

# Amanda Chojnaeki - U.S. History

Consider the following prompts in your response:

- Why does it matter how we write about historical figures such as Columbus? (Does the change in poems have THAT great a significance on our understanding?)
- What are the pros/cons for either poem in trying to describe the history of European exploration?

Poem #1	Poem #2
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In fourteen hundred ninety-two  
Columbus sailed the ocean blue.

He had three ships and left from Spain;  
He sailed through sunshine, wind and rain.

He sailed by night; he sailed by day;  
He used the stars to find his way.

A compass also helped him know  
How to find the way to go.

Ninety sailors were on board;  
Some men worked while others snored.

Then the workers went to sleep;  
And others watched the ocean deep.

Day after day they looked for land;  
They dreamed of trees and rocks and sand.

October 12 their dream came true,  
You never saw a happier crew!

"Indians! Indians!" Columbus cried;  
His heart was filled with joyful pride.

In Fourteen Hundred and Ninety Two,  
Columbus sailed the ocean blue.  
But everything else in the childhood rhyme,  
Ignores the historic details and genocide.

The overland route between Asia and Spain,  
Was closed making trade very hard to maintain.  
But Oriental goods were in high demand,  
A new route would allow this exchange to expand.

Aristotle had proved that the world was round,  
You could reach eastern Asia by sailing westbound.  
The Ancient Greeks calculated the length of the trip,  
Far exceeding the range of the most modern ship.

Columbus made absurd and outrageous guarantees,  
About his nautical calculations and skills at Sea.  
But despite reservations expressed by the King,  
He was given three ships outfitted by the Queen.

He set sail in August of 1492,  
his Log Book describes what he planned to do.  
To take wealth and riches wherever they were found,  
His thievery would become historically profound.

But "India" the land was not;  
It was the Bahamas, and it was hot.  
  
The Taino natives were very nice;  
They gave the sailors food and spice.  
  
Columbus sailed on to find some gold  
To bring back home, as he'd been told.  
  
He made the trip again and again,  
Trading gold to bring to Spain.  
  
The first American? No, not quite.  
But Columbus was brave, and he was bright.

Columbus reached Islands in the Caribbean Sea,  
Not even close to where he thought he should be.  
He said there was gold and made other false  
claims,  
To gain the support for more voyages from Spain.  
  
Columbus described the Natives as being,  
Generous, hospitable, and very agreeing.  
Not quarrelsome, excitable – devoid of hate,  
He exclaimed they'd be easy to dominate.  
  
He made several voyages to the Caribbean Sea,  
Visited the mainland where he thought Asia should  
be.  
He colonized the region and controlled everything,  
Destroying the culture and lives of every human  
being.  
  
He appointed himself Governor; no one disagreed,  
Extermination of the Natives could then proceed.  
Their homes and lands were taken by force,  
Those not killed were enslaved without remorse.  
  
He created a "tribute system" very tragic to behold,  
Intended to fulfill Spain's unending lust for gold.  
Requiring a quota from every Native over  
fourteen,  
Or their hands were cut off, death became quite  
routine.

	<p>Natives were raped at will and many used as slaves,  The rest were exterminated, in a variety of ways.  By burning, hanging, cut in pieces or in half,  Babies swung by the feet and their skulls were  smashed.</p> <p>He initiated the conquest and genocide,  During his expeditions, 9 million people died.  Following the "Civilization" of the Western  Hemisphere,  100 million vanished as a result of European  profiteers.</p> <p>Columbus didn't keep the promises made to the  Crown,  And a sea route to Asia, he never found.  He could not deliver on his guarantees of Gold,  But colonization of the Americas began to unfold</p>
<p><b>Questions to answer in your discussion post:</b>  How do you think the author wants you to feel  about Columbus's voyage?</p> <p>How does the author describe Columbus'  interaction with Native Americans?</p> <p>Who is the intended audience for this poem? Does  this matter in looking at it's historical significance?</p>	<p><b>Questions to answer in your discussion post:</b>  How do you think the author wants you to feel  about Columbus's voyage?</p> <p>How does the author describe Columbus'  interaction with Native Americans?</p> <p>Who is the intended audience for this poem? Does  this matter in looking at it's historical significance?</p>