Mr. Weiss

**Should Columbus Day be celebrated?**

***Directions***:

After watching the video clips, and reading the background information below, answer the following questions on your own, on a separate sheet of paper and turn it in.

***Background Information:***

The first recorded celebration honoring the discovery of America by Europeans took place on

October 12, 1792 in New York City. The event celebrated the 300th anniversary of Columbus'

landing in the New World.

San Francisco's Italian community held their first Columbus Day celebration in 1869. In 1892,

President Benjamin Harrison urged citizens to participate in the 400th anniversary celebration of

Columbus' first voyage. It was during this event that the Pledge of Allegiance, written by Francis

Bellamy, was recited publically for the first time.

Colorado was the first state to observe the holiday in 1905. In 1937, President Roosevelt

proclaimed October 12 as "Columbus Day" and in 1971, President Nixon declared the second

Monday of October a national holiday.

Today many schools and businesses across the nation are closed in honor of Columbus Day. The

nation observes the day with parades and parties, as well as with protests, demonstrations, and

alternative holidays. Many Americans see Columbus as a hero, but more attention is being

directed towards Columbus’ connection to the conquest of the Native Americans, spread of

disease, forced religious conversion, and slavery.

Questions:

1. In your own words, what is a controversial issue?

2. What makes the celebration of Columbus Day controversial?

3. Who do you think supports the celebration of Columbus Day?

4. What groups of people might be opposed or against the celebration of Columbus Day?