Statue and Columbus Day. October 17, 2016. Accessed November 22, 2016. <https://newsela.com/articles/racist-roosevelt-statue/id/22824/>.

Newsela is a resource for students that is intended to challenge them according to lexile levels—teachers can assign students the same articles at different Lexile levels, and they now have an option to read in Spanish as well. They provide researched current events at the grade school level in a variety of categories, including World History, Arts and Culture, and War and Peace.

Legay, Gilbert. *Dictionary of North American Indians and Other Indigenous Peoples*. Hauppauge, NY: Barron's, 2007.

Legay's dictionary is a handy resource for students interested in influential Native American figures, animals, and geography. Each definition is clearly delineated, the profiles are easy and concise, and it is colorful with many bright and interesting graphics accompanying the text.

Reis, Ronald A. *Christopher Columbus and the Age of Exploration for Kids: With 21 Activities*. Chicago, US: Chicago Review Press, 2013. Accessed October 29, 2016. ProQuest ebrary.

While the text has purported "21 Activities" are namely intensive creative projects more likely suited for enrichment at home, the text itself provides a detailed and unbiased view of Columbus. It is easy to collect information for well-rounded discussion on the explorer through looking through this text.

Rice, Earle, Jr. *A Brief Political and Geographic History of Latin America. Places in Time: A Kid's Historic Guide to the Changing Names and Places of the World*. Hockessin, DE: Mitchell Lane Publishers, 2008.

Part of a wider series intended for students to help them extend their knowledge on geography and history, this text focuses on the background of Latin American countries and takes special care to teach about the notable and notorious people who populate them



## Bibliography for Teachers

Brocchetto, Marilia, and Emanuealla Grinberg. "On Columbus Day, Support Grows for the Indigenous." CNN. October 10, 2016. Accessed November 21, 2016.

<http://www.cnn.com/2016/10/09/us/columbus-day-indigenous-peoples-day/index.html>.

This recent news article is a good resource for those looking for information on the move to rename Christopher Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples' Day in the United States. It lists several United States communities who have already made the adjustment, and gives voice to individuals with personal stake in the matter.

Chasteen, John Charles. *Born in Blood and Fire: A Concise History of Latin America*. Vol. 3. New York: W.W. Norton, 2011.

Chasteen's text is a comprehensive history of the most important parts of Latin American history. It is easy to read, and, dare I say, even has a sense of humor and distinct voice which makes it an invaluable resource.

History.com Staff. "Columbus Day." History.com. A&E Television Networks, 2010. Web. 20 November 2016.

An informative article discussing the celebrations and controversies of Christopher Columbus and the surprisingly history of the day named after him.