



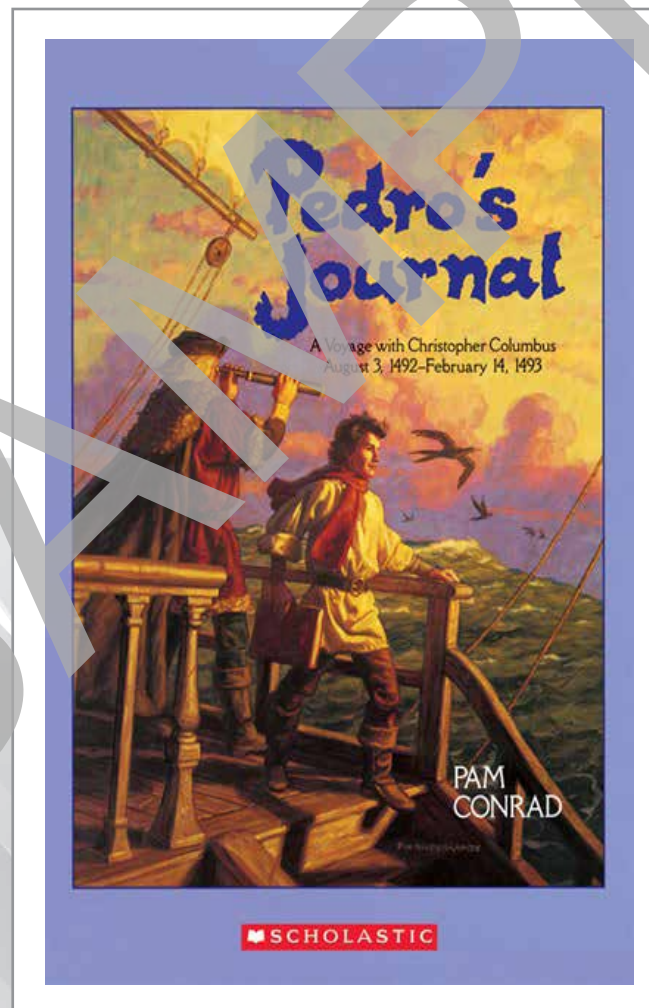
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 3-5

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Pedro's Journal

Pam Conrad



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Pedro's Journal

Pam Conrad

TEACHER GUIDE

NOTE:

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

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Skills and Strategies

Comprehension

Creative thinking, identifying attributes, predicting, inferring, supporting judgments

Critical Thinking

Brainstorming, research, analysis, compare/contrast, fact/opinion

Literary Elements

Story mapping, characterization, setting, conflict, theme, author's purpose, point of view, cause and effect, figurative language

Vocabulary

Target words, definitions, synonyms and antonyms, parts of speech

Listening/Speaking

Discussions, debate, dramatizing, oral presentation

Writing

Creative writing, character journal, personal narrative, letter, poem, journalism

Across the Curriculum

Social Studies—culture, history, maps, time line; Science—nautical, navigation, compass, trade winds, Sargasso Sea, animals, archaeology; Math; Geography; Music; Art—design, illustration

Genre: historical fiction, adventure

Setting: August 3, 1492–February 14, 1493; Palos, Spain; the Canary Islands; the West Indies

Point of View: first person

Themes: courage, leadership, discovery, conquering a native people, oppression, greed

Conflict: person vs. nature, person vs. society, person vs. person, person vs. self

Style: narrative

Tone: candid, conversational, informative

Date of First Publication: 1992

Summary

Pedro's Journal is the story of a ship's boy sailing with Christopher Columbus on the 1492 voyage to the Indies. Through his writings and sketches, Pedro tells of the wonders and dangers found in uncharted waters, the tensions mounting between superstitious sailors and their temperamental captain, and the relief at finding land. For Pedro, the excitement of discovery quickly fades. The Indies aren't as magnificent as expected, and Pedro wonders where they have really come ashore. He's uncomfortable with how the native people believe the Europeans are angels from God. He's ashamed that Columbus and the crew are capturing natives to take back to Spain. After he accidentally sinks the *Santa María* on a coral reef, Pedro is ready to go home, never to return to the sea. But the *Niña* and *Pinta* must survive a terrible storm before arriving in Spain.

About the Author

Pam Conrad was born in New York City. She began writing when she was seven years old, though her dream was to become a dancer. Marriage and raising a family interrupted her plans. Conrad returned to school, attending Hofstra University and the New School for Social Research in New York, where she received a bachelor's degree. In 1981 while she was in college, her first children's book, *I Don't Live Here*, was published.

Conrad wrote for children and young adults, often on serious topics. Her most popular book, *Prairie Songs*, is about a pioneer woman who goes insane. Her novels have won numerous awards, such as the ALA Best Book for Young Adults, Booklist's "Best of the 80s" Books for Children, and the Edgar Allan Poe Award for Best Juvenile Mystery. Her novels include *What I Did for Roman*, *My Daniel*, *Stonewords*, and *The Tub People* picture books. Pam Conrad said, "I can write anything—articles, advertising copy, poetry, but I especially love to write stories, to make up people and places and events." Conrad died in 1996 at the age of 48.

Background Information

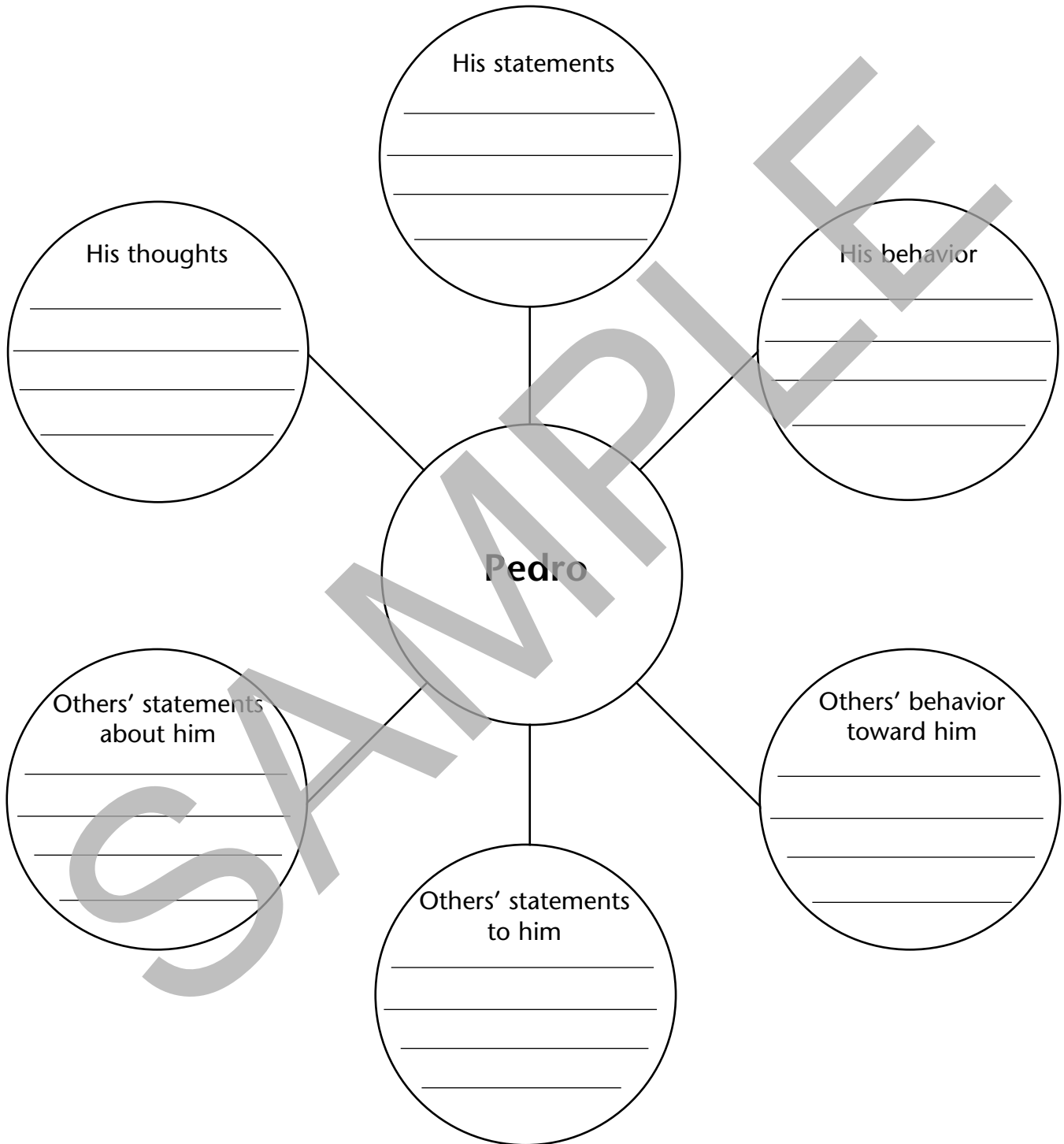
Over 500 years after Christopher Columbus' Enterprises of the Indies, as he called his four voyages, controversies and questions remain. Most experts believe that Columbus was Italian and born in Genoa, yet others argue that he was Spanish or a Spanish Jew. No one agrees on where he first set foot in the New World. Perhaps the biggest controversy is whether Columbus is a hero or a villain. For over 400 years, he was hailed as the brave explorer who discovered America, then public opinion began to change. People realized that Columbus did not actually discover America; the native people who lived there did. He wasn't even the first European to

Prediction Chart

What characters have we met so far?	What is the conflict in the story?	What are your predictions?	Why did you make these predictions?
SAMPLE			

Character Web

Directions: Complete the attribute web below by filling in information specific to Pedro.



August 3–September 3, pp. 1–12

Hired for his reading and writing skills, Pedro de Salcedo is a ship's boy on the *Santa María*. The fleet of three ships under the leadership of Christopher Columbus hopes to be the first to sail across the ocean to India. Pedro wants to trust Columbus, who is certain they will reach the lands discovered by Marco Polo, but not all of the sailors agree with their leader. Already, someone may have sabotaged the *Pinta* to prevent the voyage. Pedro, who is dedicating his journal to his mother, hopes he will safely return to her.

Vocabulary

roster (1)
dedicate (2)
fleet (2)
rosary (5)
disturbed (5)
dinghy (5)
ingenious (6)
replacement (7)
abrupt (7)
careening (7)
depart (8)
trek (8)
sandglass (10)
navigator (10)
transcribed (10)

Discussion Questions

1. Why does Pedro dedicate his journal to his mother? *(Pedro is nervous that his first time away from home is through uncharted waters. He hopes his mother, who has lost much, will not lose him, too. Discussion could include writing for his mother provides him with comfort and a sense of security. p. 2)*
2. Why is Columbus certain they will reach India? *(Answers will vary but should include that Columbus studies maps and charts. He feels prepared for the voyage. p. 2)*
3. What does the Captain encourage Pedro to do? Why might this be helpful? *(Columbus wants Pedro to make sketches of what he sees. Answers will vary but should include that drawings would be a valuable record of the voyage. p. 4)*
4. What happens that would please Pedro's mother? What happens that would amuse her? *(Pedro leads the morning prayers. Columbus says his prayers as if they are orders. pp. 4–5)*
5. Why does Pedro pretend he understands everything the Captain tells him to do? How does he do the things he doesn't know how to do? *(Columbus has little patience and a fiery temper. Pedro asks someone else to explain what needs to be done. p. 5)*
6. Why don't some of the men want to make the voyage? *(They don't have faith. They are worried about sea monsters and that they will sail off the edge of the world. p. 7)*
7. What are Pedro's duties as ship's boy? *(He turns the sandglass, calls out the time, reminds the crew to pray for a safe journey, transcribes the navigator's notes from the slate to the log, washes the slate, and returns the log to the Captain's cabin. p. 10)*
8. What does Diego tell Pedro about the people of the Canary Islands? *(Diego says if they believe that these people have seen land to the west, they must also believe these people have seen sea monsters and mermaids. p. 11)*
9. **Prediction:** Will there be enough food for the voyage?

Supplementary Activities

1. Literary Analysis: Begin the Story Map on page 11 of this guide. Add to the map as you read.
2. Literary Analysis: Begin a Character Web for Pedro (see page 12 of this guide). Add to the web as you read.
3. Social Studies: Design a captain's log to track your reading progress, to record your thoughts as you read, and to use for writing exercises. Use yellow or tan paper to make your log look

old. To make a leather-like cover, apply overlapping one-inch strips of masking tape to a report folder. Paint over the tape with brown shoe polish.

4. Social Studies: Record Christopher Columbus' voyage on a world map (see page 13 of this guide). Label the places Columbus hoped to reach and those where he actually went.
5. Art: Some of the sailors warn Pedro about sea monsters, mermaids, and the edge of the world (pp. 7, 11). Draw a nautical chart that shows the sea as these sailors believe it looks.

September 10–September 25, pp. 13–21

The crew is nervous and doesn't trust Columbus as they sail into uncharted waters. Finding part of a wrecked ship and seeing a star fall into the ocean adds to their fears. Columbus tries to keep the men's spirits up, going so far as to misrepresent the distance they have traveled. He convinces Pedro to overcome his fear of swimming and to jump into the ocean with the sailors.

Vocabulary

helmsman (13)
maravedis (13)
sullenly (13)
devour (15)
omen (15)
portended (15)
harpooned (16)
billowing (16)
soundings (16)
fathoms (16)
gunwale (19)
cleat (20)
emerging (21)
transformed (21)

Discussion Questions

1. How does the crew react to sailing away from land? *(They seem crazy, don't do their jobs well, fear they won't ever see land again, and some men cry. p. 13)*
2. Why isn't the Captain accurately recording the distance traveled in the official log? *(Columbus wants the crew to think they are closer to home than they are. p. 13 [Note: Some experts believe the two logs represent Columbus' conversions between miles and leagues. Both measurements used by Columbus vary from today's standards.])*
3. Why is the compass reading of the North Star off? *(The crew believes the compass no longer works because they are in dangerous, uncharted seas. Columbus says that the North Star moved. p. 14 [Note: Latitude and longitude affect compass readings as do various influences from the Earth's magnetic field. Magnetic compasses do not point precisely to true north but toward magnetic north. The North Star is not directly above true north. Today, the North Star is about one degree off true north. In Columbus' time, the difference was over three degrees.])*
4. How does Pedro react to the large mast floating in the water? *(He wonders what happened to the wrecked ship and questions sailing through waters that devour ships. p. 15)*
5. What does the Captain tell the men about the falling star? What does he write in his journal? *(Columbus tells the men that falling stars foretell blessings and grace. He writes that he has never seen a meteorite fall so close to a ship before. p. 15)*
6. What does the Captain say when he sees a tern? What does he order the crew to do? *(Columbus thinks they are near land. He has the men take soundings to check the depth of the ocean. p. 16)*
7. Why does the fleet sail through the thick seaweed? *(Searching for a way around might take them off course. pp. 18–19)*