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Introduction Thought

“Why do we tell stories?” If we think of history as a kind of story, why do we tell it, teach it to our children, and continue to study it?”

What happened in this past year? Write a one paragraph “history” of the most important events that happened in the past year.

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Introduction to Historical Thinking Video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mSJLmWnrxPg>

Why Historical Thinking Matters



Boring names, facts, dates - this is history for a lot of people. But historians think about history differently. They see themselves as detectives, often unsure about what happened, what it means, and rarely able to agree amongst themselves. This process of trying to figure out things you don't already know is as different from mindless memorization as you can get.

Explore this interactive presentation where Professor Sam Wineburg discusses how historians investigate what happened in the past.

Focusing on the question of what happened at the Battle of Lexington in 1775, this piece reveals that historical evidence is often fragmented and contradictory. Since this is all that historians have to go on, Wineburg talks about the strategies historians use to try to make sense out of this evidence.

--> [View Why Historical Thinking Matters.](#)

Download a Zip file containing "[Why Historical Thinking Matters.](#)" Unzip the file and then open the html file in your browser to view the Flash movie from your computer.

Introduce the students to this unit’s essential question, “Why do we tell stories?” If we think of history as a kind of story, why do we tell it, teach it to our children, and continue to study it?”

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Lesson Video –

<https://bestgedclasses.org/revolutionary-war/>

The Battles of Lexington and Concord on 19 April 1775, the famous 'shot heard 'round the world', marked the start of the American War of Independence (1775-83). Politically disastrous for the British, it persuaded many Americans to take up arms and support the cause of independence.

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Reading

Excerpt #2

Christopher Columbus was born in Genoa, Italy. He was the oldest of five children in his family. His father was a wool weaver. He helped his father with the weaving, but he always wanted to sail the seas. Columbus wanted to find a short way to get to the Indies by ship. He tried for eight years to get King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella to supply him with ships and money. Finally they agreed, but he made more demands. He wanted to be made a knight, admiral of the Ocean Sea. He wanted to be the viceroy and governor general of all lands he would discover. Also he wanted one-tenth of everything he found of value in the new lands. He even boldly told them he wanted all of this in writing. This was rather brave of him because they could have had him killed because of his demands. They finally agreed and he got three ships ready to sail. The Santa Maria and two smaller ships, the Pinta and the Nina. He took enough food for a year. In four months he was ready to sail. They left Spain on August 3, 1492. They made one stop, and then sailed on towards the west. After many days, the sailors were ready to turn around and start back home. "Just three more days," he said. "Then if we don't see land, we'll turn around and go back home." Two days later they saw land; an island Columbus named San Salvador. He thought he had found the Indies and called the people he saw there "Indians". When they got to Cuba, he thought he was in China. The world was a lot larger than he thought. Columbus did not become rich as he had hoped. At the end of his life he only had a pension the king and queen had given him because he was the first to reach the New World. He spent the last few months of his life in bed because of the pain of arthritis. Columbus not only discovered a New World, but he led the way for other explorers.

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With the reading strategy of "Contrast and Contradictions" in mind, **use the T-Chart to make a list of the different information that you learn about Christopher Columbus from each entry.**

Example

Christopher Columbus Continued...

Positives	Negatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Columbus opened up trade and immigration across the Atlantic Ocean between the "Old" and "New" Worlds <p>"Every ship that comes to America got its chart from Columbus." - Ralph Waldo Emerson</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Columbus and his men brought European diseases. ✓ Columbus enslaved thousands of natives. <p>"...They ought to make good and skilled servants, for they repeat very quickly whatever we say to them. I think they can very easily be made Christians, for they seem to have no religion..." - Christopher Columbus</p>

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Do you believe that we should celebrate Columbus Day? Why or why not?" Tell them to be sure to include evidence in the form of examples, statistics, etc. to support.