

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Sec.: \_\_\_\_\_

# The People v. Columbus, et al

## Trial Preparation

**Instructions:** Your group will have one and half class days to begin “defending” your innocence in court, but no good lawyer has ever won a case without doing their *homework* first. Loosen the tie, put down the briefcase, and *time to put your legal expertise to work!* Each step completed is worth 10 classwork points.

### Step #1: Read over the following group roles, and assign each person a role:

Group Member’s Name and Role:

**Attorney** – Addresses the jury and class. Questions other defendants, and explains to the whole class why their client is innocent and others are guilty. This person should be prepared to argue and question in front of the class.

Attorney: \_\_\_\_\_

**Defendant** – Plays the part of the person on trial. Your job will be to remain quiet during the trial unless questioned by other attorneys. You must respond in character.

Paralegal: \_\_\_\_\_

**Paralegal(s)** – Responsible for making sure that both your Attorney and Defendant are extremely well prepared and ready to go before the trial. You may be called to speak in attorney’s absence. You will remain by the defendant’s side during the trial and assist the attorney in any way you can.

Paralegal: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historical Expert/Juror** – Your group will have two historical experts responsible for knowing their HISTORY inside and out! You are responsible for the research and evidence gathering that will help your team win the case. You can also be called as a witness. One of the two historical experts will be asked to participate on the jury during the trial.

Defendant: \_\_\_\_\_

Historical Expert: \_\_\_\_\_

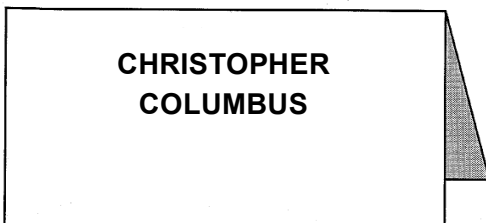
Historical Expert: \_\_\_\_\_

### Step #2: Create a nameplate so your team is visible:

Make sure your team’s name is visible and create one visual symbol to represent your defendant. Your nameplate should be appropriate and COLORFUL!

Mr. V’s Stamp When Step #1 Is Completed

Mr. V’s Stamp When Step #2 Is Completed



**Step #3: Prepare your opening statement and defense:**

**With the help of your group**, come up with all of the reasons for your innocence. Remember, that a good lawyer does not lie, but perhaps stretches the truth. Be sure that the defense of your client includes multiple reasons as to why your defendant is not guilty. If you are pleading guilty, then your opening statement must include the reasons for your guilt AND must name another defendant in the trial this is ALSO guilty.

*Mr. V's Stamp When Step #3 Is Completed*

"Ladies and gentlemen of the court, my client \_\_\_\_\_ is not guilty because...

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Step #4: Witnesses:**

**Witness List**

**Part of your defense is to** convince the jury of your innocence, but that others are in fact *guilty*. Of the four other groups, you must now choose at least two witnesses to question in front of the court.

*Example:* Attorneys for the King and Queen might call one of the Taínos to stand and say: "Have you ever seen me before?" ...."No? No further questions your honor."

**Witness #1:**

---

---

**Witness #2:**

---

---

**Step #4: Witnesses (continued):**

Write your questions below that you will ask of your two witnesses. Think of questions that will get the jury to see that your client is *innocent*.

Mr. V's Stamp When Step #4 Is Completed

Questions for Witness #1 \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

Questions for Witness #2 \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

**Step #5: Historical Expertise:**

Your historical experts are in charge of finding just the right EVIDENCE to support your opening and closing statements, and the questions you will be asking of the witnesses. List your evidence and sources below.

Mr. V's Stamp When Step #5 Is Completed

**Name of Evidence #1**

**Name of Evidence #2**

**Name of Evidence #3**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Source #1**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Source #2**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Source #3**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**How does it help your case?**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**How does it help your case?**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**How does it help your case?**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Step #6: Closing Statement and Rehearsal

**Write your questions below** each group at the end will have an opportunity to make one final *closing statement* on the final day of the trial. As a group, come up together with a POWERFUL statement to leave the jury with. What idea do you want to plant into the jury's head before they deliberate a verdict? Each team will have 3 minutes to make their closing statement. At this stage, each team member should be rehearsing his or her role in preparation of the first day of the trial.

"Ladies and gentlemen of the court, in closing, my client \_\_\_\_\_ is not guilty because...

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

*Mr. V's Stamp When Step #6 Is Completed*

### Extra Credit: Dressing Up

**A successful lawyer** is a well-dressed lawyer. All of group members are expected to actively participate in the trial, but individuals can earn an additional 5 (five) bonus points on their project grade for dressing professionally as lawyers.

