

## **Grade 6: Unit 2**

# **Before Columbus: Whole Class Book Seminars**

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### **Seminar 3: Whole Class Book**

#### **What Does Success Look Like?**

Scholars understand Mann's purpose for writing *Before Columbus*. They explain how Mann uses the cities of Norte Chico to prove that the "New World" is older and more sophisticated than previously thought.

#### **Seminar 3:**

***Before Columbus: The Americas of 1491*: Introduction and Chapter 1 (pages vii–11)**

#### **Do Now — 10 minutes**

- Play classical or jazz music to establish a calm work environment.
- Scholars revise their Exit Tickets from the previous seminar based on the feedback you gave them.

#### **Launch — 2 minutes**

- Tell scholars that today, they will dive into *Before Columbus: The Americas of 1491*. Tell scholars that as they listen to the opening pages, they should consider Mann's purpose for writing this book.

#### **Read and Discuss 1 — 35 minutes**

**Read:**

- **Play Audiobook (00:00:21–00:07:09):** Introduction, pages vii–ix

**Discuss:**

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: What three big questions does Mann plan to answer? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: Why did Mann write this book?

**Read:**

- **Play Audiobook (00:07:10–00:19:07):** Chapter 1, pages 1–7

**Discuss:**

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

**Write — 10 minutes**

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

- Based on the Introduction and beginning of Chapter 1, how does *Before Columbus: The Americas of 1491* challenge “the history books”? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

**Wrap-up — 5 minutes**

- Show an exemplar essay to scholars. Have scholars discuss what makes the claim clear and compelling. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they need to apply to their own work moving forward.

**Read and Discuss 2 — 20 minutes**

**Independent Reading (10 minutes):**

- Chapter 1, pages 8–11

**Discuss:**

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: How did the geography of Norte Chico affect the civilizations that developed there? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: Why does Mann include information about the cities of Norte Chico in Chapter 1?

**Exit Ticket — 8 minutes**

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

- In Chapter 1, how does Mann prove that the New World was older and more sophisticated than previously thought? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

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## Seminar 4: Whole Class Book

### What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars understand Mann's point of view on maize and explain how he proves the sophistication of early American civilizations. Scholars understand how significant archaeological discoveries in Mexico led historians to revise their understanding of Mesoamerican history.

### Seminar 4:

***Before Columbus: The Americas of 1491: Chapters 2–3 (pages 12–31)***

### Do Now — 10 minutes

- Play classical or jazz music to establish a calm work environment.
- Scholars revise their Exit Tickets from the previous seminar based on the feedback you gave them.

### Launch — 2 minutes

- Review the big ideas from yesterday's reading by having scholars quickly discuss the following question: In Chapter 1, how does Mann prove in Chapter 1 that the New World was older and more sophisticated than previously thought? Then, build excitement for today's reading and discussion.

### Read and Discuss 1 — 35 minutes

#### Read:

- **Play Audiobook (00:29:12–00:37:33):** Chapter 2, pages 12–15

#### Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: Why does Mann call maize a “mystery”? (page 13). Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: What does the development of maize show about the Indians who created it?

#### Read:

- **Play Audiobook (00:37:33–00:47:34):** Chapter 2, pages 16–20

#### Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: How does Mann use maize to prove his argument in Part One that the “New World” is much older and more sophisticated than historians previously thought? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.

### Write — 10 minutes

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

- Why was the Indians' use of maize significant? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

### Wrap-up — 5 minutes

- Show an exemplar essay to scholars. Have scholars discuss what makes the claim clear and compelling. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they need to apply to their own work moving forward.

### Read and Discuss 2 — 20 minutes

#### Independent Reading (15 minutes):

- Chapter 3, pages 21–31

#### Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: What is the significance of Stirling's discoveries in La Venta? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: What is the relationship between the Olmec and the Maya?

### Exit Ticket — 8 minutes

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

- In what ways did the Olmec culture influence other Mesoamerican "sister cultures"? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

### Homework

- Read *Before Columbus: The Americas of 1491*, Chapter 4 (pages 32–40).

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## Seminar 5: Whole Class Book

### What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars analyze how Cortés defeated the Triple Alliance, and explain Mann's message about power in conflict. Scholars also evaluate various arguments about human migration and decide which is the strongest.

### Seminar 5:

*Before Columbus: The Americas of 1491: Chapters 5–6 (pages 41–61)*

### Do Now — 10 minutes

- Play classical or jazz music to establish a calm work environment.

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

### **Launch — 2 minutes**

- Review the big ideas from yesterday’s reading by having scholars quickly discuss the following question: In what ways did the Olmec culture influence other Mesoamerican “sister cultures”? Then, build excitement for today’s reading and discussion.

### **Read and Discuss 1 — 35 minutes**

#### **Read:**

- **Play Audiobook (01:26:40–01:37:49):** Chapter 5, pages 41–47

#### **Discuss:**

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: How does the section “The Eagle on the Cactus” connect to the section “A City of Mystery”? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: What is Mann’s argument about the role of religion in society?

#### **Read:**

- **Read Aloud (10 minutes):** Chapters 5–6, pages 48–54

#### **Discuss:**

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: How does Mann prove that it was not horses, guns, and swords that allowed the Spanish to conquer the Triple Alliance? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.

### **Write — 10 minutes**

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

- Why did Cortés succeed in conquering the Triple Alliance? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

### **Wrap-up — 5 minutes**

- Show an exemplar essay to scholars. Have scholars discuss what makes the claim clear and compelling. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they need to apply to their own work moving forward.

### **Read and Discuss 2 — 20 minutes**

#### **Independent Reading (10 minutes):**

- Chapter 6, pages 55–61

#### **Discuss:**

- Scholars discuss the following questions in pairs: What limitations do archaeologists face in developing theories about the past? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: How did radiocarbon dating change modern understanding of the earliest inhabitants of America?

### Exit Ticket — 8 minutes

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

- Which of the three theories that Mann presents on early human migration is the most compelling? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

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## Seminar 6: Whole Class Book

### What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars analyze the significance of the megafauna extinction. They evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of the lack of livestock in Native American society.

### Seminar 6:

*Before Columbus: The Americas of 1491: Chapters 7–8 (pages 62–76)*

### Do Now — 10 minutes

- Play classical or jazz music to establish a calm work environment.
- Scholars revise their Exit Tickets from the previous seminar based on the feedback you gave them.

### Launch — 2 minutes

- Review the big ideas from yesterday's reading by having scholars quickly discuss the following question: Which of the three theories that Mann presents on early human migration is the most compelling? Then, build excitement for today's reading and discussion.

### Read and Discuss 1 — 35 minutes

#### Read:

- **Read Aloud (10 minutes):** Chapter 7, pages 62–68

#### Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: According to the overkill theory, how did the Clovis hunters impact the American megafauna? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: What were the advantages and disadvantages of the Native Americans' lack of livestock?

#### Read:

- **Read Aloud (10 minutes):** Chapter 8, pages 69–72

**Discuss:**

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: Why were the Spanish conquerors of Mexico able to defeat the Native Americans so easily? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.

**Write — 10 minutes**

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

- What is Mann’s message about the role of genetics in civilizations? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

**Wrap-up — 5 minutes**

- Show an exemplar essay to scholars. Have scholars discuss what makes the claim clear and compelling. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they need to apply to their own work moving forward.

**Read and Discuss 2 — 20 minutes**

**Independent Reading (10 minutes):** Chapter 8, pages 72–76

**Discuss:**

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: What impact did de Soto’s pigs have on the Americas? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: Why is the section “How Many Died?” important in understanding the impact of disease?

**Exit Ticket — 8 minutes**

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

- What is the relationship between disease and power in conflict? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

**Homework**

- Read *Before Columbus: The Americas of 1491*, Chapter 9 (pages 77–85).

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## Seminar 7: Whole Class Book

**What Does Success Look Like?**

Scholars examine the role of fire in Native American culture and agriculture. They explain how Native Americans used fire to manipulate the environment.

**Seminar 7:**

***Before Columbus: The Americas of 1491*: Chapter 10 (pages 86–97)**

### **Do Now — 10 minutes**

- Play classical or jazz music to establish a calm work environment.
- Scholars revise their Exit Tickets from the previous seminar based on the feedback you gave them.

### **Launch — 2 minutes**

- Review the big ideas from yesterday's reading by having scholars quickly discuss the following question: What is the relationship between disease and power in conflict? Then, build excitement for today's reading and discussion.

### **Read and Discuss 1 — 35 minutes**

#### **Read:**

- **Play Audiobook (03:03:02–03:14:04):** Chapter 10, pages 86–92

#### **Discuss:**

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: How did the Native Americans use fire to their advantage? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: Why does Mann use van der Donck's story to introduce this chapter?

#### **Read:**

- **Play Audiobook (03:14:05–03:17:38):** Chapter 10, pages 93–94

#### **Discuss:**

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: What does mound building reveal about Native American societies? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.

### **Write — 10 minutes**

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

- Why was fire important to the Native Americans? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

### **Wrap-up — 5 minutes**

- Show an exemplar essay to scholars. Have scholars discuss what makes the claim clear and compelling. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they need to apply to their own work moving forward.

### **Read and Discuss 2 — 20 minutes**

#### **Independent Reading (10 minutes):**



- Chapter 10, pages 94–97

**Discuss:**

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: What is the connection between fire and maize? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: Why does the author include “A Changing Landscape” at the end of the chapter?

**Exit Ticket — 8 minutes**

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

- What was the impact of fire on Native American agriculture? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

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## Seminar 8: Whole Class Book

**What Does Success Look Like?**

Scholars evaluate the impact of disease on the Native Americans. Scholars explain why the Europeans believed that American land was untouched wilderness.

**Seminar 8:**

***Before Columbus: The Americas of 1491: Chapters 11 (pages 98–108)***

**Do Now — 10 minutes**

- Play classical or jazz music to establish a calm work environment.
- Scholars revise their Exit Tickets from the previous seminar based on the feedback you gave them.

**Launch — 2 minutes**

- Review the big ideas from yesterday’s reading by having scholars quickly discuss the following question: What was the impact of fire on Native American agriculture? Then, build excitement for today’s reading and discussion.

**Read and Discuss 1 — 35 minutes**

**Read:**

- **Play Audiobook (03:23:18–03:28:34):** Chapter 11, pages 98–101

**Discuss:**

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: How did the Europeans’ arrival in the Americas affect the Native Americans? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: How does Tisquantum’s experience prove the effects of disease?

**Read:**

- **Play Audiobook (03:28:35–03:35:13):** Chapter 11, pages 102–104

**Discuss:**

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: What was the impact of the smallpox epidemics that struck just before and during the Revolutionary War? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.

**Write — 10 minutes**

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

- How did Tisquantum help the European settlers? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

**Wrap-up — 5 minutes**

- Show an exemplar essay to scholars. Have scholars discuss what makes the claim clear and compelling. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they need to apply to their own work moving forward.

**Read and Discuss 2 — 20 minutes**

**Independent Reading (10 minutes):**

- Chapter 11, pages 104–108

**Discuss:**

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: How did the vast number of Native American deaths from disease affect the environment? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: Why did the Europeans most likely think the New World was “primitive and unchanging”? (page 107).

**Exit Ticket — 8 minutes**

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

- Why did the Europeans think that the land was untouched wilderness? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

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## You Did It!

**Congratulations!** You’ve reached the end of Literature Unit 2: *Before Columbus: The Americas of 1491!*

**As a result of teaching this unit, you as the teacher have:**

- Helped your scholars fall in love with this informative nonfiction text.
- Built your scholars’ ability to articulate their understanding of texts both orally and in writing.

**Your scholars can:**

- Notice interesting language and structures used by an author and explain how these choices support the big idea.
- Write and revise arguments of 200 words to demonstrate their understanding of texts.

**Celebrate your scholars' successes by acknowledging what they can now do as readers as a result of their work during this unit.** Invite scholars to share how much fun they had learning about the Americas of 1491.

**Reflect on your successes and stretches, as well as those of your scholars.** Look at your Fountas & Pinnell results. Have your scholars grown as readers over the last month? Between the start of the school year and mid-year, your scholars should move from a Level W to a Level X. This is always a tricky jump for scholars and they can easily get stuck, making little to no growth. In order to move to a Level X, scholars must keep track of jumps in time and narration, infer the meaning of symbols, and express changes in ideas and perspectives across a text. Enlist parents to help get scholars over this hump!

Scholars must read at home, as well as in school. Do you have 100% of your scholars reading nightly at home? Make sure at-home reading is happening, and meet with families who are falling short to recommit them to this team effort.

Do you have 100% of your scholars reading fluently? Using all of the tools at their disposal to figure out the meaning of what they are reading?

Do you have 100% of your scholars doing their literacy homework? You must insist that 100% of scholars are completing their nightly.

Going into the next unit, make specific reading goals for yourself. Set a percentage goal for how many scholars you will move. Set a goal for scholars who are not reading at home. Who will you get to consistently read at home? Set a goal for moving any scholars stuck at level V or below. Why are they stuck? Do they read fluently? Do they understand what they're reading? Do they understand the big idea? How will you partner with parents to support their growth?

If you are having trouble meeting your goals, do not wait until you have NOT succeeded. Consult your colleagues. Consult your leaders. ASK FOR HELP so you can meet your goals!