



**Essay: Zinn vs Textbook**

**Comparing two historical versions of Columbus' encounter with the Indians  
(Historian Howard Zinn's Columbus & Your U.S. History Textbook's Columbus)**

**Assignment:**

Write a **one-page essay** discussing the contrast between how Columbus is presented in your textbook (textbook chapters 3 and 4) versus how he is presented in the Howard Zinn introduction (taken from A People's History of the United States) handed out in class.

Make sure your essay answers the following **essential question**:

1. How does Zinn's account of Columbus and his interaction with the Native peoples he encountered *compare* with your *textbook's* account regarding how Columbus interacted with the Indians?
  - a. Are there differences between these two accounts? If so, specify very clearly what these differences are. Are there similarities? What are they?
  - b. Are the differences that you identified *important* in terms of the picture that a student studying this history would get?
  - c. *Why* are they important (or why not)?

Use these stylistic guidelines for history essays issued in class (below) to write this essay:

**Code to remember the essay format:** AP DD CC SS

**AP Your Opening Paragraph must Answer the Prompt**

In a well crafted opening paragraph identify the essential questions you've been asked to address in your essay. Then introduce the basic claim you will be making (take a position) that answers/addresses the prompt/questions.

**Supporting Paragraphs (please note that the data and details are often combined with the commentary or connections (instead of being treated in separate paragraphs))**

**DD Data and Details**

Provide data and details that support the claim(s) you've made.

**CC Commentary & Connection**

This is the bulk of your paper- provide roughly 3 connections/comments made for each detail given. Here's where you show your analysis and critical thinking regarding the *relevance/importance* of the data and details you've provided. Explain and elaborate on the significance of your supporting info. Discuss how your supporting info makes your case (proves your claim.)

**SS In a concluding paragraph that is short & strong, briefly reference your thesis and highlight the major points in your argument. Conclude with a couple of succinct yet strong, sentences that vividly restate your claim in a new way.**

**Instructions:**

1. Address the essential question in an opening paragraph. **Make sure you make a claim** about the difference between the two accounts.
1. Cite *at least* 3 examples that portray how Columbus treated the Indians he encountered according to Zinn. Cite *at least* 3 contrasting examples from your textbook's account. **(DD)**

2. Explain why each of these examples you cited are important for supporting the claim you are making about how Zinn's account compares to your textbook account. **(CC)**
3. Discuss whether or not you think the differences between these accounts are important in terms of how history students understand the encounter between Columbus and Native peoples. Explain why you think this is the case. **(CC)**
4. Discuss your own reaction to the contrasting accounts. **(CC)**
5. Conclude by discussing whether or not it *matters* how we, as history students, view Columbus. Why *does* it matter, if you think it does, and why *not* if you think it doesn't? **(SS)**