

A TEACHERS' GUIDE TO A COYOTE COLUMBUS STORY

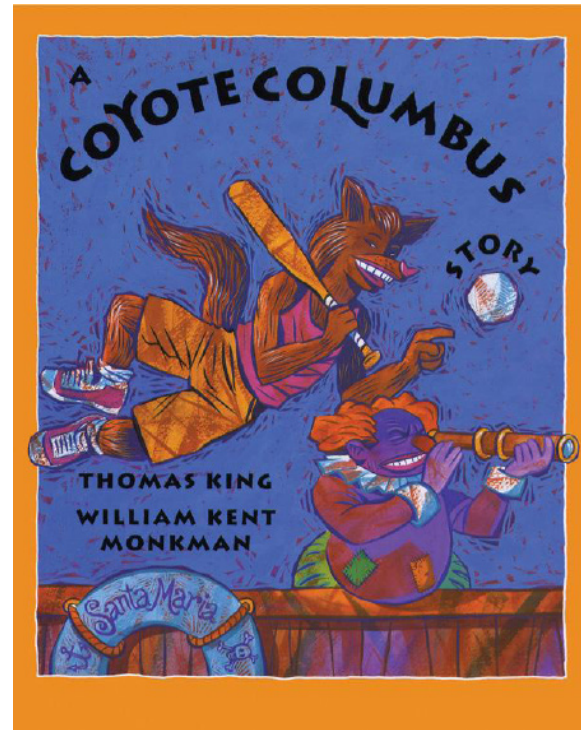
Written by Thomas King and illustrated by William Kent Monkman

ABOUT THE BOOK

A retelling of the Christopher Columbus story from a Indigenous point of view turns this tale on its ear! Coyote, the trickster, creates the world and all the creatures in it. She is able to control all events to her advantage until a funny-looking red-haired man named Columbus changes her plans. He is unimpressed by the wealth of moose, turtles and beavers in Coyote's land. Instead he is interested in the human beings he can take to sell in Spain.

Thomas King uses a bag of literary tricks to shatter the stereotypes surrounding Columbus's voyages. In doing so, he invites children to laugh with him at the crazy antics of Coyote, who unwittingly allows Columbus to bring about the downfall of her human friends. And he makes the point that history is influenced by the culture of the reporter.

The book provides a cultural perspective on the story of Christopher Columbus and colonization. The cross-curricular connections could include but are not limited to Social Studies and Health.



A Coyote Columbus Story

Written by Thomas King

Illustrated by

William Kent Monkman

JUVENILE FICTION

Reading Ages 4 to 8

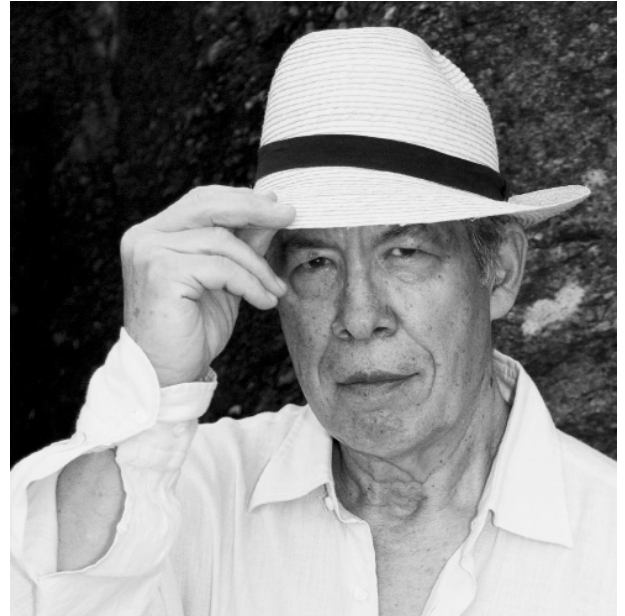
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Thomas King has written several highly acclaimed children's books, including *A Coyote Columbus Story*, illustrated by William Kent Monkman, which was a Governor General's Literary Award finalist. He has also written *Coyote Tales*, illustrated by Byron Eggenschwiler. King, who is of Cherokee and Greek descent, was a Professor of English at the University of Guelph for many years, where he taught Native Literature and Creative Writing. He won the RBC Taylor Prize and the British Columbia National Award for Canadian Non-Fiction for *The Inconvenient Indian*, and the Governor General's Literary Award for his adult novel, *The Back of the Turtle*.



ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

William Kent Monkman is a filmmaker and visual artist whose paintings have been shown in galleries across North America. He has designed sets for theater and dance and has illustrated several books. Of Swampy Cree and English-Irish descent, Kent is a member of the Fisher River Band in Manitoba. He lives in Toronto.

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BEFORE READING

Terminology

Terminology to consider:

- Christopher Columbus
- Jacques Cartier
- goodwill

Research

With students, research Coyote and the connection to tricksters. What other tricksters can be found in Indigenous storytelling? Have students build a word wall of the different tricksters in Indigenous cultures and associated vocabulary. Include the terms listed above, which appear in the text and may be new to young readers.

Have students research Christopher Columbus and Jacques Cartier. Ask students: Who were they? How did they come to North America according to the information you found? Where were they from originally and why did they come to North America?

Shared Activity

Create a chart labeled “Christopher Columbus.” Ask students to turn to a partner and complete a think-pair-share in which students think about and share with each other all that they know about Christopher Columbus. After the think-pair-share, record their ideas on the chart paper and post it in the classroom as an anchor chart.

Art Activity

Ask students to draw what they think the arrival of Christopher Columbus would have looked like.

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BEFORE READING

Discussion Questions

Prior to beginning the story, have students activate their thinking by considering: Who were the “explorers” that came to North America? What were they looking for? Why did they stay? Have students brainstorm their thinking in small groups. Record.

Engage in a Story Walk

Anticipation Guide: Use some of the photos in the story and post them around the classroom. Number each of the photos so students can discuss them in a chronological way. Have students infer what the story could be about.



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AFTER READING

Discussion Questions

These are guiding questions that can be discussed orally — as a shared response as a class or in small groups — or completed as individual reading responses.

- Why do you think Coyote couldn't be satisfied with not playing baseball all the time?
- When did Coyote realize that she had made a mistake? How did she try to fix it?
- What do you think is the lesson in the story?

Compare and Contrast

Create a two-column chart on chart paper. Label the columns "Coyote Columbus" and "Other Stories." Have students work in small groups to compare and contrast the Coyote Columbus story with other stories that you have shared with them from the earlier research activity. Have them think about the differences in how Columbus is portrayed, how Indigenous people are/were portrayed, how Columbus treated the land and the people and why they stayed. Record their answers on the chart paper. Ask students to think about why these stories may be different.

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CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Social Studies

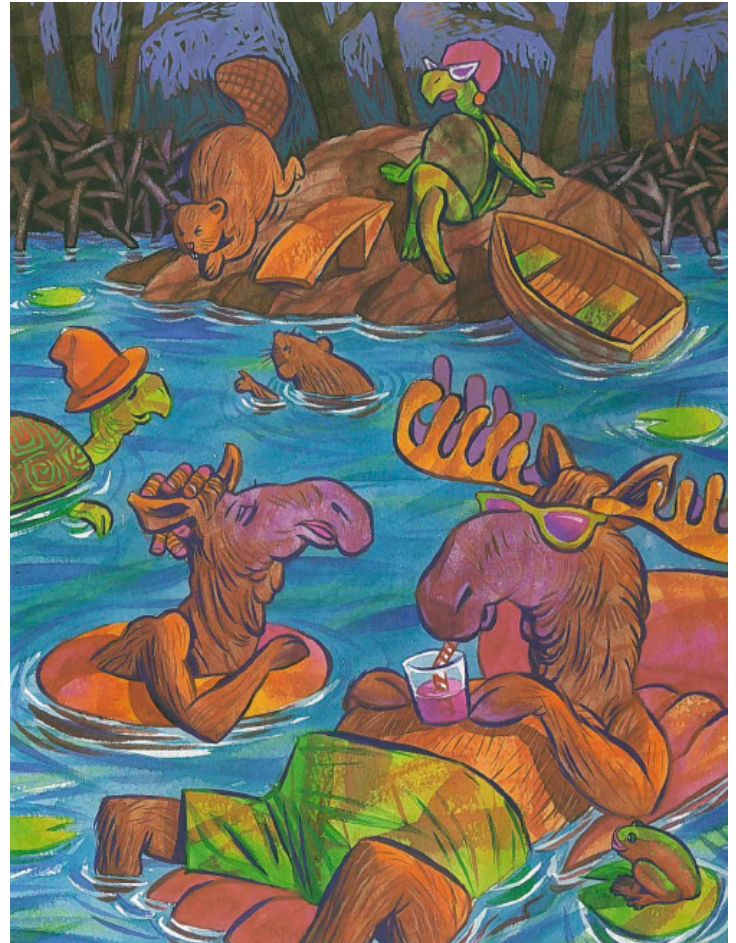
- Grade 1: Our Changing Roles and Responsibilities; The Local Community
- Grade 2: Changing Family and Community Traditions
- Grade 3: Communities in Canada, 1780–1850
- Grade 5: Indigenous Peoples and Europeans in New France and Early Canada

Geography

- Grade 7: Natural Resources around the World: Use and Sustainability
- Grade 8: Global Settlement: Patterns and Sustainability

Physical Education and Health

Active Living



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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Supplemental Reading

Yolen, Jane, and David Shannon (illus.). *Encounter*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt, 1992.

Web Resources

Christopher Columbus Video Story:

“Muffin Stories — Christopher Columbus.” Produced by Muffin Songs. Video, 7:27, August 3, 2012. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=63TIYTmlknE>

Sutherland, A. “Coyote — Native American Trickster, Creator, And Sacred Animal Who Can Deceive But Also Give Wisdom.” *Ancient Pages*, April 28, 2017.

<http://bit.ly/2CuFBgu>