

Big Book

This activity includes making your own (individual, small group, or class) Big Book that tells the story of the Columbus-Taíno encounter. This can be used as an extension of the activity above where students illustrate a story that has already been written. Here, students will write and illustrate their own story of the Columbus-Taíno encounter.

Many students will be able to generate their own ideas and titles, but if students need some help getting started—here are some possible titles “Do you know the real Columbus?” “The truth about Christopher Columbus” or “Wanted: The real Christopher Columbus”

Trial

This activity is based entirely on lesson plans and materials from RTC (pp. 85-93). Students create a mock trial with groups representing Columbus, Columbus’s men, the Taíno, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, and the System of Empire. RTC provides all the necessary handouts and information on pgs 85-95. Each group is charged with something. The students’ jobs are to represent their ‘client’, call witnesses, and make arguments for their client’s innocence while proving the guilt of others. The activity is most appropriate for middle and high school students, but RTC includes an article by Bob Peterson (p. 94) explaining how he adapted the activity for his 5th grade class, so it can be used in upper elementary grades.

This activity can also be expanded to have a final writing activity for individual assessment purposes. For the final writing assignment students write a persuasive essay discussing who they would find fault with had they been the judge. In writing their essay, they answer the following questions: Who were the guilty parties in what happened with the Taíno during Columbus’ period of exploration? Do you see an alternative version of history? How could things have been different? What would have happened if Columbus had never found the Americas?