

Lesson 2.3

THIS JUST IN: EXPLORER MEETS WABANAKI INDIANS

Objective: Students will articulate what they imagine to be the Wabanaki perspective on European exploration by writing and performing a newscast based on European accounts.

Materials:

- **Sheet 2.3A:** Directions
- **Sheet 2.3B:** Planning Worksheet
- **Doc. 2.3A:** Excerpt by Giovanni da Verrazzano, 1524
- **Doc. 2.3B:** Excerpt by George Weymouth, 1605
- **Doc. 2.3C:** Excerpt by Father Pierre Biard, 1611
- **Doc. 2.3D:** Excerpt by Raleigh Gilbert, 1607

Timing: Four to five class periods, with time outside of class for preparation

Background Reading: Chapter Two

Procedure:

1. Review with the class the reading from Chapter Two on the four explorers represented in the excerpts: Giovanni da Verrazzano, George Weymouth, Father Pierre Biard, and Raleigh Gilbert (of the Popham Colony). Go over their nationalities and their loyalties, as well as where they explored and how they interacted with the Wabanaki.
2. Discuss briefly with students where this information comes from: original 17th century writings. Discuss the challenge of reading a document from the 17th century.
 - The language is difficult, so reading takes work: looking up words in the dictionary and reading the passage over several times in order to understand it. Pull an example from one of the excerpts to go over with the class.
 - Students should examine the different perspectives as they read. The excerpts subjective—they are only one version of what actually happened. They should keep in mind that these documents were written by Europeans, for Europeans.
3. Have students break into groups of 4-5 people. Give them one of the excerpts to decipher together. Have them read it out loud together a few times, and look up all the words they don't know.
4. Each group should choose one person to play each of the following roles: News Anchor, Correspondent, Wabanaki Person(s), European Person(s) (see Directions). After they fully understand their excerpt, they can begin planning their newscast. Each group should fill out the Planning Sheet before they write their skit; they should get your signature on the sheet before they continue. Each newscast should be no longer than seven minutes. Tell students they need to be prepared to work on their skit together outside of class.

Evaluation: Have students fill out a Group Brag Sheet, Appendix 2. Present students with a rubric when you assign the project (see Appendices 3 and 4). Allow them to evaluate themselves, then evaluate them yourself. Give each group a grade, as well as each individual in the group.

Follow up activity:

- Portfolio option: At home, have students rewrite the excerpt from the Wabanaki point of view. How might a Wabanaki person have experienced the explorer's visit?

Alignment with Learning Results:

Grade Level: **6th-8th**

Content Area: Social Studies: **HISTORY**

Standard: **Individual, Cultural, International, and Global Connections in History**

Students understand historical aspects of unity and diversity in Maine, the United States, and various world cultures, including Maine Native Americans.

Descriptor **E2c:** Describe major turning points and events in the history of Maine Native Americans, various historical and recent immigrant groups in Maine, the United States, and other cultures in the world.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Group Members: _____

Presentation Date: _____

THIS JUST IN: EXPLORERS MEET WABANAKI INDIANS DIRECTIONS

If there had been newscasts during the Age of Discovery, stories of European encounters with American Indians would have been common. We can read written accounts of these encounters today to get a feel for what they were like. Unfortunately, Europeans wrote most of the written accounts we have. What was the Wabanaki point of view of these encounters? Here's your chance to tell the stories the way you think they should be told.

Your task is to create and act out a newscast, based on a story first written by a European explorer.

1. Read the excerpt several times together until you understand it well. Look up any words you don't know. Fill in your Planning Sheet, to help you understand the story and prepare for your newscast. Make sure you get a signature from your teacher before you begin preparing for your newscast.
2. In a group of four to five people, choose the following roles: TV News Anchor, TV Journalist, Wabanaki Person(s), European Person(s).
 - TV News Anchor: Sits at the desk in the newsroom and introduces the story, hands the story over to the News Correspondent, and then concludes the story.
 - TV Journalist: Tells the story in exciting, accurate language. Interviews people who were at the scene.
 - Wabanaki Person: Answers the questions of the Journalist, telling the Wabanaki point of view of the incident.
 - European Person: Answers the questions of the Journalist, telling the European point of view of the incident.
3. Together with your group, plan a newscast in which you tell the story represented in your excerpt. Make sure you are accurate and interesting, and that you include the Wabanaki point of view as well as the European point of view. Make it news! Use the Newscast Planning Sheet to help guide your planning.
4. **Practice your skit at least three times.** Make sure you feel comfortable with your lines and parts. You may wish to use costumes and/or props in performance.
5. Perform your newscast for your class. Remember to bring in any props or costumes you have decided on. Have fun!

Name: _____

Date: _____

Group Members: _____

**THIS JUST IN: EXPLORERS MEET WABANAKI INDIANS
PLANNING SHEET**

a. Who are the important characters in the story?

b. Summarize the story. What are the main events?

c. What is the European point of view on meeting the Wabanaki Indians? How did the Europeans treat the Wabanakis?

d. What do you imagine the Wabanaki point of view might have been? Would they have been scared? Curious? Angry? Something else? Why?

Teacher Signature: _____

**GIOVANNI DA VERRAZZANO, EXPLORER
1524**

At a distance of fifty leagues, keeping more to the north, we found high country full of very dense forests. . . . The people were quite different from the others, for while the previous ones had been courteous in manner, these were full of crudity and vices, and were so barbarous that we could never make any communication with them, however many signs we made to them. They were clothed in skins of bear, lynx, sea-wolf and other animals. . . . If we wanted to trade with them for some of their things, they would come to the seashore on some rocks where the breakers were most violent, while we remained in the little boat, and they sent us what they wanted to give on a rope, continually shouting to us not to approach the land; they gave us the barter quickly, and would take in exchange only knives, hooks for fishing, and sharp metal. We found no courtesy in them, and when we had nothing more to exchange and left them, the men made all the signs of scorn and shame that any brute creature would make, such as showing their buttocks and laughing. Against their wishes, we penetrated two or three leagues inland with 25 armed men, and when we disembarked on the shore, they shot at us with their bows and uttered loud cries before fleeing into the woods. . . .

From *The Voyages of Giovanni da Verrazzano, 1524-1528*, by Lawrence C. Wroth. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, published for The Pierpont Morgan Library, 1970. Pp. 140-141.

GEORGE WAYMOUTH, EXPLORER
WRITTEN BY JAMES ROSIER
1605

This day, about five a clock in the afternoon, we in the ship espied three Canoes coming towards us. . . to whom we made signs with our hands and hats, waving unto them to come unto us, because we had not seen any of the people yet. They sent one Canoe with three men, one of which, when they came near unto us, spoke in his language very loud and very boldly: seeming as though he would know why we were there, and by pointing with his oar towards the sea, we conjectured he meant we should be gone. But when we showed them knives and their use, by cutting of sticks and other trifles, as combs and glasses, they came close aboard our ship, as desirous to entertain our friendship. . . .

Our Captain [George Weymouth] showed them a strange thing which they wondered at. His sword and mine having been touched with the Loadstone¹, [he] took up a knife, and . . . being laid on a block, and touching it with his sword, made that [knife] take up a needle, whereat they much marvelled. This we did to cause them to imagine some great power in us: and for that to love and fear us. . . .

[Several days later] they had there assembled together 283 Savages, every one [with] his bow and arrows, with their dogs, and wolves which they keep tame at command, and not anything to exchange at all; but would have drawn us further up into a little narrow nook of a river, for their Furs, as they pretended. These things considered, we began to join them in the rank of other Savages, who have been by travellers in most discoveries found very treacherous Wherefore after good advice taken, we determined so soon as we could to take some of them. . . .

From "A True Relation of the Voyage of Captaine George Weymouth," by James Rosier, in *Early English and French Voyages*, ed. Henry S. Burrage, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906.
pp. 367-8, 371-2, 377. Spelling modified to modern conventions.

¹Loadstone: magnet

**FATHER PIERRE BIARD, MISSIONARY
1611**

. . . [W]e suddenly discovered six Armouchiquois canoes coming towards us. There were twenty-four persons therein, all warriors; . . . they continued to come and go; they reconnoitered; they carefully noted our numbers, our cannon, our arms, everything; and when night came they camped upon the other bank of the river, if not out of reach, at least beyond the aim of our cannon. All night there was continual haranguing, singing and dancing, for such is the kind of life all these people lead when they are together. Now as we supposed that probably their songs and dances were invocations to the devil, to oppose the power of this cursed tyrant, I had our people sing some sacred hymns. . . . But when they once got into the way of singing, the spiritual songs being exhausted, they took up others with which they were familiar. When they came to the end of these, as the French are natural mimics, they began to mimic the singing and dancing of the Armouchiquois who were upon the bank, succeeding in it so well that the Armouchiquois stopped to listen to them; and then our people stopped and the others immediately began again. It was really very comical, for you would have said that they were two choirs which had a thorough understanding with each other, and scarcely could you distinguish the real Armouchiquois from their imitators. . . .

At the confluence of these two rivers there was the finest assemblage of savages that I have yet seen. There were eighty canoes and a boat, eighteen wigwams and about three hundred people. The most prominent sagamore was called Betsabes, a man of great discretion and prudence; and I confess we often see in these Savages natural and graceful qualities which will make anyone but a shameless person blush, when they compare them to the greater part of the French who come over here. . . . When they had recognized us they showed their great joy during the evening by their usual demonstrations; dancing, singing and making speeches. And as for us, we were very glad to be in a country of safety; for among the Etechemins, as these are, and the Souriquois, as are those of Port Royal, we are no more obliged to be on our guard than among our own servants. . .

They have no beards, the men no more than the women, except some of the more robust and virile. They have often told me that at first we seemed to them very ugly with hair both upon our mouths and heads; but gradually they have become accustomed to it, and now we are beginning to look less deformed.

From *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites,
Cleveland: The Burrows Brothers Company, 1896. Vol. II, p. 35-37, 49-51, Vol. III, pp. 73.

RALEIGH GILBERT, COLONIST OF THE POPHAM COLONY
WRITTEN BY JAMES DAVIES
1607

So Captain Gilbert departed from them, and within half and hour after he had gotten to his boat, there came three canoes down unto them, and in them some sixteen savages, and brought with them some tobacco and certain small skins, which were of no value; which Captain Gilbert perceiving, and that they had nothing else wherewith to trade, he caused all his men to come aboard, and as he would have put from the shore; the savages perceiving so much, subtly devised how they might put out the fire in the shallop, by which means they [thought] they should be free from the danger of our men's [weapons]; . . . one of the savages came into the shallop and taking the fire brand which one of our company held in his hand thereby to light the matches, as if he would light a pipe of tobacco, as soon as he had gotten it into his hand he presently threw it into the water and leapt out of the shallop.

Captain Gilbert seeing that, suddenly commanded his men to betake them to their muskets and the targeteers took from the head of the boat, and bade one of the men with his target on his arm to step on the shore for more fire; the savages resisted him and would not suffer him to take any [from their campfire] and some others of them holding fast to the boat rope that the shallop could not put off. Captain Gilbert caused the musketeers to present their pieces, the which, the savages seeing, let go the boatrope and betook them to their bows and arrows, and ran into the bushes, . . . but did not shoot, neither did ours at them.

From A Relation of a Voyage to the Sagadahoc, by James Davies. An account of the Popham Colony, 1607-1608. Cambridge: J. Wilson and Son, University Press, 1880.