

Background

Christopher Columbus is a controversial figure in history. On one hand, he is celebrated in nations such as the USA and Spain a prominent figure who helped “Discover America”. At the same time, he has been criticized by many others as being a genocidal maniac who is responsible for the death of millions of native Americans.

Task

You will be given one of two roles, lawyer or judge. Depending on your role your task will differ.

Question:

Should Christopher Columbus Day be celebrated in the United States?

Lawyers:

Defense: (3 students)

Your role is to come up with a defense that supports having a Columbus Day in the United States. What you have to prepare is an

Opening Speech (4-5 minutes each)

You and your partners must come up with a 4-5 minute opening speech identifying reasons why Columbus should be revered as a hero, and therefore celebrated by the American people.

Cross Examination (10 minutes each)

You and your partners must come up with 3 questions to ask the opposing side.

Questions must be limited to under 1 minute.

Answers must be limited to under 2 minutes.

Questions from Judges (5-10 minutes)

The judges will ask 3 questions to the lawyers in order to clarify their positions, as well as test the lawyers basic knowledge of the topic at hand.

Closing Statements (3 minutes each)

You and your partners must come up with a 3 minute closing speech summarizing your argument.

Prosecution: (3 students)

Your role is to come up with reasons why Christopher Columbus Day should not be celebrated.

***The rest is the same as the defense.**

Judges: (3-5 students)

Your role is to come up with a verdict (decision) deciding whether the defense or prosecution had a better argument.

You must take notes throughout their presentations, and come up with a one page reflection about why you believe the Defense or the Prosecution had a better argument. In your reflection piece you must include;

-Strongest arguments made on each side,

-An explanation in regards to why you felt one side had stronger case,

The verdict papers will be due at the beginning of the following class period. They should be at least one page in length single spaced.

Your other major role is during the “Questions from judges” segment. For this segment of the court you will be required to ask at least one question per judge to the lawyers in regards to the case they presented. (*Judges may be asked to ask one question as a pair if there are more than three3 judges in one session).

RUBRIC(S)

LAWYERS (Defense/Prosecutor)

	Excellent (A)	Good (B)	Satisfactory (C)	Unsatisfactory (D/F)
OPENING	The opening statements are strong and clear. The message is very persuasive and includes specific evidence, which has been analyzed and presented in a manner easy to understand. The three lawyers are working well together as one organized unit.	The opening statements are clear. The message includes some data and it is clear and apparent that the lawyers have communicated with each other prior to the court case in preparation for the opening speech.	The opening statements make it clear in regards to why Columbus Day should or should not be celebrated. The lawyers have showed up with a prepared opening statement.	The lawyers came unprepared or only partially prepared for their opening speech. The opening speech lacks evidence and has little persuasion.
CROSS EXAMINATION & JUDGES QUESTIONS	The cross examination questions are complex and well researched. When answering the questions the lawyers answer without hesitation, and are prepared to provide in extensive detail a satisfying answer to the other lawyers or the judges.	Good cross examination questions, which help advance the debate are prepared by the lawyers. The lawyers manage to answer the questions well, but with some hesitation. The lawyers are able to provide adequate/good responses to most questions.	The questions are answered, but insufficient with evidence. Overall, the lawyers are somewhat well thought out, but the lawyers appear to be stumped by some of the questions posed by the opposing side or the judges.	The lawyers are not prepared to answer the questions. They have great difficulty in responding to questions from judges and the opposing side.
CLOSING	The closing statement is strong and clear. The message ties up loose ends and summarizes the arguments made well. The lawyers are working well together and present the closing as one unified group.	The closing statement is clear. The message is coherent and the position of the lawyers is clear.	The closing statement is coherent, however, lacks in depth. Some research is presented, but some loose ends are not tied, and the student is repeating their opening statement.	The closing statement is not well prepared.

JUDGES

	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
IN COURT DECORUM	The judge is engaged and paying attention to the lawyers.		The judge is paying attention in court.	The judge is not engaged and fails to pay attention to the lawyers.
JUDGES QUESTION(S)	The questions are asked to invoke thoughtful answers from the lawyers. The questions are well thought out, and shows that the judge has been attentive to the points made by the lawyers.	The questions asked help the lawyers clarify the points they made in their opening statements.		The judges do not ask questions or ask questions that invoke little to no clarifications to the opening speeches made.
VERDICT PAPER	<p>The verdict paper includes specific examples of why the judge sided with prosecutor or defense. The verdict portrays a good understanding of the issue at hand, and shows that the judges were taking detailed notes of points made by lawyers on both sides.</p> <p>The verdict paper is at least one page long (single spaced), with none to very few spelling/grammatical errors.</p> <p>The paper has good flow, includes an opening and closing paragraph and sites specific quotes from the case.</p>	<p>The verdict paper includes specific examples of why the judge sided with the prosecutor or defense.</p> <p>The verdict paper is at least one page long (single spaced), with none to very few spelling/grammatical errors.</p>	<p>The verdict paper is at least one page long (single spaced), with few spelling/grammatical errors.</p> <p>The paper addresses some key points, but does not provide specific evidence from the case about why the judge chose to side with the defense or prosecution.</p>	The verdict paper lacks specific examples from the case, and does not fully address why the judge chose to side with the prosecutor or defense.

For judges, the verdict paper will count for 50% of their grade.