

GRADE 7 History Notes Term 2

History
Grade 7
Term 2



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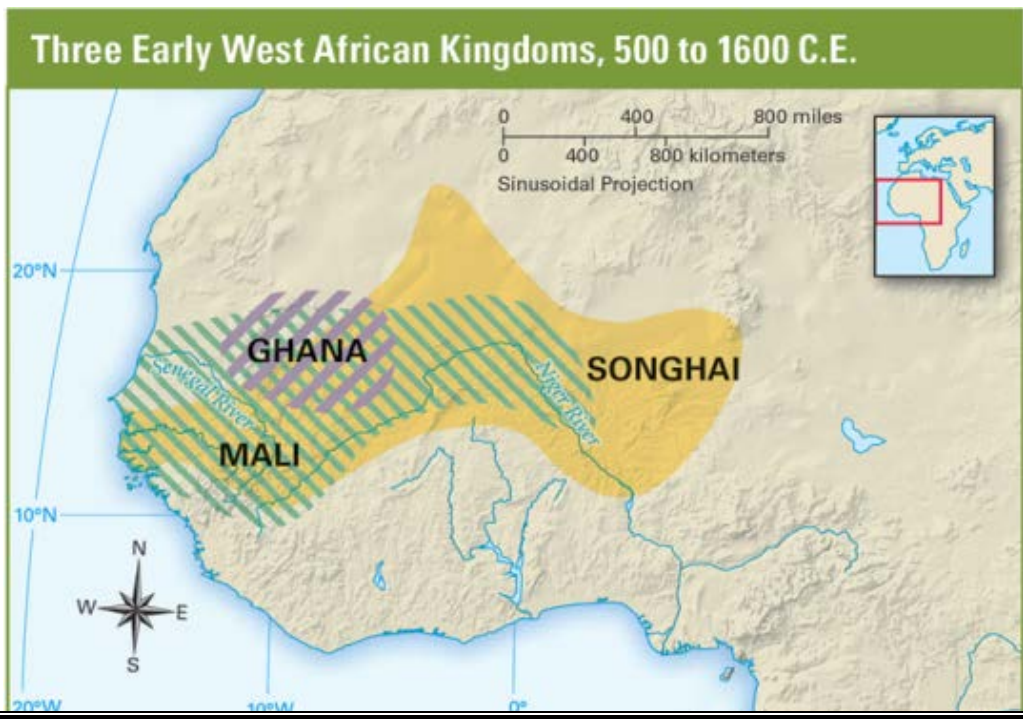
Section A: West Africa before the European slave trade



West Africa today consists of sixteen countries. They are Benin, Burkina Fasco, Ivory Coast, Cape Verde, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. Long before the beginning of the slave trade to America, West Africa had well-developed and highly organised societies. People spoke many languages and there were many different types of communities in this region.

The region had three distinct empires, Mali, Ghana and Songhai.

The first Europeans to trade with the West Africans were Portuguese who arrived in the 1400s.



Section B: Slavery in West Africa before the Europeans

Before the Europeans started making large profits from trading in people, slaves already existed in West Africa. A slave is someone who is owned by another person or other people. He or she belongs to his or her owner in much the same way as an animal such as a dog, a cat or a cow does. A slave cannot choose to find another employer but the slave-owner can choose to sell his or her slaves.

Slaves are not paid for their work although a slave-owner needs to provide enough food, drink, clothing and shelter so that the slaves can do their work. The Africans who employed slaves generally treated them well and followed strict rules about looking after them. Slaves were to be treated honourably and fairly. They could lead very ordinary lives like other people. They could marry and even own land and houses and some were well educated.

In West Africa the slaves were usually people who:

- ▶ were captured in battle
- ▶ were criminals
- ▶ had been chased away by other local societies
- ▶ were bought to perform unskilled work or domestic labour



Slaves captured in West Africa



Slaves tied with chains

The Trans-Saharan slave trade

Key Words

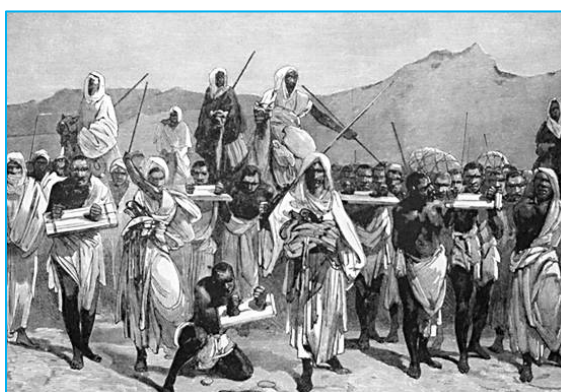
Raid: to attack or invade

BCE: Before the Christian Era, formerly known as BC.

CE: Christian Era, formerly known as AD.

West African slavery changed at the beginning of the 7th century. Arab Muslims **raided** and traded for black African slaves in West Africa. Thousands of slaves were sent to North Africa, parts of the Middle East and southern Europe.

Later, kings like Mansa Musa, raided their weaker neighbours and sold their captives as slaves. They also kept slaves of their own. These powerful rulers with large armies often used the slaves as soldiers. Slaves worked in the gold mines and farmed the land. Slaves were usually exchanged for horses. Fifteen or twenty slaves were exchanged for one Arabian horse.



How do you feel about slavery?

Trans-Atlantic slave trade



Section C: Slavery in the American South



Key Words

Plantation: a large farm for growing crops like sugar cane, rice, tobacco and cotton.

Activity 1

Write down the meanings of the following words:

- colony
- indigenous people

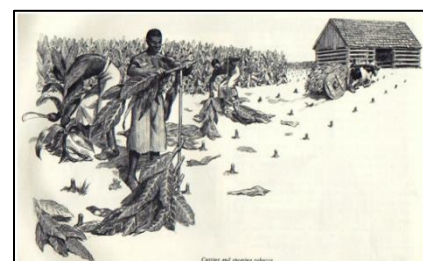
America was colonized by the British people. The same land was occupied by the Native American people.

Types of plantations

Starting in the 1500s, Britain established a number of colonies in North America. These colonies became the original states of the USA and the early provinces of Canada. Slaves from Africa were first brought to the American colonies during the 1600s. The slaves were needed to work on the plantations in the American South, where tobacco, sugar, rice, cotton and other crops were grown.

Tobacco plantations

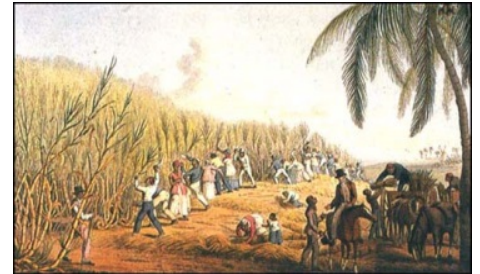
Tobacco was the first plantation crop grown in the American colonies. At first, the British settlers brought servants from England, but by the late 1600s there were few servants available, so they



imported slaves from Africa instead. Tobacco plantations were smaller than sugar plantations and required only about 20 or 30 slaves, while there were often more than 50 slaves on a sugar plantation.

Sugar cane plantations

Sugar cane had been grown in the Mediterranean countries in Europe for about 750 years before plantations were started in Brazil and the Caribbean Islands, and, later, the American South. Slaves were used on these plantations.



Rice plantations

Rice plantations were also large and required at least 30 slaves per plantation. Rice plantations earned more money than tobacco plantations as rice is easier to grow. The areas in which rice was grown were unhealthy for slaves because the land was wet, swampy and full of disease.

Cotton plantations

Cotton plantations became a very popular way of making a great deal of money for the following reasons:

1. The great demand for cotton in Europe and elsewhere.
2. The invention of the cotton gin, by Eli Whitney, a machine that could clean large amounts of cotton fibre in a short time.

Some American states, such as Virginia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas, had huge cotton plantations. Slave overseers were often very cruel.



Reasons for using slave labour

In the 1600s, the country we know as the United States of America was divided into North and South. People in the South had huge plantations, so they needed many more workers than those in the North did. Therefore, the white Americans in the South owned slaves while those in the North did not. Later, the North would fight the South in a Civil War, partly over the issue of slavery. The more crops that the plantation produced, the more money the plantation owner received. The plantation owners preferred workers who had no claim to any part of the crops. Ordinary workers could have claimed some land, which is why slave labour was so attractive to these plantation owners. As slaves were property, the owners had the power to treat the slaves as they wished. Many owners mistreated and abused their slaves.

Corn, pigs and other types of food were provided for slaves, which meant that they did get some good nutrition and were able to remain fairly healthy. However, very few landowners and overseers cared about slaves. Many slaves died because of overwork and cruel punishment. However, the owners didn't care, because as long as there was a good supply of slaves, the plantations could make profits.

“Thus the plantation system could be profitable even when it literally killed off its own workers”. (<http://www.answers.com/topic/plantation-system-of-the-south#ixzz1Dq1AfGlt>)

Activity 2

Informal assessment

1. How many slaves were usually needed on a sugar plantation? (1)
2. Which continent were slaves brought from? (1)
3. Explain in your own words the difference between a servant and a slave. (2)
4. Did slavery start in the Southern colonies of North America?
Give a reason for your answer. (2)
5. Name three states or colonies in the American South that had cotton plantations. (3)
6. Name 3 other crops that were grown on plantations. (3)
7. Were rice plantations better or worse to work on than cotton plantations?
Give reasons for your answer. (3)

8. Was starvation a common cause of death among slaves? Explain your answer. (2)
9. Look at the quotation at the end of the passage, "Thus the plantation system could be profitable even when it literally killed off its own workers". Read through the quotation carefully and then write its meaning in your own words. (2)

Total: 19

How slaves were captured, sold and transported from West Africa

European settlers in America needed people in large numbers to work on their huge farms called plantations. The slave trade used the trade routes developed in the Atlantic Ocean. Slaves were often bought from African slave traders. These slave traders were usually powerful men who would barter or exchange household slaves for goods. Slaves were also hunted like animals and taken against their will by the European traders. The West Africans knew about slave traders and some Africans tried to escape capture by disfiguring themselves, eating dirt and poisoning themselves, or committing suicide. However, it was difficult to escape from well-organised armed men.

The transatlantic slave trade involved capturing at least 14 million people from Africa and sending them, against their will, to work as forced labour in other parts of the world. (the word, 'transatlantic' means across the Atlantic of the ocean.) The transatlantic slave trade started in 1619. The law that ended slavery in the USA came into effect in 1865.

Look at the following story, in pictures.

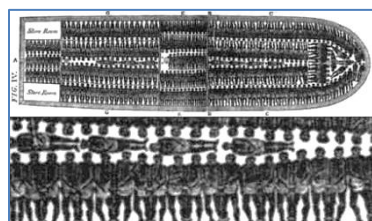
Source A

Slaves were captured inland and force-marched to the coast.



Plan of a slave ship.

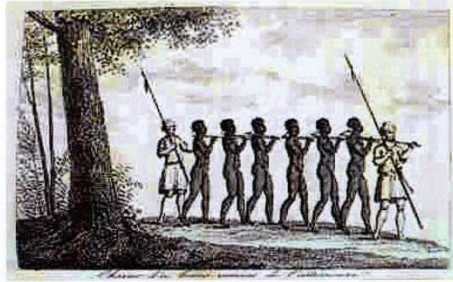
People were crammed together and cruelly treated. Many did not survive.



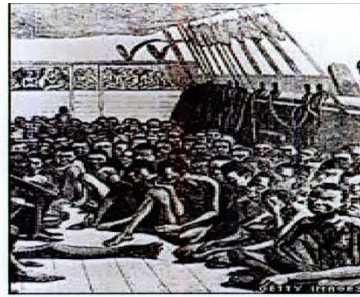
On their arrival in the Americas, slaves were sold off to the highest bidder.



Discuss the pictures below



Wooden neck clamps tight around slave's necks



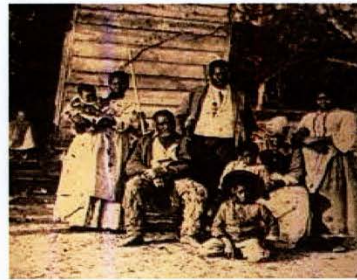
Slave ship transporting slaves.



Slaves being auctioned.



Slave families outside their wrecked house.



A family of father, mother and children.



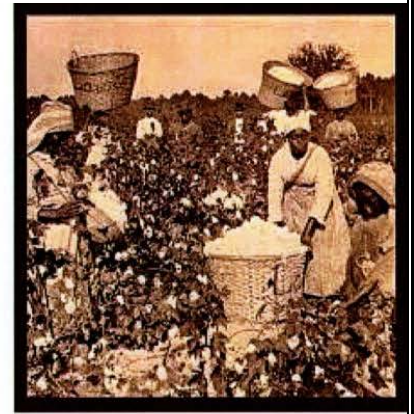
A sad Dad, Mom and children.



Slave men being monitored at work.



Slaves captured



Slave women in the cotton field.



Children in a cage



Slave families outside their home.

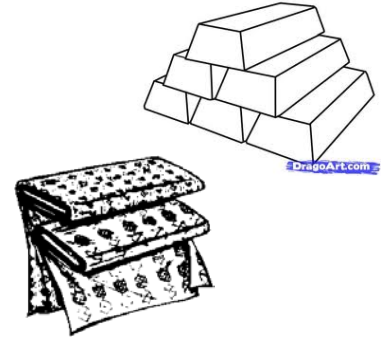


Slaves working on the fields.



Did you know?

The slaves were bought for 25 dollars in West Africa and sold in America for 50 dollars. For their cargoes of human flesh, the slave traders exchanged iron and copper bars, brass pans and kettles, cowry shells, old guns, gunpowder, cloth and alcohol.



Goods exchanged for slaves

Source B

Slaves were seen as goods to be sold at a profit. Now, when one transports goods such as corn or cloth, one packs as much of it as possible into as small a space as possible. This is good for profits. It was the same with slaves; so slave ships were jam-packed. Men, women and children were squeezed like sardines into the holds of ships. The stench became awful. Many died, and their bodies were simply thrown into the sea. Overseers were usually very savage in their treatment of slaves. Even after 1807, when slavery was made illegal in Britain, and 1808, when the USA banned the importation of slaves, the slave ships made good (although illegal) profits for a while.

Source C

Both slave transportation, and slavery itself in the US were very brutal. It was not unknown to have 50% death rate during the passage from Africa. Slaves who were too ill to survive the trip were sometimes thrown overboard to drown. Once on American soil, slaves were largely treated as property, to be freely bought and sold.

Activity 3

A. Read the case study below and answer the questions that follow:

The trade of slaves across the Atlantic lasted for about 250 years. In the fifteenth century, the Portuguese sent sailors down to the west coast of Africa. Before long, they had built up a flourishing trade in gold, ivory and slaves with African communities along the coast. At the time, the demand for slaves was not big.

In 1492, Christopher Columbus sailed across the Atlantic Ocean looking for a new sea route to India. When he reached the Caribbean islands he thought he had reached India. He called the islands the 'Indies'. However, he had found the Americas, a land mass known to the Europeans. As European settlers began to conquer North and South America, the demand for slaves increased.

The colonies provided land that was ideal for growing crops like sugar, cotton and tobacco, which the British and the French sold for high prices in Europe. However, there was often a shortage of labour.

1. Why do you think the Americas were called the 'New World' by the Europeans?
2. Why did the first Europeans in the New World call the indigenous people 'Indians'?
3. Why did the plantation owners import slaves from as far away as Africa?
4. Most Africans who were captured were young and fit. What effect do you think that had on Africa?

B. Draw the triangular trade route.

List two items that were carried on each leg of the triangular trade route.



Key Words

Gag: to cover a person's mouth with a piece of cloth so that he/she can't speak.

Slave markets

Activity 4

Write the meanings of the following words:

- a. auction
- b. bid
- c. branded

Whenever ships of slaves arrived from Africa, there was great excitement among the plantation owners. Slaves were a form of cheap labour and the slaves would become the property of the owners. Slaves were paraded about, inspected, and auctioned or sold off to the highest bidder. No rule existed that said that families had to be sold as a group, which meant that men, woman and children were sometimes separated. Imagine being forced to take a voyage in horrible conditions and being sold to new owners, in a strange country, where people speak a language that you don't understand! Slaves were sold as if they were animals or goods. Once sold, they were often **branded** to show that they belonged to the new owner.



A newspaper advertisement from the 1780s for the sale of slaves in South Carolina.

SLAVES AT SALE
 WITHOUT RESERVE.
 BY BEARD, CALHOUN & CO.
 J. A. BEARD, Auctioneer.

Charleston, July 24th, 1769.

TO BE SOLD,
 On Thursday the third Day
 of August next,
 A CARGO
 OF
 NINETY-FOUR
 PRIME, HEALTHY
 NEGROES,
 CONSISTING OF
 Thirty-nine MEN, Fifteen BOYS,
 Twenty-four WOMEN, and
 Sixteen GIRLS.
 JUST ARRIVED,
 In the Brigantine DEMBIA, *Francis*
Bare, Master, from SIERRA-
 LEON, by
 DAVID & JOHN DEAS.

Activity 5

Different people, different feelings

1. Suggest how the poster 'Slaves at sale' would make you feel (and why) if you were:
 - a. The owner of a large cotton plantation.
 - b. A slave who was advertised for sale.
 - c. A person who believed that slavery should be ended (an abolitionist).
 - d. Which word in the advert tells us that slaves were regarded as goods, rather than people?

Number of slaves that were taken to America

No one knows the exact number of slaves who were taken from Africa. Historians put the figure at 10 million, while other records suggest 15 million, or even as many as 20 million Africans taken. Some researchers found that two out of every 10 slaves died before they ever arrived in America.



Number of slaves taken from Africa

Region	1650-1700	1700-1750	1750-1800	1800-1850	1850-1900	Total
Benin	246 800	708 200	515 000	520 300	25 900	2 016 200
Gold Coast	85 800	374 100	507 100	68 600	-	1 035 600
Biafra	108 900	205 200	695 900	446 400	7 300	1 463 700
West Central	?	806 400	1 525 400	1 458 200	155 000	3 945 000
TOTAL (incl. from other regions)	497 500	2 231 600	3 828 100	3 186 800	231 700	10 005 700

Activity 6

Read, interpret and explain a table.

1. From what area in Africa did most of the slaves come? Look at the table.
2. Why do you think there is a question mark next to one of the entries?
3. During which three periods was the slave trade very active? Why?
4. In which years did the trade in slaves decrease? Give possible reasons.
5. Why is there a hyphen under Gold coast in the years 1850-1900?

In groups, compare your answers and discuss any differences.

What happened to the raw materials that slaves produced?

The American South made huge profits from slavery. Plantation owners forced slaves to work very hard. They harvested raw goods such as tobacco, cotton and sugar.

These goods were then sold, sometimes in the United States but mainly to Western Europe, where factory workers turned the raw goods into finished products such as cloth and clothing. These products were sold all over the world, including back to the American South. The sale of these raw products made plantation owners extremely wealthy. The countries that bought the raw materials also benefitted, because they could process the materials and sell the products at a profit. Everyone made money except for the cruelly treated slaves.

Section D: The impact of the transatlantic slave trade on slaves

What it was like to be a plantation slave in the American South

What bad experience has had a bad impact on your life?

Life on the plantations was extremely hard for the slaves. Men, women, and children over the age of 12 worked in the fields for 18 hours a day. The slave drivers and overseers, who were usually white men, whipped them cruelly if they did not work hard enough.



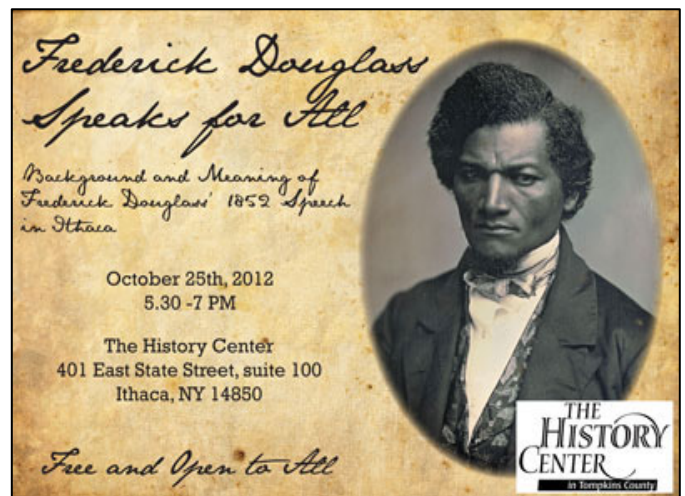
The slaves did not have much food to eat and all food was strictly rationed (measured out). They slept in small houses, often on dirt floors with only coarse blankets. The household slaves also worked very long hours and did not even get time off on Sundays, as they had to cook the Sunday meals and sometimes go with the family to church. Slaves were not allowed to learn how to read and write.

Punishments were vicious and extremely cruel. Slaves were starved, badly whipped, beaten, or even rolled down a hill in a barrel with nails stuck into it.

Source D: Description by a former slave.

'There were no beds given to the slaves, unless one coarse blanket be considered such, and none but the men and women had these ... when their day's work in the field is done most of them have their washing, mending and cooking to do... (After much preparation, they) drop down side by side, on one common bed – the cold, damp floor – each covering himself or herself with their miserable blankets; and here they sleep 'till they are summoned to the field by the driver's horn'

The narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, 1845



Activity 7

Read Source D above and answer the questions.

- Choose the correct answer. The blanket was ...
 - rough to the touch
 - warm, but smelt bad
- What does 'they drop down' tell you about the state of the slaves?
- Describe how the slaves were woken up.
- List the activities that the slaves were expected to do after they had completed their day's work.
- Why do you think slaves were not allowed to learn to read and write?

Slave Culture in songs and stories

Key Words

Dialect: *form of a language used in a particular area*

Slaves were often cruelly treated and families were often separated. Yet, as a group, the slaves held onto and developed their culture, which was passed down over the centuries. As slaves were forbidden to speak their original African languages, English was used as they heard it and needed it. Therefore, the slaves developed their own **dialects**, which mixed words from their own languages with English. A new and different way of speaking developed in the slave culture.

Slaves were also prevented from practising their own religions. The slaves would sometimes hold secret religious services. Here they could express themselves freely. At religious services, slaves combined dancing and singing from their own cultures with European ways of worshipping. This was an important part of the birth and growth of a new, African-American culture.

Many of these songs celebrate the coming of freedom and point to the end of slavery. Such songs worked in code and had hidden meanings. The slaves would understand its hidden meaning, but that meaning would not have been clear to the plantation owners or other white people.

Stories were also an important part of slave culture, and the very popular Br'er (Brother) Rabbit stories started during the time of slavery. Br'er Rabbit can be seen to represent the slave. He has to use his wits to overcome circumstances and take revenge on those who are against him, who represent slave-owners. He is not always successful, but his efforts make him a folk hero.

Br'er Rabbit does not always behave morally. He is a character with both good and bad traits. The slaves could identify with him and relate his adventures to their lives. These stories were written in the way the slaves spoke.



Original illustration of Br'er Rabbit and the Tar Baby.

Example of Slave English

'Didn't the fox never catch the rabbit, Uncle Remus?' asked the little boy the next evening. 'One day ..., Brer Fox went ter wuk en got 'im some tar, en mix it wid some tukentime, en fix up a contrapshun w'at he call a Tar-Baby ...'

This clever song advised slaves to escape in winter and head north toward the Big Dipper (group of stars), the code name for which was drinking gourd.

Follow the drinking gourd,
Follow the drinking gourd,
For the old man is waiting for to carry you to freedom
If you follow the drinking gourd.



When the sun comes back and the first quail calls,
Follow the drinking gourd.
For the old man is waiting for to carry you to freedom
If you follow the drinking gourd.



The riverbank will make a very good road.
The dead trees show you the way,
Left foot, peg foot travelling on,
Following the drinking gourd.



The river ends between two hills, Follow the drinking gourd.
There's another river on the other side, Follow the drinking gourd.

Where the great big river meets the little river, Follow the drinking gourd.
The old man is waiting for to carry you to freedom, If you follow the drinking gourd.

Activity 8: THINKING ABOUT A SONG WORKSHEET

Group work

1. What words do you think had possible hidden references or meanings?
2. Where do you imagine this song being sung? Under what circumstances?

Describe two possible scenarios.

3. What would an outsider listening to this song think about it?
4. Why do you think this song worked as a successful coded song?
5. If you were a slave, how would you feel while listening to this song?

Read the lyrics from 'Swing low, sweet chariot':

Chorus:

Swing low, sweet chariot
Coming for to carry me home
Swing low, sweet chariot
Coming for to carry me home

I looked over Jordan and what did I see

Coming for to carry me home
A band of angels coming after me
Coming for to carry me home

(Chorus)

If you get there before I do
Coming for to carry me home
Tell all my friends I'm coming too
Coming for to carry me home

(Chorus)

If I get there before you do
Coming for to carry me home
I'll cut a hole and pull you through
Coming for to carry me home

(Chorus)

Sometimes I'm up and sometimes
I'm down

Coming for to carry me home
But still my soul feels heavenly bound

Resistance to slavery

Key words

Rebellion: the action or process of resisting authority or control

Revolt: armed resistance to an established government or ruler

Some of the resistance to slavery was organised and carried out by groups. Examples include the Amistad mutiny, the Underground Railroad and the efforts of Nat Turner, John Brown, Harriet Tubman and their supporters. However, individual slaves and slave families also fought against their appalling conditions, often taking serious risks, since they could be severely punished.

Slaves set fire to Plantation!

New York News, 1712:
23 slaves kill 9 owners!

Virginia
Herald,
January
1805:
Slave

**Slaves desert plantation and
revolt against owners!**

The government tried to stop slaves from organising group resistance to slavery. Therefore, some slaves tried to show their resistance by deliberately:

- working very slowly and sluggishly, trying to do as few duties as possible.
- approaching their work passively and not responding to instructions.
- drinking alcohol to make their pain go away.
- running away from the plantations.
- deliberately breaking tools.
- Pretending to be sick.

Some slaves were so desperate to escape from slavery that they killed themselves. Individual resistance by slaves wasn't very successful because the slave owners could and did severely punish any slaves who showed signs of rebelling. Therefore, the slaves soon realised that group resistance would be more successful in fighting slavery than individual resistance. Some groups of slaves started working together to plan acts of resistance, which included burning down plantations or murdering owners.

Discuss the following pictures about rebellions:



Rebellion against slavery

Some people fought against slavery and their actions are remembered to this day.

Nat Turner's revolt 1831: Case Study

Nat Turner was put to death on 11 November 1831. He had led a slave rebellion on 21 August 1831 in which 56 white people were killed. Nat Turner did not know his father, so he took his master's surname. He was very religious, and he preached to other slaves in the local Baptist church. He was known as the prophet, as he shared his visions from God with other people.

By 1828, Nat Turner was sure that God had chosen him to do



some great deed. He said:

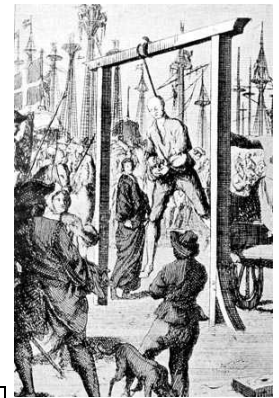
This is a sign from God. It's like a black hand. The date: 11 February 1831.



The Spirit instantly appeared to me and said the Serpent was loosened and Christ had laid down the yoke he had borne for the sins of men, and that I should take it on and fight against the Serpent.

In August, Nat Turner and a few trusted friends went to homes to free slaves. They didn't use guns, but they aimed to create 'terror and alarm' among whites. In total, 55 white men, women and children were killed.

Although this rebellion was over in two days, Nat Turner was caught only on 30th October. He was tried, found guilty and hanged on 11 November in Virginia. However, 56 slaves and freed slaves were executed as a result of this uprising.



Key Words

Investigating: *trying to find out something*

The events of this revolution were the greatest loss of life since the American Revolutionary War. After Nat Turner's execution, Thomas Gray, who was his lawyer, published ***The Confessions of Nat Turner***. He wrote this book after investigating what had happened when Nat Turner was still in hiding and from conversations he had had with Nat Turner in the jail. This means that the book is an original source.

Activity 9: Describe what you would say.

In the case study of Nat Turner, slave owners were killed and so were the slaves who killed them.

Imagine you were the child of either:

a. a mother and a father who owned a plantation and were killed

OR

b. a slave who was executed for trying to free other slaves.

Write a letter to a brother/sister who was not at home at the time, telling him/her what has just happened.

Joseph Cinque and the *Amistad* Mutiny, 1839

Joseph Cinque was married, and a father of three. He lived in Sierra Leone, where he was a rice farmer. He was captured, but fought against being taken to America and sold into a terrible life of misery and slavery. The ship, *Amistad*, was sailing from Havana in Cuba to America, when the 53 slaves on board, led by Cinque, mutinied and took over the ship.

On 2 July 1839, they killed the captain and the cook. They did not kill the navigator, as they wanted him to sail the *Amistad* back to Sierra Leone. However, the navigator continued to sail for America. The ship was captured by the US *Washington*, an American ship, and the slaves were arrested and jailed in New Haven.

The men were tried for murder, and the case went to the Supreme Court, the highest court in the land. A poet who admired the hero of *Amistad* wrote this (shortened):

Source E



All hail! thou truly noble chief,
Who scorned to live a cowering slave;
Thy name shall stand on history's leaf,
Amid the mighty and the brave:
Thy name shall shine, a glorious light
To other brave and fearless men.

John Quincy Adams, who was a past president of USA, felt so sorry for the captured Joseph Cinque and his fellow Africans that he agreed to be their lawyer for no pay. He made such a powerful speech, which lasted for eight hours, about how evil slavery was and how the men had been illegally kidnapped that he convinced the judges to set them free.

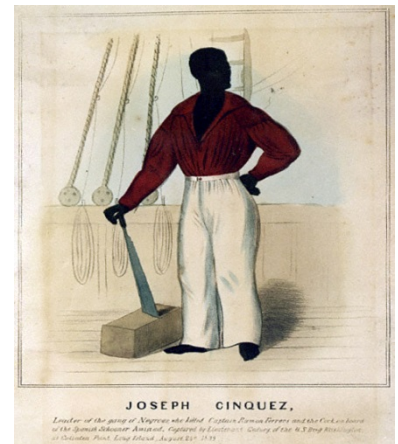
The Amistad rebellion became one of the best-known cases of slaves fighting back. Joseph Cinque, as he was named by the Spanish (Sengbe Pieh was his real African name), was seen as a hero.

A newspaper, at the time, described Joseph Cinque as follows:

Source F: Extract from The Colored American, 19th October 1839

A Brave fellow indeed

We have seen a wood-cut representation of the royal fellow. It answers well to his lion-like character ... His eye is deep, heavy ... as if volcanoes of action might be asleep behind it ... It is a gentle... generous look, sparing and not a destructive look. It would give ... occasion to strike at the slave trade and at our people for imprisoning and trying a man admitted to have risen only against the worst of pirates and for more than life – for liberty, for country and for home.



Death of Capt. Ferrer, the Captain of the Amistad, July, 1839.

Don Jose Ruiz and Don Pedro Montez, of the Island of Cuba, having purchased fifty-three slaves at Havana, recently imported from Africa, put them on board the Amistad, Capt. Ferrer, in order to transport them to Principe, another port on the Island of Cuba. After being out from Havana about four days, the African captives on board, in order to obtain their freedom, and return to Africa, armed themselves with cane knives, and rose upon the Captain and crew of the vessel. Capt. Ferrer and the cook of the vessel were killed; two of the crew escaped; Ruiz and Montez were made prisoners.

Activity 10: Write about your hero

The poem and article in source E and F contain descriptions of a brave man written by people who saw and admired him.

Looking at the present: Who is your hero or heroine? Write a short article, or poem, about someone you admire (for facing up to unfair treatment and defending people). Illustrate your text.

The Underground Railroad

Key words

Abolitionists: people who hated slavery and joined the American Anti-Slavery Society. They held public meetings and used newspapers to inform other countries and people on how slaves were treated.

Slavery was abolished in North America (the free states) and Canada long before it was stopped in the South. Those people who didn't support slavery helped slaves to escape from the South to the North. A system of secret routes and safe houses, called the Underground Railroad, existed to help them. In 40 years, about 100 000 slaves apparently escaped using this network. If slaves were caught fleeing, they were often severely punished, as was anybody who helped them. As safety and secrecy were very important, the slaves used code words to plan their escapes. Some 'code words' are illustrated below.



Conductors:

The people who travelled with the slaves to help them to escape



Stations or depots:
The safe houses



Station masters: The owners of the safe houses. Some were caring church people and others were free slaves

There were many other code words, known only to those involved in the Underground Railroad. The slaves knew they had to go north to find freedom from the cruel slave-owning plantation growers in the southern states.

Harriet Tubman (+ 1820 – 1913)

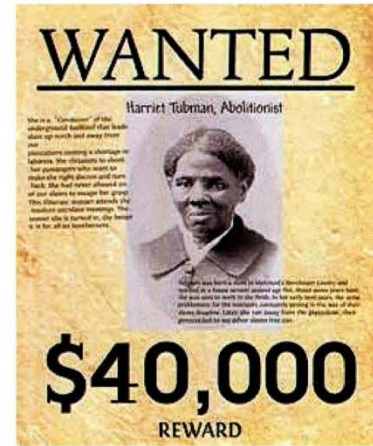
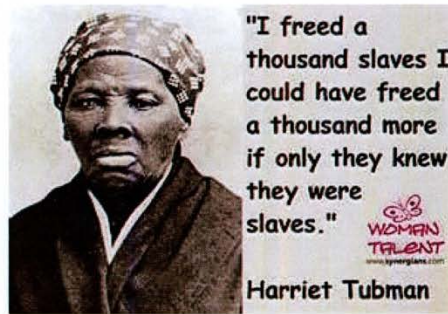
Harriet Tubman was born in about 1820 to parents who were slaves, so she was also a slave. When she was 12 she was hit on the head with a heavy object by an over-seer. This injury caused her to sleep a lot. She had dreams and visions in which she believed God was going to free her and others from slavery. Harriet managed to gain her freedom by using the Underground Railway and moving north. This journey was nearly 145 kilometres and took between five days and three weeks. The trip was made more difficult by bounty hunters who were on the lookout for slaves trying to escape. When Harriet gained her freedom, she went back South and helped her family and other slaves to become free. She died at 93, and is remembered for her fight against slavery and helping others. She was a true heroine.



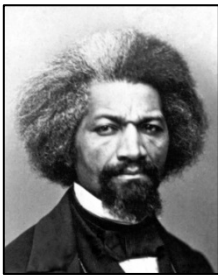
Source A

Harriet Tubman made nineteen trips as a 'conductor', risking her life every time, and successfully freed about 300 slaves. She carried a gun and threatened any slave who wanted to turn back.

A reward of \$40 000 was offered to any bounty hunter who brought her in to the authorities, but she managed to avoid capture. Harriet Tubman became known as 'Moses' because she freed her people just as Moses freed the children of Israel from Egyptian slavery.



Source B: Fredrick Douglass (former slave and abolitionist) about Harriet Tubman



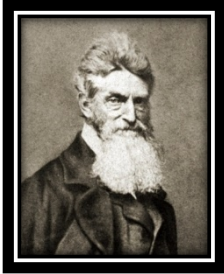
"I have wrought (worked) in the day- you in the night..... The midnight sky and the silent stars have been the witnesses of your..... devotion to freedom and of your heroism..... I know of no one who has willingly encountered more perils and hardships to serve our enslaved people than you have"

Frederick Douglass

Activity 11: Harriet Tubman

1. Write three facts about Harriet Tubman in a paragraph of four to five sentences.
2. Why do you think Harriet threatened those slaves who wanted to turn back?
3. Provide evidence that supports Frederick Douglass's view of Harriet Tubman.

The Story of John Brown and his mission to abolish slavery

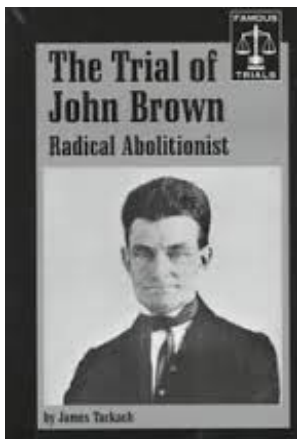


'These men are all talk. What we need is action – action!'

'John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in his grave, but his soul goes marching on.'

'Here, before God, in the presence of these witnesses, from this time, I consecrate (give) my life to the destruction of slavery!'

John Brown was a revolutionary abolitionist, which means that he believed that change would come about quickly if violent methods were used. His aim was to abolish slavery for good. John Brown lived in an anti-slavery state. He clashed with the supporters of slavery in Kansas. In 1856, during the Kansas campaign, he and his supporters killed five pro-slavery Southerners in what was called the Pottawatomie Massacre.



In 1859, he also tried to start a freedom movement among the slaves in Harpers Ferry, Virginia. However, the army got involved and some of Brown's supporters were killed and he was captured. He was tried for treason against the state of Virginia, for the murder of five pro-slavery Southerners and for starting a slave rebellion. He was found guilty and was later hanged. His beliefs and spiritual sense infuriated some people and gave hope and courage to others.

Section E: The impact of the transatlantic slave trade on America, Britain and Africa

Key words

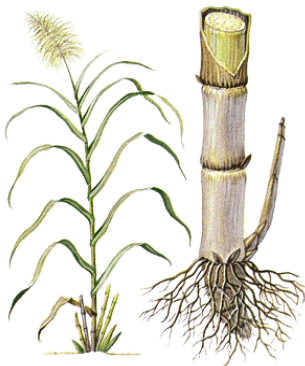
Economy: the centre of supply and demand of goods and services. The economy depends on industry, consumer spending, levels of government and money. Therefore economics and politics influence each other.

Gains for America and Britain

The economy of America profited enormously from slavery. Before the American Civil War, when the Northern and Southern states of the USA fought each other, cotton was financially the most important crop. Cotton was grown on plantations where the free labour of slaves was used. Slavery helped the economy of the USA to develop through the growth and export of cash crops like wheat, rice, sugar and especially cotton. (However, this does not justify slavery.)



Cotton Plant



Sugar Cane

By the late 1850s, a new sense of freedom existed and, gradually, people, especially in the Northern states, came to regard the South as backward because of its mistreatment of slaves. Slavery was made illegal in the Northern states in 1834 but continued in the South. Eventually the North and South went to war, partly because of this issue (the American Civil War, 1861-1865). Up to the end of the Civil War, the economy of America profited very much from the unpaid labour of the slaves.



Many of the raw materials produced by the slaves were sold in Britain. This meant that, during the time of slavery (late 1600s to early 1800s), trade between America and Britain grew. Trade is an important part of the economy.



Tobacco Plant

Although it is hard to work out exactly how much the economy of Britain profited from slavery, we know that the effect was great. The British developed industries to process the raw materials imported from the American South. Ports like Liverpool, Bristol and Glasgow also profited from the slave trade because of the slave ships using them. Altogether, we can see that while Britain and America grew rich and well off as a result of the transatlantic slave trade, the unfortunate slaves did not.

Negative impact on West Africa

Slavery had a negative impact on Africa and the continent suffers from the effects of these events to this day.

So many people were taken as slaves that the population of some parts of Africa was greatly decreased. In some of these areas, there were not enough people left to manage the land successfully. In other areas, people who were trying to avoid being captured got together in numbers that were too large and this resulted in over-population. Both of these effects caused the breakdown of societies.

West African societies were so weakened that they could not resist being taken over by European colonists. The damage to local economies was one effect of this situation. The Europeans interfered with farming all over West Africa. They forced the local people to grow crops, such as coffee, that could be sold in Europe, rather than allowing them to grow the food crops that they needed in order to survive normally.



Coffee Plant

Slaves were bought with goods from Europe. In time, the African kingdom came to rely on trade with Europe. This trade benefitted the few powerful people who ruled, but not the majority of Africans. The slave trade became so important to the economies of some parts of Africa that, once slavery was done away with in Europe and America, the African kingdoms found it hard to buy the goods they needed. The traditional ways of growing crops and trading had been forgotten or

destroyed and large parts of Africa became poorer and poorer. In addition, most of the very healthiest and strongest African people had been sold as slaves and were therefore not able to contribute as workers in their home areas. Slavery also caused an increase in the number of wars between Africans. In order to gain wealth, one tribe might attack its neighbour in order to take prisoners. These prisoners were then sold to slave traders. This caused the further weakening of many West African societies.

Activity 12: Discuss the impact of the slave trade.

Read information given in the text and answer the following questions:

1. Explain how the slave trade helped to reduce the price of cotton, coffee, rice and sugar.
2. The list below contains some of the role players in the slave trade. Explain what each group did in terms of the slave trade and how they benefitted from the slave trade:
Slave traders, slave ship owners, plantation owners, factory owners.
3. What effects did the slave trade have on West Africa?

