

Example Student Response #1

Columbus, the Indians, and Human Progress, p. 3 - 16

A People's History of the United States, Howard Zinn

Directions: Read Zinn's first chapter and respond to questions 1 – 3.

1.

<p>Write down preconceptions about Europe/Europeans (Columbus in particular) OR Americas/Indians</p>	<p>Write excerpts from the passages that support or contest your initial thoughts from column 1.</p>
<p><i>Example: Columbus, like many Europeans, did not know as much about the earth; they thought the world was flat.</i></p> <p>Native Americans were savages and animalistic with no sense of humanity.</p> <p>Columbus treated the Native Americans well</p> <p>It took Columbus one voyage to take control of most of the land in the</p>	<p><i>“...like other informed people of his time, he knew the world was round...” p. 4 (CONTEST)</i></p> <p>“These Arawaks... were remarkable... for their hospitality, belief in sharing...” pg. 1 (Contest)</p> <p>“The Arawaks lived in village communes...developed agriculture...” pg. 5 (Contest)</p> <p>“The Arawaks... brought them food, water, gifts.” pg. 1 (Contest)</p> <p>“...they are extremely generous...” pg. 7 (Contest)</p> <p>“... I took some of the natives by force...” pg. 4 (Contest)</p> <p>“...they went on a great slave raid...” pg. 6 (Contest)</p> <p>“The cruel policy... by Columbus... resulted in complete genocide.” pg. 8 (Contest)</p> <p>“...Columbus’s...second voyage was given 17 ships...” pg. 6 (Contest)</p> <p>??????????????</p>

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2. Write down the TWO most important things you believe Zinn writes about Columbus (include page numbers) that all Americans should know. You can paraphrase his actual writing, as long as you include page numbers.

Zinn describes Columbus differently than how our middle-school teachers described Columbus. For example, Zinn says that Columbus treated the Native Americans terribly and even says that it's "genocide" (pgs. 8-9). He brings in a source named Bartolome de las Casas who describes Columbus as "blind" and a criminal (pg. 7). Zinn wants Americans to know the truth about Columbus's character. Columbus wasn't really this glorious trustworthy sailor whose morals should never be questioned. Zinn brings in examples of all of the terrible deeds/crimes that Columbus committed (all pages). In this way Zinn is trying to show Americans that Columbus actually committed many immoral acts against the Indians.

Zinn not only describes Columbus as a murderer, but Zinn emphasizes the selfish/greedy qualities of Columbus. He says that Columbus lied about who sighted land first to get the huge reward (pg. 5). Zinn emphasizes Columbus's hunt for gold and slaves to please the nobility in Spain. By doing this he would receive riches, land, and fame (pg. 4). In conclusion, Zinn is also trying to get Americans to see how selfish Columbus was. All of his accomplishments were done so to benefit himself.

3. Beginning on page 9, Zinn begins to share some of his fundamental beliefs about the way in which history is written and shared from generation to generation. What do you think is the most important thought about history Zinn is trying to get his readers (you and I) to understand?

I think that Zinn really stresses the fact that there are many perspectives to one event, and most of the time we learn all the glory stories but none of the horror stories. We see history through the eyes of the winner, but the loser has an important story too. We have to get the full story from both sides in order to truly understand a historical event. It's unjust to only show one perspective of an event. Zinn is really trying to tell us that there's always another point of view/story from the same event. Look at the event from every possible perspective whether that be from the winner or loser. In every event there are concealments and hidden stories that can greatly inform us on the event as a whole. Essentially, "disclose those hidden episodes of the past", and understand that the story we know is only a piece of the true event.

Example Student Response #2

Columbus, the Indians, and Human Progress, p. 3 - 16
A People's History of the United States, Howard Zinn

Directions: Read Zinn's first chapter and respond to questions 1 – 3.

1.

<p>Write down preconceptions about Europe/Europeans (Columbus in particular) OR Americas/Indians</p>	<p>Write excerpts from the passages that support or contest your initial thoughts from column 1.</p>
<p><i>Example: Columbus, like many Europeans, did not know as much about the earth; they thought the world was flat.</i></p> <p>Columbus treated the Native Americans in a good manner</p> <p>Took Columbus one trip to discover America</p>	<p><i>"...like other informed people of his time, he knew the world was round..." p. 4 (CONTEST)</i></p> <p>"The cruel policy...by Columbus...resulted in complete genocide" pg.7 or ".....I took some of the Natives by force..." pg 4</p> <p>"Columbus'ssecond voyage was given 17 ships" pg. 6</p>

2. Write down the TWO most important things you believe Zinn writes about Columbus (include page numbers) that all Americans should know. You can paraphrase his actual writing, as long as you include page numbers.

"One can lie outright about the past. Or one can omit facts which might lead to unacceptable conclusions. Morison does neither. He refuses to lie about Columbus. He does not omit the story of mass murder; indeed he describes it with the harshest word one can use: genocide" pg. 9 I think that this is really important because most people when they think about Columbus they think positively that he's a great guy because he discovered the Americas, however; they don't know or don't realize that he was responsible greatly for the death of many people, and he was a very selfish guy.

"My point is not that we must, in telling history, accuse, judge, condemn Columbus in absentia. It is too late for that; it would be a useless scholarly exercise in morality. But the easy acceptance of atrocities as a deplorable but necessary price to pay for progress-that is still with us. One reason this is still with us is

that we have learned to bury them in a mass of facts, as radioactive wastes are buried in containers in the earth”. pg 10 This was a perfect way to describe the past of Columbus and what we now know and how we think of him because although he did some terrible things everyone still knows of how as the man who discovered America, and nothing else. There is no way to convince everyone of the truth.

3. Beginning on page 9, Zinn begins to share some of his fundamental beliefs about the way in which history is written and shared from generation to generation. What do you think is the most important thought about history Zinn is trying to get his readers (you and I) to understand?

I believe that the most important thought about history that Zinn is trying to get his readers to understand is that there is more to history than we think. He is trying to explain that we may think we know the full story, however; there is always more to every event and we cannot simply believe everything we hear. We need to understand that there are different perspectives, views, and events that occur in something that occurs in history.

Example Student Response #4

Columbus, the Indians, and Human Progress, p. 3 - 16

A People’s History of the United States, Howard Zinn

Directions: Read Zinn’s first chapter and respond to questions 1 – 3.

1.

<p>Write down preconceptions about Europe/Europeans (Columbus in particular) OR Americas/Indians</p>	<p>Write excerpts from the passages that support or contest your initial thoughts from column 1.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>“As soon as I arrived in the Indies, on the first island which I found..”</i> ● <i>“Columbus’s report to the royal court in Madrid was extravagant. He</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>“Where is the gold?...There was gold in asia, it was thought, and certainly silks and spices, for Marco Polo and others had brought back marvelous things from their overland expeditions before.” Page 4</i> ● <i>“Hispaniola is a miracle. Mountains and hills, plains and pastures, are both fertile and beautiful...the harbors are unbelievably good and there are many wide rivers of which majority contain gold...” Page 5</i>

<p><i>insisted he had reached Asia (It was Cuba) and an island off the coast of China (Hispaniola).</i></p>	
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2. Write down the TWO most important things you believe Zinn writes about Columbus (include page numbers) that all Americans should know. You can paraphrase his actual writing, as long as you include page numbers.

On pages 6 and 7, Zinn writes about how Columbus really end up treating the indians and Arawaks. They fought them, killed their families and children, hung them, burned them to death, took them as slaves, and so on. I never knew this until reading this article. This is very shocking and more people definitely deserve to hear about this.

“The treatment of heroes (Columbus) and their victims (the Arawaks)-the quiet acceptance of conquest and murder in the name of progress-is only one aspect of a certain approach to history, in which the past is told from the point of view of governments, conquerors, diplomats, leaders.” - Page 10

3. Beginning on page 9, Zinn begins to share some of his fundamental beliefs about the way in which history is written and shared from generation to generation. What do you think is the most important thought about history Zinn is trying to get his readers (you and I) to understand?

- I think the point Zinn is trying to get across is that history can be viewed so many different ways. Many people sit and look at Columbus as if he is a hero for discovering the Americas, and he is. Despite this fact, Columbus and his men did enslave many Arawak people and killed them as well.