



A Lesson on Columbus and the Egg by Kimberly Slaughter

Grade Level: Grade 5

Subject Area: English Language Arts

Lesson Length: 2 hours

Lesson Keywords: Reading, Vocabulary, Writing, Columbus

Lesson Description: The goal of this lesson is to allow students to practice their reading skills, writing skills and learn new vocabulary words while reading the story of "Columbus and the Egg." The lesson allows students to critically read the text to understand what good character traits are and how jealousy can be a negative influence. The discussion questions and writing activity will also provide an opportunity to think deeply about being the first person to do something and how easy it is to take that for granted.

Common Core Standards Covered with This Lesson

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.4: Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 5 topic or subject area.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.5.4: Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.5.4a: Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.1c: Pose and respond to specific questions by making comments that contribute to the discussion and elaborate on the remarks of others.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.5.1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.5.2: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

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Lesson Content: Book/Story/Reading Passage

Instructions: Please read the following reading passage as many times as needed (aloud and silent) before starting to go through other lesson pages. Understanding the content of this passage is very important since the lesson activities will be all about this content. Feel free to print the passage if needed.

Columbus and the Egg

by

Content: This is a story about Columbus. He was an explorer. He is the explorer who came to the Americas from Spain in 1492. This is a story about what might have happened long ago when he was back in Spain.

When Columbus came back from his trip to the Americas, many people praised him. He was made an admiral. That means he was a leader. People said what a great thing he had done. But not everyone liked him. Some were jealous of all the attention he got.

One day Columbus was at a party that a Spanish gentleman gave in his honor. People were saying, What a great discovery you have made. Several persons were present who were jealous of the great admiral's success. They were proud, conceited fellows, and they very soon began to try to make Columbus uncomfortable.

“You have discovered strange lands beyond the seas,” they said, “but what of that? We do not see why there should be so much said about it. Anybody can sail across the ocean; and anybody can coast along the islands on the other side, just as you have done. It is the simplest thing in the world.”

Columbus made no answer; but after a while he took an egg from a dish and said to the company: “Who among you, gentlemen, can make this egg stand on end?”

One by one those at the table tried the experiment. When the egg had gone entirely around and none had succeeded, all said that it could not be done.

Then Columbus took the egg and struck its small end gently upon the table so as to break the shell a little. After that there was no trouble in making it stand upright.

“Gentlemen,” said he, “what is easier than to do this which you said was impossible? It is the simplest thing in the world. Anybody can do it -- AFTER HE HAS BEEN SHOWN HOW!”

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Task 1: Vocabulary

Instructions: Please complete the following vocabulary activity by choosing the correct meaning of each word selected from the passage and use of each word correctly in a sentence.

Q: 1 WordPhrase: in his honor **WordPhraseTier:** 2

Question: The author in our story writes, "One day Columbus was at a party that a Spanish gentleman gave in his honor." What does the phrase "in his honor" mean in this sentence?

- A: to embarrass him
- B: in his home
- C: out of respect
- D: in his town

Question: Which one of the sentences below uses the phrase "in his honor" correctly?

- A: The party was in his honor because it was cold outside.
- B: The dinner was given in his honor because he won the contest.
- C: They were in his honor because that was where he was born.
- D: They wanted to make fun of him, in his honor.

Q: 2 WordPhrase: conceited **WordPhraseTier:** 2

Question: The author in our story says "They were proud, conceited fellows, and they very soon began to try to make Columbus uncomfortable." What does the word "conceited" mean in this sentence?

- A: angry
- B: selfish
- C: excited
- D: fearful

Question: Which one of the sentences below uses the word "conceited" correctly?

- A: The conceited girl felt she deserved all of the candy.
- B: The frightened, conceited man threw the phone at the snarling dog.
- C: The woman yelled at the man when he hit her car because she was conceited.
- D: She was so conceited that she began jumping up and down with excitement.

Q: 3 WordPhrase: explorer **WordPhraseTier:** 3

Question: The author in our story says "He is the explorer who came to the Americas from Spain in 1492." What does the word "explorer" mean in this sentence?

- A: teacher
- B: student
- C: driver
- D: adventurer

Question: Which one of the sentences below uses the word "explorer" correctly?

- A: He was the explorer that taught the children how to read.
- B: The explorer climbed the tallest mountain in India.
- C: The explorer in the classroom raised his hand to ask a question.
- D: The explorer of the cab drove very fast.

Q: 4 WordPhrase: admiral **WordPhraseTier:** 3

Question: The author in our story says "Several persons were present who were jealous of the great admiral's success." What does the word "admiral" mean in this sentence?

- A: teacher of children
- B: musician
- C: leader of the sea
- D: boss

Question: Which one of the sentences below uses the word "admiral" correctly?

- A: The kindergarten students answered the admiral's questions.
- B: The admiral of the guitar played very beautifully.
- C: He had to stay and work late for the admiral.
- D: The admiral was a great man who sailed around the world.

Task 2: Forum Discussion

Instructions: This discussion forum will have questions for students to respond. Read the posted questions, and respond to each. Students are responsible for posting one initial and two peer responses for each topic.

1 - Why are the gentlemen jealous of Columbus?

The author writes, People were saying, What a great discovery you have made. Several persons were present who were jealous of the great admiral's success. Why were some of the people at the party jealous of Columbus?

2 - Why do people at the party say "It is the simplest thing in the world."?

The author writes, Anybody can sail across the ocean; and anybody can coast along the islands on the other side, just as you have done. It is the simplest thing in the world." Do you feel that what Columbus accomplished was simple? Why?

3 - What lesson was Columbus trying to teach with the egg?

After standing the egg up, Columbus says, "Gentlemen," said he, "what is easier than to do this which you said was impossible? It is the simplest thing in the world. Anybody can do it -- AFTER HE HAS BEEN SHOWN HOW!" What lesson was Columbus trying to teach with the egg?

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Task 3: Writing Activity

Instructions: You are to write and post here a 500 words essay describing something you would like to accomplish in the future and the pros and cons of being the first person to accomplish it. Make sure to provide specific examples.

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