

About the Book

Text Type: Fiction/Realistic Page Count: 24 Word Count: 2,752

Book Summary

A girl named Karen is assigned a research report on Christopher Columbus. She is upset at first because she is convinced that she already knows all the interesting facts about her subject. However, her research uncovers many exciting and lesser-known facts. She fills in her brother on Columbus's unknown plights and failures as she reiterates what she's learned. While writing her paper, Karen begins to understand that perhaps she has to "unlearn" some things about a national hero. Illustrations and a map support the text.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Visualize

Objectives

- Use the reading strategy of visualizing to understand text
- Analyze characters in the text
- Identify and use complex sentences
- Recognize and use synonyms and antonyms

Materials

Green text indicates resources available on the website

- Book—*Christopher Columbus* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry erase board
- World map
- Thesauruses
- Index cards
- **Visualize, analyze character, complex sentences, synonyms and antonyms worksheets**
- **Discussion cards**



Indicates an opportunity for students to mark in the book. (All activities may be demonstrated by projecting book on interactive whiteboard or completed with paper and pencil if books are reused.)

Vocabulary

*Bold vocabulary words also appear in a pre-made lesson for this title on VocabularyA-Z.com.

- **Content words:**

Story critical: ***fleet*** (n.), ***navigator*** (n.), ***New World*** (n.), ***route*** (n.), ***settlement*** (n.), ***voyage*** (n.)

Enrichment: *abusing* (v.), *admiral* (n.), *channel* (n.), *colonist* (n.), *disgrace* (n.), *optimism* (n.), *revolted* (v.), *slave* (n.), *tragedy* (n.), *triumphant* (adj.), *venture* (n.), *venture* (v.)

Before Reading

Build Background

- Using a large world map, point to North America and then Europe and Asia. Ask students if they have ever heard of Christopher Columbus. Have them tell what they know about the explorer. Point out Spain and tell students that the king and queen of Spain provided Christopher Columbus with ships for several voyages across the Atlantic Ocean. Ask students if they know the names of his three most famous ships (the *Nina*, the *Pinta*, and the *Santa Maria*). Explain that Columbus was really trying to sail to Asia when he landed in different parts of the New World, now known as the Americas.

Preview the Book

Introduce the Book

- Give students their copy of the book. Guide them to the front and back covers and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers. Encourage them to offer ideas as to what type of book it is (genre, text type, fiction or nonfiction, and so on) and what it might be about.
- Show students the title page. Discuss the information on the page (title of book, author's name, illustrator's name).
- Preview the table of contents on page 3. Remind students that the table of contents provides an overview of the book. Ask students what they expect to read about in the book, on the basis of what they see in the table of contents. (Accept all answers that students can justify.)

Introduce the Reading Strategy: **Visualize**

- Explain to students that good readers often visualize, or create pictures in their mind, while reading. Visualizing is creating mental images in one's mind to construct meaning. Explain that one way to visualize is to draw a picture. Read aloud to the end of page 4 while students follow along silently.
- Model how to visualize using a drawing.
Think-aloud: Whenever I read a book, I always pause after a few pages to create a picture in my mind of the information I've read. This helps me organize the important information and understand the ideas in the book. For example, on page 4, the story begins with Karen talking to her family and telling them why she's upset. Using what I know about emotions, body language, and facial expressions, I imagined a girl stomping into the dining room with her hands on her hips, a frown, and lips pinched together in anger. I imagined her family looking on with concerned and confused faces.
- Introduce, explain, and have students draw what they visualized from page 4 on their visualize worksheet. Invite students to share their drawings.
- As students read, encourage them to use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

Introduce the Comprehension Skill: **Analyze character**

- Explain that there are many ways to learn about a character in a story. One way is to examine a character's words or thoughts. Another way is to examine the actions of the character. Explain to students that an author uses a character's words, thoughts, and actions to give the reader insight into a character's personality, relationships, and motivations, and the conflicts he or she may face.
- Ask students to return to page 4. Model how to analyze a character, on the basis of his or her actions.
Think-aloud: As I read page 4, I found out that Karen was upset because she drew Christopher Columbus's name to write a report about. She said that other kids got really neat people on which to write their reports and that she was "majorly not happy" that her topic had to be Columbus. Her mother guessed right away that Karen was upset about something happening at school. On the basis of these clues, Karen appears to be passionate, interested in school, and a little hot-tempered. This information provides insight into Karen's personality.
- Have students read the first two paragraphs on page 5. Discuss the fact that the words might suggest that Karen is knowledgeable and quick to judge. (She already knows that Columbus discovered America and proved that the world is round. She quickly judged that he was boring before researching him any further.)
- Introduce, explain, and have students record the information from the discussion on their **analyze character worksheet**.

Introduce the Vocabulary

- Cut out the map and illustration on pages 10 and 14 from the book and post them on the board. Write the following story-critical vocabulary words on the board: *voyage*, *route*, and *navigator*. Remind students that they can look for context clues in the text and photographs to help them define an unfamiliar word.

- Show students the illustration from page 14. Point out the ocean stretching out into the distance of the illustration. Ask students if they know the name of a long trip or journey, especially on a ship. Point to the word *voyage* on the board. Have students turn to page 12 and find the sentence in which the word *voyage* can be found. Have a volunteer read the glossary definition for *voyage*, and have him or her compare it to the ideas that were discussed while looking at the illustration.
- Ask students if they know another word for a path or road from one place to another. Invite them to share their ideas. Show students the map from page 10 and ask volunteers to follow a route from Europe to India. Point to the word *route* on the board. Have students turn to page 10 and find the sentence in which the word *route* can be found. Have a volunteer read the glossary definition for *route*, and have him or her compare it to the ideas that were discussed while looking at the map and using prior knowledge
- Repeat the exercise using the illustration from page 14 and the vocabulary word *navigator* from page 22.
- Have volunteers use the words *voyage*, *route*, and *navigator* (along with the book title) to predict the events that occur in *Christopher Columbus*. Invite them to share their predictions with a neighbor. Repeat the exercise once students have finished reading the book to check for understanding of the vocabulary.

Set the Purpose

- Have students read to find out more about Karen's research report about Christopher Columbus. Remind them to stop after every few pages to visualize the most important information and to draw on their visualize worksheet what they visualized about it.

During Reading


Student Reading




Guide the reading: Have students read from the top of page 5 to the end of page 9. Ask them to place an asterisk or a star next to information where they visualized. Encourage students who finish before everyone else to go back and reread.

- Model visualizing.
Think-aloud: When I read about Columbus's first from Italy to England, I pictured five ships headed out to sea. I pictured all of the ships being attacked just a few miles from the coast. I visualized cannonballs smashing the decks of the ships one by one and each ship sinking into the ocean, engulfed in flames and smoke. I pictured Columbus swimming in the deep, dark waters, completely exhausted once he reached the shore. Have students draw pictures of what they visualized while reading. Have them explain their drawings aloud.
- Ask students why, on the basis of the information in the book so far, Karen might be considered studious and excited about knowledge? (Karen researched for three days and took a lot of notes; she was excited to share with her brother about what she had learned about Columbus; she started by telling him about things he might be interested in.) Have students record the information from the discussion on their analyze character worksheet for pages 5 through 9.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students read to the end of page 12. Have them visualize the information in the text as they read. Ask students to draw what they pictured on their visualize worksheet. Invite students to share what they visualized.
- Ask students to explain whether they think Karen's personality has changed at this point in the story or stayed the same. Write any new examples in the Traits section of the analyze characters worksheet for pages 10 through 12. Then have students write clues that support their answers from the text on the analyze character worksheet (resourceful: You know all those spices Mom has in the kitchen cabinet? sensitive: ...a touch of annoyance in her voice, and so on). Have students share their responses from the text.

- Discuss how events in the story help to show different sides to Karen's personality. Encourage students to add more examples to their analyze character worksheet when they come across more evidence to support character traits already listed.

 Have students read the remainder of the book. Remind them to visualize as they read and have them continue to place an asterisk or a star next to information where they visualized.

 Have students make a question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. Encourage them to use the strategies they have learned to read each word and figure out its meaning.

After Reading

- Ask students what words, if any, they marked in their book. Use this opportunity to model how they can read these words using decoding strategies and context clues.

Reflect on the Reading Strategy

- Ask students to explain or show how the strategy of visualizing helped them understand and remember important events in the story.
- **Think-aloud:** *When I read about the Santa Maria wrecking at Hispaniola, I pictured the large ship crashing into the island and breaking into pieces. I pictured the crew using the wood from their broken ship, hauling it onto higher ground, and building a large fort. I visualized them painting a sign for the fort after Columbus decided to name it La Navidad. This helped me to understand how this fort came to be and to remember that part of the book.*
- **Independent practice:** Have students complete the visualize worksheet. Discuss their answers aloud after they are finished.

Reflect on the Comprehension Skill

- **Discussion:** Review the characteristics of Karen that students identified from the first page of the story and those written in the first column on the board (passionate, interested in school, hot-tempered). Review the other character traits on the board identified as Karen's (quick to judge, studious, excited about knowledge, resourceful, sensitive). Ask students if other character traits were revealed later in the story.
- **Independent practice:** Have students complete the analyze character worksheet. Discuss their answers aloud after they are finished.
- **Enduring understanding:** In this story, Karen was surprised to find that some of the facts she had long held true about Christopher Columbus may not have been on the basis of truth. Now that you know this information, why do you think it is important to conduct further research on a topic, even when you might think you've learned all there is to learn?

Build Skills

Grammar and Mechanics: **Complex sentences**

- Write the following sentence (from page 7 in the text) on the board: *French vessels attacked the ships _____ they were just a few miles out to sea.*
- Have students read the sentence and suggest words that belong in the blank to complete the sentence (*when, since, because*).
- Review or explain that a *conjunction* is a word that joins together two parts of a sentence. Point to the examples that students suggested to complete the sentence on the board. Explain that these conjunctions join parts of sentences together to form a *complex sentence*. List examples of conjunctions on the board (*after, although, as, as if, because, before, for, it, once, since, so, than, that, though, unless, until, when, whenever, where, whereas, wherever, whether, while*).

Lesson Plan *(continued)*

Christopher Columbus

- Reread the sentence on the board, including a conjunction in the sentence. (*French vessels attacked the ships when they were just a few miles out to sea.*) Underline *French vessels attacked the ships*. Explain that this part of the sentence is called the *independent clause*. Circle *when they were just a few miles out to sea*. Explain that the part of the sentence that follows the conjunction is called the *dependent clause*. Point out that even though both sentence parts contain a subject and verb, the dependent clause does not express a complete thought and is not a sentence on its own.



- **Check for understanding:** Have students highlight the following sentence on page 16 of their book: *As part of his hero's welcome, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella gave him a generous reward, made him governor of the new lands, and named him Admiral of the Ocean Sea.* Have students underline the dependent clause (*As part of his hero's welcome*) and circle the independent clause (*King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella gave him a generous reward, made him governor of the new lands, and named him Admiral of the Ocean Sea*). Ask students to identify the conjunction (*as*).
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [complex sentences worksheet](#). Discuss their answers aloud after they are finished.

Word Work: **Synonyms and antonyms**

- Write the word *mad* on the board. Ask students to suggest a word that means almost the same thing (*angry, furious*). Review or explain that a word that means the same or almost the same as another word is called a *synonym*. Ask students to suggest a word that means the opposite of *mad* (*calm, happy*). Review or explain that a word that means the opposite of another word is called an *antonym*.
- Have students locate the third paragraph on page 7. Write the following sentence on the board: *He started thinking about where a fast westward-moving current, called the Canary Current, might carry a sailing ship.* Ask students to find the word that tells the speed of the current (*fast*). Ask them to suggest a word that means the same or almost the same as *fast* (*rapid*). Ask them to suggest a word that means the opposite of *fast* (*slow*).
- Show students a thesaurus. Use the example above to explain how a thesaurus is used, writing synonyms and antonyms for *fast* on the board.
- **Check for understanding:** Give pairs of students a thesaurus. Ask them to find the word *interesting* and have them name the synonyms listed. If the thesaurus lists antonyms, have them find the antonyms for *interesting*. If needed, provide additional practice using a thesaurus.
- **Independent practice:** Give students the [synonyms-and-antonyms worksheet](#). Discuss their answers aloud once everyone has finished working independently.

Build Fluency

Independent Reading

- Allow students to read their book independently. Additionally, partners can take turns reading parts of the book to each other.

Home Connection

- Give students their book to take home to read with parents, caregivers, siblings, or friends. Have them visualize with someone at home when they read the book.

Extend the Reading

Realistic Fiction Writing Connection

Have students write a realistic fiction story about a different historical figure. Tell them that the story should have a main character and at least one supporting character, and challenge them to add dialogue. Remind students to keep the characters and events believable since they are writing a realistic fiction piece based in history. Have students share their finished stories aloud in small groups, and encourage those who finish early to illustrate their work.

Visit [Writing A-Z](#) for a lesson and leveled materials on narrative writing.

Social Studies Connection

Provide print and Internet resources for students to work in groups to find out more about ship navigation in the 1400s. Supply index cards for students to record their findings. Have them find out the answers to questions such as: *What tools did sailors use? How did they know when to use them? Did these tools always work? Who taught the skill of navigation to the sailors?* Have students report their findings to the class.

Skill Review

[Discussion cards](#) covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided as an extension activity. The following is a list of some ways these cards can be used with students:

- Use as discussion starters for literature circles.
- Have students choose one or more cards and write a response, either as an essay or as a journal entry.
- Distribute before reading the book and have students use one of the questions as a purpose for reading.
- Cut apart and use the cards as game cards with a board game.
- Conduct a class discussion as a review before the book quiz.

Assessment

Monitor students to determine if they can:

- consistently use the strategy of visualizing to comprehend the text during discussion and on a worksheet
- analyze the words, thoughts, and actions of the main character during discussion and on a worksheet
- correctly identify the parts of complex sentences during discussion and on a worksheet
- identify, select, and use synonyms and antonyms during discussion and on a worksheet

Comprehension Checks

- [Book Quiz](#)
- [Retelling Rubric](#)