



**GeoCivics Lesson: *Christopher Columbus and
The Taino Indians in Puerto Rico***

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Teacher(s): Rosa M. Jiménez Otero	Unit Title: The first settlers: the indigenous society Lesson Title: Christopher Columbus and The Taino Indians in Puerto Rico	Grade Level: 4th grade
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Notes: We anticipate this lesson to take two 50 minute class sessions.

Pre-existing Knowledge: N/A

Overview of Content:
 When Christopher Columbus arrived on the Bahamian Island of Guanahani (San Salvador) in 1492, he encountered the Taíno people, whom he described in letters as "naked as the day they were born." The Taíno had complex hierarchical religious, political, and social systems. Skilled farmers and navigators, they wrote music and poetry and created powerfully expressive objects. At the time of Columbus's exploration, the Taíno were the most numerous indigenous people of the Caribbean and inhabited what are now Cuba, Jamaica, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. By 1550, the Taíno were close to extinction, many having succumbed to diseases brought by the Spaniards. Taíno influences survived, however, and today appear in the beliefs, religions, language, and music of Caribbean cultures.

Except for a few Spanish chronicles, such as Fray Ramón Pané's *Relación de las antigüedades de los indios* (An Account of the Antiquities of the Indians, 1497), there are few written records of Taíno culture. Luckily, science has given important clues about the Taínos' rise and decline, debunking the common misconception (known as the "myth of the Taino extinction") that Taínos were wiped out by Spanish colonialism. In fact, Taíno descendants, along with their culture and language, remain an important part of Caribbean life today. Many Taíno words, such as canoe, hammock, and tobacco, still exist in today's Spanish and English vocabulary. In places like the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico,

islanders proudly refer to themselves as “quisqueyanos” or “boricuas,” a reference to the Taíno name of their respective islands. In addition, new research by political scientists like Tony Castanha and biologists like Juan C. Martínez Cruzado have confirmed the legacy of Taíno culture in modern-day Puerto Rican society. Martínez Cruzado for example employed genetic testing to determine that 61.1% of Puerto Ricans carry Taíno ancestry. The Taíno then, remain central to understanding the history and the cultural diversity of the Caribbean.

The Taino had an elaborate system of religious beliefs and rituals that involved the worship of spirits (zemis) by means of carved representations. They also had a complex social order, with a government of hereditary chiefs and subchiefs and classes of nobles, commoners, and slaves.

Purpose:

In this lesson, students will learn about their Taino heritage, as well as how the Tainos lived, and developed their political, religious and economical characteristics. Students will also learn about how the Tainos suffered after Columbus arrived in Puerto Rico. Students will recognize the various pre-Columbian societies in Puerto Rico; do research on the economic, social, political, and religious aspects of the Tainos; identify contributions to Puerto Rican culture.

National & State Social Studies Standard(s):

National:

- TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE: Studying the past makes it possible for us to understand the human story across time.
- PEOPLE, PLACES, AND ENVIRONMENTS: The study of people, places, and environments enables us to understand the relationship between human populations and the physical world.

Puerto Rico:

Change and continuity - studies the life of societies in the context of changes and transformations that occur over time.

4.cc.1 - It distinguishes historical places of Puerto Rico, indigenous ceremonial parks, caves, archaeological settlements, fortifications, colonial style architecture, among others.

- 4.cc.6 - Critically describes processes that occur in the history of Puerto Rico such as confrontation, domination, slavery, cultural miscegenation and uprising, evangelization, and exploitation among others.

National & State Geography Standard(s):

National

- Standard 17: How to apply geography to interpret the past.
- Standard 6: How culture and experience influence people’s perceptions of places and regions.

Puerto Rico

- 4.PLA.2.1 - It presents examples in the Taino, African and Puerto Rican context, understanding the chronological process of these events and the duration in different periods of time.
- 4. PLA. 7 - Recognizes the relationship between geographic space and human cultural, economic, political, and social activities.

ELA Standards:Literacy in History/Social StudiesIntegration of Knowledge and Ideas

- 4. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

- 4. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

ISTE Teacher and/or Student Standard:**Student:**

- 1.3.a Effective Research Strategies: Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
- 1.3.c Curate Information: Students curate information from digital resources using a variety of tools and methods to create collections of artifacts that demonstrate meaningful connections or conclusions.

Language Functions:

- Summarizing and Informing: Students use language to identify, report or describe information
- Inferring, Predicting, & Hypothesizing: Students use language to make inferences, predict implications, hypothesize.
- Comparing and Contrasting: Students use language to describe similarities and differences in objects or ideas.
- Inquiry/Seeking Information: Students use language to observe and explore the environment, acquire information, inquire.
- Analyzing: Students use language to separate whole into parts, identify relationships and patterns
- Justifying and Persuading: Students use language to give reasons for an action, decision, point of view, convince others

Culturally Responsive Lesson Strategies:

- SOCIAL JUSTICE- Different Perspectives: Lesson/Assignment provides avenues for students to connect learning to social, political, or environmental concerns that affect them and their lives and enact change.
- CONNECTION: Lesson/activity incorporate real-life connections and representations from various cultures and life experiences.

Objective(s):

Students will be able to:

- Develop knowledge about important historical events that link them to their cultural heritage.
- Analyze and comprehend texts that are related to the existence of the Tainos in Puerto Rico and what they have contributed to us in the context of different cultural aspects such as vocabulary, religion, traditions, food and music.
- Research how the influence of Taino words and symbols are still used today in Puerto Rico.

SIOP

SIOP Elements		
Preparation Adapting content Linking to background Linking to past learning Strategies used	Scaffolding Modeling Guided practice Independent practice Comprehensible input	Grouping Option Whole class Small groups Partners Independent
Integrating Processes Reading Writing Speaking Listening	Application Hands-On Meaningful Linked to objectives Promotes engagement	Assessment Individual Group Written Oral

Evidence of Mastery (Measurable):

Formative - Following research on different aspects of Taino life, students create a poster that reflects the results of their research and share this out with the teacher and class via a gallery walk. The teacher will make note of each students' presentation for use as a formative assessment of student learning.

Summative - After conducting research and learning about the history and culture of the Tainos, the students will be given a Double-Entry Journal with pictures where they will use what they have learned to write down their reactions and feelings about the provided images. The students must include vocabulary words and examples as appropriate for each image. Then students will respond to the question: *Do you think Columbus Day should be a national holiday?* and the teacher will use the Journal Rubric below to assess students' learning with a score of 30 or higher indicating mastery.

Journal Rubric

Levels of Accomplishment	Criteria	Point value
Exceeds Expectations	Responses provide a clear and detailed explanation of what every image represents and gives a detailed explanation with reasoning to explain about how the writer feels about each image. The responses include multiple use of the lesson vocabulary used appropriately and provides several appropriate examples of what the image represents. The response to the teacher's question about Columbus Day gives detailed and well documented reasoning tied to	35 + pts.

	evidence from research for why you feel the way you do about whether Columbus Day should be a national holiday or not.	
Meets Expectations	Responses provide a clearly expressed explanation of what every image represents and explains how the writer feels about each image. The responses include the lesson vocabulary where appropriate and provides an appropriate example of what the image represents. The response to the teacher's question about Columbus Day gives a clear and documented reason for why you feel the way you do about whether Columbus Day should be a national holiday or not.	30 pts.
Approaches Expectations	Responses provide some explanation for what at least 3 images represents and does explain how the writer feels about each image. The responses include some of the lesson vocabulary but lacks appropriate use of all of them, and provides some examples of what at least 3 images represents. The response to the teacher's question about Columbus Day gives a clear reason for why you feel the way you do about whether Columbus Day should be a national holiday or not.	15 to 25 pts.
Fails to Meet Expectations	Responses provide some explanation for what 2 or less of the images represents and explains how the writer feels about only 2 or less images. The responses do not include the lesson vocabulary and lacks an appropriate example of what every image represents. The response to the teacher's question about Columbus Day gives only a little or no reasoning for why you feel the way you do about whether Columbus Day should be a national holiday or not.	0 to 10 pts.

Key vocabulary:

- **indigenous:** inhabiting or existing in a land from the earliest times or from before the arrival of colonists
- **ceremonies:** a formal act or series of acts prescribed by ritual, protocol, or convention
- **petroglyphs:** Petroglyphs are rock carvings (rock paintings are called pictographs) made by pecking directly on the rock

Materials:

- Pictures of early Taino artifacts/pictures/art (in Lesson Materials Document) and Link in Sources below (or the teacher can use actual Taino objects if available)
- A KWL chart on the classroom whiteboard to record students' share outs.
- Maps of Puerto Rico (in Lesson Materials Document)
- Sites to research aspects of Puerto Rico:

surface using a stone chisel and a hammerstone. When the desert varnish (or patina) on the surface of the rock was chipped off, the lighter rock underneath was exposed, creating the petroglyph.

- **heritage:** something that is handed down from the past, as a tradition: a national heritage of honor, pride, and courage. something that comes or belongs to one by reason of birth; an inherited lot or portion: a heritage of poverty and suffering.
- **creole:** originally, any person of European (mostly French or Spanish) or African descent born in the West Indies or parts of French or Spanish America (and thus naturalized in those regions rather than in the parents' home country).
- **settlers:** a person who arrives, especially from another country, in a new place in order to live there and use the land
- **diseases:** disease, any harmful deviation from the normal structural or functional state of an organism, generally associated with certain signs and symptoms and differing in nature from physical injury.
- **enslavement:** is the act of making someone into a slave or the state of being a slave.

(links in Sources below)

- Student access to computers/tablets to conduct research (at least one per group)
- Student access to poster paper (one per group) and markers and/or crayons to create a Jigsaw poster
- Student computer connection to a printer to print images and text from their research to add to their posters
- Video: Christopher Columbus and the Tainos (Link in Sources below)
- Student access to notebooks for taking notes
- Online article: *Hispaniola* (Link in Sources below)
- Student copies of the Double-entry Journal (in Lesson Materials Document)

Sources:

- Taino artifacts/pictures/art: <https://smarthistory.org/introduction-taino-art/> & <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/312807>
- Taino Art Images: [Smarthistory – Introduction to Taíno art](#) & https://www.google.com/search?q=copyright+images+of+taino+art+artifacts+and+art&rlz=1C1GC EA_enUS915US915&oq=copyright+images+of+Taino+art%2C+artifacts%2C+&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUqBwgCECEYoAEyBggAEEUYOTIHCAEQIRigATIHCAIQIRigATIHCAQQIRigATIHCAUQIRigAdIBCTIwOTk4ajBqN6gCCLACAQ&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8#vhid=YS7hZe8KUwg9SM&vssid=l&ip=1
- Reading #2: Arrival of Columbus: [Reading #2: Arrival of Columbus](#)
- Reading #1: The Taíno people of Boriken: [Reading #1: The Taíno people of Boriken](#)
- [Maps of Puerto Rico](#)

Sites to research aspects of Puerto Rico:

- a. language and vocabulary: [Puerto Rican Language and Identity - Yo Soy \(I am\): The Historical Trajectory of Language in Puerto Rico](#)
- b. social systems: [Social Class, Style of Life and Fertility in Puerto Rico](#)

- c. music and poetry: [Puerto Rican Music and Cultural Identity: Creative Appropriation of Cuban Sources from Danza to Salsa](#)
- d. farming and food: [Agriculture in Puerto Rico – A Brief Analysis | BioMASS Lab - University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign](#)
- e. heritage: [Puerto Rico - History and Heritage](#)
- Video: Christopher Columbus and the Tainos: [Christopher Columbus and the Tainos](#)
- Online article: *Hispaniola*: [Hispaniola | Genocide Studies Program](#).

Teacher Resources:

- <https://www.teachingforchange.org>
- <https://www.zinnedproject.org/if-we-knew-our-history/whose-history-matters-taino>
- <https://sheg.stanford.edu/sheg-materials-spanish>
- <https://www.youtube.com/>

Engage

Teacher Will:

1. Ask students if there is art (of any kind) or an object they really like, and ask: *Why do you like it? How does it make you feel? Does it have a special meaning? Why?*
2. Then, the teacher will bring out early Taino artifacts/pictures/art (some images available in Lesson Materials Document) to share with class. Explain that the Taino were the indigenous people of Puerto Rico. Ask students if they recognize any of the artifacts/pictures or art images, and in what context.
3. Students make observations about the objects. *How did the objects make them feel? What do they think they mean? What do they think influenced their creation?*

(NOTE:) The teacher will support ELLs/SPED students by providing sentence frames to the students to use in responding to the questions asked. I.E.:

*The _____ makes me feel _____
 I feel _____ about the _____.
 I think the _____ means _____.
 I think that _____ influenced the creation of the _____.*

(Scaffolding: Guided Practice)

Student Will:

- 1&2. Participate in a class discussion of art/objects they like and of the Taino artifacts/pictures/or art shown by the teacher, sharing out if they recognize any of these.

(Grouping/Whole Class) (Integrating Processes: Listening/Speaking) (Preparation: Linking to background)

3. Make observations of the objects shown and respond to the teacher’s questions about how they make them feel and what they think they mean, etc., using the sentence frames provided if needed.

(Grouping/Whole Class) (Integrating Processes: Listening/Speaking) (Preparation: Linking to background)

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Ask students what else they already know about the Tainos. The teacher will begin to fill out the K-W-L chart on the whiteboard writing down the students' responses. 5. The teacher will lead the class in a discussion based on KWL chart responses. Ask students if they know what may have influenced the artifacts and art. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4.& 5. Contribute to the KWL chart by sharing out what they know about the Tainos and observe the teacher's writing of these on the board K-W-L chart. Then engage in a class discussion of what the class has shared out about their knowledge of the Tainos and what they think about may have influenced the artifacts and art of the Tainos. <p>(Grouping: Whole class) (Integrating Processes: Listening/Reading/Speaking) (Preparation: Linking to background)</p>
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Explore

<p>Teacher Will: IQ #1: <i>What original Taino cultural characteristics have influenced current Puerto Rican culture?</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. First, explain that Puerto Rico is an Island in the Caribbean and show the class maps of Puerto Rico and have the students observe them and then engage in a class discussion of what they observe from the maps. 2. Let students know that they will now prepare to participate in a jigsaw by conducting research on various aspects of Taino culture, and the teacher will begin by introducing the lesson vocabulary words and their meanings to the class, writing them on the board and having the students record them in their own notebooks. The teacher will then place the students into five groups with the teacher strategically grouping ELLs/SPED and Gifted students to provide language and/or learning support as needed. Each group will be assigned or allowed to choose one of the <i>different aspects</i> of Taino culture listed below - and the groups will then use their computers to conduct their research on their aspect. <p>(NOTE:) The teacher can provide groups with research site links found in Sources above)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. language and vocabulary b. social systems 	<p>Student Will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Observe the maps shown by the teacher and discuss with the class what they observe and know about Puerto Rico. <p>(Grouping: Whole class) (Integrating Processes: Listening/Speaking/Reading)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Observe and listen to the teacher's presentation of lesson vocabulary words, reading them when written on the board, and writing each word and its definition in their own notebooks. Students will then get into their research groups and prepare for a jigsaw presentation by conducting research on the aspect of Taino culture assigned to them or chosen by them. <p>(Grouping: Whole class/Small Groups) Application: Hands-on/Meaningful/Promotes engagement/Linked to Objectives)</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. music and poetry d. farming and food e. heritage <p>3. Direct students as they conduct their research of their assigned or chosen aspect or Taino culture, to create a poster, using images and text downloaded and printed while conducting their research to demonstrate the research completed on their topic.</p>	<p>3. As they conduct their research, the groups will work together to write down information about their assigned or chosen aspect and will find and print images and text and use these to create a poster that demonstrates the research completed on their topic.</p> <p>(Grouping: Small Groups) (Integrating Processes: Listening/Speaking/Reading/Writing) (Application: Hands-on/Meaningful/Promotes engagement)</p>
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Explain - Formative Assessment

<p>Teacher Will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lead students in a class discussion asking if any of their research findings are a part of their own family life. 2. Then have students use their research findings and poster creation to participate in a gallery walk to share their poster and information with the class. The teacher will make note of each group's presentation for use as a formative assessment of student learning. 3. When done, the teacher will engage the students in a class discussion by asking the students: <i>Can you think of any original Taino cultural characteristics that influenced our current Puerto Rican traditions? Or that stayed the same?</i> 	<p>Student Will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reflect on the teacher's question about whether any of their research findings are a part of their own family life and if so, share these out with the class. <p>(Grouping: Whole Class) (Preparation: Linking to Background)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Participate in a gallery walk to share their poster and information with the class based on their research and poster creation. <p>(Assessment: Group/Oral/Written)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Participate in a class discussion making a connection between what they have learned about original Taino cultural characteristics and current Puerto Rican traditions and sharing their thinking out with the class. <p>(Grouping: Whole Class) (Integrating Processes: Listening/Speaking) (Preparation: Linking to past learning/linking to background).</p>
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Elaborate

<p>Teacher Will: <i>IQ #2: In what ways did the arrival of Columbus impact the Tainos' lives and culture?</i></p> <p>(NOTE) provide language and learning support as needed for ELLs/SPED students), and have the</p>	<p>Student Will:</p>
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students work with their partners to discuss Inquiry Question #2 and write down notes on their responses in their notebooks..

1. Pair students
2. Then show students the video [Christopher Columbus and the Tainos](#), and have them write down notes.
3. Have students work with their partners to read the following online article: [Hispaniola | Genocide Studies Program](#) to learn more and take more notes:
4. Then, engage the students in a discussion asking: *Is this new information for you? How does it vary from what you already knew? What connections can be made to what you researched in Explore?"*

1. With their partners, discuss Inquiry Question #2 and write down notes about it in their notebooks.

(Grouping: Partners) (Integrating Processes: Listening/Speaking/Writing) (Preparation: Linking to past learning)

- 2.& 3. Watch the video shown and take notes in their notebooks and then read the online article *Hispaniola* with their partners and write down more notes based on what they have learned.

(Grouping: Whole Class/Partners) (Integrating Processes: Listening/Speaking/Reading/Writing)

4. Participate in a class discussion of what they have learned about the Taino history and culture from the video and reading and make connections to what they already knew and what was learned before.

(Grouping: Whole class) (Integrating Processes: Listening/Speaking) (Preparation: Linking to past learning) (Application: Meaningful/Promotes engagement)

Evaluate - Summative Assessment

Teacher Will:

1. Pass out copies of the Double-entry Journal (in Lesson Materials Document) to students and have them write down their reactions and feelings about the provided images. The teacher will also present the Journal Rubric to the students and go over the criteria used for grading their work and tell students they must include vocabulary words and examples that are appropriate for each image. When students finish, ask them, *Do you think Columbus day should be a national holiday?* and make note of students' responses as part of their final assessment. When done, the teacher will collect the students' Double-entry Journals

Student Will:

1. Students will use their handout of the Double Entry Journal to write down their reactions and feelings about the provided images using what they have learned from their research and lesson discussions. They will include appropriate vocabulary words and examples for each image in their written reactions..

(Assessment: Individual/Written/Oral)

and use the Journal Rubric to grade students' work with a score of 30 or higher indicating mastery.	
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Extensions: Class will discuss other activities that they can plan to increase their knowledge about these topics. *For example...*

- A field trip to a Taino ceremonial park
- Having a historian come to our school
- Visiting the Historic Cultural Institute