



**MA State Standards addressed by the lesson** (Include minimum of two state frameworks goals for this subject and grade level that this lesson aligns to):

1. Distinguish between long-term and short-term cause and effect relationships.
2. Show connections, causal and otherwise, between particular historical events and ideas and larger social, economic, and political trends and developments.
3. Distinguish intended from unintended consequences.
4. Explain how people or communities examine and weigh the benefits of each alternative when making a choice and that opportunity costs are those benefits that are given up

**National Education for Sustainability Standards addressed by the lesson** (Include minimum of two EfS standards that this lesson aligns to):

1. **Intergenerational Responsibility - Responsibility to Future Generations** - Students analyze and list their roles and responsibilities in their family, their school, and their community -- now and into the future. They demonstrate understanding of the cultural context of intergenerational responsibility (i.e. how some cultures consider and plan for seven generations into the future, etc)
2. **Multiple Perspectives** - Students consider an issue or challenge related to sustainability, through a variety of lenses or perspectives and they explain how approaching that issue or challenge from different perspectives may result in different decisions and outcomes.
3. **Quality of Life Indicators** - Students define indicators that contribute to their own and their community's quality of life and assess their and their community's quality of life based on these indicators.

**Brief Summary of Unit (including curricular content and unit goals):**

In this unit 8<sup>th</sup> grade US History I students will consider the role of the past (as seen in this particular instance through the prism of the Columbian Encounter) in shaping present-day communities. We will explore what happens when communities from vastly disparate cultures come into contact with each other--as with European arrival in the Americas. Our discussions in this unit will be informed by an overarching consideration of how the different cultural values and assumptions held by the various competing communities that we are studying resulted in importantly different understandings and behaviors, as well as consider how these understandings and behaviors shaped the narrative we have been handed as history. We will ask questions about the sustainability of various practices and ideologies that were in play during the initial Columbian Encounter with the indigenous Taino people as documented by historians Kirkpatrick Sale and Robert Royal, in particular taking a close look at the success of Taino housing, farming, and governance as a tool for raising questions about what is important, and how cultural notions regarding what is important shape a society and their interactions in the world, and therefore raise important questions about the link between societal values and sustainability. Our discussions will be informed by the following texts: *Columbus In History*, focusing on the argument advanced by cultural historian Michael Kammen in his book *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in America*, an argument in which Kammen points out that historical figure of Columbus was elevated to heroic status in the mid 1800's for reasons having less to do with Columbus's actual deeds, and more to do with a fledgling Americas' needs for a strong national identity; Kirkpatrick Sale's affirmative response to the Question "Was Columbus an Imperialist?" from his debate with historian Robert Royal, in *Taking Sides: Clashing Views in US History*; Victoria Schofield's article, *The World in 1492*, and Howard Zinn's description of the Columbian encounter in the introduction to his book, *A People's History of the United States*.

**Enduring understandings (what understandings are desired?):**

***Students will understand that:***

1. All historical accounts are mediated through the multiple lenses of a given historian's particular location in time, their cultural biases, and assumptions about the nature of truth and what is important
2. All historical accounts are inevitably subject to varying degrees of bias.
3. The history of the Americas and the Columbian Encounter is most often presented through the lens of European perspectives. The absence of extensive historical accounts reflecting the perspectives of non-Europeans (often lost, or simply *never written down*) has broad implications for how we understand this nation's past, and as a consequence, how we foresee and enact the future.
4. It is important to always be mindful of how habits and conceptions directly impact the degree to which communities act and interact in ways that are ultimately sustainable.

**Essential questions (what essential questions will be considered?):**

1. How do we understand individual and collective identities?
2. Do we/should we value diversity?
3. Do we/how do we pursue cooperation, negotiation, & tolerance?
4. Is community limited to communities of humans, or does it extend beyond humans to the natural world and other entities?
5. What is History?
6. What are the individual and communal elements necessary for a good quality of life?
7. At the time of the Columbian Encounter, how did various cultural understandings about what was important or of value shape the various behaviors that in turn influenced the encounter and impacted the larger world community?
8. When studying the past, should we consider the commons and how to live more sustainability?

**Outcomes (what key knowledge and skills will students acquire as a result of this lesson/unit?)**

***Students will know...***

1. General information about the habits of the Taino Indians in 1492;
2. General information about the Europeans in 1492;
3. General information about the relative culture, technology, governance, agriculture, art, and explorations of a wide variety and representation of peoples on all continents in 1492;
4. How to look comparatively at varying accounts of a given period (the Columbian Encounter with the Taino)

***Students will be able to...***

1. Assess how “Eurocentrism” may apply to the way US History is taught (specifically around the Columbian Encounter)
2. Provide a general definition of sustainability
3. Grapple with questions regarding what is needed for a fulfilling life
4. Look at various indicators that will help them assess global and community trends in terms of sustainability
5. Evaluate practices in terms what they contribute or demand from the “commons”

6. Consider the ways in which historical narratives are mediated and remediated by the various factors defining a given moment in history, as well as the various factors defining the lenses through which the past is regarded.

## **Stage 2 – Determine acceptable evidence**

### **Performance tasks (what evidence will show that students understand?):**

1. Students will write 4 essays:

- a. The World in 1492 Essay
- b. ZinnvTextbook Essay
- c. Michael Kammen Article Essay
- d. The Sale/Royal Debate Essay

2. Rethinking Columbus Booklet

(The first two essay assignments are attached, the last two are part of a Columbus Booklet – assignment for booklet also attached.)

3. Sustainability Journals – Students will address essential questions for this unit with responses and reflections recorded in ongoing sustainability journals that will be written in at least twice a week either in class or for homework. Students will be assigned 4 required entries in the journals each term that I will evaluate, as well as give a completeness grade.

### **Other evidence (quizzes, tests, prompts, observations, dialogues, work samples):**

1. Students will take 4 standard chapter quizzes during the unit (Chapter 1, 2, 3, 4)

### Stage 3 – Learning plan

**Learning activities (what will students do and what will you, the teacher do, to prepare the students to achieve the desired outcomes?)**

Outline – Each entry represents one day unless otherwise indicated:

1. Day 1 – Introduction: What is History & Sustainability Journals – Recap of History Students  
Beware Assignment & Handout Describing Sustainability Journals
2. Chapter 1, 2, 3 America’s Past and Promise (three chapters over the course of 2 weeks, quiz after each chapter)
3. Reading: Michael Kammen, Columbus in History & Taking Double Entry Notes
4. Discussion of Kammen article in class – making sure students understand salient points
  - a. Framing Questions:
    - When Does Kammen Say Americans began to focus on Columbus as a heroic figure and why?
    - Why was Columbus in particular chosen as emblematic of Americans?
    - What does Kammen say was problematic about the way Columbus was depicted/understood in the late 1700s into the late 1800s?
    - When did understandings of Columbus begin to shift, and why?
5. Chapter 4 America’s Past and Promise – 5 days (including Chapter 4 quiz)
6. Reading – Introduction to Howard Zinn, *A People’s History of the United States*
7. Discussion of Zinn’s characterization of the Columbian Encounter as compared to Chapters 3 and 4 (portions on Columbus) from Americas Past and Promise
8. Essay: Zinn Vs Textbook (see attached assignment)
9. Reading The World in 1492, by Victoria Schofield
  - a. Anticipation Guide/Word Splash (testing prior knowledge)
  - b. Guided Reading – Fill In Template with examples and details
  - c. In class discussion
  - d. Write 1492 Essay (see attached assignment)
10. Introduce Columbus Booklet (see attached assignment)
11. Activity: What Do We Need for A Fulfilling Life? Brainstorming (See template from Defining What Matters, Creative Change Educational Solutions/www.creativechange.net) Generate a class list that Answers this Question & Post in Class

12. Homework: Journal Entry – see prompt 1, Sustainability JE Prompts Doc (**Prompt 1 Question:** What observations do you have about the list generated in class regarding what is needed for a fulfilling life? After thinking about it further, are there things you would remove from the list? Add to the list? Should everyone be able to have what they need for a fulfilling life? What sorts of things should be done so that future generations can be sure to get these needs met?)
13. Defining the “Commons” Reading: What Supports Our Wellbeing? (from Defining What Matters, Creative Change Educational Solutions/www.creativechange.net) Generate a Class List that Answers this Question & Post in Class
14. Homework: Homework: Journal Entry – see prompt 2, Sustainability JE Prompts Doc (**Prompt 2 Question:** Should Studying US History help students become better equipped at considering how to be mindful of the commons and seeking ways in which we can increase our sustainability? Why? How? )
15. Activity: How Do We Get What We Need? See Attached Template - Generate a Class List that Answers this Question & Post in Class
16. Homework: Journal Entry, see prompt 3 Sustainability JE Prompts Doc (**Prompt 3 Question:** What surprises (if any) did you encounter with the list we generated about how we get what we need? What thoughts did generating the list inspire? What questions does it raise about fairness and equity?)
17. Activity: Developed or Not Developed (from Defining What Matters, Creative Change Educational Solutions/www.creativechange.net) – Generate a class list that includes the criteria for each category & Post In Class
18. Homework: Journal Entry – see prompt 4, Sustainability JE Prompts Doc (**Prompt 4 Question:** What questions did the developed/undeveloped list raise for you? Are there ways in which the list intersects with the list of how we get what we need? Describe! Is development always good? Why or why not?)
19. Read Sale Royal Debate & Take Double Entry Notes (in class) from *Taking Sides: Clashing Views in US History* (see attached handout)

20. Homework: Journal Entry, see prompt 5, Sustainability JE Prompts Doc (**Prompt 5 Question:**  
How did your reading of Sale and Royal impact/contribute to the 4 lists that we generated in class regarding what is needed for a fulfilling life; what supports our well-being; how we get what we need, and what constitutes developed or not developed? After reading their lists, did you add or remove things from our lists? If so, what? What thoughts do you have about the relative sustainability of the Taino vs the Europeans (bearing in mind that the Taino no longer exist, and Europeans, of course do.)
21. Discuss Sale Royal Debate in class
22. Library Visit to begin Columbus Project – expectations and tips for doing research
23. Work on & finish Columbus Booklets (2 more weeks)