



QUESTIONING

Thinking strategies to enhance skills of analysis, creativity, and problem solving.

SHOULD I JOIN COLUMBUS?

Lesson Description: Students role play being a person living in Spain in 1492. They have heard about a man named Christopher Columbus who is looking for people to sail to the West Indies. Columbus has agreed to meet with those interested and will answer any questions they might have. Students will compose questions to ask Columbus to help them make up their minds about joining him.

Pre-assessment/Prior Knowledge:

- Students have indicated a basic understanding of the Questioning strategy through the introductory lesson (p. 21).
- Students have shown knowledge of Christopher Columbus through assessments in Social Studies.

SOL/POS Objective:

History 3.3 The student will describe the discovery of the Americas by Columbus and other European explorers and also the first permanent Spanish, French and English settlements in North America, with emphasis on the people (explorers and their sponsors), their motivations, the obstacles they encountered, and the successes they achieved.

Instructional Strategy:

Cues, Questions, and Advance Organizers- Students apply questioning skills to develop greater understanding of decision-making requirements of early explorers.

Materials:

1492 Person Profile (p. 54)

Enduring Understanding:

- Effective questioning is an important step in making quality decisions.
- Effective questioning facilitates greater understandings.
- People living in the past were faced with making difficult and often dangerous decisions.

Introduction/Essential Questions:

- Why do people ask questions before starting something new or having a new experience?
- What are the benefits of asking questions before you have to make an important decision?
- How are the needs, worries and concerns of people living in the present the same as those who lived in the past?



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Teach and Explore Strategy:

- Ask students to recall a time when they have had to make an important decision and had a difficult time deciding one way or another. Ask: What makes some decisions easy and others difficult? Ask them to recall a time when they felt they needed more information before they could make a final decision. Allow time for students to share experiences.
- Explain that in this lesson they will role play a person from 1492 who needs to decide whether or not to join Columbus' voyage to the New World.
- Share *1492 Person Profile* (p. 54) with the class.
- Discuss the situation of the fisherman. Ask probing questions: If you were this person, what additional information would you need? What would be your concerns, worries or hopes? What questions would you ask Columbus?
- Students share a few examples of questions the fisherman might ask Columbus. Record these questions on the board or chart paper. Which of these questions would be the most helpful for someone who needs more information to make a decision? Why?
- Assign the class to write 4- 5 questions other than the examples given. Use the following thinking prompt:
If I was the person from 1492, I would ask Columbus...
Allow about 15 minutes for the class to write their questions.
- Ask 4 or 5 students to share their questions with the group. Ask the group which of the questions were the most original? Which questions were the most common? Which questions are the most important? Which would result in the most helpful answers?
- Ask students, if you could only ask one question on the list, what would it be? Why? Have students evaluate their questions by putting a check mark next to their most important question.
- Question students, why would skills in questioning have been important to people who decided to sail with Columbus? Why are effective questioning skills important to us today?

Assessment Evidence:

- Student responses during discussion
- Student questions for Columbus

Metacognition:

- How does asking questions help you make decisions?
- Was it easy or difficult to think of more than one question? If difficult, what made it hard for you?

Extensions:

- Students create a PMI chart (Plus, Minus, Interesting) to respond to the topic: *Sailing to the New World With Columbus*.
- Students create a set of questions to help them make a difficult decision using either a real life or imaginary situation.



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1492 Person Profile

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Here are some facts about you that might influence the kinds of questions you ask Columbus:

- Only sailing experience is on your small fishing boat
- Age 28
- Don't know much about Christopher Columbus
- Cannot read or write
- Not sure if the world is round or flat
- Family at home- wife and two children
- Your daughter is an infant
- Your 12 year old son wants to go with you
- Earn a living as a fisherman
- Poor, live a simple life without luxuries
- Heard that if gold is discovered he could get rich
- Your wife is skilled as a seamstress
- Your wife doesn't want you to go
- Worry about staying healthy
- Concerned about your safety
- Love adventure
- Has a brother in the same town