

American History 11 – Mr.Ruppert
Chapter 1 Writing Assignment (50 points)

Length: Approx. 1.5 to 2 pages (double spaced, one inch margins, size 10 font)
Your page heading should appear as follows at the top of the page:

Name _____
American History 11

Period _____
Due Date _____

Christopher Columbus: Hero or Villain?

Background: The 2nd Monday in October is a day that most of you will look forward to, as McQuaid will not be in session due to the commemoration of the life, exploits, and legacy of Christopher Columbus. As shown in the viewpoints reading (back of this page), this national holiday is not without its detractors and has become much more publicly and passionately debated in recent years. Many believe we should not honor this man's exploits with a sacred national holiday, especially considering the impact which the Columbian (Atlantic) Exchange had on Native American populations.

Your Essay Topic: In class you will be learning, in depth, about the life, accomplishments, and legacy of Columbus. Your essay should be persuasive in nature and seek to address the following questions from your perspective:

Was Columbus a hero as some would say, a villain or even a murderer as others would say, or somewhere in between? Should we continue to honor him with a national holiday?

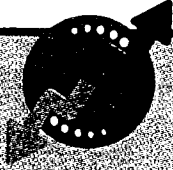
Advice to do well: Use a variety of information both from your textbook and in class documentation to write a well reasoned, well organized essay. You may, of course, use outside research if you wish. State your position and catch the reader's attention in the introduction, but do not get into detailing your reasons and constructing your argument. Conclude strongly by firmly restating your position.

P.S. – Your arguments should be a bit more substantial than “I feel we should continue to honor him with a holiday because I like having a day off school,”...although undeniably that may play a part.

- I) Introduction – Set the scene with some flair / Catch the readers attention with some articulation of the conflict over the differing viewpoints concerning Columbus' legacy
- II) Body / Multiple Paragraphs / Addresses...
 - a. Hero or Villain or somewhere in between? Give evidence!
 - b. Should we continue to honor him with a national holiday? In your estimation, are there other Americans who are more worthy of such a holiday? Who? Make a case for them.
- III) Conclusion – Summarize his legacy (Columbian Exchange, etc.)

Resources:

- The pre-1492 biography from National Geographic
- Cd-rom in class – 500 Nations
- Differing Viewpoints Reading
- In class oral arguments made by your classmates
- Web sites available through Mr. Ruppert's History Pages
 - 1492: An Ongoing Voyage
- Go to google...type in "Columbus hero or villain" and search



Viewpoints

On Celebrating Columbus Day

The five-hundredth anniversary of Columbus's voyage to the Americas inspired a spirited debate over whether a celebration was appropriate to mark the event. *What broader issue, other than the celebration of Columbus Day, is revealed in the viewpoints below?*

For a Celebration of Columbus Day
"Celebrate Columbus? Not if that simply means backslapping and flag waving. But it can mean more: taking stock of the long, fascinating record, noting that inevitable conflict resulted in losers as well as winners and produced a mixture of races, customs, and habits never before seen in the world."

Journalist Paul Gray, *Time*, October 7, 1991.

Against a Celebration of Columbus Day
"Yes, Christopher Columbus was the first European to sail to America in recorded history. But Columbus set into motion a sequence of greed, cruelty, slavery and genocide that, even in the bloody history of mankind, has few parallels. He organized an extermination of Native Americans."

Essayist Hans Koning, *The New York Times*, August 14, 1990