

Columbus and the "Discovery" of the "New World"

Analysing the topic in two German popular history magazines

How is Columbus and the "discovery" of the "New World" presented in selected German popular history magazines? In the following, abstracts from the history magazine "GEO-EPOCHE. The Magazine for History. The Age of Discoverers" (2007) and "G/Geschichte. People, Events, Epochs: Departure into a New World. Columbus and the Age of Discoverers" (2006) are considered more closely.

The selected German magazine articles are used for illustrative purposes. Whoever is interested in the depiction of Columbus in [Spanish](#), [Polish](#), [English](#) and [Swedish](#) magazines may apply the following questions to the respective materials.

Tasks

1

What do you think about Columbus?

- a. Consider: In your opinion, is Columbus a hero or even a role model? Exchange your views with your partner. Write down your thoughts.
- b. Consider: What influenced your view of Columbus? (i.e.: books, films, historic novels, ...)

2

Analysing a German magazine article about Columbus

- a. Read the article "[Columbus discovers a new world. Dreamland Ahoy!](#)" from the



Magazine "G/Geschichte" and take notes. Pay particular attention to the character traits assigned to Columbus.

b. There are more people mentioned in the article. How do they perceive Columbus and his "journey to India"?

c. What position, do you think, would have been your own in that situation? Discuss this topic.

3

Analysing the editorial of a German magazine about Columbus

Read "[Editorial: Departure into the Uncertain, Return from the Unknown](#)" from "G/Geschichte". How is Columbus presented here? Consider the following quote for your answer: "He didn't know where the journey would take him. He didn't know where he was when he was there. And when he returned, he didn't know where he had been – and all that on borrowed money!".

Compare your findings with the article.

4

Comparing the depiction of Columbus in the magazine and in the textbook

Compare the image of Columbus which is created in your textbook with the characteristic traits ascribed to him in the magazine. How is Columbus depicted in your textbook and how is he judged there? Explain why.

5

Assessing the different depictions of Columbus

a. Discuss with your neighbour which view (textbook text, magazine article or editorial) is more appealing to you personally. Explain why.

b. Consider: Why does the article do without a differentiated presentation despite the critical approach of the topic "Columbus" in the editorial? Explain your thoughts.