

■ NAME: _____

Interpretation: Assessment of Columbus

A: The Columbian discovery was of greater magnitude than any other discovery or invention in human history. Europeans realized that in the sixteenth century. In the centuries since then, the importance of Columbus's discovery has continued to swell, both because of the prodigious development of the New World and because of the numerous other discoveries that have stemmed from it. It was after Columbus's voyages that the task of integrating the American continents into Greco-Roman-Christian-European-culture was carried out. Notwithstanding errors, egoism, and unheard-of violence, the discovery was an essential, in many ways, determining, factor in ushering in the modern age. It was brought about first and above all by the Spanish and then by the Portuguese, French, English, Italians, Irish—to some extent by all the peoples of Europe. But this recognition cannot diminish the value of the inception of that task, which was Columbus's discovery.—Paolo Emilio Taviani, *Columbus, The Great Adventure*, 1991

B: Thus began the history, five hundred years ago, of the European invasion of the Indian settlements of the Americas . . . When we read the history books given to children in the United States, it all starts with heroic adventure—there is no bloodshed—and Columbus Day is a celebration. To emphasize the heroism of Columbus and his successors as navigators and discoverers, and to deemphasize their genocide, is not a technical necessity but an ideological choice. It serves—unwittingly—to justify what was done. . . . The treatment of heroes (Columbus) and their victims (the Arawaks)—the quiet acceptance of conquest and murder in the name of progress—is only one aspect of a certain approach to history, in which the past is told from the point of view of government, conquerors, diplomats, leaders . . . Was all this bloodshed and deceit—from Columbus to Cortes, Pizarro, the Puritans—a necessity for the human race to progress from savagery to civilization?—Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States*, 1980

Explain the differences between Interpretation A and Interpretation B:

Specific Historical Evidence to Support A (not mentioned in passage):

Specific Historical Evidence to Support B (not mentioned in passage):
