

## Grade 6: Unit 2

# Before Columbus: Connected Text Seminars

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## Seminar 1: Connected Texts

### What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars explain Wilford’s argument about the history of disease in Native American populations. In addition, they understand Columbus’s point of view on Native Americans.

### Seminar 1:

“Don’t Blame Columbus for All the Indians’ Ills” by John Noble Wilford (Nonfiction) and “Excerpts from Journal of the First Voyage of Columbus” (October 12 and October 17, paragraph 2) (Nonfiction)

### Do Now — 10 minutes

- Scholars revise their Exit Tickets from yesterday’s seminar based on the feedback you gave them.

### Launch — 2 minutes

- Tell scholars that today, they will be reading two texts: “Don’t Blame Columbus for All the Indians’ Ills” and “Excerpts from Columbus’s Journal.” Build excitement by telling scholars that both texts will develop their background knowledge about concepts important in *Before Columbus: The Americas of 1491*.

### Read and Discuss 1 — 35 minutes

## Display “Don’t Blame Columbus for All the Indians’ Ills.”

### Preview the Text (2 minutes):

- Have scholars read the title and scan the passage to frame their thinking.
- Call on scholars to share what they noticed about the text and what they will think about as they are reading.

### Read (3 minutes):

- Say: *As you are reading, think, “What is this article mostly about?”*
- Read the article aloud while scholars follow along on their digital copy.

### Discuss (3 minutes):

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: What is this article mostly about? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.

### Read (15 minutes):

- Say: *As you are rereading, think, “Why did the author write this?”*
- Read the article aloud as scholars follow along on their digital copy. While reading aloud, pause to ask the questions below:
  - Stop after line 10, “...in the last 7,000 years.”
    - Partner Talk: What is Wilford’s argument?
  - Stop after line 13, “...the New World was hardly a healthful Eden.”
    - Partner Talk: What does the phrase “hardly a healthful Eden” mean?
  - Stop after line 56, “...most infectious diseases”
    - Partner Talk: Why were some Pre-Columbian populations healthier than others?
    - Discuss: Why did the author write this article?

### Main Idea Jot (2 minutes):

- Scholars jot a main idea in a comment next to the title of the text.
- While scholars are working, circulate to determine which scholars have a bull’s-eye main idea jot and which do not.

### Discuss (8 minutes):

- Scholars discuss the following questions as a whole class:
- What evidence does Wilford use to develop his claim?
- Why does Wilford emphasize that recent findings “in no way mitigated the responsibility of Europeans as bearers of disease”? (line 27)

**Give scholars 2 minutes to revise their main idea jots based on the discussion.**

**Write — 10 minutes**

**Write an essay of no more than 200 words:**

- How does the article support the claim that “the New World was hardly a healthful Eden”? (line 13) Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from “Don’t Blame Columbus for All the Indians’ Ills.”

### Wrap-up — 5 minutes

- Show an exemplar essay to scholars. Have scholars discuss what makes the claim clear and compelling. Set your expectations for what scholars must do differently when approaching the next text.

### Read and Discuss 2 — 30 minutes

#### Display “Excerpts from Columbus’s Journal.”

#### Preview the Text (2 minutes):

- Have scholars read the title and scan the passage to frame their thinking.
- Call on scholars to share what they noticed about the text and what they will think about as they are reading.

#### Read (10 minutes):

- Say: *As you are reading, think, “What is this text mostly about? Why did the author write this text?”*
- Scholars independently read and annotate the text on their Chromebooks. When they are finished, they jot a main idea in a comment next to the title of the text.
- While scholars work, circulate to determine the major trend in scholars’ work and conference with two to three scholars.

#### Discuss (5 minutes):

- Scholars discuss the following questions in pairs: What is this text mostly about? Why did the author write this text? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.

#### Give scholars 2 minutes to revise their main idea jots based on the discussion.

#### Read (6 minutes):

- Say: *As you are rereading, think, “What is Columbus’s point of view on the Native Americans?”*
- Reread lines 14–45 with scholars.

#### Discuss (5 minutes): Scholars discuss the following question as a whole class:

- What is Columbus’s point of view on the Native Americans?

### Exit Ticket — 8 minutes

#### Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- What do Columbus’s descriptions reveal about his view of the native people? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from “Excerpts from Columbus’s Journal.”

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## Seminar 2: Connected Texts

### What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars articulate the authors' arguments about history and studying the past.

### Seminar 2:

“Sculpted Stones” by Victor Montejo (Poem) and “Laser Scans Unveil a Network of Ancient Cities in Cambodia” by Julia Wallace (Nonfiction)

### Do Now — 10 minutes

- Scholars revise their Exit Tickets from yesterday’s seminar based on the feedback you gave them.

### Launch — 2 minutes

- Tell scholars that today, they will be reading two texts: “Sculpted Stones” and “Laser Scans Unveil a Network of Ancient Cities in Cambodia.” Build excitement by telling scholars that both texts will develop their background knowledge about concepts important in *Before Columbus: The Americas of 1491*.

### Read and Discuss 1 — 35 minutes

#### Display “Sculpted Stones.”

#### Preview the Text (2 minutes):

- Have scholars read the title and scan the passage to frame their thinking.
- Call on scholars to share what they noticed about the text and what they will think about as they are reading.

#### Read (3 minutes):

- Say: *As you are reading, think, “What is this poem mostly about?”*
- Read the poem aloud while scholars follow along on their digital copy.

#### Discuss (3 minutes):

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: What is this poem mostly about? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.

#### Read (15 minutes):

- Say: *As you are rereading, think, “Why did the author write this?”*
- Read the poem aloud as scholars follow along on their digital copy. While reading aloud, pause to ask the questions below:
  - Stop after line 6, “...of victory.”
    - Partner Talk: What is the subject of this poem?
  - Stop after line 18, “as if saying.”

- Partner Talk: Why does the author use the phrase “bares its teeth” in stanza 2?
  - Stop after line 33, “...*who have fallen on top of the hieroglyphs*”
    - Partner Talk: Why does the font change in the final two stanzas?
    - Discuss: Why did the author write this poem?

**Main Idea Jot (2 minutes):**

- Scholars jot a main idea in a comment next to the title of the text.
- While scholars are working, circulate to determine which scholars have a bull's-eye main idea jot and which do not.

**Discuss (8 minutes):**

- Scholars discuss the following questions as a whole class:
  - How does the Mayans’ experience of uncovering ancient ruins differ from that of the archaeologist?
  - What words and phrases does Montejo use to create and shift the tone of the poem?

**Give scholars 2 minutes to revise their main idea jots based on the discussion.**

**Write — 10 minutes**

**Write an essay of no more than 200 words:**

- Contrast the tone of stanzas 1 to 3 with the tone of stanzas 4 and 5. Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from “Sculpted Stones.”

**Wrap-up — 5 minutes**

- Show an exemplar essay to scholars. Have scholars discuss what makes the claim clear and compelling. Set your expectations for what scholars must do differently when approaching the next text.

**Read and Discuss 2 — 30 minutes**

**Display “Laser Scans Unveil a Network of Ancient Cities in Cambodia.”**

**Preview the Text (2 minutes):**

- Have scholars read the title and scan the passage to frame their thinking.
- Call on scholars to share what they noticed about the text and what they will think about as they are reading.

**Read (10 minutes):**

- Say: *As you are reading, think, “What is this text mostly about? Why did the author write this text?”*
- Scholars independently read and annotate the text on their Chromebooks. When they are finished, they jot a main idea in a comment next to the title of the text.

- While scholars work, circulate to determine the major trend in scholars' work and conference with two to three scholars.

**Discuss (5 minutes):**

- Scholars discuss the following questions in pairs: What is this text mostly about? Why did the author write this text? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.

**Give scholars 2 minutes to revise their main idea jots based on the discussion.**

**Read (6 minutes):**

- Say: *As you are rereading, think, "What have historians and archaeologists discovered about Angkor by using lidar?"*
- Reread lines 49–100 with scholars.

**Discuss (5 minutes):** Scholars discuss the following question as a whole class:

- What have historians and archaeologists discovered about Angkor by using lidar?

**Exit Ticket — 8 minutes**

**Write an essay of no more than 200 words:**

- How is technology changing the way that historians study the past? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from "Laser Scans Unveil a Network of Ancient Cities in Cambodia."