

Columbus, the indian, and human progress essay sample

[Sociology](#), [Slavery](#)



1. Zinn's main purpose for writing *A People's History of the United States* is to show history from the viewpoint of others. 2. This is Zinn's thesis for pages 1-11: These traits did not stand out in the Europe of the Renaissance, dominated as it was by religion of popes, the government of kings, and the frenzy for money that marked Western Civilization and its first messenger to the Americas, Christopher Columbus. 3. According to Zinn, Columbus is portrayed as a holy character that was brave enough to sail into the unknown in traditional history books. 4. Zinn disputes Henry Kissinger's statement: "History is the memory of the states," because he believes that history is the memory of the people and how they were in the American countries of today.

5. Howard Zinn's basic criticism of historian Samuel Elliot Morison's book "*Christopher Columbus, Mariner*" was that Morison used too many dangling participles. 6. The major issues that Bartolome de las Casas brings up regarding Spanish expeditions in the Carribeans was that he witnessed the Columbian oppression of the native peoples of the Americas. Also after witnessing it, he returned to Europe and became a priest. 7. Columbus's early motive and subsequent motive that led him to oppress indigenous peoples was explained when he arrived in the west Indies, on the first island he had found and took the natives by force in order to learn and gather information of these new lands he had found. 8. The ultimate fate of the Arawak Indians was extinction because over the centuries, they were subject to hostile take-overs, diseases, enslavement, and damage to food supplies by the Europeans.

Zinn Chapter 1: pp. 2-22

Columbus, The Indian, and Human Progress

1. The significance of the Quetzalcoatl was that he was a God that was supposed to come back in human form to his followers. This legend made the Aztecs believe that Cortez was the Quetzalcoatl. This gave the Spaniards enough time to take power in the new world. 2. The similarity between Cortez and Pizarro was that they both used the same strategy by kidnapping the emperor and demanding tons of gold. The difference between the conquests of the Aztecs and the Incas was that the Spanish found many states eager to topple their Aztec over lords and Montezuma lost power when his divinity was disapproved by his kidnap. The Incas supported their leader till the end and were able to steal Spanish supplies. 3. The major causes of war between the Powhatans and the English Settlers was the refusal of the English from the Powhatan's land. 4. The significance of Powhatan's statement is that it is not only his words; it was also the Indian's words as they watched the white men enter their territory.

5. John Winthrop's legal and biblical justification for seizing Indian land was justified the Puritans justified seizing Indian land because the Indian's only had a natural right to it which does not have legal standing to it. It was not a civil right. Governor Winthrop also used biblical backup. 6. The main tactic of warfare used by the English against the Indians was deliberate attacks on noncombatants for the purpose of terrorizing the enemy. This meant that they would attack those not able to fight, which in this case would be the women and children. 7. The English were able to justify their attacks on

Indian land because he had studied their language and advocated fair dealings with them.

8. At the time of Columbus's arrival to North America, the ten million Indians living there would reduce to less than one million Indians, due to diseases introduced by whites. 9. In this statement, it explains that we can give something up, but do we have the right to throw a child or our child directly into death for an unclear progress? 10. Zinn attempted to prove that Indians were not inferior by describing their peaceful life in the Americas, even before Christ. For example, Zinn described the Indian world as a world with a complex culture, but egalitarian. Everyone among the different tribes helped each other out and kept peace throughout centuries. He described it as the most beautifully worked out relations there could be in the entire world.

Zinn Chapter 2: Drawing the Color Line

1. According to Zinn, the root of racism is slavery because it created a separation between whites and blacks for about 350 years. The whites were superior and the blacks were inferior. 2. Africans were considered better slaves than Indians in Virginia because the whites were outnumbered by Indians and faced retaliation if they were enslaved. Slaves were also resourceful on their indigenous lands while whites were not benefited at all. 3. Sixteenth century Africa compared to sixteenth century Europe politically because many African states were highly organized, rivaling the European states. Also, in the economic aspect, many port cities existed that allowed a

great amount of trading with Europe. Now in the military aspect, Europeans had superior firearms but were unable to overpower Africans on the inside.

4. Slavery in the Americas and Europe was much different than African slavery because Americans and Europeans treated slaves more like animals than humans, which led to racism against blacks. It led to a cruel form of human servitude. While in Africa, slaves were able to marry, build a family, own property, have their own slaves, and could even become heirs of their lords and masters. 5. The conditions of the slaves on ships during the middle passage were terrible. One in three blacks died on the ship during the trip to America. They were also chained to the floor and were layed on their own waste without being able to move. 6. The Catholic Church did not consider slavery as unlawful or unmoral. 7. The cost of slavery in the Americas was about fifty million dollars. 8. As the plantation system grew, more labor was needed.

9. Many slaves did not accept their fate easily, so many slaves revolted, many attempted to run away, many attempted incidents of sabotage on their masters, and many risked their lives to keep their family together. 10. Slave owners feared poor whites because the poor whites were economically poor, and they were frustrated with the white aristocrats. The poor whites were ready to rebel and in many instances they revolted with blacks.

Zinn Chapter 3: Persons of Mean and Vile Condition

1. This is the thesis of this chapter: As the colonial period progressed, a distinct class structure developed, creating significant class tension between

poor and rich whites. 2. The cause of Bacon's rebellion was because the unhappy farmers in West Virginia were angry that Governor Berkeley and the House of Burgesses seemed to do little to protect the western borders from Indian attacks. 3. The "double motive" of the Virginia government vis-à-vis Bacon's rebellion was because essentially, the House of Burgesses sought to divide Indians to control them while they punished rebellious whites to discourage and put a stop to future revolts. 4. Free men, indentured servants, and black slaves took part of Bacon's rebellion.

5. Indentured servants were poor Europeans who agreed to provide exclusive service for 5 to 7 years in return for the cost of transportation to the new world. It was white slavery. They were bought and sold like slaves. They could only marry with permission, could have families separated, and could be beaten if they disobeyed their master. 6. The voyage of the indentured servants was a bit different than the middle passage because they were not chained like the blacks were, but they did experience crowdedness and extreme health problems. 7. The majority of the indentured servants remained poor, some returned to England, or died during their years of servitude. Those that remained became tenant farmers.

8. The wealthy class managed to acquire wealth and power, while the poor grew more and more. A growing middle class of artisans and merchants began to develop during this time. 9. A historian noted a Boston tax list from 1687 and 1770 and noticed that in 1687, the top 1% owned about 25% of the wealth, and in 1770, the top 1% owned 44% of the wealth. 10. The statement means that at the time of the American Revolution, many people

living in America were not free or economically self-sufficient. The majority of the indentured servants were better off in Europe, 20% of the population were black slaves, women were left out, and all the power was left in the hands of a few aristocrats

11. The rich managed to keep the Indians at a distance by sending the Indians to the west and putting the poor whites on the western frontier to create a buffer zone between the rich whites and the Indians. 12. Parliament made transportation to the new world a legal punishment for crime because colonies grew aware that there were many blacks creating the possibility of revolts. This is why white criminals were sent to America so they can equalize the population. 13. This statement means that in order for the rich whites to control the poor whites, they began to play a race card game. Thus creating alliances with all the whites in order to put the poor whites against the blacks.

Zinn Chapter 4: Tyranny is Tyranny

1. This is the thesis for chapter 4: Around 1776, certain important people in the English colonies made a discovery that would prove enormously useful for the next two hundred years. They found that by creating a nation, a symbol, a legal unity called the United States; they could take over land, profits, and political power from favorites of the British Empire.

2. It benefited the United States because only a few families owned most of the wealth. To keep the wealth, they married into wealthy families. The wealthy people also created laws to protect their wealth, power, and

appointed people to enforce the laws. 3. The more concentrated wealth was in Philadelphia and New York. By 1750, the wealthiest people from these cities left five million dollars as recorded by the court. The top 5% of Boston's tax payers controlled 49% of the cities taxes. 4. The loyalists and the leaders of the revolution were concerned about the lower classes in Philadelphia because the working class was successful in gaining political power. This made them worry that the lower class would become more autonomous. 5. The major issue that fueled the regulator movement was the movement of "leveling" that was underway, as colonies were striving for economic equality. 6. General Gage's observation vis-à-vis the leaders of the movement against the stamp act was that he saw that it required American colonists to pay a tax on all printed paper they used, such as: ship papers, legal documents, licenses, newspapers, other publications, and even playing cards were taxed.

7. According to Zinn, the advice that the colonial leaders gave to the people was that they should form their own militia for the Townshend acts. 8. The Sons of Liberty came from the middle class. Their goal was to protect the rights of the colonists from the abductions by the British government after 1766 9. The significance of Patrick Henry's oratory, "Give me liberty or give me death" was that it was patriotic to question government. 10. One of John Adams concerns vis-à-vis Thomas Paine's common sense was that it would bring the rising revolutionary sentiment into focus by placing blame for the suffering of the colonies directly on the Monarch.

11. According to Zinn, Paine is one of his heroes because he destroyed royal authority through his radical flyers, the ones that Americans ignored. 12. The groups of Americans that were deprived of the ideals set forth in the Declaration of Independence were the blacks because they were still kept for slaves and they deprived basic human rights. 13. Zinn described John Locke as a wealthy man with investments in the silk slave trades, but he actually helped a lot with slavery and child labor. He also contributed in the Declaration of Independence. 14. This statement the immediate dissatisfaction of the Americans after the Declaration of Independence was issued.

Zinn Chapter 5: Part I pp. 76-88

A Kind of Revolution

1. The Colonial population was not very fond of the revolutionary war, but they still helped a little bit with weapons and boats from sailors and mechanics. 2. Slavery largely impacted the war effort in the south. Revolts from the slaves took a major toll on the south. 3. Revolutionary war leaders told current soldiers to talk about how their life has been impacted, but improved by the war in order to attract recruits. They also said that if you joined, your social status and earnings would increase. 4. The American Navy's position on impressments was that they had copied what the British did before. 5. Robert Morris's plan to assuage the concerns of financial contributors to the continental congress angered the common soldier because they did not agree with this plan. This meant little food and water, and danger of multiple illnesses.

6. The British strategy concerning slavery in the south was to allow the slaves to join their army in order to decrease slavery and the population in the south. This worked because slaves weren't allowed to join due to the fright that slavery would decrease. 7. The revolution had created takes that made the Americans support the church, but Zinn disagrees that the separation of the church and the state was due to the revolution. 8. The land confiscated from the loyalists by the revolutionary leaders caused the social classes to change. The rich class rose and the middle class rose between the poor and rich classes.

9. Morgan's summary of the class of nature of the revolution challenged the popular perception of the revolution and its ideals by creating a struggle for power between the upper class population. Morris's statement about popular perception was based more on the rich white men. 10. "No new social class came to power throughout the door of the American Revolution." Meant that rich men still came to power at the end of the war, it had not changed the social status. 11. America's victory on the Native Americans impacted them because the government had excluded them from the Declaration of Independence and this caused them to suffer even more. 12. Jennings' statement: The revolution was a "multiplicity of variously oppressed and exploited peoples who preyed upon each other."

Zinn Chapter 5: Part II pp. 88-101

A Kind of Revolution

1. Beard's thesis involved that the rich people had a choice of two things to benefit the: to completely control the government or control the laws that the government controls. So what do the Founding Fathers and the constitution have to do with this? Beard one said " that most of them were lawyers and were really rich." He also discovered that the writers of the constitution had direct ties to the economic interest that needed a powerful government. They needed this for people such as money lenders or sieve keepers. Everyone needed a powerful government and a good economy to keep moving forward. 2. The source of resentment in western towns of Massachusetts against the legislature in Boston was because the people could not be in the state office if they weren't rich, due to the constitution of 1780 raising property requirements for voting. The legislature has also stopped issuing paper money, so that the farmers in debt could pay off their debt

3. The disgruntled western farmers sought to improve their shaky situation by becoming armed and form legal conventions to oppose the legislature created in the west. 4. Daniel Shays' goal was to bring the disgruntled western farmers all together to fight against the legislature and bring justice to the farmers. 5. Jefferson's view of the uprisings was very decisive and positive. He thought that they helped bring the people together for a good cause, but other leaders thought this would tear the people apart. 6. Zinn states that democracy's problem in post- revolutionary America was not primarily due to constitutional limitations on voting because the conflicts

were based more on social classes. The difference between the wealthy and poor classes caused more conflicts than limitations on voting.

7. Zinn is critical of Madison's argument in Federalist X because Madison thinks that the government was made only to maintain unity in America, but Zinn thinks there is more to it. 8. Zinn asserts that despite party differences among federalists and democratic-republicans, they were both fundamentally similar because they both wanted a solid government, and they also believed that it would be more solid with two agreeing on plans. 9. Zinn characterizes the constitution's compromise by distinct concept from the north and south. 10. Zinn refutes Beard's critic, Robert E. Brown because Brown believes that the wealth and property should belong to the Americans, but Zinn disagrees because many people own land, and many people own more land than others. 11. The constitution illustrates the complexity of the American System by helping the middle class and the rich class, but the government always supports the rich class more.

12. The constitution's contract clause or tax clause favor rich over the poor because they know that the rich are more likely to pay taxes, but more taxes were established for the poor than for the rich. 13. Zinn argued the first amendment is not stable a one might assume the government cares less for the first amendment and people revolting against them. Zinn thinks that the first amendment is useless because people get arrested for speaking out against the government and president. 14. Zinn contrasts the government's enforcement of the first amendment and the power to tax because they basically have the same government that they had in England. If people

spoke out, they were arrested and put in jail, and taxes were the same. 15.

Zinn refutes Bernard Bailyn's view of the creation of the constitution because it was only established to help them, but not the actual American.

Zinn Chapter 6: The Intimately Oppressed

1. The theme of this reading was about the oppression of woman in American History. 2. The treatment of women differs in private property and communal living because in private property, women were familiar with others doing homework and labor work. In communal living, they did their own work around the house and the land and it was usually an entire family living together. 3. The earliest female settlers in Virginia were there for poverty reasons. They were indentured servants, but treated as slaves. They were also brought to Virginia to raise the population. 4. Women were treated differently on the frontier compared to those living in towns or cities because women on the frontier were viewed the same as men because they worked hard like men, but in cities and towns, they were viewed less equal than men because their jobs were easier than the ones done by men.

5. English law affected the status of women in America because America used the same laws of the English. Women were still treated the same in America like they were in England. The women were still property to their husband in marriages. 6. Zinn uses the cases of Ann Hutchinson to support his basic argument so he could describe how women were frowned upon in public. Ann Hutchinson was known as a speaker in her colony, but one day she was exiled because of this. 7. The American Revolution affected the

women's public life. The revolution allowed women to meet in public and form groups to even boycott England. 8. Abigail Adams' position on the role of woman in America was that they should be treated equal as men and respected like men. She fought for Woman's rights so they may speak their thoughts. She also teamed up with upper class women.

9. The social forces that led to the onset of the "Cult of true Womanhood" and the "Cult of domesticity" were so woman could group up and be the symbol of purity since men as a whole were believed to be sinful. 10. Dress was used as a mean of social control because women were forced to wear corsets and petti coats. These clothes were much different than men's because the body was more defined. 11. The rights that were denied to women in the "Cult of Womanhood" were to follow the men's' orders at all times. Also, if women were engaged to sexual relations, they were exiled. Clothes were also a big part of women's rights

12. Workers' strikes in the 1830's and the 1840's reflected the changing role of women by allowing women to have jobs and work hard labor. When women got jobs, they also wanted to be treated equal as men. 13. The connection between primary school teaching and women's participation in the reform movement of the 1830's, 1840's, and 1850's because women gained intelligence and they powered that intelligence and learning towards the reform movements towards future. Since they gained intelligence and took part on the reforms, they became socially acceptable.