

Share and Learn

Consider

Who really discovered America?
What was the role of Christopher Columbus in history?

Should Columbus Day be Renamed?

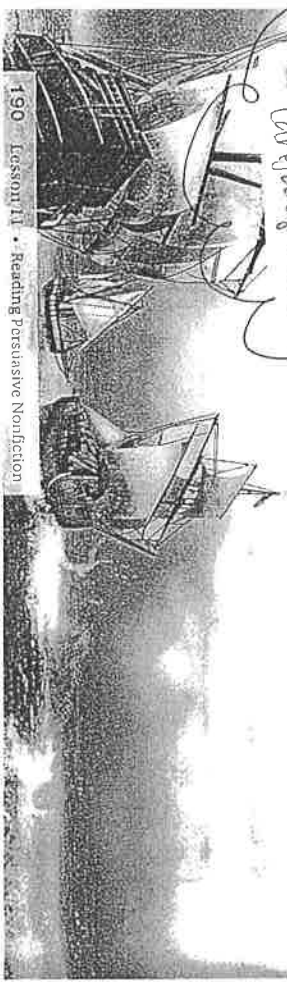
"In fourteen hundred ninety-two, Columbus sailed the ocean blue..." This familiar rhyme reminds us of the man who "discovered" America: Christopher Columbus. He and his three ships, the *Niña*, the *Pinta*, and the *Santa Maria*, are as much a part of America's history and identity as the stars and stripes. Or are they?

Because of the curriculum mandated in schools across the United States for decades, students have learned that Christopher Columbus discovered America. But is Columbus's "discovery" worthy of a celebration? Did he genuinely earn his fame?

Many students throughout the United States celebrate Columbus Day by honoring this explorer. And the Columbus Day holiday provides a day off—a break from work and school duties—for many in the United States. While Columbus Day is not celebrated on the same day in all states, it is generally celebrated at some point in October in recognition of the holiday's namesake.

Increasingly, Columbus and his place in American history have come under the microscope. By the time Columbus sailed to America, Native Americans had already inhabited the land for thousands of years, so many say that the idea of Columbus "discovering" America is ridiculous. Many state that Columbus arrived in America and treated the Native Americans he met as slaves, stealing from them and harming them, all in an effort to advance his own career and goals.

NTI
Dad!
4th grade
Language Arts



Share and Learn



Christopher Columbus

Many hold the belief that celebrating Columbus for having committed crimes against America's native people is a farce. They feel strongly that celebrating Columbus Day shows a lack of respect for Native Americans and even for previous explorers. The Norsemen Leif Ericson and Bjarni Herjólfsson may have sighted America centuries before Columbus sailed west.

Across the nation, Columbus Day festivities have been on the wane. In some communities, this is not a comment on Columbus himself but rather on the insignificance of the holiday. Some even say the holiday has become unimportant because it celebrates the wrong person.

What are the sides of the debate? Is Columbus Day worth celebrating or not?

The topic: The name of Columbus Day should be changed.

Con:

Columbus Day should remain just as it has been since it became a national holiday in 1937. The idea that the holiday's name should be changed is senseless. We should continue to honor Christopher Columbus, his exploration, and the discoveries he made—even if he made them in a dishonorable way. We believe that a change would undermine the foundation of our nation.

It is true that Columbus's exploration led to conquistadors entering America and taking the lives of millions of Native Americans. We also acknowledge that he returned to Spain with Native Americans who were pressed into slavery. Despite these facts, Columbus Day should keep its name and continue to celebrate its namesake. Columbus put his own life in jeopardy to travel across the world and discover new sea routes. We laid his role in connecting America and Europe and in taking his European culture to new places. The world would not have flourished as it has if Columbus had not bravely set out to explore new places.

ARGUMENT What is the argument of the "Con" passage?

PERSUASIVE TECHNIQUE Has the author successfully refuted the opposing viewpoint? Explain.

ELABORATE KEY IDEAS Circle two sentences that are effective in elaborating and developing the position in the "Con" passage.

AUTHOR'S PURPOSE

What is the author's purpose in writing the "Pro" passage?

POINT OF VIEW What is the point of view of the author of the "Pro" passage? Explain.

EVIDENCE AND

INFERENCES Based on information in the "Pro" passage, what can you infer would be a new name the author would like to see for Columbus Day?

CENTRAL IDEA What is the central idea of "Should Columbus Day Be Renamed?"?

The topic: The name of Columbus Day should be changed.

Pro:

Columbus Day's name should be changed because it is a travesty to continue celebrating Christopher Columbus' "achievements" and maintaining the name of the holiday.

Our reasons for our position are as follows:

- Columbus and those who followed his path of travel unknowingly brought diseases and caused destruction to the native people who were already living here.
- Giving Columbus credit for discovering America **invalidates** the fact that native peoples already lived on the land. Columbus could not have "discovered" a land that already served as a home to others—the native peoples.
- Other explorers have been denied recognition for having discovered America. For example, **Leif Ericson** sailed to North America centuries before Columbus made his voyage.
- Biarni Herjólfsson is believed to be the first explorer to have laid eyes on America.

What sorts of names have been proposed to rename Columbus Day? Some of these, renamings have already been implemented in cities or on college campuses around the country. They include *Discoverers' Day*, *Native American Day*, and *Indigenous Peoples Day*.

As you weigh the pros and cons, consider what you've learned about Columbus and the holiday that honors him. Then consider this: the argument is certain to continue to heat up debates across the nation. What history teaches us is that there are two or more sides in every debate, and that facts may emerge over time that strengthen one argument or another.

¹Indigenous native



Leif Ericson



Biarni Herjólfsson

LESSON

7

Point of View

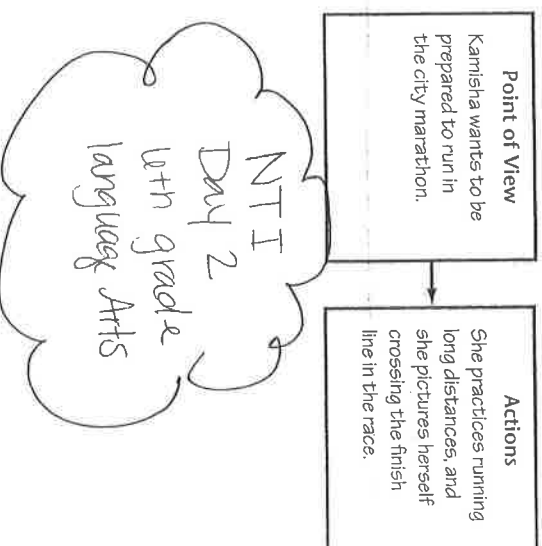
Learn About It

Point of view is the perspective on viewpoint that a character or narrator has in a story. If the point of view is not directly stated, readers can **infer** it based on how characters act and what they say. Authors often introduce contrasting points of view in a text to help establish **conflict** in the plot. A character's point of view may also change throughout the course of a story based on the events that take place and the lessons that the character learns.

Look for details in the passage that help to identify Kamisha's point of view. Note how her point of view is connected to her actions.

The alarm clock buzzed at exactly 5 a.m., and Kamisha pulled herself out of bed. The sun was barely rising when she stepped out her front door to begin a long eight-mile run in preparation for the city marathon next month.

It would be a grueling race, and Kamisha knew she had to prepare herself both mentally and physically for it. As her feet hit the pavement, she settled into an easy rhythm and pictured herself crossing the finish line of the race.



Apply It

Read the passage. Circle details that indicate point of view. Note contrasting points of view and changing points of view in the margin. Answer the questions that follow.

New Year's in Chinatown



It was a cold Sunday morning when Lucas walked down Canal Street in New York City. His friend, Sophie, and her Uncle Robert strolled alongside him, chatting about Chinese New Year.

"Why is everyone wearing red?" asked Sophie, as she looked down the street at the people lining up for the parade. Sophie liked to ask questions . . . a lot of questions.

"Red is a sign of good luck," replied her uncle. "Gold is another color for the New Year. See . . . look at the gold streamers and red-and-gold flags over there." Sophie's uncle pointed to a building down the street, but Lucas kept his eyes down, watching the impressions that his feet made in the thin layer of ice on the ground.

Why Sophie wanted to see the parade in Chinatown was beyond him. They could have gone anywhere else and he would have been happier. This was just another parade, and he didn't even celebrate Chinese New Year.

"And what about those things up there?" Sophie continued. "What are they?"

"Those are paper dragons and red lanterns—they are very common decorations for Chinese New Year," her uncle explained. "You'll see more dragons in the parade, and lions, too." Before Sophie could follow up with another question, her uncle's face suddenly lit up, and he pointed across the street.

Continued from the previous page

"Ooh, look over there!" he shouted above the growing noise level of the crowd. "The parade is about to start!"

Lucas glanced up to see a line of colorful floats begin to make their way down the street. All at once, a marching band began to play music and the crowd around him cheered loudly. Dancers seemed to emerge from everywhere in two-, four-, and eight-person costumes. They were dressed as lions and dragons, and they swayed left and right across the street, wishing a year of luck and prosperity to the onlookers. A lion approached Lucas, dancing expertly in front of him; he couldn't help but appreciate the elaborate detail of the costume and the skill of the dancers.

Glancing past the dancers, he saw that acrobats, magicians, and martial artists were making their way toward him. Raising his eyebrows, Lucas realized that this parade was not at all what he expected. The excitement around him was contagious, and he found that he was drawn in by the joyful atmosphere. He stared in wonder at each of the performers, impressed by their particular talents. Looking over at Sophie, he saw that she had a look of fascination on her face, and he wondered if his own face looked like hers. Later, as the last of the parade passed them by, Sophie's uncle looked down at Lucas and asked, "What did you think?"

Lucas shrugged nonchalantly and answered that it wasn't bad, but he was still cold. Sophie knew better, though, and laughed at his game. Slyly, she asked her uncle, "Don't they have really delicious food during Chinese New Year? Maybe we could pass the food vendors down the block."

Lucas perked up immediately and tried not to look as excited as he felt. Food, after all, was the way to his heart!

Continued on the next page

Answer these questions about "New Year's in Chinatown." Write your answers in complete sentences.

1. How does Lucas feel at first about going to see the parade in Chinatown?

2. How do Sophie's actions reveal her point of view about Chinese New Year?

3. Contrast Lucas's point of view with Uncle Robert's point of view.

4. Explain how Lucas's point of view changes during the course of the story.

Choose one of the following writing tasks and complete your answer in at least FIVE paragraphs.

Writing Task 1

Situation:

A role model is a person you look up to. Before you begin writing, think about someone you look up to. Why do you admire this person? In an essay, identify the person you admire and why you chose this person.

Writing Task:

Write an expository essay in which you explain to your classmates whom you admire and why you admire this person. Be sure to include specific reasons and supportive details when explaining why you admire this person.

Writing Task 2

Situation:

A wealthy donor plans to build a new facility that will benefit young people in your area. It could be a swimming pool, a theater, a skateboard park, an art school, or any other facility that would provide young people with constructive ways to spend their time. The donor is not sure what kind of facility would be most useful.

Writing Task:

Write a letter to the donor identifying the type of facility you would like to have built, and persuade him/her that your building is the best choice for her. Be sure to support your opinion with convincing reasons and evidence.

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Day 3
6th grade
language Arts

Writing situation:

Scientific studies have been done about separate classrooms and schools for boys and the girls. The studies suggest that when boys and girls are separated, they do better in school and on tests. The research also indicates that there are fewer distractions from behavior problems. The research also indicates that there are pros and cons to single-sex classrooms. The chart below lists some reasons for and against separating boys from girls.

Pros	Cons
Girls participate more in class discussions and are more likely to choose disciplines like science in college.	Teenage girls usually are more responsible than boys in the same age group and can be a good influence in group projects.
Boys and girls have different learning pattern, which is easier to address in single-sex classes.	Boys and girls can be good influences on each other.
Teachers in single-sex classroom can use strategies most effective for one gender.	Both boys and girls do well when they are exposed to good teaching. Things like smaller class size have more impact on student success.
Boys are more likely to participate in activities without worrying about what girls may think.	Single-sex classes mainly focus on the learning strengths of the class and may not address areas of weakness.

Jones, E. (November 10, 2000) "Single Sex Schools". http://www.idebate.org/debatabase/topic_print.php?topicID=105 March 1, 2012

Two middle schools in Jefferson County recently became single-gender schools. Though they have only been separate schools for a short time, other schools are interested in adopting a similar structure. Your school's Site Based Council is interested in hearing from teachers, parents, and students on the subject of single-sex classrooms.

Writing directions:

Write an editorial to the school newspaper presenting an argument for or against separating boys and girls. Include specific evidence from the Writing Situation to support your claim.

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Day 4

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