

Columbus in different lighting

A multinational comparison of diverse perspectives in popular history magazines

In order to highlight contrasting perspectives on Columbus we have here selected texts and images from popular history magazines from two countries. More perspectives from more countries and questions on Columbus and colonialism can be found in the links above labeled "The Legacy of Columbus" and "The Historiography of Columbus".

1 Your image of Columbus?

Discuss a minute or two with a classmate:

- a.** What image do you have of Columbus?
- b.** Where you have gotten your image of Columbus from (for instance school, movies or books).

2 Images in the popular history articles

In pairs, together with a classmate:

- a.** Look at the images in the articles from [Sweden](#) and [Germany](#) and analyze how people are depicted; for instance men, women and aboriginals?
- b.** Discuss in what ways the images can help the presentations of history and also how they might be a problem. Use the articles to provide examples of problems and potentials in using images.

3 Distant and close reading

One way to quickly get an overview of the content of a text is to make a wordle. Copy the text from the articles from Sweden and Germany and paste it on [wordle.net](https://www.wordle.net).

In pairs, together with a classmate:

- a. Make a wordle per country (print or use print screen PrtSc to copy and then paste the "wordclouds" in word).
- b. Consider what similarities and differences in your two wordclouds mean. What image of Columbus appears, if any?
- c. Compare your findings with your conclusions from the analysis of the images. Similarities and differences?
- d. Read the [German](#) and [Swedish](#) texts and consider what is lost when using wordle in textual analysis. Consider also whether a wordle gives an accurate picture of the contents of a text. What limitations do wordle have in textual analysis?

4 Analysis in group

Split up the pairs and make new groups of four and analyze the following:

- a. Describe Columbus in a few written sentences and highlight differences. What was Columbus like? How is Columbus described in the different texts? What are the key differences between the ways in which he is portrayed in each article?
- b. Why is Columbus described in such different ways in the texts?
- c. How can one notice that the text is written for a popular historical magazine? Compare for instance the headlines, images, quotes and narratives in the magazines with the design and content of your textbook

5 Trustworthy?

In groups analyze:

- a. What sources are used in the texts to describe Columbus' deeds?
- b. What theoretical position (bias) do you think the author has?
- c. How trustworthy do you consider the texts to be?