



## **Who First Reached America: The Vikings, the Chinese Admiral Zheng He, or Columbus?**

Curriculum Unit 07.02.09  
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### **Introduction**

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My unit is primarily focused on reading for information and on the related writing skills which are required by the English curriculum. It is appropriate for College English 3, College English 4 and AP English Language and Composition. The unit will start with the following essential questions: Who first reached America: the Vikings, the Chinese Admiral Zheng He or Columbus? What were these travelers looking for? What did they actually find and what benefits did they get? It will consist of three parts, each covering the travels of the Vikings, Zheng He to the eastern side of Africa and Columbus to the discovery of America (I will use the word "discover" but the students will learn that it is problematic since the Amerindians were the native population and knew about America), and will take a period of five or six weeks. The unit will analyze visual and written texts in order to understand, to compare and contrast, to synthesize, and to evaluate causes and effects. It will also require various writing activities throughout the entire unit together with a final project that will be in the form of a documented essay and a presentation, or a simple documented visual for those students who have special needs.

### **Rationale**

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In the last four years, I have been teaching Language Arts in Cooperative Arts and Humanities, New Haven, Connecticut. My school is a public magnet school for visual arts. This is a relevant factor because all the students who attend it come from the Greater New Haven area and choose this school because they want to develop their specific artistic interests. I feel honored to teach in such a challenging environment where each student has a unique and talented approach to my subject matter. It is also fascinating since I have the opportunity to engage my students' arts interests and accomplish tasks that are normally considered "boring." Being the only teacher of English for all the juniors gives me the opportunity to instill a real sense of community and acceptance for the individual in spite of our remarkable diversities. Co-op is also a "magnet" school and this is another important component as we experiment the real concept of diversity and all its

connected complications.

Demographically, my students come from all possible backgrounds - 49% African-Americans, 35 % White and 16% Hispanics. I have a group of twenty students who are not native and do not have an ESL teacher in the school. Another group of about fifteen students with various special needs is usually placed in one class with the presence of the Special Education teacher who co-teaches and works with all students irrespective of their abilities or special needs. This is particularly valuable because it helps overcome the barriers of diversity. About ten percent of all the juniors excel in both writing and reading. All my classes are good examples of the "melting pot" pattern with students belonging to all the various groups. This combination has been proving very effective. In fact, I constantly see substantial improvements for the weakest students as well as an effective overcoming of the fear of diversity.

At the beginning of the school year, my students and I determine an overarching essential question, which will lead us through the various units. This essential question is important because it helps them understand the material we cover. It is also a steady reference for the promotion of concrete-operational thinking to accept the self and the others, to explore and understand the individual contribution, and to improve the social life of any human being. For my juniors this overarching essential question is: What is the author's theory? What is mine?

Our curriculum requires all students the completion of a research paper in various subjects as essential task. This is something that my students do not want or do not like to do and many of them prefer a low grade to doing a genuine project. To engage them and to eventually develop a mastery of the required skills are a true challenge in my school. This unit has to be planned only after taking into account prior assessments and after addressing the students' understanding, learning levels and interest. Timing is also another important factor for its failure or success. If I planned it too early in the school year, I would not be able to use the deep knowledge I have acquired of each of my students, and their complete trust, so I can overcome their spontaneous opposition and rejection of the proposed topic. Due to these considerations, I plan this unit at the beginning of the fourth marking period because I know that my students will do anything I will ask them by then. They have internalized the overarching essential question and they can use their artistic skills to complete the most "boring" task, as they would put it.

In a new techno-savvy world, students want to be "travelers" searching for new "worlds." They thrive for activities no one else has ever attempted. They want to be acknowledged as the first to determine something different. They love to have different positions or different interpretations. Since they are artistically gifted, they are intuitive and they are attracted by texts which are informational but are presented in the form of a creative journal. These are the essential conditions to plan a unit which is basically informational. Of course, my plan has to take into consideration my students' giftedness and creativity and their characteristic approach to learning.

In planning my unit, the need for differentiated instruction plays an essential role. I think it is the key for closing the gap because each student is so different and unique that a standard, linear approach would be a complete failure. The theory of multiple intelligences suggests that the individual has strengths and weaknesses in one or several areas. Gardner's multiple intelligence theory suggests the cultivation of desired capabilities. This means each student has a very specific skill. This skill needs to be valued because it helps the student reinforce his/her self-esteem with a direct improvement of the student's learning. Consequently, I will focus on the desired capabilities of each student together with a varied and personalized approach. Following the district's requirements, which I share, my goal is to engage the students in all the stages of the

critical thinking process developed by the Bloom's Taxonomy throughout the entire process.

## Unit Overview

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The first part of the unit will cover the travels, the maps and any other possible visual material about the Vikings, Scandinavian people, who adventured to new lands for various reasons. The students will have various documents: an excerpt from *Voyages in World History* by Valerie Hansen telling about "The Vikings in Vinland" around the years 1000 (Hansen, chapter 10), entitled the *Graenlendiga Saga* and *Eirik's Saga* from *The Vinland Sagas: The Norse Discovery of America* by Magnus Magnusson and *Hermann Palsson Saga*. They will also analyze the *Vinland Map* (held in Beinecke Library, Yale University) learn and discuss about the culture of these Scandinavian people interpreting the visual document of a Viking boat from the cover page of *The Vinland Sagas: the Norse Discovery of America*. These various documents will give the students the opportunity to determine the correct information about the Vikings approach to the American continent, what they discovered about the people already living here, and the reasons which pushed them to explore new lands. The second part of the unit will analyze the voyages of the Chinese Admiral Zheng He to east Africa. The documents will put in evidence the complete different reasons behind the travels the Admiral Zheng lead, and will illustrate the time and the peculiarities of the Ming dynasty. As primary source, I will use *Overall survey of the Ocean's Shores* by Ma Huan and translated by J.V.C. Mills. The students will use excerpts from *Voyages In World History* by Valerie Hansen (Hansen, chapter 14) and *How Not to (Re)Write World History: Gavin Menzies and the Chinese Discovery of America* by Robert Finlay. The third part will cover the travels of Christopher Columbus, who was sponsored by the Spanish monarchs to try a new route toward the eastern countries. As secondary source, they will read the excerpt from *Voyages in World History* (Hansen, chapter 15) and as primary sources they will read excerpts from *The Journal of Christopher Columbus* by Clements Markham, and *The Four Voyages of Christopher Columbus* by J.M. Cohen. The primary and secondary sources will focus on the reflections and interactions with the native populations but will also point out the real reasons moving money and men into the unknown of the exploration. The students will also interpret some visual documents and will thoroughly write and discuss about them. They will also be encouraged to search about the Vikings, Zheng He and Columbus independently to understand how a 'researcher' draws

his/her conclusions.

At the beginning of the unit the students will write an essay which will primarily focus on their prior knowledge discussing the actual role, importance and interest for exploring the unknown. I will suggest some of the following points to be included in the essay: What is the challenge to discover something nobody knows about? Do we still need to explore? Why? What benefits might we have? What about the space explorations? What benefit do we actually have from the space explorations? Why? What do we expect to find and what do we actually find? Who discovered America? This pre-reading activity will direct them to the understanding of the underling desire which motivated and drove Columbus, the Vikings and Zheng He into their explorations.

After this initial activity, all the three parts of the unit will be built around specific activities of reading and writing. The visual texts will be analyzed by looking, analyzing, and responding in writing. They will involve descriptions of the details shown by the visual as well as the feeling aroused by the same. These texts will offer also the opportunity to learn analyzing the image with a specific language based upon perception and

will include terms as focal point, figure-ground contrast, repetition or similarity (shape and size), and color contrast. I will suggest questions like: what do you think are the key elements or features of the image? How do they contribute to what you see? Look for the elements that are similar for size, shape or color and explain the effects of those elements. Does this image suggest you a story? What does this image tell you about this culture/this traveler? I will also require them to compare and contrast their analysis of the visuals to the written documents to see if they communicate contrasting information or if they support and confirm the written text.

I will require the students to do their initial reading of the written documents with an emphasis on the meaning of the unknown words they will have to determine either by using the context or the dictionary. The first close reading will require the students to work on the text by highlighting and labeling in the margin its various components. I will teach them to determine the descriptions, the reflections or hypothesis, the facts, the purpose, the narration and whatever the document contains. The second close reading of the document will call for writing down the results of the analysis and interpretation so that they can determine the purpose and the perspectives. Before drawing any conclusions, I will require them to compare the perspectives of all visual and non-visual documents in order to determine similarities and/or differences. They will have to prepare an annotated bibliography with concise summaries, and/or paraphrased passages and/or relevant quoted information. At the end of each traveler, the students will have to write a documented essay in response to the essential questions supporting their theories with specific references to the visual and written documents in a reflective and convincing voice.

When all the three parts of the unit are concluded, the students will be required to compare and contrast the three travelers with each other and write a final paper in the form of a documented essay presenting their interpretations or theories about the real reasons and advantages behind these voyages together with the historical truth narrated in the various sources. I will also require a presentation of their conclusions with Power Point slides. The students with special needs will conclude the unit with the presentation and the Power Point slides only.

## Students' Resources

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The unit will cover the reading, understanding, analysis, interpretation, and evaluation of the medieval Icelandic prose narratives, *The Vinland Sagas: The Norse Discovery of America* translated by Magnus Magnusson and Hermann Palsson. I will read two excerpts from *The Overall Survey of the Ocean's Shores* by Ma Huan and Robert Finlay article *How Not to (Re)Write World History: Gavin Menzies and the Chinese Discovery of America*. I will include the *Journal of Christopher Columbus during his first voyage in 1492* translated by Clements R. Markham, and *The Four Voyages of Christopher Columbus* by J.M. Cohen. I will also use excerpts about the three travelers from *Voyages in World History* by V. Hansen.

### The Vikings

I will compare and contrast the "Gaenlendiga Saga" to the "Eirik's Saga" since I deem it an essential step in our process to determine who reached America first and why. The sagas are very similar but they also contain different details in the description of the territories they found and the native people they met. (Magnusson, Magnus, Palsson Hermann. *The Vinland Sagas: The Norse Discovery of America*. London: Penguin, 1965). My

students need to get into the shoes of a "real" researcher who has various sources and whose task is to determine the correct historical facts. Each student will be required to draw conclusions and propose "who reached America first" based on the facts stated in the various source documents.

After the first complete reading of The Vinland Sagas, I will engage my students in a close reading and analysis of the pages relating to four voyages the Vikings did westward. I will start from the "Gaenlendiga Saga" and, specifically, I will require my students to reread "Eirik explores Greenland" (Magnusson 49-51) and "Bjarni sighted land to the west" (51-54). These excerpts will give my students the background information about the first voyage of the Vikings. The same passages will require the students to determine whether the Vikings did reach any territories nearby America at the beginning of the eleventh century. These initial pages of the "Gaenlendiga Saga" explain exactly why Thorvald, father of Eirik the Red, started to explore new lands.

"Leif explores Vinland" (54-56) contains the necessary information about the second voyage of Eirik the Red who followed the same route of his father. In fact, the Saga says he "was outlawed and lived in Brattahlid, Greenland, as the only recognized authority of the land" (54). From there, Eirik's son decided to start a voyage - my students will identify it as second voyage - which brought to the discovery of new countries. They will learn that this was only the beginning of a more decisive exploration. In fact, Leif, Eirik's son, first landed in a country that was mostly covered by ice and rocks. When he landed the second time, he was in a flat, wooded and sandy area. He called it Markland (the southeastern coast of Labrador, or Newfoundland). As he did in the previous landing, Leif and his men hurried back to their ship and sailed away. This time they followed the north-east wind for two days. At that point, they saw another land again. The weather was fine and they found a grassy area. "There was a sound between the headland and what they said it was an island. They reached a place where a river flowed out of a lake" (56). The weather was mild, so they decided to spend the winter here, build houses, and continue the exploration towards the inside of the country. The saga also says, "in this country, night and day were of more even length" than in other locations and "on the shortest day of the year, the sun was already up by 9 a.m., and did not set until after 3p.m." (56). The geographical description of that area and the remark about the length of the day will clearly help my students understand that this location could have been anywhere between the Gulf of St. Lawrence and New Jersey. The same narrative prose says this country was rich in grapes, vines, and timber. Apparently, this was the reason Leif and his men decided to call it Vinland (57-58). This land was called Vinland for its abundance of grapes - "vinum" in Latin and "wine" in English.

The third voyage begins with "Thorvald explores Vinland" (59-61). In this chapter the students will have a detailed description of the country - "they found the country there very attractive, with woods stretching almost down to the shore and white beaches" (59). "They found no traces of human habitation or animals except on one westerly island" (60). The next exploration brought them eastward along the coast. They arrived at a heavily wooded area, and here they met some native inhabitants who used skin-boats. "Thorvald and his men divided forces and captured all of them except one, who escaped in his boat" (60). My students will also have descriptive details matching with the boats used by certain Native American tribes of New England after 1500.

After these first explorations, the Vikings did not stop visiting Vinland as the saga confirms. In fact, Karlsefni prepared another voyage - the fourth voyage, "Karlsefni in Vinland" (64-67). I want my students to focus on "the agreement with his crew that everyone should share equally in whatever profits the expeditions might yield" (65). Karlsefni ordered to cut timber, and to pick all the grapes, wild wheat, or any other produce they could find. They spent the summer and the winter in the same location without encountering any native people (65). The same excerpt contains other details about the native American tribes, called Skraelings in the

saga. "The cattle were grazing near by and the bull began to bellow and roar." "This terrified the Skraelings" (65). The same passage will give my students information about the attempted trading exchanges between the Vikings and the Native Americans.

"Eirik's Saga" confirms the same details reported by the "Graenlendinga Saga". I will follow the same strategy of an initial reading of the complete work followed by a second close reading of those excerpts that compare and contrast with the "Graenlendiga Saga". I deem this strategy an essential one to determine who reached America first. In particular, I will draw my students' attention on chapter 2, "Eirik explores Greenland" (76-78). I want my students to notice the striking differences both in tone and details between the two Sagas. In fact, the "Graenlendiga Saga" focuses on landscape details essentially and simply states that "next summer, he set off to colonize Greenland" (50). On the contrary, "Eirik's Saga" gives a lot of details about Eirik's fights in his homeland which ultimately caused him and all his followers to be outlawed (76-77). At the same time, they can see that both sagas confirm the same period of time - three years - to colonize or explore Greenland.

The second excerpt I will analyze is "Leif discovers Vinland" (84-88). The striking difference in this part refers to the fact that the king suggested Leif, who was ready to leave for Greenland in the summer, "to go there with a mission from me to preach Christianity" (85). This is interesting because the "Graenlendiga Saga" never mentioned religion as a clear purpose of exploration. Another important difference from the preceding saga is the reference to the provisions they prepared before starting this voyage, and the complete lack of any details or description of the new territories.

The third excerpt I will reread is "Karlsefni goes to Vinland" (93-96). This chapter can be compared to the fourth voyage in the "Graenlendiga Saga". It is interesting to notice that it opens saying that "there were great discussions at Brattahlid that winter about going in search of Vinland." How did they know there was a new land named Vinland? If they already knew about its existence, why were they searching for Vinland? These are the questions my students will be required to respond by using the specific references to the previous saga. At this point we will also compare and contrast with the Introduction from *The Vinland Sagas* written by Magnus Magnusson and Herman Palsson (7-43). The only difference this chapter underlines is the abundance of tall grass, animals of all kinds, maples, grapes, wild wheat, rivers, and lakes full of fish.

"Eirik's Sagas" differs from the other saga for the abundance of details about the native population. In fact, chapter 10, "Karlsefni goes south", contains the same details as the other saga as far as the description of this land is concerned. However, it contains interesting details about the native populations who are also identified as "skin-boat" men (98). "The newcomers rowed towards them and stared at them in amazement. . . . They were small and evil-looking, and their hair was coarse; they had large eyes and broad cheekbones" (98). The same saga mentions the "Skraelings' attack" (99-101). It says the indigenous people wanted to buy "red cloth, swords and spears" (99). The second time they came in huge number by boat and from the south. They waved their sticks but anti-clockwise and were howling loudly. A fierce battle followed. At the end of the battle, the Vikings realized that although the land was excellent, they could not live here permanently because of the unpredictable nature of the native populations.

I will also use the excerpt from *Voyages in World History* by V. Hansen as secondary source. This source will be used to verify the validity of the information we found in the Sagas (Hansen, Valerie. *Voyages in World History*. Boston:Houghton Mifflin, forthcoming 2009, chapter 10).

### *Zheng He and his Voyages*

The other traveler I will take into consideration is Zheng He because he is sometimes referred to as a



predecessor of Columbus. I will present my students chapter 14 - an excerpt - from *Voyages in World History* by V. Hansen. On handing out this passage, I will not mention that it is a secondary source because I want them to determine the difference between this specific document and the two excerpts from *The Overall Survey of the Ocean's Shores* by Ma Huan. We will only read and take notes about the essential details the document reports about Zheng He. Specifically, we will focus our attention on the fact he is a Muslim Chinese who was captured by the Chinese soldiers, castrated and forced to become a soldier. "In leading China's navy to India and Africa, Admiral Zheng He was following the well-established routes taken by both pilgrims and Muslim merchants" (Hansen, chapter 14). Gavin Menzies maintains "four Chinese fleets . . . visited every part of the world except Europe between 1421 and 1423" (Finlay, Robert. *How Not to (Re)Write World History: Gavin Menzies and the Chinese Discovery of America*. *Journal of World History*. 15.2 (2004): 29 pars. 14 Jul. 2007, 1). At this point my students will analyze and juxtapose Menzies and the primary source to determine whether the admiral Zheng He reached or did not reach America. Differently from Columbus, Zheng He never kept any journal or wrote any accounts of his numerous travels.

The primary source, I will use *The Overall Survey of the Ocean's Shores* written by Ma Huan, Zheng He's interpreter, and translated by J.V.G. Mills is a detailed account of Zheng He's travels. I will start our study from "Poem Commemorating the Journey". After the initial reading for the understanding of the text, I will analyze where the expedition(s) was directed and how the new territories are described: "The Emperor's glorious envoy received the divine commands, proclaim abroad the silken sounds, and go to the barbarous lands;" "clusters of mounts, green floating shells" (Ma, Huan. *Ying-Yai Sheng-Lan 'The Overall Survey of the Ocean's Shores'*. Bangkok: White Lotus, 1997, 73), and "from She-p'o again the Western Ocean broached" (74). The other details we will consider are the reactions on both the first encounter and the related descriptions: ". . . and strange the people are." "With unkempt heads and naked feet, a barbarous tongue they speak" (73); ". . . grateful, admiring our virtue, they show themselves loyal, sincere" (74). I will also require my students to discuss "the west with the east they mixed" (74). These details are important in order to determine what country they were exploring. Was it America? If it was, which other primary sources, the Vikings' Sagas and Columbus's log-book, do they reasonably compare to?

I also want my students to read "The country of Ku-Li" and determine the correctness of the information found in the "Poem Commemorating the Journey". "The Country of Ku-Li" is interesting because it starts with "This is the great country of the Western Ocean" (137). What is Ma Huan specifically referring to? Is that America? This documents will offer me the opportunity to look for references like the religion(s) the Chinese found in this country - "The population of the country includes five classes, the Muslim people, . . .", "There is a traditional story that in olden times there was a holy man named Mou-hsieh," and "the people knew he was a true man of Heaven", or "the king has cast an image of Buddha" (138-139). Similarly, interesting are details referring about the level of civilization of the native people at the time of the Admiral's arrival, the trades, and the plants, or trees growing in this area. Now, I will require my students to analyze Ma Huan's writing style and compare it to Columbus's one. I think this is an important step in order to lead my students to their conclusions on who discovered America, what these travelers were looking for, and what benefits, if any, they had.

### *Christopher Columbus: the Journal of his First Voyage*

Columbus's voyage will begin with the First Letter of Paolo Toscanelli to Columbus (Markham, Clements R. *The Journal of Christopher Columbus (during His first Voyage, 1492-93) and Documents Relating to the Voyages of John Cabot and Gaspar Corte Real*. London: Elibron classics, 2005, 3). This document is composed of the "Prologue to Columbus" and "A Copy of the letter to Martins". I want my students to focus their attention on

how Paolo Toscanelli defines the date of this letter to Columbus, "some days ago" (3). I want them to reflect and learn using temporal details referring to a specific year or moment in time. I will also draw their attention on specific details referring to Columbus's desire to "find a way to where the spices grow," "a shorter way to the places of spices," (3-4) and "his ancestors desired intercourse with Christians now 200 years ago" (6). These are important details in order to determine the causes for exploring new territories. The same document is important because it contains the information about the possibility to reach "the places of the spices" sailing westward. (5). Toscanelli claims that "this can be shown from the spherical shape of the earth" and to help understand he also prepared a "sailing chart" (5). Paolo Toscanelli seems very comfortable with his assertions since he writes, "It is asserted that none but merchants live on islands. For there the number of navigators with merchandize is so great that in all the rest of the world there are not so many as in one most noble port called Zaitun" - modern Quanzhou, Fujian province, China (5-6). This document will also help my students realize how Columbus could conclude that the first land he and his men encountered was India - "the spaces of sea to be crossed in the unknown parts are not great" (9). They will also closely read the "Second Letter of Paolo Toscanelli" to Columbus (10-11) which stresses the same motivations for the voyage. I deem these two letters extremely interesting for the amount of details referring to the geographical knowledge of those times, and for the possible activities of inferring and/or critical thinking they will allow me to develop.

After the two letters by Paolo Toscanelli, I will read the "Journal of the First Voyage of Columbus". I want my students to read the entire Journal and in class we will closely read only some excerpts which will be used to compare and contrast with The Vinland Sagas. Specifically, we will analyze the pages referring to the day - "January 2nd, 1492", when Columbus had the Spanish royal permission of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabela to prepare his expedition to India sailing westward (15-18). It will be interesting to compare how differently the Vikings and Columbus prepared their vessels before departing - "and came to the town of Palos, which is a seaport; where I equipped three vessels . . . and departed from that port, well supplied with provisions and with many sailors" (17). We will also reflect on the different format as well as on the authors of The Vinland Sagas and the Journal of the first Voyage. These are not digressions from our primary objective to determine who reached America first. It is an essential activity involving my students' critical thinking skills in order to learn to interpret the information they read in the various documents.

The next excerpt we will analyze thoroughly is the journal entry dated "Thursday, 11th of October" (35). I want my students to learn what Columbus took into account in order to conclude that the land was not far away. He writes, "The course was W.S.W., and there was more sea than there had been during the whole voyage. They saw sandpipers, and a green reed near the ship" (35), and "the crew of the caravel Nina also saw signs of land, and a small branch covered with berries" (35). The next day, they arrived at a small island called Guanahani by the local people. Unlike the Vikings, Columbus was received hospitably by the local people, who wore no clothes. He landed and took possession of this country in the name of the Spanish King and Queen (36-37).

Since Columbus's journal contains very detailed descriptions of the native people and of the relationships between Columbus, his men, and the inhabitants of these territories, I will require my students to determine the similarities and differences with The Vinland Sagas. I will also engage them in an activity to scaffold their metacognitive skills. In fact I want my students to look at style of the two documents (The Vinland Sagas and the Journal of the first Voyage of Christopher Columbus) and determine the composition techniques. Another striking difference with the Sagas I want my student to focus on is the fact that the Vikings did not encounter the indigenous people - the Skraelings - on their arrival whereas Columbus says, "presently, they saw naked people" (36). The number of these native populations differs between the two sources too - "presently, many inhabitants of the island assembled" (37).



In the same excerpt, other factors - conversion to Christianity and the explorers' intentions and/or considerations- can be analyzed and compared. Differently from the Sagas, Columbus claims the inhabitants of these territories could be easily converted to Christianity because they were learning quickly whatever his men were teaching them. Similarly to the Vikings, Columbus exchanged red caps, glass beads to put around the necks, and many other objects of little value. "It also appeared to me - Columbus - to be a race of people very poor in everything" (38-39). He also concluded that these local people should be good servants. Another interesting consideration I want my students to focus on is how carefully Columbus observed what the natives brought him in exchange of his gifts since he wanted to find out whether these territories were rich in gold (39).

I will also closely read the journal entries "Saturday, 13th of October and Sunday" , and "14th of October" (39-42). We will analyze the description of the south-western island and compare with the ones we studied in the Sagas. "This island is rather large and very flat, with bright green trees, much water, and a very large lake in the center, without any mountain, and the whole land so green that is a pleasure to look on it." (40). The same journal entries further discuss the nature of the local populations. We will also analyze and reflect on Columbus's considerations and/or personal judgments about these inhabitants (41). I want my students to discuss and compare Columbus's attitude and the Vikings' one along their exploring process.

It is also interesting to study the "Letter of Columbus to Various Persons Describing the Results of his first voyage and Written on the Return Voyage" (Columbus, Christopher. *The Four Voyages of Christopher Columbus*. London: Penguin, 1969, 115-123). The letter contains a detailed description of the various islands he discovered, the description and personal evaluation of the indigenous populations, interesting references to the verbal and non-verbal communications with these people, the peculiar exchanges between Columbus's men and the natives, and Columbus's conclusions about the profits the king of Spain would obtain from this exploration. This document might be considered a repetition of the log-book but I want my students to read it for two reasons. First, I want them to understand that a good researcher needs other documents to confirm the validity of the information contained in the previous ones. Secondly, I want them to analyze by comparing and contrasting the ethos, logo and pathos of this letter with the Journal and The Vinland Sagas, and the excerpts from The Overall Survey of the Oceans' Shores. This activity will give them the opportunity to draw the adequate conclusions about the underlying causes of these explorations.

I will also use the excerpt from *Voyages in World History* by V. Hansen as secondary source. This source will be used to verify the validity of the information compared to the primary sources (chapter 15).

### *Visuals*

The visual documents are another important component of the unit because they will engage my students in understanding, analyzing, evaluating, and comparing and contrasting activities with a consequent scaffolding of their critical thinking skills. In particular, I will use the Vinland Map, the North Atlantic Map drawn by Sigurdur Stefansson, the Atlantic Map, the Greenland Map, the North America Map, the pictures of the Viking Ship, the Algonquian Birchbark Canoe (Northeast) used by the indigenous people, the Map of the First Voyage of Columbus, the Map of the Four Voyages of Columbus, the Three Vessels of Columbus's First Voyage, the restored picture of the Toscanelli Map, and Zheng He's Ship.

## Objectives

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1. to analyze and reflect why a person wants to discover what he or she does not know;
2. to predict, infer, and see causes and effects;
3. apply their prior knowledge and determine who were the first outsiders to reach the Americas, the real meaning of "discovery," and why;
4. write an initial essay analyzing the necessity for new explorations;
5. draw conclusions and evaluate the eventual benefits
6. read the written documents and start an initial understanding by underlining or highlighting the points and/or parts that grab the students' attention;
7. retell and construct meaning for the initial understanding of the documents with their peers;
8. draw conclusions about the right interpretation of the underlined or highlighted points;
9. paraphrase the initial understanding on sticky notes that will be posted on the classroom board;
10. understand the specific vocabulary of the various text;
11. understand and learn to use the specific language for the visual interpretation of the texts;
12. write the concise summary of the written documents;
13. understand and analyze the visual documents by taking into consideration the focal point, the contrast, the repetition or similarity for shape and size, and the color contrast;
14. determine the purpose(s) and the perspective(s) of each document;
15. write the close analysis of both the written and visual documents;
16. discuss the close analysis of the written and visual documents with the peers;
17. reflect and explain the effects of the image in creating or determining the culture of the traveler;
18. compare and contrast the various written and visual documents, and draw the appropriate conclusions;
19. write an annotated bibliography of all the studied written and visual documents;
20. write a final essay in which the students will evaluate and theorize about the studied travelers with adequate evidential support;
21. illustrate their theories with Power Point and present them to their audience.

## Teacher Resources

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At the beginning of the school year, all the juniors I had were at the concrete-operational stage and could not conceive anything other than what they had their hands on. According to Piaget, the concrete-operational stage occurs when the child is able to solve concrete problems. It is the time when the student displays a logic which is based on a concrete situation he can see, touch or hear. The student cannot think abstractly and cannot understand what is inferred in a written, visual or musical text. My long term goal was to move my students from this initial stage to the formal-operational one that is when the student is able to solve abstract problems. This means the student can infer, develop theories and concerns about the social world surrounding him/her. At this stage the student is able to think hypothetically and reason deductively. The formal-operational thinker can identify general principles or use specific observations to identify a solution or a new theory. Through a long and consistent planning path which was, as I said, primarily formal-operational oriented, I have seen a noticeable improvement. However, they still do not master that stage completely and the strategies of this unit still focus on this primary goal.

In planning all my units, I always follow Vygotsky's theory that the teacher has to assist and guide the students in their learning experience. The Department of Education in the state of Connecticut and the New Haven School District follow Vygotsky too. This theory requires continuous scaffolding - giving information, prompts, reminders, and allowing the students to gain ownership of their learning. This is particularly important for this unit which is based on reading for information because my students would never follow me, if I did not empower them.

Another important theory by Vygotsky is the "zone of proximal development" which is the level at which a student cannot solve the problem or do things alone because he does not know how. That is the point when real learning occurs and when the teacher is needed to guide the student to the solution of the problem. It is only at this level that the learning is directed by the teacher who models appropriate strategies to meet the goal and guides the students in their use of the strategies. At this point, whatever I have planned for my students becomes meaningful and relevant. It is also important to plan a consistent repetition of the task making them aware of the specific strategies they are using to achieve a degree of automaticity.

My unit also takes into account the theory of Multiple Intelligences by Gardner. The concept of intelligence is extremely important in teaching and can never be minimized. All individuals are different and have a different intelligence because they can excel in one or more but they can also meet more difficulties in others. Gardner's Multiple Intelligences theory confirms the fact that there are separate abilities. At the same time, Gardner says that these abilities may not be so separate and that there are connections between them. My students are a clear example. I have students with a specific musical talent who have logical-mathematical skills because they are able to handle long chains of reasoning. I have dancers who have also interpersonal skills since they are able to respond appropriately to the moods, desires, and motivations of other students. I have many students in the honor class who have a clear intrapersonal intelligence but also have capacities to perceive the visual-spatial world, or have a particular sensitivity for the meanings of words, sounds, and language in general.

I support this theory and my unit is based on the cultivation of all these capabilities. As an educator, I feel the responsibility to prepare my students for the community they live in and in a broader sense for our society. The multiple intelligences theory allows me to approach my unit goals in a variety of ways. I can spend a significant amount of time on key concepts and on generating ideas or essential questions. Gardner offers me

the effective possibility to introduce the principle of diversification and lead my students to a successful conclusion.

The objectives of this unit as well as the daily assessments are always based on the Bloom's taxonomy, which is another important aspect for the development of the critical thinking. I usually try to include all or most of the six steps of the taxonomy in each lesson plan just to guide the students in their thinking process. The six levels of the thinking process are:

1. knowledge (the thinking skill refers to the ability to recognize the concepts that have been taught);
2. comprehension (this thinking skill involves the interpretation of prior knowledge);
3. application (this skill allows the student to transfer the information he just learned to a new task);
4. analysis (this thinking skill implies the ability to examine, predict, and draw conclusions)
5. synthesis (this thinking skill says that a student combines the prior and present knowledge to originate a new product);
6. evaluation (this thinking skill refers to the ability to assess or criticize on the basis of specific criteria).

## Strategies

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The strategies I will follow for this unit are:

1. Quick Write
2. Tea Party
3. Probable Passage
4. Modeling
5. Questioning
6. Prompt/Quick Writes
7. GIST/concise summary
8. Compare and contrast
9. Class discussion or sharing time
10. Possible Ideas for Possible Papers
11. Thesis statement
12. Discovery draft

13. Drafting
14. Final Paper

Vygotsky suggests the use of Modeling to teach the students how to solve a problem and scaffold any complex learning activities. This usually works very well but I do not overuse it because I want to challenge their zone of proximal learning and also move them to the formal-operational stage. Due to the multiple intelligences that my classes reflect, I can have one student modeling for the peers with more positive results.

Using a prompt to start any writing process is always advisable because the prompt activates the prior knowledge and helps the students in writing their reflections. Vygotsky supports its use because it brings the students to the zone of proximal development and offers the opportunity to further explore the topic of the prompt. According to Piaget, a prompt can also help the students write about their personal vision or position, or just help acquire more automaticity in writing their thoughts.

Both Piaget and Vygotsky suggest using the Class Discussion, Questioning, Comparing and Contrasting either to move the students from the concrete-operational stage to the formal-operational one, or to bring them to the nearest zone of proximal learning. Actually, I find the Class Discussion strategy, which I usually call Sharing Time, very beneficial because many of my students refrain from saying what they think. In order to overcome their resistance, I usually present this strategy as a time when we learn sharing whatever we have done or whatever we think without being or becoming judgmental. My students need to acquire the concept of accepting diversity while developing another important concept: the ownership in learning. It generally works very well and it moves the concrete-operational students to the formal-operational stage. Identically, all the other strategies - Possible Ideas for Possible Papers and Discovery Drafts - introduced in the English curriculum for the New Haven Public Schools are intended for the same goals.

## Lesson Plans

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### Task One: Previewing

The previewing activity, also known as warm-up, is an essential strategy to motivate my students. The choice of effective strategies is the key point of the entire unit. Research says the level of motivation students bring to a task impacts whether and how they will use comprehension strategies. Reading for real reason and creating an environment rich in high-quality texts is identically important and will undoubtedly help. Sometimes an oral preview of stories, which are then turned into discussions and predictions, increases the story comprehension, and a creative variation of the preview by having the students compose a narrative based on key words from the upcoming story triggers a deeper comprehension. (Farstrup, Alan E., Samuels S. Jay. eds. *What Research Has to Say About Reading Instruction*. Newark: International Reading Association, 2002.

Duke, Nell K., Pearson P. David. *Effective Practices for Developing Reading Comprehension*. Farstrup and Samuels 205-236).

Since I am responsible for all the juniors in my school, I will use a combination of pre-reading activities to accommodate the striking differences inside a class and between classes. I also need sustained interest and motivation as well as text comprehension throughout the entire unit. Consequently, I will use two different activities: a Quick Write activity at the very beginning of the unit and the Tea Party and/or Probable Passage before the reading of each document. The Tea Party strategy encourages an active participation with the text. This pre-reading strategy allows students to predict what they think will happen in the text while inferring, comparing and contrasting, see casual relationships, and use their prior knowledge. It is extremely effective with unmotivated and/or struggling readers. The Probable Passage forces students to predict, think, infer, reach conclusions, and see casual relationships. It also offers the opportunity to comprehend the vocabulary (Beers, Kylee. *When Kids Can't Read What Teachers Can Do*. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2003).

Quick Write activity (at the very beginning of the unit):

1. Prompt: "Would you like to be the first person to discover something or someone? Why? What would you do to achieve your goal and find something nobody ever thought about or knew about? What would you expect if you became famous?"

I always participate to all my students' activities because it improves their engagement and makes the activity "real."

2. Sharing Time: all my students will be sitting in a circle. One of us (either the teacher or a student) will start reading aloud and taking brief notes. Any other student can respond to the writer and/or share the writing.

3. When Sharing Time is over, I will ask them to go through their notes and determine the reasons and causes just shared in class. I will write the list of causes and effects on a Post-It board.

4. At this point, I will ask them to spend some other minutes and write if their initial position has changed after our discussion/sharing time, and why.



### Probable Passage Activity (pre-reading activity):

When I present my students this activity for the first time, I model it. Then, we do it together on our second time. I also form groups of three or four students.

1. I will write on the board a list of words from the passage we are about to read.
2. I will ask them to distribute those words in one of the following categories: character(s), setting, causes, outcome(s), and unknown words.
3. When they finish categorizing the words, I will ask them to write a Gist Statement (concise statement).
4. Sharing Time: I will ask the students to say/share how they categorized those words. I will write them on the board together with their gist statements.

### Tea Party activity (pre-reading activity):

(I would not suggest modeling it because "not knowing how to do it" triggers more thinking.)

1. I will prepare fifteen or twenty index card with one phrase from the document they will be reading. I can repeat those phrases two or three times, so you can have one card per student.
2. I will give one card to each student and ask them to move from student to student. While moving, they have to share their card, listen to others as they read their cards, discuss how these cards might refer to, and suggest what these cards might mean.
3. I will ask them to form groups of three or four students and write what they think about those statements in the cards and why.
4. Sharing Time: I will ask the students to read what they wrote and I take notes on the board.
5. After reading the text, we will have another Sharing Time to compare and contrast their predictions and the text. This step also helps them understand how the explorers drew their conclusions and how the researcher has to find out the validity of these conclusions.

### **Task Two: Visuals**

To look at images, respond, and then analyze what you see may be difficult, but the hardest of all is to communicate what you see and feel to the others. The students need to be taught a strategy or a combination of strategies. Modeling is essential and I will do it by using the visual included in this unit. My students are talented artists but they have difficulty articulating exactly what they see and feel, and why. Consequently, I

will give them a process they can use, and I will provide them a vocabulary they can use to explain what they feel to others. While modeling I will also ask the students to respond and share for a better understanding and learning of the strategy.

I will begin by telling them that when you look at things, you have a reaction and you need to understand that reaction. After understanding this reaction, you need to share what you have seen and felt to the others. Thus, the process involves five stages:

### 1. Looking and understanding (I look at the image and say what I see holistically)

- What do you see in this image?
- What do you notice specifically?
- What does it remind you of?
- What do you feel looking at this image?

### Modification

- What is visible in this image?
- Write down a few notes on what the visual appears to be.

### 2. Analyzing images

Usually there is one central figure that attracts your eye first, and that is called focal point. This is important because it guides you to understand the image.

- What detail catches your attention first?
- Why would the artist focus on this detail? What are your theories?

Another important element of analysis is the figure-ground contrast which emphasizes the difference between what is in the front and what is in the back (ground). The figure is often the focal point.

- What other details do you see other than the focal point?
- Why would the artist include those details? What are your theories?

### Modification

- Write down any elements or details that seem important.

or

- What are the key elements or features of this image?

- How do they contribute to what you see?

Grouping according to proximity and similarity is also an important element in visuals.

- Which elements and/or details are in the same space? (proximity)

- Look for elements that are positioned close together. What connections do you see between/among them?

Modification

- Look for details /elements that are close to each other.

- Why would the artist include those details? What are your theories?

Similarity

- Which elements and/or details are close to each other or have the same shape, or size? (similarity)

- What is/are the effect(s) of those elements on your response to the image?

Modification

- Look for details/elements that are similar for size, shape or color.

- Why would the artist include those details? What are your theories?

Color in visuals has a specific connotation and conveys meaning and feelings. In fact, it can focus on our attention, create contrast, appeal to emotions and help communicate the message.

- How do the color(s) or degree of shading appeal to emotions?

Modification

- Did the artist use colors that you did not expect? What are your theories?
- What emotions does this specific color appeal to?

Modification

- Would you use the same colors the artist did? Why?
- Would you use different colors? Why?

Lines also provide a sense of movement. A line can convey mood (in the AP English Language and Composition class, and those in the Honors class already know the meaning of mood). Lines can create a sense of calm and equilibrium, uncertainty, or movement and stress. Soft lines may imply softness, flow, or change.

- Look at the lines in this image. Describe these lines (horizontal, vertical, soft, thick, or wavy).
- Why did the artist include those lines? What are your theories?

Modification

- Would you use the same lines? Why?
- Would you use different lines? Why?
- What do you think the artist wanted to tell us?

Most times artists do not include all the details in their image. This is because the artist wants the viewer to predict and imagine. Leaving information out creates interest, generates tension contributing to the understanding of the artist's message, and promotes the viewer's participation. This is said closure.

- What is not visible? Why? What are your theories?
- What question you would ask the artist? Why?

Modification

- Does this image suggest you a story?
- What does this image tell you about this culture/this traveler?

3. Sharing time: I simply read aloud what I wrote and then my students will be encouraged to do the same (since we are in the fourth marking period, they do it automatically, but if you never did it before, the students need encouragement). I also tell them that we do not spend any time discussing their writings, we simply share them.

4. At this point, I will ask them to respond the following questions:

- What is the purpose of this image?
- What detail or details mentioned by your peers caused you to see this image differently?
- How do your experience and knowledge affect the reading of the image? Think about the image in term of context: historical, personal, technical, or cultural.
- Use the title as a theory and parts of the visual as clues to detect and specify the interrelationships in the graphic.

Modification

- Highlight the words of the title of the visual if available.
- Are there any connections between the title and the visual?
- Draw a conclusion about the visual as a whole.

5. Compare and contrast the visual with a specific piece of expository text (I will combine the visual to the text we will read). Write in the essay format. Modification: first draw a T-chart and list all the essential elements, feelings, reactions, and/or interpretations of the visual and of the text. Secondly, draw connecting lines for the similarities, and then write about these similarities and differences.

### **Task Three: Student's Independent Research**

The students will critique the discussion of the discovery of America in two sources (one text-book and one website): does the author mention the Vikings, Zheng He or Columbus, and how?

#### **Task Four: Reading the Documents and Writing the GIST/Concise Summary**

The strategies for reading differ and are modified in order to meet all the reading levels of my students. The grade level readers and the AP students, most of whom do not know to summarize concisely, are usually asked to do the initial reading of the document(s) as homework with the specific task to determine the meaning of the new vocabulary in the context before coming to class. In class, we do the following sequence of steps for the direct instruction:

1. Sharing time: we discuss about the important facts from the document(s) and the new words. The students write their ideas (WHO/WHAT) on sticky notes that are posted on the classroom board. We discuss those ideas in order to avoid using the same words found in the text.
2. Students write those ideas in completed sentences in their journals;
3. Sharing Time: we share our concise summary/GIST of the document, discuss about the language structures, paraphrase, and make any necessary changes;
4. For each voyage and/or explorer covered in the various documents the students are required to keep a chart responding to the following: Who, When, Where, Why, What Did they See?, Source: Title and Pages. Copy is posted on the board.

Modification:

1. Pre-reading activity (I use the Probable Passage for the below grade-level readers and the Tea Party for the struggling readers);
2. I divide the text in short passages/sections that can be logically summarized, and we read one at a time.
3. I ask them to highlight the words that are difficult to understand.
4. Sharing Time: we discuss the meaning of the words in the context and out of the context and we write them on a Post-it Board that will stay in the classroom for the entire unit.
5. We reread the passage and highlight the main ideas in a different color.
6. Sharing Time: we discuss about the important facts from the passage. The students write their ideas on sticky notes that are posted on Post-it boards.
7. Sharing Time: we discuss how to write those ideas in sentences without using the texts words.
8. The students craft accurate sentences and write them in their journals.
9. I repeat the same process for each sections of the document except for the pre-reading activity;
10. For each voyage and/or explorer covered in the various documents the students are required to keep a chart responding to the following: Who, When, Where, Why, What did they See?, Source: Title and Pages. Copy is posted on the board.



## Task Five: Close Reading and Analytical Writing

For grade-level readers and AP students, I do the following:

1. Read the passage/document again;
2. Underline interesting, important, and/or unusual/unexpected words, phrases, and language structures, and label them in the margin;
3. Determine connections and draw arrows from one part of the passage to another to mark those connections;
4. Highlight the descriptions, the reflections, the facts, or the purpose.
5. What is the main idea or subject of the text? How do you know? How is it presented? Does the author introduce it immediately? Does the author express this main idea, or do you have to infer it? How do you infer it? What clues support your theory?
6. When did this situation occur? Why? How do you know or determine the time and place this situation occurred? Is it clearly stated? Do you infer it? How do you infer it? What clues confirm your theory?
7. Who is the audience? How do you know? Is it clearly stated? How? How do you infer it? What clues confirm your theory?
8. Who is the voice that tells the story? Is it the author? How do you know? What assumptions can you make about this voice? Can you assume what age, education, social status, hidden reasons for writing this document?
9. What is/are the purpose(s) of the document? What's the reason(s) behind the text? How do you know? What reaction(s) in the audience does the writer want to achieve? Why? How do you know? What techniques does the author use to achieve this purpose? How do you think the audience will feel? What is the effect the author wants to achieve?
10. What is the tone of this document? How do you know? What word(s) or phrase(s) determine this tone? Why? What details, sentence structures, or images convey this tone? Why?
11. Sharing Time: the students share their analysis, discuss and take notes in their journals.
12. Add any new detail(s)/information/perspective to the Who/When/Where/Why/ What chart.
13. Do you notice any difference(s)/similarity(ies) between this document and the previous one(s) you analyzed?
14. Can you notice/infer any difference(s)/similarity(ies) between the author of this document and the previous one(s)?
15. Do you notice any stylistic difference(s)/similarity(ies) between this document and the previous one(s) you analyzed?

Modification:

1. Read the passage/document again;
2. Underline interesting, important, and/or unusual/unexpected words, phrases, and language structures;
3. Determine connections and draw arrows from one part of the passage to another to mark those connections;
4. Write a "Wonder Why" question for each interesting, important, unusual, or unexpected word/phrase. Write your theory(ies) and support it with clear references to the text.
5. Sharing Time: the students share, discuss their interpretations, and take notes of the peer's thoughts in their journals.

### **Task Six: Final Paper**

The Final Paper will be a documented essay with an annotated bibliography. This documented essay will follow various stages. In fact, we will start determining the thesis statement in response to the essential question, "Who first reached America: the Vikings, the Chinese Admiral Zheng He, or Columbus? What were these travelers looking for? What did they actually find and what benefits did they derive?" In order to write a strong thesis statement, the students have to:

1. Review the Who/When/Where/What chart we did while reading and interpreting the various documents and visuals and highlight the details and information that will lead to their theory;
2. Reread their journals and highlight the details, information they want to use to support their theory;
3. Write a possible idea/theory, share, and discuss it with the peers;
4. Write a discovery draft with a thesis statement and reasons;
5. Write a first draft containing the thesis statement, the reasons, the supports/references from the documents, and the analysis/discussion why those references support the assertions. This draft will be followed by a group work of peer revision;
6. Write a second draft including the suggestions from the peer's revision. This will be followed by a group work of peer's editing;
7. Write a third draft followed by a conference with the teacher.
8. Write the annotated bibliography of the documents cited in the essay. They will have a model for the MLA requirements. Each source will be followed by few lines describing the content of the source. They can use their GIST statements they already have in the journal.

Modification:

9. Review the Who/When/Where/What chart we did while reading and interpreting the various documents and visuals and highlight the details and information that will lead to their theory;
10. Reread their journals and highlight the details, information they want to use to support their

theory;

11. Write the thesis in response to the essential question and use one Power Point slide;
12. Determine and write the reasons for your theory/thesis and use one Power Point slide;
13. Find the evidences in the documents and write them in other slides.
14. Write a brief conclusion on a slide.
15. Sharing Time: each student will read the slides and discuss his/her theory and the evidence(s) with the class.

The students who will write the documented essay will prepare the presentation (sharing time) with slides that will illustrate their theory, reasons, references to sources, connections between support and reason, and conclusion.

## **Appendix: Implementing District Standards**

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The teaching implemented in this unit reflects the requirements of the Connecticut's Common Core of Learning K-12 Content Standards. The curriculum for Language Arts in the New Haven District adheres to the state standards and each unit offers the opportunity to teach, deepen or scaffold the four essential standards: Reading and Responding, Exploring and Responding to Literature, Communicating with Others, and English Language Conventions. My unit is primarily built on either the scaffolding or teaching of the following:

Content Standard One: Reading and Responding

Students read, comprehend and respond in individual, literal, critical and evaluative ways to literary, informational and persuasive texts in multimedia formats.

- 1.1 Students use appropriate strategies before, during and after reading in order to construct meaning.
- 1.2 Students interpret, analyze and evaluate text in order to extend understanding and appreciation.
- 1.3 Students select and apply strategies to facilitate word recognition and develop a vocabulary to comprehend the text.
- 1.4 Students communicate with others to create interpretations of written, oral and visual texts.

#### Content Standard Two: Exploring and Responding to Literature

Students read and respond to classical and contemporary text from many cultures and literary periods.

- 2.1 Students recognize how literary devices and conventions engage the reader.
- 2.2 Students explore multiple responses.

#### Content Standard Three: Communicating with Others

Students produce written, oral and visual texts to express, develop and substantiate ideas and experiences.

- 3.1 Students use descriptive, narrative, expository, persuasive and poetic modes.
- 3.2 Students prepare, publish and/or present work appropriate to audience, purpose and task.

#### Content Standard Four: Applying English Language Conventions

Students apply the conventions of standard English in oral, written and visual communication.

- 4.1 Students use knowledge of their language and culture to improve competency in English.
- 4.2 Students speak and write using standard language structures and diction appropriate to audience and task.
- 4.3 Students use Standard English for composing and revising written text.

## Annotated Bibliography: Resources for Teachers and Students

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Beers, Kylene. *When Kids Can't Read What Teachers Can Do*. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2003

An effective text with strategies for struggling readers.

Columbus, Christopher. *The Four Voyages of Christopher Columbus*. London: Penguin, 1969.

An interesting translation of the original log-book, letters and dispatches and narratives about Columbus's life and his son Hernando Colon.

Farstrup, Alan E., Samuels S. Jay. eds. *What Research Has to Say About Reading Instruction*. Newark: International Reading Association, 2002.

Duke, Nell K., Pearson P. David. *Effective Practices for Developing Reading Comprehension*. Farstrup and Samuels 205-236.

A compelling chapter where the authors analyze, compare and contrast the validity of various strategies teachers use for an effective reading comprehension.

Hansen, Valerie. *Voyages in World History*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, forthcoming 2009.

A world history book through the eyes of various travelers.

Ma, Huan. *Ying-Yai Sheng-Lan 'The Overall Survey of the Ocean's Shores'*. Bangkok: White Lotus, 1997.

A fascinating account of the Ming dynasty (1368 and 1644). The writer, Ma Huan, a Chinese interpreter, writes about the seven expeditions of Cheng Ho/Zheng He.

Magnusson, Magnus, Palsson Hermann. *The Vinland Sagas: The Norse Discovery of America*. London: Penguin, 1965.

A long introduction and the translation of the two medieval Icelandic sagas describing the Vikings' expeditions to new territories.

Markham, Clements R. *The Journal of Christopher Columbus (during His first Voyage, 1492-93) and Documents Relating to the Voyages of John Cabot and Gaspar Corte Real*. London: Elibron classics, 2005.

The journal Columbus wrote during his first voyage to America, and also an important letter from Paolo Toscanelli with sailing directions.

## Visuals

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Columbus, Christopher. *The First Voyage of Columbus*. London: Penguin, 1969, 54.

A detailed map of the first territories Columbus encountered along his first voyage.

Columbus, Christopher. *The Vessels of Christopher Columbus*. London: Penguin, 1969.

The cover page of the book.

Ma Huan. Sketch of Cheng Ho's Ship. Bangkok: White Lotus, 1997, 30.

A very interesting image full of specific details.

Ma Huan. Chen Ho's Ship. Bangkok: White Lotus, 1997.

The cover page of the book with amazing details.

Markham, Clements R. The Three Vessels of the First Voyage of Columbus. London: Elibron classics, 2005, iv.

An old map of Espanola. The drawing is believed to be by the Admiral.

Markham, Clements R. Restoration of the Toscanelli Map. London: Elibron classics, 2005, 2.

A three-dimensional map where you can see the initial attempt to draw the earth as we would see it.

Magnusson, Magnus, Palsson Hermann. North Atlantic Map. London: Penguin, 1965, 121.

The map was drawn by Sigurdur Stefanosson in Iceland in 1590 as the Vikings described it.

Magnusson, Magnus, Palsson Hermann. The Atlantic Map. London: Penguin, 1965, 122.

A map illustrating the territories the Vikings reached in their expeditions.

Magnusson, Magnus, Palsson Herman. Greenland. London: Penguin, 1965, 123.

A more detailed map of Greenland together with the Eastern settlements.

Magnusson, Magnus, Palsson Hermann. North America Map. London: Penguin, 1965, 124.

A more detailed map of Labrador and New England.

Magnusson, Magnus, Palsson Hermann. Viking Ship. London: Penguin, 1965.

A detailed image of a Viking vessel on the cover page of the book.

The Vinland Map, Manuscript 350A, Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University.

The famous original Vinland Map (whose authenticity is in doubt).

## Websites

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<http://www.mnh.si.edu/vikings/voyage/subset/vinland/archo.html>

An archeological site about Vinland with images and critical analysis.



<http://www.econ.ohio-state.edu/jhm/arch/vinland/vinland.htm>

The image of the Vinland map and the controversy about its authenticity.

[http://www.pc.gc.ca/lhn-nhs/nl/meadows/natcul/vinland\\_e.asp](http://www.pc.gc.ca/lhn-nhs/nl/meadows/natcul/vinland_e.asp)

An informative Canadian Historic site with images of the Vikings' expeditions.

Finlay, Robert. How Not to (Re)Write World History: Gavin Menzies and the Chinese Discovery of America. *Journal of World History*. 15.2 (2004): 29 pars. 14 Jul. 2007.

<http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/jwh/15.2/finlay.html>

A very interesting article which severely critiques the theory by Gavin Menzies. He maintains that the Chinese fleet, trained by Zheng He, reached the Americas, New Zealand and Polynesia.

<http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/content/2006/s1702333.htm>

A program transcript discussing Gavin Menzies's theory that the Chinese Admiral Zheng He reached the New World with his fleet in the 1420s.

<http://www.1421.tv/pages/evidence/content.asp?EvidenceID=191#>

The supposed evidence of the voyages of Zheng He to America.

<http://www.uh.edu/engines/epi1028.htm>

Archaeological claims about the Chinese discovery of America.

<http://www.millersville.edu/~columbus/tagliattini.html>

A critical study about Christopher Columbus and his voyages.

<http://nativeamericanrhythmes.com/library/images/canoelarge.gif>

Various visual materials about the boats used by the Amerindians in the different areas of the country.

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