**Document #1: Watch video as class**

**Document #2: Below are excerpts from Christopher Columbus’ personal journal that he kept during his first voyage to the Americas (1492-1504). These passages describes his first encounters with the Taíno people that inhabited the Caribbean Islands when the Spanish arrived.**

*“They (the Taínos)…brought us parrots and balls of cotton and spears and many other things, which they exchanged for the glass beads and hawks’ bells (small bells made of brass or copper). They willingly traded everything they owned…They were well built, with good bodies and handsome features…They do not bear arms, and do not know them, for I showed them a sword, they took it by the edge and cut themselves out of ignorance. They have no iron. Their spears are made of cane…They would make fine servants… If it please our Lord, I intend at my return to carry home six of them to your Highnesses… However, when Your Highnesses so command, they can all be carried off to Castile (Spain) or held captive in the island itself, since with fifty men we could subjugate (enslave) them all and make them do whatever we want.”*

*“As soon as I arrived in the Indies, on the first Island which I found, I took some of the natives by force in order that they might learn and might give me information of whatever there is in these parts.”*

*“And I was attentive and labored to know if they had gold, and I saw that some of them wore a small piece hanging from a hole with they have in the nose, and from signs I was able to understand that, going to the south or going round the island to the south, there was a king who had large vessels of it and possessed much gold. I endeavored to make them go there, and afterwards saw that were not inclined for the journey. I resolved to wait until the afternoon of the following day, and after that to leave for the south-west, for, as many of them indicated to me, they said that there was land to the south and to the south-west and to the north-west, and that those of the north-west often came to attack them. So I resolved to go to the south-west, to seek the gold and precious stones.”*

**Document # 3:** **The following account is from the journal of a close friend of Columbus, Michele de Cuneo, who wrote the first disturbing account of a relation between himself and a Native female given to him as a gift by Columbus.**

“While I was in the boat I captured a very beautiful Carib woman, whom the said Lord Admiral (Columbus) gave to me, and with whom, having taken her into my cabin, she being naked according to their custom, I conceived desire to take pleasure. I wanted to put my desire into execution but she did not want it and treated me with her finger nails in such a manner that I wished I had never begun. But seeing that (to tell you the end of it all), I took a rope and thrashed her well, for which she raised such unheard of screams that you would not have believed your ears.”

**Document # 4:** **Bartolome de las Casas was a young Catholic priest who participated in an early Spanish voyage to the New World in 1502. For a time, he owned a plantation on which Indian slaves worked, but he gave that up and became a strong critic of Spanish cruelty. The excerpt below is from de las Casas’ multivolume book, *History of the Indies (1542)*, where he describes the treatment of the Taínos by Columbus and the Spaniards.**

*“Endless testimonies…prove the mild (calm) and pacific (peaceful) temperament (behavior) of the natives…But our work was to exasperate (anger), ravage, kill, mangle and destroy; small wonder then, if they tried to kill one of us (the Spanish) now and then…The admiral (Christopher Columbus), it is true, was blind as those who came after him, and he was so anxious to please the King that he committed irreparable crimes against the Indians…”*

*“Mountains are stripped from top to bottom and bottom to top a thousand times; they (the Taíno people) dig, split rocks, move stones, and carry dirt on their backs to wash it in the rivers, while those who wash gold stay in the water all the time with their backs bent so constantly it breaks them; and when water invades the mines, the most arduous task of all is to dry the mines by scooping up pansful of water and throwing it up outside…”*

*“Thus husbands and wives were together only once every eight or ten months and when they met they were so exhausted and depressed on both sides…they ceased to procreate (have children). As for the newly born, they died early because their mothers, overworked and famished, had no milk to nurse them, and for this reason, while I was in Cuba, 7,000 children died in three months. Some mothers even drowned their babies from sheer desperation….In this way, husbands died in the mines, wives died at work, and children died from lack of milk…and in a short time this land which was so great, so powerful and fertile…was depopulated…My eyes have seen these acts so foreign to human nature, and now I tremble as a I write….*

*“From that time onward the Indians began to seek ways to throw the Christians out of their lands. They took up arms, but their weapons were very weak and of little service in offense and still less in defense. (Because of this, the wars of the Indians against each other are little more than games played by children.) And the Christians, with their horses and swords and pikes began to carry out massacres and strange cruelties against them. They attacked the towns and spared neither the children nor the aged nor pregnant women nor women in childbed, not only stabbing them and dismembering them but cutting them to pieces as if dealing with sheep in the slaughter house.”*

*“One of his (Columbus’) officers was responsible for the indiscriminate slaughter of many locals, hanging some, burning others alive, and throwing yet others to wild dogs, sometimes sawing off their hands and feet, sometimes pulling out their tongues or hacking off their heads. Even though the locals never raised a finger against the Spaniards, the distinguished commander knowingly allowed this spate of atrocities to continue unchecked, directed as it was to terrorizing the local people into doing his bidding and into bringing him gifts of Gold or other precious objects.”*

*“During these eleven years, more than two million souls have perished and in an area of more than a hundred leagues by a hundred leagues, only two thousand survivors are to be seen, and even this number is shrinking day by day as the survivors succumb to the rigours (hardships) of a life of slavery.”*