

# SHOULD COLUMBUS DAY BE REPLACED BY INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY?

**THIS ACTIVITY SHOULD TAKE ABOUT 90 MINUTES. IF STUDENTS ARE ABLE TO REVIEW MEDIA FOR HOMEWORK, IN-CLASS TIME SHOULD BE 45 TO 60 MINUTES.**

## INVESTIGATE

Read, watch, and listen to the three media resources on the Thinkalong module. Students can use the Investigate graphic organizer to summarize each piece of media and record new information. Below are summaries of the three pieces of media curated in the Thinkalong module.

### **COLUMBUS DAY OR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY?**

NPR | October 14, 2019 | Audio  
3:37 minutes

Native peoples first proposed Indigenous Peoples' Day during a 1977 U.N. conference. Since that time, many cities, states, towns, and counties have begun to recognize the day in place of Columbus Day.

- As Columbus was an Italian explorer, Columbus Day was originally adopted as a way to celebrate Italians who were discriminated against at the time, but who have played a vital role in making the US what it is.
- Shannon Speed, a citizen of the Chickasaw Nation and director of the UCLA American Indian Studies Center, points out that many of Columbus's actions (pillaging, raping and generally setting a genocide of the peoples who were already here in motion) would be considered crimes today.
- In 1989, South Dakota was the first state to replace Columbus Day with Native American Day. In 1992, Berkeley, CA became the first U.S. city to change Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day.
- As of October 2019, more than 100 cities, towns, and counties throughout the U.S. commemorate Indigenous Peoples' Day.

### **COLUMBUS DAY'S MEANING FOR ITALIAN AMERICANS**

NPR | October 12, 2019 | Audio  
3:28 minutes

While Columbus Day is a celebration of Italian culture for many Italian Americans, some are considering other influential Italian Americans figures to celebrate in his place.

- When Italians immigrants arrived in the US in the late 1880s in mass they encountered extreme xenophobia, where many engaged in acts of violence against immigrants.
- Columbus was a figure that many Italian immigrants latched onto as a way to get a foothold in the hostile environment that they found themselves in.
- A number of Italian Americans have decided that supporting Columbus is not something that they want to associate themselves with.

*Using public media — video, audio and digital reports — about newsworthy topics, these classroom-based exercises help students to think critically about media messages, develop informed opinions, and practice how to take a stand.*

## AZ INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' CAUCUS URGES STATE TO RENAME COLUMBUS DAY

AZ Public Media | June 24, 2020 | Article

- The Arizona Indigenous Peoples' Caucus wants the state to rename Columbus Day as Indigenous Peoples' Day.
- The Arizona Indigenous Peoples' Caucus would like the state to stop celebrating Christopher Columbus, as his legacy of genocide toward Indigenous peoples is a “shameful” reminder of past trauma.
- State Senator Jamescita Peshlakai, who represents Legislative District 7 and the several tribal nations within it, introduced a bill to abolish Columbus Day in 2013 and again in 2018.
- When Senator Peshlakai’s bill went through, it went through as a Native American Day on June 2nd — the day in 1924 Congress granted Native Americans citizenship.

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### KEY WORDS

Look out for these important keywords in the news stories. Discuss the definitions with your classroom and see how they affect the understanding of the story.

- Indigenous
- Colonization
- Genocide
- Legacy

### CONTEMPLATE

Students will use media literacy questions to critically engage with news by thinking about its purpose, searching for bias and discussing missing perspectives. They will answer the 5 Key Questions of Media Literacy created by the Center for Media Literacy, which are:

1. Who created this message?
2. What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?
3. How might different people understand this message differently than me?
4. What values, lifestyles and points of view are represented in, or omitted from, this message?
5. Why is this message being sent?
6. When was this media created, and is it still relevant?

A graphic organizer is included in this guide and the Thinkalong website to help students answer these five questions about each piece of media.

### DEBATE

Students will engage their peers in an evidence-based debate using the media they just analyzed. Use the debate tool on the module webpage to help form an evidence-based response to the debate question.

In addition to rich in-class discussions, teachers can also connect with other classrooms through the Thinkalong website.

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