



Continents and Islands

A look At the Ecosystems and People of the Land

By Kelly McGrath

Summary: This lesson explores early indigenous life on the island of Puerto Rico through the eyes of a young brother and sister. Connections are developed by looking at the way the arrival of Christopher Columbus changed both the people and the land and environment of Puerto Rico and of the mainland. Through literature students are asked to read, draw conclusions, make comparisons and form opinions about the ecosystem and people in both Puerto Rico and the mainland..

Background Information: The original inhabitants of Puerto Rico were the Taino people, a peaceful group, and the Caribe, warlike cannibals who had come from the jungles of South America. At the time of the arrival of Columbus the two tribes were at war, however soon after Spanish arrival, the two groups joined forces to try to keep what they deemed as the larger enemy at bay.

Christopher Columbus discovered Puerto Rico in 1493 on his second voyage to claim land for the rulers of Spain. At the time the island was called Borinquen by the inhabitants. Columbus named it San Juan Bautista- St. John the Baptist- San Juan still bears remembrance of this name. A holiday also honors this saint and original name. In celebration of that day, Puerto Ricans walk backwards into the ocean in hopes that that act will bring them good luck in the coming year. Later Spanish traders began calling the island Puerto Rico which means “Rich Port” and the nave has stuck.

Morning Girl, the book that is the main focus of this lesson examines life before the arrival of Columbus and ends with his arrival. This gives the reader a chance to form his/her own opinions about the life of the Taino, the Spanish and how the island will be affected.

Materials:

- A copy of *Caribbean Dream* by Rachel Isadora for a read aloud.
- Enough copies of *Morning Girl* by Michael Dorris for a guided reading group.
- Enough copies of *Squanto’s Journey* by Joseph Bruchac for a guided reading group.
- Picture Dictionary- attached to the lesson
- Chapter Four Writing prompts- attached to the lesson
- *Squanto’s Journey Reflection*- attached to the lesson

Grade Level: Remedial Reading for 5th grade or average 4th grade reading.

Goal: To introduce students to another native group, the Taino, and their culture. Then have students explore the similarities/differences of Columbus finding Puerto Rico and Columbus finding North America.

Key Concepts: Indigenous cultures, Guided Reading, Christopher Columbus, Our Natural World

Objectives: Upon completion of this lesson, students will:
1)create a Venn Diagram comparing/contrasting the arrival of Columbus on Puerto Rico and the Mainland.
2)form opinions on the impact of Columbus on the Americas.
3)increase both their fluency and comprehension of the written word.

Teaching Location: Classroom, outdoors

Lesson Time: 30 minute lessons

Subject Areas for Infusion: social studies, reading, language arts, environmental education.

Sheet of websites dealing with Columbus landing on Puerto Rico

It would be if this could be put on the school website so students
Could navigate from there instead of typing in the sites.

- [KWL Chart](#)
- [Venn Diagram](#) blank sheet
- [Problem/ Solution Chart](#)
- [Four Column Chart](#)
- [Cluster Chart](#)
- [Clock](#) organizer
- A contact with a person of Native American descent who would be willing to talk to the class about his/her history and family as well as they way he/she observes Thanksgiving, if it is done at all.

Set-Up:

A list of steps for instructors to follow in preparing to teach the lesson.

1. Pre-read all of the books/materials to be used to familiarize oneself with them.
2. Review the overall lesson.
3. Research any questions about the topic you feel students may want more information on.
4. Print off needed graphic organizers and gather supplies needed for each day.
5. Make contact with the guest speaker well in advance to accommodate when he/she would be willing to come and share with the class.

Procedure:

Introduction.

Before handing the book out to students, one may want introduce the book by reading the following dialogue from the book taken from <http://www.wmich.edu/dialogues/texts/morninggirl.html> :

Morning Girl is a young Taino girl who 'dreams too hard' at night, and therefore wakes early every morning. This early waking is why her family calls her Morning Girl; and she loves the beginning of the day, saying, 'If the day starts before you do, you never catch up.' One of the lovely things about this young girl is what she says about her approach to treading on the world: 'I try to step lightly on the path so the sounds I make will blend into the rustle of the world.' She also goes on to say, 'You'll see more if you're quiet.' Her interests are apparently in complete opposition to those of her younger brother, Star Boy, who lives for the black of night and loves to look at stars. Their rivalry and opposition play out as the pleasant and common sibling friction that so many children endure the world over.

Star Boy is different than his sister: he likes the night. His sister says he 'see[s] everything so upside down.' He says, 'The first night I woke up and noticed that everyone was invisible, I held perfectly still and disappeared.' When he finds out his mother is pregnant with what she believes will be a girl,

Standards:

Language Arts:

- A.8.1 Use effective reading strategies to achieve their purposes in reading.
- A.8.2 Read, interpret, and critically analyze literature.
- A.8.3 Read and discuss literary and nonliterary texts in order to understand human experience.
- A.8.4 Read to acquire information.

Social Studies:

- A.8.1 Use a variety of geographic representations, such as political, physical, and topographic maps, a globe, aerial photographs, and satellite images, to gather and compare information about a place
- A.8.7 Describe the movement of people, ideas, diseases, and products throughout the world
- A.8.11 Give examples of the causes and consequences of current global issues, such as the expansion of global markets, the urbanization of the developing world, the consumption of natural resources, and the extinction of species, and suggest possible responses by various individuals, groups, and nations

Environmental Education:

- B. 8.5 Give examples of human impact on various ecosystems.
- B.8.9. Explain how the environment is perceived by various cultures.
- B.8.10. Explain and site examples of how humans shape the environment.

Vocabulary

- additional vocabulary in activities

Indigenous: having originated in and being produced, growing, living, or occurring naturally in a particular region or environment

Mainland: a continent or the main part of a continent as distinguished from an offshore island or sometimes from a cape or peninsula

Puerto Rico: a self-governing commonwealth in union with the United States capital San Juan

Star Boy is distraught, miserable, hoping instead for a brother or, at the very least, a parrot. But his mother insists that it's to be a girl, to Star Boy's deep chagrin. He concludes, 'If it's another sister, I'll leave and go someplace else.' The story traces some of what the customs and habits of the Taino (sometimes referred to as [Arawaks](#)) might have been, and also what a hypothetical family may have been like. Star Boy and Morning Girl both are growing up, finding out things about their own personalities that they like, finding things about the other that they don't like. They vie for attention. They resent attention given to the other by the parents. In short, they are children: human children. Their families have families, and they get together as families do.

Near the end of the story, Morning Girl sneaks down to the ocean to go for an early morning swim. There is the noise of something, which proves to be a canoe full of Europeans, whom she sees and thinks are immediately funny for their hot and cumbersome clothes. But she doesn't laugh, thinking to herself that it's impolite to laugh, and that she doesn't want the visitors to think her people are foolish because her actions are foolish. She greets them with friendliness and generosity, a sentiment echoed in Columbus' journals and in [A People's History of the United States](#)

Activity 1:

1. Hand out a [KWL Chart](#) and have students complete the “K” with what they know about islands and island life (both human and environmental). (10 mins.)
2. Read aloud *Caribbean Dream* (5 mins)
3. Ask students to share some of the things this picture book tells us about islands. (5 mins)
 - a. Create a list on the board.
4. Ask students to brainstorm everything else they know about islands, how they are formed, the types of plants and animals and how they are unique. (5 mins)
 - a. Have students share and add to the list on the board.
 - b. Students can add to their know column.
5. Discuss some possible things students want to learn about islands. (5 mins)
 - a. Ask students to add these to their “W” column and write down anything else they want to learn.
 - i. Take a look at these in order to include some mini-lessons on student interest topics if they are not already being touched upon in the lesson.
 - ii. Students should keep these charts at hand throughout the lesson to add to the L “learned” column. At the end of the unit, students will share what they have learned.

Activity 2:

Pre-Reading:

Morning Girl- Guided Reading Lessons

Michael Dorris

AR Level 4.9 2 pts. Guided Level S

- Read the back of the book *Morning Girl* by Michael Dorris or read the excerpt in the introduction information in the beginning of the lesson.. Make predictions about the book. (3 mins)
- Discuss the aspect of each chapter being written from the point of view of either Morning Girl or Star Boy. (5 mins)
 - o Make sure students understand point of view.
 - o Have them make statements from the point of view of:

- Their mother
- Their father
- A dog
- A cat, etc.

Chapter One: Morning Girl

- Introduce vocabulary (2 mins): misunderstand (2), aloneness (2), floating (3), complaining (4), hammock (4), cruel (4), mango (5)
- Read aloud chapter one to students. (10 mins)
- Discussions (10 minutes)
 - Discuss the families living situation?
 - What does their home look like?
 - Have each student find specific sentences that creates an image of some aspect of their home to share.
 - Can you relate to the brother/sister conflicts?
 - How did morning girl get her name? Does the name fit her?
 - Morning Girl received this name because she is always up before the others. She often gets out of the house before anyone else is up. She loves the silence of the morning and being alone

Activity 3:

Chapter Two: Star Boy

- Hand out picture dictionaries to the students. Go through the pictures and words and explain that these words will be used in the story and this sheet is to help students understand what is being talked about. (5 minutes)
- Introduce vocabulary (2 mins): excusing (8), bothering (8), argument (10), manioc (10), conversation (12), expert (12)
- Partner read chapter two (20 mins).
- Write the following discussion prompts on the board for partners to discuss (8 mins):
 - How did Star Boy get his name? Does it fit?
 - He loves being outside at night when it is dark. He likes darkness more than anything.
 - What was Star Boy's old name? Why was he called this?
 - His old name was hungry because he ate all the time. This name still fits for him because he eats all the time?

Activity 4:

Chapter Three: Morning Girl

- Introduce vocabulary (2 mins): interrupting (14), ruin (15), parrot (17), expert (19), recognize (19)
- Read aloud chapter 3. (10 mins)
- Discussions prompted as I read aloud: (5 mins)
 - P. 16 Discuss why her mom would go off to the Woman's House? Have student think back to their human growth and development class.

- What does it mean if her mom hasn't gone to this house lately? She is pregnant.
- Discuss the feelings the family has regarding losing a baby. Have each student think as if he/she were the mom, dad, Star Boy and Morning Girl and have them express their feelings about losing the baby as if they were that person.

Chapter Four: Star Boy

- Introduce vocabulary (2 mins): crouched (23), narrowly (24), disappeared (26), hollow (28), annoyed (28), pleasure (29)
- Begin silent reading chapter four. (11 minutes)

Activity 5:

Chapter Four: Star Boy- continued

- Have students finish silent reading chapter four. (10 mins)
- Have students pick and write on a discussion question (see handout)(15 mins):
 - P. 26 Do you think mother knows Star Boy is near?
 - P. 27 Does the father know where Star Boy is? Why do you think this?
 - Why do his parents come and express their feelings out loud so close to him? What are they trying to accomplish?
- Discuss and share writings. (5 mins)

Activity 6:

Chapter Five: Morning Girl

- Introduce vocabulary (2 mins): curious (30), yam (31), coconut (32), delicate (33), complicated (33)
- Explain the following to students: They can work with their reading partners to complete to think of ideas.
 - P. 33-34 Have students make comparisons about their facial feature as Morning Girl did. Examples:
 - She has the chin like a starfish.
 - Her brows are like white clouds on the horizon.
 - Her cheeks swell into mountains when she smiles.
- Partner read chapter five. (10 min.)
- Facial Feature comparison project (10 min.)
- Activity (8 min.):
 - Have students make a list of things Morning Girl's family eats.
 - Have students make a list of what they eat.

Morning Girl's Family

Manioc (Cassava)
Yams

My Family

Pizza
hamburgers

Coconut
Fish

apples
spaghetti

- Compare the lists why does each group eat certain things. Which list do they think is healthier for them? Which group is better for the environment? Why would this be?

Activity 7:

- Finish working on the comparison of foods/chart and discussion. (10 min.)

Chapter Six: *Star Boy*

- Introduce vocabulary (2 min.): shielding (38), cassava (38), fronds (40), shrieks (40), jealous (41)
- Popcorn read chapter six by paragraphs (15 min.)
- Discuss the following passage from page 38: Even his eyes seemed to stretch, and there was a worry on his face I had only seen once before- the time when the bad visitors, their bodies painted white for death, were spotted in three big rafts to the south of the nearest island.
- What does this mean? Why is it scary?
- Discuss why storms can be so devastating to islands? (3 min.)
 - Not always high ground to escape from.
 - Wind rips out trees that hold in the topsoil.
 - Destroys crops.
 - The storm may cause animals to leave the island for awhile. In the story the biting insects left, however the people weren't too upset about that.
- Discuss how grandfather was there to help Star Boy make it through the storm? Have students give opinion on whether or not the grandfather was really there helping them. (2 min.)

Activity 8:

Chapter Seven: *Morning Girl*

- Introduce vocabulary (2 min.): thatching (47), behaving (49), hibiscus (48)
- Have students silent read chapter eight. (10 min.)
- Write the following questions on the board and have students respond when they have finished silent reading (13 min.)
 - Why are the families having a celebration?
 - Do you think this celebration is a good idea?
 - Do you agree with the statement “the food had been left as an apology”?
 - How would you feel if you were Morning Girl about her brother's behavior at the gathering? Would he embarrass you? Was he acting inappropriately?

Activity 9:

Chapter Eight: *Star Boy*

- Introduce vocabulary (2 min.): explore (54), foolishly (60), disappear (56), anxious (64)

- Read aloud chapter eight (10 min.).
- Discussions (5 min):
 - How would you feel if your best friend made a mean comment to you such as Red Feathers saying maybe they shouldn't wander so far from home in case Star Boy became hungry again?
 - How would you react?
 - Did Star Boy react appropriately?
 - What did father mean when he said, "It's good to like food, but your enjoyment won't disappear if you hide the loudness of its call."? (56)
- Have students draw their favorite scene from the book and describe in 3-5 sentences. (13 min.)

Activity 10:

Chapter Nine: Morning Girl

- Share drawings/descriptions from yesterday (3 min).
- Introduce vocabulary (2 min.): stubborn (63), embers (63), unfamiliar (68)
- Partner read chapter nine. (15 min)
- Discussions (10 min):
 - How do you think Morning Girl feels as she gets up and leaves in the morning? Possibly jealous of the attention her parents give her brother. Happy to be able to leave and be by herself for awhile.
 - Have students make a list of the descriptions of the visitors. What do the descriptions tell us about them? Examples:
 - Fat
 - Wrapped every part of their body with colorful leaves and cotton.
 - Some had decorated their faces with fur.
 - Their canoe was short and square and despite all of their paddling, it didn't move anywhere fast.

Activity 11:

Post Reading Activities:

- Introduce the [Clock](#) organizer and explain how it works. (2 min)
- Have students write one event from each chapter in the [Clock](#) organizer (20 min).
 - They should fill in the remaining blanks with their predictions for the future.
 - Share and discuss (8 min)

Activity 12:

Epilogue

- Read aloud the epilogue to students. (3 min)
- Ask for their feedback at different points (10 min.). What do the words I am reading mean? How do they make you feel (angry, upset, happy,).How do you feel about the letter from Christopher Columbus? How does he feel

about the indigenous people he meets? How does he treat them? (as a lower class)

- “ I recognized that they are people who would be better freed (from error) and converted to our Holy Faith by love than by force.”
- “They do not carry arms nor are they acquainted with them, because when I showed them swords and took them by the edge and through ignorance, they cut themselves.”
- “ They should be good and intelligent services, for I see they say very quickly everything that is said to them; and I believe that they will become Christians very easily, for it seems that they have no religion.”
- “I will take six of them from her to Your Highness in order that they may learn to speak.”
- Ask students to create a brainstorm (list, web) of how Morning Girl’s family lives on the island. (5 min)
 - What did they feel was important?
 - What kinds of materials do they use in their everyday life?
 - Clothing
 - Housing
 - Transportation
 - food
- Have students think back to their history classes about how people in Christopher Columbus’ day lived in Europe? (5 min)
 - What did they feel was important?
 - What kinds of materials do they use in their everyday life?
 - Clothing
 - Housing
 - Transportation
 - Food
- Have students look at the lists and describe/discuss how these “important” things impact the environment- either positively or negatively. Give students specific examples and have them add to the list (7 min):
 - Easter Islanders using up all their forest resources and ultimately killing themselves.
 - Food that comes in lots of packaging adds to our landfill problem.

Activity 13:

Post Reading Activities:

1. Have students use the [Problem/ Solution Chart](#) to develop some problems and possible solutions that might arise from having the new visitors on the island. (10 min)
2. Use the problem/solution chart the students filled out to have them come up with guidelines for the island that they and their visitors need to live by to maintain the environment of the island. (10 min)

3. Acting as a democratic group of islanders, the group will discuss/share their guidelines and come to an inclusive group of guidelines that all islanders can agree to live by. (10 min)
 - a. Discuss how these guidelines will affect their natural guidelines.
 - i. Do they work to protect the environment of the island for the future?
 - ii. Are all people, both islanders and Europeans treated equally?

Activity 14:

Post Reading Activities:

- Continue the discussion to agree to a set of guidelines (10 min.)
- When the guidelines have been agreed upon, have students work together to neatly re-write them on nice paper. They should all sign their names to the page and post it in the room. (5 min)
- Have students right their view on how the first Thanksgiving went. This should be interesting with a mixed Native American/Caucasian group. I hope to have varied viewpoints. (15 min.)
- If time, share.

Impact of colonists on Native Populations

Activity 15:

Squanto's Journey

- If students were not able to share/discuss their first Thanksgiving stories yesterday, allow time to do so today (10 min).
- Have students write about how they spend Thanksgiving. (15 min). This works best when the students come from varied ethnic backgrounds as this often leads to greater differences.
- Share stories and discuss similarities/differences as well as reasons for things being different/the same. (5 min)

Activity 16:

- Have students finish sharing their Thanksgiving stories and discussing them. (10 min).
- Explain to students that tomorrow we will have a visitor to the classroom. The visitor will be of Native American descent and is coming to talk about his/her history family and how he/she feels about Thanksgiving. (2 min.)
- Have students develop a list of questions as a class that they will write down and ask when the time presents itself when the speaker is sharing. (10 min.)
- Allow students to have the rest of the class time to develop questions to ask that may interest them. These may focus on the way of life, gender roles, food, sports, etc. Make students aware that they may very likely develop questions while the speaker speaks tomorrow, they should feel free to jot those down and ask them as well. (8 min.)

Activity 17:

- Introduce the guest speaker to the students with a brief introduction. (This will need to be done once the speaker is confirmed to make it meaningful). (2 min.)
- Allow the speaker to present (20 min.)
- Open up the floor to student questions. (8 min.)
- Assignment Choices:
 - Create a poster with both pictures and words showing what was learned from today's guest speaker.
 - Write a one page essay highlighting what was learned from the speaker, what it means to them and how their background is similar/different to the guest speaker's.

Activity 18:***Squanto's Journey*****AR 4.2 Guided P**

- Have students get into small groups to discuss their assignments and share thoughts/feelings from yesterday.
 - Have each group share one idea with the class. (13 min)
- Explain to students that most of us are only aware of the First Thanksgiving story from the view of the pilgrims, but many do not know the story from the view of the Native Americans. The book, Squanto's Journey, which we will be reading gives us that view. (2 min)
- Have students create a brainstorm list on the board of things that may be different in Squanto's story. (5 min)
- Introduce vocabulary: Squanto, homeland, English, pilgrims, anchored, Newfoundland, desert, Friars, accompanied, wounded, Mayflower, arrowhead, interpreter. (10 min)
 - Go through the vocabulary/definitions at the back of the book.
 - Discuss that although this story is written as an autobiography, it is not, in fact written by Squanto. This is called historical fiction book where the author researches the topic, but also includes some of his perspective.
 - Discuss that some of the Native American words/names in the story are a bit difficult. If they are posing a problem for students, students may simply use the first letter as they read. This way pronouncing the word doesn't negatively impact their comprehension.

Activity 19:***Squanto's Journey***

- Have students whisper read the story. Teacher makes his/her way around the table listening to each student read and offer strategies and ask comprehension questions. (20 min.)
- As students finish, they should begin to work on the Squanto's Journey Reflection Sheet. This will allow them to bring things they read in the

book together with their own views to form opinions and make points. (10 min.)

Activity 20:

Squanto's Journey

- Have students each come up with two questions and answers about the book to ask each other. (5 min.)
 - Ask and answer questions (5 min.)
- Have students take Accelerated Reader (AR) tests. (5 min.)
- As students finish their AR test, they should continue to work on their reflection of the book. (5-10 min.)
- Discuss reflections/feelings/opinions (5-10 min)

Activity 21:

Shared Reading: Columbus Landing in Puerto Rico

- Pick and choose from the websites on Columbus landing in Puerto Rico (see page with list) to find material that is an appropriate level for a shared reading experience with the students.
- Read aloud and discuss. (15 min)
- Have students create a [Venn Diagram](#) comparing/contrasting the arrival of colonists in America and Puerto Rico. (15 min)
 - Begin by setting up the Venn Diagram and brainstorming one idea for each category together.
 - Allow students to complete the rest on their own. Have students shoot for getting at least five ideas in each category.
 - Discuss what students came up with. Create a master on the board so students can add to their diagrams.

Conclusion.

To finalize the lesson, students will take part in one final activity. They will be split into teams of four and asked to essentially re-write history. Ask students to think about the life indigenous groups had before the arrival of the colonists. Brainstorm the positives and negatives of this pre-colonial life. Examples:

<u>Positives</u>	<u>Negatives</u>
Free to rule themselves	War with neighboring tribes caused hardships
Attempted to live sustainably	If they messed up their environment.

This activity should prompt some ideas and possibly direct students to take an avenue with a culminating project.

Groups will then have a choice on what/how they want to present. Some choices are as follows:

- Model a town hall meeting where the Spanish work with the Indigenous to develop laws and a governing system that are good for all.
- Write and act out a play that shows a more respectful way in which the Spanish could have treated the Indigenous.
- Present through artwork before and after images of what the natural environment may have looked like before the Spanish and after.

- Write hypothetical persuasive letters to the King of Spain persuading him to retract his colonists who have settled on Puerto Rico. Include points that touch upon both the natural and cultural effects of the Spanish.
- Write and perform a dance that interprets the struggle indigenous groups have had with colonists and how they have adapted/overcome.
- Write and create a commercial that sells Puerto Rico as it is with all of its natural beauty. Why should colonists who settle there give up their old ways and follow the ways of the native people. For this activity, it would be interesting if students chose and advertising technique to focus on.
- Other presentation ideas may be okayed by the teacher.

Since this comes at the end of a long, involved unit, it is up to the individual teacher to come up with guidelines for these projects. Some teachers may choose to give students lots of time to complete the project making the grading rubric more intense. Other teachers may use this as a short culminating activity and have broader standards for assessment.

Assessment. How will you determine if your objectives have been met? Try to use a variety of authentic assessment strategies. Some of the different assignments/ means of assessment for this unit are as follows:

- Classroom discussions: I expect students to be taking part in the majority of discussions. An easy way to monitor this is to keep a class list handy and create columns for the date of the discussion and then mark the students who participated. This will count into their participation aspect of their grade.
- Culminating Activity- Rubric should be developed with the help of the students.
- Many of the different charts used will be put together to create a portfolio for the students. My goal with many of these charts/organizers is to expose students to the different forms and allow them to experience them and choose one or two that they feel comfortable with and will utilize in the future:
 - KWL chart-the first two columns will be completed at the beginning of the unit with lots of guidance, the last column L will be completed by students while we work through the unit. This will be discussed and then collected at the end of the unit.
 - Problem/Solution Chart- Problems should have been documented from the book and solutions should be realistic to the book and the time period.
 - Clock Organizer- Should be completed.
 - Venn Diagram- should include at least five ideas in each category.

Adaptations: In order to meet the needs of varied levels of student ability, more of the reading could be read aloud to overcome any reading difficulties, while enabling students to process what is being read to them and drawing their own conclusions and offering insight.

Much of the work could be done in partners or small groups. The teacher can group accordingly to make sure students are placed with a partner or group in which they can be successful.

When students are asked to do writing, this can be adapted so students draw or write words depending on the grade level/ability of the class.