



A Lesson on Columbus and the Egg by Sarah Gimmi

Grade Level: Grade 7

Subject Area: English Language Arts

Lesson Length: 1 hour 15 minutes

Lesson Keywords: reading, writing, Columbus, Christopher Columbus, discovery, exploration

Lesson Description: The goal of this lesson is to allow students to practice their reading and writing skills and learn new vocabulary while reading "Columbus and the Egg." The lesson requires students to critically read "Columbus and the Egg" and consider what it was like to be Christopher Columbus. This lesson allows students to draw their own conclusions about hypothetical situations. This lesson also allows the students to express their own opinions and form their own conclusions while using evidence from the text to strengthen their opinions and conclusions.

Common Core Standards Covered with This Lesson

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.7.1: Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.1: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.2b: Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.7.4a: Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.7.6: Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

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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, the explorer who discovered America. We have put discovered in quotation marks because actually other people already lived on the continent long before Columbus made his voyage in 1492. This is a story about what might have happened long ago when he was back in Spain. Is it accurate, did it really occur? That's not known, but it is a story that could have happened. Stories such as this are passed from generation to generation and sometimes are based on facts.

When Columbus came back from his trip to the Americas, many people praised him. He was made an admiral, he had made a remarkable voyage despite many challenges. People said what a great thing he had done, discovering the Americas. However, not everyone appreciated him, there were some who were jealous of all the adulation

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 resented this great admiral's success. They were proud and conceited, 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. All you need to do is sail West, that's not a remarkable feat.

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?

That's impossible, the host replied. You would need to be a magician to do that. 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, it was defying gravity.

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: Accurate **WordPhraseTier:** 2

Question: "Is it accurate, did it really occur?" What is the meaning of "accurate" in this sentence?

- A: Correct
- B: Wrong
- C: Definitely
- D: Incorrect

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

- A: Principal Accurate has a pet dog.
- B: These are accurate measurements for this recipe.
- C: My dog, Accurate, likes to play outside.
- D: According to Columbus, sailing is accurate.

Q: 2 WordPhrase: Resented **WordPhraseTier:** 2

Question: "Several persons were present who resented this great admiral's success." What does the word "resented" mean in this sentence?

- A: To send again
- B: Loved
- C: Adored
- D: Disliked

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

- A: I resented that package yesterday.
- B: They resented Columbus because they were jealous.
- C: My friend resented her dog to the pound.
- D: I could not believe how happy they were, they really resented the present!

Q: 3 WordPhrase: Discovery **WordPhraseTier:** 3

Question: ?What a great discovery you have made!? What does the word "discovery" mean in this sentence?

- A: To miss something
- B: To lose something
- C: The buy something
- D: The find something

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

- A: Can I buy discovery at the store?
- B: I seem to have lost my discovery. Have you seen it lying around?
- C: Scientists can make a new discovery every day!
- D: I miss my discovery.

Q: 4 WordPhrase: Admiral **WordPhraseTier:** 3

Question: "He was made an admiral..." What does the word "admiral" mean in this sentence?

- A: To be admired
- B: To be loved
- C: To be a high ranking officer
- D: To be disliked

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

- A: John's father is an admiral in the Navy.
- B: Everyone loves him because his is admiral.
- C: No one likes Thomas, he's admiral.
- D: Candace's work is admiral.

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 - What do you think Columbus trying to prove...

What do you think Columbus was trying to prove to the others at the end of the story when he cracked the small end of the egg on the table? Why? Use evidence from the text to support your claim.

2 - "What is easier than to do this which you said was impossible?"

In the last sentences of the passage, Columbus said, '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!' Using two sentences from the passage as evidence, explain how Columbus showed the others how seemingly impossible things can be done.

3 - "Is it accurate, did it really occur?"

The author stated that this story may or may not be accurate, but it was passed down from generation to generation and could be based on facts. Using the text as evidence, show at least two ways that this story could be true. Using the text as evidence, show at least two ways that this story could be untrue.

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Task 3: Writing Activity

Instructions: In the box below, I want you to put yourself in Columbus' position. How would you respond to being named an admiral? How would you react to the people who were jealous of Columbus if you were him? If you could, would you change anything about Columbus' response to the people who told him his voyage was simple? What would you do differently? (Minimum 300 words)

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