

# Perspectives and Biases: Cultural “Heroes” and “Villains” Among the early Conquistadors

Author and School Information	
Teacher Name	Randy Martin
School Name	Desert Ridge Middle School
Lesson Overview	
Curriculum Framing Question (Essential Question, Unit Question)	<p>Who decides what constitutes a hero or villain?</p> <p>What role do cultural perspectives and historical bias take in the making of heroes and villains?</p>
Lesson Summary	<p>The students will be taken to the computer lab and will be charged with the task of gathering raw biographical data about early 5 conquistadors of their choice (from a list). The students will then organize the raw data onto a “double bubble” thinking map labeled “Hero” or “Villain” for each conquistador according to which side that conquistadors particular actions and characteristics fall on according to each student’s bias. Each student will then rank their conquistadors from most heroic to most villainous according to their own bias. They will then take their double bubble maps and use them to form two paragraphs on each conquistador- one proclaiming their heroic characteristics, and the other their villainous ones for an essay. They will then debate in small groups over who is the most “heroic” and who is the most “villainous” according to their own bias. As a large group, we will then discuss and debate who might agree or disagree with their own bias according to differing cultural perspectives. For example, would the Indigenous populations of Mexico agree with you that Cortes is the most heroic? Why or why not? The students will then turn in their raw data, double bubble maps, and essays for a grade.</p>
Subject Area(s)	Social Studies
Grade Level	7
Student Objectives and Learning Outcomes	<p>Students will gain new knowledge and understanding about differing cultural perspectives in history</p> <p>Students will come to an understanding that there is no such thing as an absolute hero or villain in history</p>

Standards and Benchmarks

**Analyze and interpret the major eras and important turning points in world history from the Age of Enlightenment to the present to develop an understanding of the complexity of the human experience.**

**Standards:**

3. Explain and analyze revolutions (e.g., democratic, scientific, technological, social) as they evolved throughout the Enlightenment and their enduring effects on political, economic, and cultural institutions, to include:

- events and ideas that led to parliamentary government (English Civil War, Glorious Revolution)
- Enlightenment philosophies used to support events leading to American and French Revolutions

**Learner Expectations**

The study of time, continuity, and change allows learners to understand their historical roots and to locate themselves in time. Learning how to read and reconstruct the past allows them to develop a historical perspective and to answer questions such as: Who am I? What happened in the past? How has the world changed and how might it change in the future? Why does our personal sense of relatedness to the past change? How can the perspective we have about our own life experiences be viewed as part of the larger human story across time? How do our personal stories reflect varying points of view and inform contemporary ideas and actions? Learners also draw on their knowledge of history to make informed choices and decisions in the present.

**Teacher Expectations**

Teachers of social studies at all school levels should provide developmentally appropriate experiences as they guide learners in the study of time, continuity, and change. They should:

- assist learners to understand that historical knowledge and the concept of time are socially influenced constructions that lead historians to be selective in the questions they seek to answer and the evidence they use;

- help learners apply key concepts such as time, chronology, causality, change, conflict, and complexity to explain, analyze, and show connections among patterns of historical change and continuity.

- enable learners to identify and describe significant historical periods and patterns of change within and across cultures, such as the development of ancient cultures and civilizations, the rise of nation-states, and social, economic, and political revolutions;

- guide learners as they systematically employ processes of critical historical inquiry to reconstruct and interpret the past, such as using a variety of sources and checking their credibility, validating and weighing evidence for claims, and searching for causality;

- provide learners with opportunities to investigate, interpret, and analyze multiple historical and contemporary viewpoints within and across cultures related to important events, recurring dilemmas, and persistent issues, while employing empathy, skepticism, and critical judgment; enable learners to apply ideas, theories, and modes of historical inquiry to analyze historical and contemporary developments, and to inform and evaluate actions concerning public policy issues.

#### Procedure

Provide the students with a list of 7-10 conquistadors that we have studied in class during the picture analysis lesson. Take students to the computer lab or library to research raw biographical data on 5 conquistadors of their choice. Provide students with large pieces of construction paper to create their "Double Bubble Maps" on. Each map should be labeled "Hero" on one side, and "Villain" on the other. The students will then organize their data onto the 5 Double Bubble Maps according to their biases. They will then rank their conquistadors from most "heroic" to most "villainous".

The Double Bubble maps will serve as a springboard into the essay part of the project. The students simply have to take their information from each side of their Double Bubbles and form them into paragraphs. Each conquistador will have a heroic and villainous paragraph for a total minimum of 10 paragraphs, plus an intro and a conclusion. The essay will be persuasive, with the goal being that the student is trying to argue that their conquistadors are correctly ranked from hero to villain, with information to support their arguments.

After they complete their essays, the students will be broken into groups of 4-5 to defend their essays to each



other. We will then have a large group discussion about cultural perspectives to see if they think other cultural groups would agree with their rankings. The big idea behind the lesson to get the students to understand that there is no such thing as an absolute hero or villain when it comes to history.

Approximate Time Needed  
(Minutes, Days, Hours, etc)

12 Regular Class Periods

#### Accommodations for Differentiated Instruction

Resource Student

Review the students' IEP and adjust lesson accordingly

Gifted Student

Research and amend essay to include biases from other cultures such as Spain, Mexico City, various pueblos, etc.

#### Assessment

Student Assessment

Raw Data from Research  
Double Bubbles  
Persuasive Essay (Graded using rubric)

## **Cultural "Heroes" and "Villains" Among the Early Conquistadors**

### **Directions:**

**Pick five Conquistadors or Indigenous figures from the list below. Research each person you pick and include things like when and where they were born, what campaigns they went on, any battles or other major events they took part in, etc. Collect AT LEAST two pages of raw data for each conquistador.**

1. **Hernando Cortez**
2. **Dona Marina/Malinche**
3. **Cabeza de Vaca**
4. **Estevanico**
5. **Pánfilo de Narváez**
6. **Montezuma II**
7. **Christopher Columbus**
8. **Francisco de Coronado**

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Villain

Hero

Cortes

