

The Song "1492": Discussion and Analysis of Lyrics

The following lyrics are included in RTC (p. 41). The song itself is available on iTunes and Amazon for purchase. The lyrics and a clip of the song are available online at www.songsforteaching.com/nancyschimmel/columbus1492.htm.

The following activity description is taken from RTC (p. 69).

"Locate a recording of the song and duplicate the words for your students. This is a fast moving song that kids like to sing. Have them find the original locations of the Native nations mentioned in the song. Ask the students to describe the message. Ask them if it tells the whole story. Use the song as an introduction to presentations your students do to other classes about 'Breaking the Columbus Myth'" (p. 69).

If you wanted to extend the activity, you could have student groups illustrate each stanza of the song and then post the illustrations and the accompanying stanzas in the room. You could also have students create moves to act out the various stanzas.

In fourteen hundred ninety-two
Columbus sailed the ocean blue,
It was a courageous thing to do
But someone was already here.
Columbus knew the world was round
So he looked for the East while westward bound,
But he didn't find what he thought he found,
And someone was already here.

Chorus

The Inuit and Cherokee,
The Aztec and Menominee,
The Onandaga and the Cree;
Columbus sailed across the sea,
But someone was already here.
It isn't like it was empty space,
Caribs met him face to face.
Could anyone discover the place
When someone was already here?

Chorus

So tell me, who discovered what?
He thought he was in a different spot.
Columbus was lost, the Caribs were not;
They were already here.

Chorus