

The Transatlantic Slave Trade

Differentiated Reading Comprehension

The resources in this pack are designed to support teaching on or around the transatlantic slave trade and slavery or as part of UKS2 learning during Black History Month. This pack is specifically aimed at an UKS2 audience due to the distressing nature of the content.

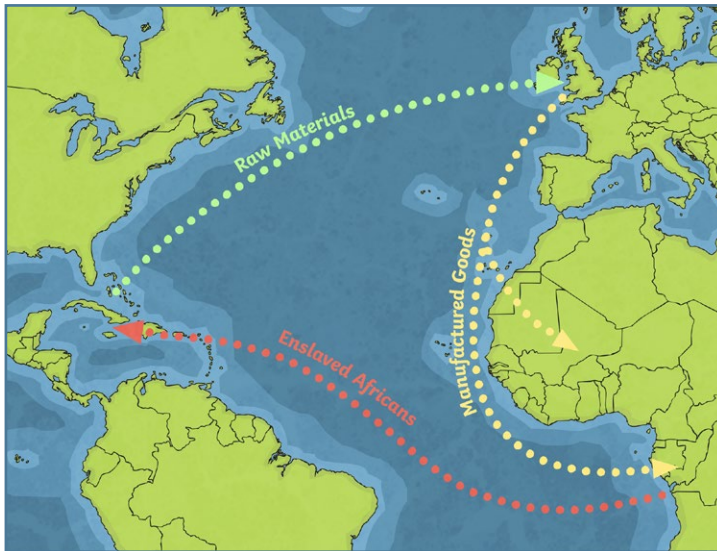
Please be aware that it will not be appropriate for the children in your class to research further into the slave trade due to the harrowing information and images freely available on the Internet.

Know your class: some content may be too upsetting for some children.

The Transatlantic Slave Trade

Between the 16th and 19th centuries, Europeans forcibly removed millions of people from their homes in West Africa and transported them across the Atlantic Ocean in awful conditions. These people were sold into a life of slavery in the Americas. They were forced to work with no pay and many were treated poorly. This was known as the transatlantic slave trade. This period of history resulted in the deaths of millions of African people.

The Triangular Trade



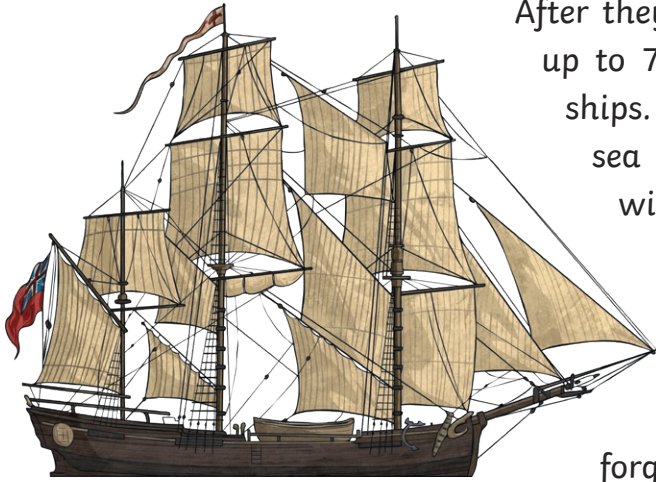
The transatlantic slave trade is often referred to as the Triangular Trade. There were three parts to the trade.

1. Firstly, large ships travelled to West Africa carrying goods such as cloth and guns. These goods were exchanged for men, women and children who had been taken from their villages.
2. During the **middle passage** across the ocean, conditions were dangerous to health. The overcrowded and dirty ships spent months crossing the ocean and many people died. When the ships arrived, their passengers were sold at **auction** and set to work.

Thus, African people were bought and sold as if they were no more than an item in a shop. They were now known as slaves who were forced to work growing crops with little chance of payment or freedom.
3. Lastly, the third stage of trade involved the ships returning with goods grown by the African people. These goods (such as sugar and cotton) were sold to the people of Britain and other European countries. The triangle was complete and the process would begin again.



What Happened to the African Villagers on the Middle Passage?



After they had been taken from their homes, up to 700 villagers were forced onto huge ships. Many of them had never seen the sea before. They were chained together with little room to move.

If they survived the **middle passage**, they were sold into slavery. People were separated from their friends and family. They were told to forget their earlier life and they were given a new name. On the plantations, slaves worked for 14 hours or more each day. If they made a mistake, or if they tried to resist or fight back, they were beaten. As a result, many slaves rebelled. Some even gained freedom and fought for an end to slavery.

Olaudah Equiano's Story

Olaudah Equiano (1745-1797) was kidnapped in West Africa and sold as a slave. Fortunately, he was able to survive and pay for freedom. He became an abolitionist – someone who was fighting for an end to slavery – and travelled to Europe to share his autobiography. It was published over 200 years ago and contained details of his dreadful experiences during the journey across the Atlantic and of slavery. Due to its honesty, it prompted many readers to question the concept of slavery and therefore became a powerful argument for its abolition.

Did You Know...?

Olaudah Equiano toured Britain so he could share his story. He talked in Birmingham, Nottingham, Manchester, Sheffield and Cambridge.

Abolition at Long Last

Eventually, people in Britain began to recognise that slavery was unethical. In 1807, the Houses of Parliament banned the slave trade. However, it was not until 1833 when slaves were finally freed across the British Empire.

In the USA, slavery continued even after its **abolition** because there was lots of disagreement. Plantation owners in southern states became very wealthy due to slave labour but those in the north disagreed with the use of slaves. As a result, the American Civil War (1861-1865) happened.

The civil rights movement of the 1960s arose because of the continued **segregation** of black and white Americans over 100 years after slavery was officially ended.



Glossary

abolition	The action of abolishing a system – in this case, slavery.
auction	A public sale where goods are sold to the highest bidder.
cargo	Goods carried on a ship, aeroplane or lorry.
middle passage	The journey that captured Africans took across the Atlantic Ocean, under unsanitary conditions.
plantation	An estate on which crops, such as coffee, sugar and tobacco, are grown.
segregation	The enforced separation of different ethnic groups in a country.
unethical	Morally wrong and unacceptable behaviour.

Questions

1. During which period in history was the transatlantic slave trade? Tick **one**.

- During the 20th century
- 1 000 years ago
- Before the 15th century
- Between the 16th and 19th centuries

2. Which statements describing The Triangular Trade are true? Tick **two**.

- There were four parts to the trade.
- Goods were exchanged for men, women and children.
- Goods were sold at auction.
- Sugar and cotton were sold to people in Britain and other countries.

3. Fill in the missing words.

Lastly, the _____ stage of trade involved the _____ returning to _____ with goods grown by the African people.

4. What were conditions like for the villagers on the middle passage?

5. Find and copy the word which describes what happened to the slaves' friends and family.

6. Why do you think that many slaves rebelled against their situation?

7. How do you think Olaudah Equiano's story helped to abolish slavery?

8. Eventually, people in Britain began to recognise that slavery was unethical. Why do you think it took so long for slavery to be abolished? Use evidence from the text.

Answers

1. During which period in history was the transatlantic slave trade? Tick **one**.

- During the 20th century
- 1 000 years ago
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2. Which statements describing The Triangular Trade are true? Tick **two**.

- There were four parts to the trade.
- Goods were exchanged for men, women and children.
- Goods were sold at auction.
- Sugar and cotton were sold to people in Britain and other countries.

3. Fill in the missing words.

Lastly, the **third** stage of trade involved the **ships** returning to **Britain** with goods grown by the African people.

4. What were conditions like for the villagers on the middle passage?

The ships were overcrowded and dirty and many people died. The villagers were chained together with little room to move.

5. Find and copy the word which describes what happened to the slaves' friends and family.

separated

6. Why do you think that many slaves rebelled against their situation?

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think they could not bear to be slaves any longer and wanted to escape their harsh lives.

7. How do you think Olaudah Equiano's story helped to abolish slavery?

Pupils' own responses, such as: Olaudah Equiano's story told readers all about his dreadful experiences and persuaded readers to think differently. He also toured Britain so he could share his story.

8. Eventually, people in Britain began to recognise that slavery was unethical. Why do you think it took so long for slavery to be abolished? Use evidence from the text.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think it took a long while because some people did not want to change. For example, plantation owners became very wealthy and also people in Britain liked to have coffee, sugar and tobacco.