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UNIT OF STUDY: Europeans and Indigenous Peoples in Contact
TITLE OF ACTIVITY: Study of Columbus at the Court of Barcelona

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School: Branford High School
Subject Area: Spanish
Grade Level(s): Levels 4/5

Introduction: The study of Columbus at the Court of Barcelona (1893), a print by L Prang & Co., is a one period activity to complement the study of Europeans and Indigenous Peoples in Contact

Essential questions:
• How can works of art enhance our understanding of history?
• From whose perspective are we examining history?
• Why did explorers and conquerors tell the court of their experiences in the Americas?
• How can we examine the accuracy of these reports?
• How can resources at Library of Congress or other databases help us understand the exploration and conquest of the Americas?

Objectives: Students will
• locate Columbus at the Court of Barcelona on line at the Library of Congress.
• use guided observation and object based learning strategies to examine the print
• complete the graphic organizer
• participate in class discussion and share their ideas about the print

Directions for teachers:
• Students will have completed homework and seen a PowerPoint presentation about the Age of Exploration.
• This activity will be followed by a discussion of multiple perspectives of the contact period and a discussion of Columbus reconsidered https://www.icloud.com/photostream/#AEG4TcsmGCl6xv
• Homework: Students will write a creative paragraph/dialogue about the scene.
• Next class: Students will read a selection from Columbus’ log in which he describes the Americas to the royal court in Barcelona.

Resources and materials:
Graphic Organizer 
Photostream—Columbus Reconsidered https://www.icloud.com/photostream/#AEG4TcsmGCl6xv

Weisenbach
Examine *Columbus at the Court of Barcelona* for 2-3 minutes. What do you see? Note your observations on the attached organizer and complete the activity. Be prepared to share your observations with the class.

(L. Prang. Library of Congress LC-USZC2-1589)
**A Study of *Columbus at the Court of Barcelona***

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>What do you see in the print? (2-3 Min.)</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>What stands out? What details do you notice? (5 min. with a partner)</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>What do the details tell us? What is the message of the print?</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Whose perspective is this print portraying? What do you think other actors are saying, thinking?</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Apply what you know about the history of the Americas and Europe in the 15th century to your observations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Observe the print again. Have your opinions changed? Do you have additional ideas? Write your conclusions.</td>
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Análisis de *Columbus at the Court of Barcelona*  

Nombre: __________________

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<tr>
<td>1. ¿Qué ve Ud. en esta obra? (2-3 Min.)</td>
<td>2. ¿Qué destaca? ¿Cuáles son los detalles? (5 min. con un compañero)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. ¿Cómo se siente? Tranquilo, alegre, triste…</td>
<td>4. ¿Qué nos dicen los detalles?</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Aplique lo que Ud. sabe de la historia de las Américas y Europa en el siglo XVI- XVII a sus observaciones.</td>
<td>6. Observe Ud. el cuadro otra vez. ¿Ha cambiado sus opiniones? ¿Tiene Ud. ideas adicionales? Escriba sus conclusiones.</td>
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Suggested questions for *Columbus at the Court of Barcelona*.

The following questions should be guided by the details you notice, the conclusions can you draw and the evidence you have to back up your ideas.

1. Why would Columbus go to Barcelona to visit the royal couple?
2. What is going on in the painting? Who are the key figures? Who are secondary figures?
3. What do you think Columbus is saying? The courtiers? The religious figures? The indigenous people?
4. What are their attitudes? How do they react to each other?
5. What are the connotations of body position? How does body language help us understand the painting? Examine the body language: bending forward, hand on head, leaning against someone, looking upward, head cocked etc.
6. What do the facial expressions tell us?
7. What are the objects in the scene? Why are they important? Why did the artist include them in this work?
8. What is the decor? Style of architecture? What are the people wearing? Or not…
9. What is the artist telling the viewer? What is his reason for creating the scene?
10. If you had the opportunity to retitle the piece, what would you name it?
Object-Based Learning Strategies

Adapted from materials by Jessica Sack, Yale Art Gallery, and Cyra Levenson, Yale Center for British Art

Begin by having students closely observe an object or work of art, 2 – 5 minutes depending on how much time you have and the complexity of the object or work of art. If you are using a museum exhibit, cover the label or encourage them not to look at it.

Proceed by asking questions about the object or work of art, in the following order:

1. **What do you see?**
   With this purely objective question, they are generating a list of words or statements, using only their eyes. This can be an inventory-like list if they are looking at a painting or a diorama, and more of a list of adjectives if looking at a single object. You can encourage them to toss out words as they come to mind.

2. **What do you notice?**
   This goes deeper, and is intended to walk the line between objective and subjective. You may remind them not to include their opinion if you want to keep this more objective. Here, they should begin to point out relationships. They may also discuss how it appears to have been made. If they have an object in front of them that they are allowed to touch, they can use other senses at this point to learn more about it.

3. **What do you think about what you see? What are your interpretations of the evidence you observed?**
   Finally you are asking here for their interpretation and opinion – if a painting, what is going on in the piece, what is the narrative – if an artifact, why might it have been made, what might it have been used for?

4. **Follow answers to steps 2 and 3 with: What do you see that makes you say that?**
   This makes students accountable for their observations/interpretations by citing visual evidence, and can also help keep students from heading off in the wrong direction or intentionally derailing the process.

5. **Finally, ask more guided questions,** especially if you have a specific area of focus you are trying to bring to your students’ attention. You can also ask: “What questions do you have about it?” and “How can you find answers to these questions?” If in a museum, let them read the exhibit label at this point and ask them if that changes anything about their interpretation. If an artifact, you can now give more detail and history, and begin a more productive discussion about its cultural and chronological context.

Variation: There is a good opportunity to have students DRAW the object between steps 2 and 3, and then write a story about/featuring their object, which gets at the same interpretive thinking as step 3 but gives an opportunity for creative writing.

Usually, before you even have students start observing you would give them some context (specific artists, time periods, cultures) or the focus/objectives of the session – this helps steer their observations into a more narrow and manageable subset.
Find an object or work of art, and spend 2 – 5 minutes closely observing it. If you are in a museum, do not read the exhibit label that gives information about the object or work of art.

After your observation time, answer the following questions in the following order. For questions 1 and 2, lists are fine (complete sentences not necessary).

1. What do you see?

2. What do you notice?

3. How was it made and what does it appear to be made from?
4. If you are looking at an artifact, why might it have been made? What might it have been used for? If you are looking at a work of art, why do you think the artist produced this work? What is going on in the piece?

5. Now read the exhibit label (if there is one) and record:

Name/Title of object or work of art: ________________________________________________

If an artifact, where in the world it is from: _____________________________________________

If a work of art, artist’s name and year of completion: ____________________________________

Any other descriptive information from the exhibit label: