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[Countries](#), [United States](#)



Gabrielle Lewis Final Paper Howard Zinn's "The Peoples History of the United States", is a must read. This book is very eye opening and informative. By just looking at the title we can conclude that the approach to the history of the United States used by Zinn, is that of the people. He writes this book from a completely different perspective of most historians. He finds a way to make history become alive and present in our everyday lives. He creates awareness in things our forefathers wanted us to overlook. His viewpoint is unlike any views that I am familiar with. If you are like me then you have never found history to be anything other than boring and useless. However reading this book will change your mind. In reading just the first chapter I was so intrigued, not only from his style of writing but also by the new information I was presented it. In a review for this book it was said, " A People's History of the United States is an attempt to balance the scales by writing about parts of US history that aren't often covered in depth. It focuses particularly on the effects of government policy on the poor, women, and non-whites throughout US history, documents labor movements and equality movement in more depth than one normally sees, and points out the mixed and disappointing records of US cultural heroes. It is in other words, an attack on assumptions and accepted wisdom about the heroes and important events in history, and on the stories we tell ourselves as a culture. " This book is truly one of the most informative books I have ever read. It discusses the ceaseless conflict between elites and the masses of whom they oppress and exploit. Zinn is writes this so well that he doesn't allow bias to get in the way of through research, and substantial pieces of the text are quotes from original source materials. The things he finds in his research are

so fascinating and completely different from what we are taught. I was so amazed by all the new information I was obtaining. It began to make me question myself. I began asking myself how I did not know this information. All I knew about Christopher Columbus and the Indians was that, Columbus was an explorer from Spain who founded America by accident, and that he used the Nina, the Pinta, and The Santa Maria. All I knew of the Indians taught. However, the very first chapter of the book showed me that there was so much more to the story than what I knew. " When Columbus and his sailors came ashore, carrying swords, speaking oddly, the Arawaks ran to greet them, brought them food, water, gifts. He later wrote of this in his log: They...brought us parrots and balls of cotton and spears and many other things, which they exchanged for the glass beads and hawk's bells. 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 of made of cane...they would make fine servants...with fifty men we could subjugate them all and make them do whatever we want" Columbus knew that he could take full control over the Indians because, they simply just did not know better. They were not used to oppression so therefore they would not know how to resist it. Another part of this chapter that I also found interesting was that Christopher Columbus' main goal was to find gold and he would use any means necessary to make that happen. " He took more Indian prisoners and put them aboard his two remaining ships. At one part of the island he got into a fight with Indians who refused to trade as many bows as he and his

men wanted. Two were run through with swords and bled to death. When the weather got cold, the Indian prisoners began to die" " In the year 1495, they went on a great slave raid, rounded up fifteen hundred Arawak men, women, and children, and put them in pens guarded by Spaniards and dogs, then picked the 500 best specimens to load onto ships. Of those five hundred, two hundred died en route. The rest arrived alive in Spain and were put up for sale by the archdeacon of the town, who reported that. Although the slaves were ' naked as the day they were born,' they showed ' no more embarrassment than animals.' Columbus later wrote: " Let us in the name of Holy Trinity go on sending all the slaves that can be sold. " What we have been taught in school was that Christopher Columbus was a great hero. We're taught that he was a respectable man, and that he founded this great country called America...however, just reading the first chapter of Howard Zinn's book, we realize that this is not true. He was just like the rest of the elites who wanted nothing more than to exploit people for the benefit of self. It's so sad that we as American would have a holiday in recognition of a man who single handedly tore down a whole creed to find gold.