AIM: What was life like in West Africa before the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade?

BACKGROUND: The voyage of Christopher Columbus from Spain to the Caribbean in 1492 set in motion forces that transformed the world. As the nations of Western Europe competed for trade and colonies, they used the labor of enslaved Africans, the indigenous population of the Western Hemisphere and indentured Europeans, the resources and land of the Americas, and trade with East Asia, to amass a level and concentration of wealth previously unknown in the world. The investment of this wealth in building the physical infrastructure of European nations, in military might, in new world plantations, in creating commercial and banking networks, and later in new technologies and industries, was an essential element in the nascent industrial revolution in Great Britain and eventually led to European global domination. A major factor in the global transformation was the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, which was dominated in different periods by Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands, England and North Americans from the United States. Between 1600 and the 1860s, the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade provided between nine and eleven million (records are incomplete and estimates vary) enslaved African workers who produced valuable cash crops, principally sugar, but also tobacco, indigo, rice and later cotton, on new world plantations. This vast forced migration changed the demographic and cultural patterns of the world and provided the profits that financed industrial capitalism.

DO NOW: Read the passage on the life of Olaudah Equiano. In your own words answer questions 1-3 on the back of the reading.

MOTIVATION: What does it mean to be a slave? When you hear the word what does it mean to you?

ACTIVITIES: In this lesson the students will learn about the life of Olaudah (Oh-lau-dah) Equiano. First the students are to read the Equiano biography and then look at the historic maps of Africa and Guinea. Groups will read and answer questions about Equiano’s life and culture in West Africa before he was sold into slavery. Students will present their research to the class. Students will create a chart comparing life in Africa in the time of Equiano and their own lives as students living in the United States in the twenty-first century.

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<th>West Africa during the 1600s</th>
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KEY QUESTIONS:
What was life like in a typical West African village?
What do you think was Equiano’s impression of the life in West Africa?

SUMMARY QUESTIONS: What do we learn about life in West Africa from the account by Olaudah Equiano? In your opinion, why did he decide to tell this story?


APPLICATION: Discuss the long term impact of the trans-Atlantic slave trade on the development of West African societies.

Lesson developed by Douglas Cioffi and Emily White
A. The Life of Olaudah Equiano (c.1745 - c.1797)

Source: http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/equiano_olaudah.shtml

Olaudah Equiano is famous for his autobiography, an account of his childhood in an area called ‘Eboe’ in Guinea as the son of the chief and experiences as a former slave. The book, which was called *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa, the African*, became immensely popular at the height of the anti-slavery campaign. Around the age of eleven, Equiano and his sister were kidnapped and shipped through the notoriously middle passage. A British naval officer, Michael Pascal, later bought Equiano and introduced him to the naval way of life. Pascal also renamed Equiano ‘Gustavus Vassa’ after a 16th-century Swedish nobleman who led the Swedes in a war of independence against the Danes to become the first Swedish king.

Initially Equiano was brought to England, where he learnt to read and write at a school in London inbetween naval actions. Equiano saw action in major naval battles during the Seven Years War in the 1750s, travelling to Canada and the Mediterranean. He had fought for the British and felt entitled to freedom and some of the prize money handed out to sailors. But he was cheated of this income and sold to another sea-captain who took him to Monserrat in the Caribbean where he was sold to Robert King, a Quaker merchant. During this time he was exposed to the horrors of slavery, seeing fellow Africans treated abominably. But Equiano was more fortunate than some of his peers, and after three years of saving his income he was able to buy his freedom in 1766 for £40.

He then returned to England, becoming a hairdresser but soon returned to sea. In 1775 he became involved in a project to set up a new plantation on the Caribbean coast of Central America. During this time Equiano and his associates bought people but he states in his autobiography that he did “every thing I could to comfort the poor creatures…” This was the 1770s when there was no organized anti-slavery movement but it nonetheless conflicted with Equiano’s later protest against slavery and his associations with Granville Sharpe, a prominent British Abolitionist. Equiano appealed to Sharpe in a bid to save former slave and friend, John Annis who had been illegally kidnapped by his former owner. Unfortunately, Annis could not be helped. Equiano’s experience as a slave-owner turned sour when he was again cheated of money and threatened with re-enslavement.

His book appeared in the spring of 1789 and was, in general, favorably reviewed. He then sold the book throughout Britain, undertaking lecture tours and actively campaigning to abolish the slave trade. In 1792 he married an Englishwoman, Susanna Cullen. They had two daughters, one of whom inherited a sizeable estate from her father when Equiano died in 1797.

Questions
1. Why is Equiano also known as Gustavus Vassa?
2. What is different or unique about Equiano’s life compared to the experience of other enslaved Africans?

B. Locating West Africa and Guinea on Maps

![Historic Map of Africa](http://bell.lib.umn.edu/historical/H_af_car.html)

**Group 1.** After reading these three passages and answer the questions, identify overall themes that exist throughout all of the pieces. Give specific explanations of how you came up with your answers.

**Geography & Government of West Africa:** “That part of Africa, known by the name of Guinea, to which the trade for slaves is carried on, extends along the coast above 3,400 miles, and includes a variety of kingdoms. It extends along the coast about 170 miles, but runs back into the interior part of Africa to a distance I believe unexplored by any traveler. The distance of this province from the capital of Benin and the sea coast must be very considerable; for I have never heard of white men or Europeans, nor of the sea; for every transaction of the government was conducted by the chiefs or elders of this place. The manners and government of a people who have little commerce with other countries are generally very simple. My father was one of those elders or chiefs I have spoken of. Those Embrence, or chief men, decided disputes and punished crimes; for which purpose they always assembled together. The proceedings were generally short; and in most cases the law of retaliation prevailed. Adultery was sometimes punished with slavery or death; a punishment, which I believe, is inflicted on it throughout most of the nations of Africa. A woman was convicted before the judges of adultery, and delivered over, as the custom was, to her husband to be punished. Accordingly he determined to put her to death.”

**Questions**
1. How does Equiano show that the distance from the capital and the coast is a great distance?
2. Why didn’t the Europeans go into the interior of Africa?
3. Who makes decisions within the government?
4. Who were the “Embrence”?
5. In your opinion, why did the husband get to choose the fate of his wife?

**Marriage Customs:** “The men do not preserve the same constancy to their wives, which they expect from them; for they indulge in a plurality, though seldom in more than two. Both parties are usually betrothed when young by their parents. On this occasion a feast is prepared, and the bride and bridegroom stand up in the midst of all their friends, who are assembled for the purpose, while he declares she is thenceforth to be looked upon as his wife, and that no other person is to pay any addresses to her. Some time after she is brought home to her husband, and then another feast is made; her parents then deliver her to the bridegroom; she is now considered as completely his wife; and at this time the dowry is given to the new married pair, which generally consists of portions of land, slaves, and cattle, household goods. These are offered by the friends of both parties; besides which the parents of the bridegroom present gifts to those of the bride, whose property she is looked upon before marriage; but after it she is esteemed the sole property of her husband. The ceremony being now ended the festival begins accompanied with music and dancing.”

**Questions**
1. Was it uncommon for a man to have more than one wife?
2. What is meant by, “betrothed when young by their parents”?
3. In your opinion, did women have the same rights as men?

**Music and the Arts:** “We are almost a nation of dancers, musicians, and poets. Thus every great event, such as a triumphant return from battle, or other cause of public rejoicing is celebrated in public dances, which are accompanied with songs and music suited to the occasion. The assembly is divided into four divisions. The first division contains the married men who in their dances frequently exhibit the representation of a battle. To these succeed the married women, who dance in the second division. The young men occupy the third; and the maidens the fourth. Each represents some interesting scene of real life, such as a great achievement, domestic employment, a pathetic story, or some rural sport; and as the subject is generally founded on some recent event. We have many musical instruments, particularly drums of different kinds.”

**Questions**
1. What is the point of celebrating with music and dance?
2. Why would the dancers be grouped together by specific gender roles?
3. In your opinion, why were there celebrations of negative events?
**Group 2.** After reading these three passages and answer the questions, identify overall themes that exist throughout all of the pieces. Give specific explanations of how you came up with your answers.

**Clothing, Food & Other Customs:** “As our manners are simple, our luxuries are few. The dress of both sexes is nearly the same. It generally consists of a long piece of calico, or muslin, wrapped loosely around the body. This is usually dyed blue, which is our favourite colour. Besides this, our women of distinction wear golden ornaments. When our women are not employed with the men in tillage, their usual occupation is spinning and weaving cotton. Our manner of living is entirely plain; bullocks, goats and poultry, supply the greatest part of their food. These constitute likewise the principal wealth of the country, and the chief articles of its commerce. Our vegetables are mostly plantains, yams, beans and Indian corn. The head of the family usually eats alone; his wives and slaves have also their separate tables. Before we taste the food we always wash their hands. They are unacquainted with strong liquors; and their principal beverage is palm wine. Our principal luxury is in perfumes; with which both men and women perfume themselves.”

**Questions**
1. Why would men and women dress similar? Is there any evidence to support your answer?
2. What does it mean to be employed in tillage?
3. In your opinion, why did men, women and slaves eat their meals separately?

**Buildings:** “In our buildings we study convenience rather than ornament. Each master of a family has a large square piece of ground surrounded with a moat or fence. Within this are his houses to accommodate his family and slaves. In the middle stands the principal building consisting of two apartments; in one of which he sits in the day with his family, the other is left apart for the reception of his friends. He has besides these a distinct apartment in which he sleeps, together with his male children. On each side are the apartments of his wives. The habitations of the slaves and their families are distributed throughout the rest of the enclosure. These houses never exceed one story in height; they are always built of wood. The whole neighborhood afford their unanimous assistance in building them and in return receive, and expect no other recompense than a feast.”

**Questions**
1. Did most of the buildings looked similar? What evidence do you have to support your answer?
2. Why were rooms be grouped together by gender?
3. In your opinion, why did the male head of household sleep with his sons?

**Occupations:** “Our wants are few and easily supplied. In such a state money is of little use; however we have some small pieces of coin. We also have markets, at which I have been frequently with my mother. Our land is uncommonly rich and fruitful, and produces all kinds of vegetables in great abundance. We have plenty of Indian corn, and vast quantities of cotton and tobacco. We also have spices of different kinds, particularly pepper and a variety of delicious fruits, which I have never seen in Europe. Agriculture is our chief employment and everyone, even the children and women are engaged in it. Every one contributes something to the common stock; we have no beggars. Indeed cheerfulness and affability are two of the leading characteristics of our nations. They use no beasts of husbandry; and their only instruments are hoes, axes, shovels, or pointed iron to dig with.”

**Questions**
1. What is the chief occupation of this African village?
2. What are some of the main tools used to aid in this chief occupation?
3. What does it mean, when he states that they use no “beasts of husbandry”?
4. What are the benefits of how Equiano’s village worked?
Group 3: After reading these three passages and answer the questions, identify overall themes that exist throughout all of the pieces. Give specific explanations of how you came up with your answers.

Slavery & War: This common is often the theater of war. From what I can recollect of these battles, they appear to have been irruptions of one little state or district on the other, to obtain prisoners or booty. Perhaps those traders who brought the European goods I mentioned amongst us incited them to this. Such a mode of obtaining slaves in Africa is common; and I believe more are procured this way, and by kidnapping than any other. When a trader wants slaves, he applies to a chief for them, and tempts him with his wares. We have firearms, bows and arrows, broad two-edged swords and javelins; we have shields also which cover a man from head to foot. All are taught to use of these weapons; even our women are warriors. Our whole district is a kind of militia. The spoils were divided according to the merit of the warriors. Those prisoners, which were not sold or redeemed, we kept as slave: but how different was their condition from that of the slaves in the West Indies! With us they do no more work than other members of the community. Some of these slaves have even slaves under them as their own property, and for their own use.

Questions
1. According to Equiano, who is to blame for most of the wars that take place?
2. What kind of weapons do the West Africans use?
3. Why would women be trained to be used as warriors?
4. Why does Equiano mention the slaves that exist where he is from?

Religion: The natives believe that there is one Creator of all things, and that he lives in the sun; according to some, he smokes a pipe, which is our own favourite luxury. They believe he governs events, especially our deaths or captivity. Some however believe in the transmigration of souls in a certain degree. Those spirits, which are not transmigrated, such as our dear friends or relations, they believe always attend them, and guard them from the bad spirits or their foes. We compute the year from the day on which the sun crosses the line, and on its setting that evening there is a general shout throughout the land. They have many offerings, particularly at full moons. These offerings, when made by one of the heads of a family, serve for the whole. We practiced circumcision like the Jews, and made offerings and feasts on that occasion in the same manner as they did. Like them also, our children were named for some event, some circumstance, or fancied foreboding at the time of their birth. I have remarked that the natives of this part of Africa are extremely cleanly. This necessary habit of decency was with us a part of religion, and therefore we had many purifications and washings; as the Jews. Those that touched the dead at any time were obliged to wash and purify themselves before they could enter a dwelling-house. Though we had no places of public worship, we had priests and magicians, or wise men. They calculated our time, and foretold events. They wore beards, and when they died their sons succeeded them. None accompanied their funerals but those of the same profession or tribe. These buried them after sunset, and always returned from the grave by a different way from that which they went.

Questions
1. Which religion does Equiano refer to as being similar to his own?
2. What were some of the similarities between the two religions?
3. Why did the people who attended funerals take a different way home?

Medicine & Health: These magicians were also our doctors. They were very successful in healing wounds and expelling poisons. The success of which no doubt they derived from their unbound influence over the superstition of the people. A virgin had been poisoned, but it was not known by whom: the doctors order the corpse to be taken up by some persons, and carried to the grave. As soon as the bearers had raised it on their shoulders, they seemed seized with some sudden impulse, and ran to and fro unable to stop themselves. At last, after having passed throughout a number of thorns and prickly bushes unhurt, the corpse fell from them close to a house, and defaced it in the fall; and, the owner being taken up, he immediately confessed the poisoning.

Questions
1. What seems to be the biggest health problem that exists in Equiano’s society?
2. What was the point of Equiano telling the story of the poisoned woman?
AIM: What was the impact of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade on Africa and Africans?

BACKGROUND: West Africans were experienced agricultural workers whose labor was used to exploit the resources of the American continents. Although slavery existed in many times and cultures throughout human history, slavery in the British Americas, including the United States, developed into a fundamentally different institution from slavery in the ancient Mediterranean world and Africa. There was no reciprocal obligation by the elite to the enslaved. Enslavement was a permanent hereditary status based on skin color. There was an impassable racial barrier that denied the fundamental humanity of the enslaved.


MOTIVATION: Evaluating evidence of the past.

ACTIVITIES: After the discussion of the map and the possible population ramifications, the students are given the reading and chart of the population effects after the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. The students will then answer the questions that follow the reading. After looking at and discussing the population reading, the students are asked whether the Africans used themselves as slaves. The students are then given the reading about Olaudah Equiano’s capture and enslavement in Africa. This will also allow students to understand how the Africans used their own for their own benefits. It will also show the effects of the slave trade on the Africans specifically. The next step for the students will be to look at the effect that the slave trade on Africa. This will be shown with the reading and pictures of bronze statues of the Benin Kingdom.

KEY QUESTIONS:
What was the impact of the population shift due to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade?
Do you think Equiano’s experience was typical of a captured African sent to be a slave in Africa?
Eventually the British looted the Benin kingdom and took some of the bronze statues. Why would they do this?
What is the significance of these bronze statues?

SUMMARY QUESTION: Based on what we have seen today, what is your final observation about how the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade effected Africa?

HOMEWORK: Students create their own written account as if they were an African living during this time period. Write what has happened to you and your people. Illustrate the text with a drawing of a “bronze statue” or created a statue in 3-dimensions.

APPLICATION: What do you think that Equiano’s next experience is going to be? Do you think he is going to see the same kindness as he is transported across the Middle Passage? Explain.

Lesson developed by Douglas Cioffi and Emily White
Benin Bronze Images Explore Art and Beliefs

Sources: http://www.hamillgallery.com/BENIN/BeninObjects/BeninObjects.html
http://www.museum.upenn.edu/new/exhibits/galleries/benin.html

Benin art supported the ability of the principle chief, the “Oba,” to govern. Benin society. Court rituals and art focused on what set the Oba apart from the other chiefs, his claim of divine origins. Benin royal art is primarily made of ivory and bronze. Before the arrival of the Portuguese, the supply of bronze came from trade with northern neighbors. In the 15th century a great expansion in bronze-casting took place. This reflected the increased commercial importance of Benin. Examine each of the illustrations and speculation about what they tell us about Benin society.

1.  
2.  
3.  
4.  
5.  

What do you think the pictures represent?

1. _____________________
2. _____________________
3. _____________________
4. _____________________
5. _____________________
West African Artifacts from the Meryside Museum in Liverpool, UK

Artifacts give us clues to life in West Africa prior to the trans-Atlantic slave trade and challenge stereotypes about traditional African societies. One myth is that West Africa was isolated from the rest of the world. A second myth is that West African societies were illiterate. A third myth is that West African societies were technologically backward.

1. A wood tablet with a passage from the Koran.
   1. There was an extensive trade network connecting West Africa with the Arab world.
   2. Many religious leaders, government officials and merchants were literate.

2. Benin bronze showing the arrival of Portuguese slave traders accompanied by hunting dogs.
   1. The creation of metal bas-reliefs suggest a high level of metallurgical skills.
   2. Images on the bas-reliefs tell stories and record history in a form of pre-writing

C. An Islamic Merchant Reports on his Travels to Mali


“In 1324, Mansa Musa, Sultan of Mali, passed through Cairo on his way to complete the hajj. The amount of gold he spent and distributed as alms was so great that it depressed the value of gold in Egypt for two years. Besides gold, other important commodities leaving West Africa included ivory, ostrich feathers, kola nuts, ambergris, hides and slaves. In return, textiles, copper, silver, books, paper, swords, ironware, perfumes, jewelry, spices, wheat, dried fruit and horses came south from Mediterranean Africa.

Along with goods, Islamic scholars accompanied the southbound caravans. Islam was the official state religion in an area where the majority of people held animist and polytheistic beliefs. In order to strengthen Muslim faith and law, Mansa Sulayman, a devout Muslim and Mansa Musa’s successor, welcomed scholars from abroad. Such a setting was perfect for our opportunistic traveler and jurist. Ibn Battuta crossed the High Atlas Mountains in late 1351 and joined a trans-Saharan caravan at the important commercial city of Sijilmasa on the northern edge of the desert. . . . After several weeks, he traveled to the capital of Mali, the location of which is unsure. He fainted during dawn prayers after eating yams or some root that had not been cooked long enough to remove the natural poison. He remained ill for two months. When he finally recovered, he attended a memorial ceremony for a Moroccan sultan at the palace of Mansa Sulayman. The sultan entered the pavilion, preceded by three hundred slaves, two saddled and bridled horses, and two rams as defense against the evil eye. . . . In February 1353, Ibn Battuta went by camel to Timbuktu, which was just then developing as a trade center. Moving on to Gao, a source of copper, he became ill again and was cared for by a Moroccan. Shortly after, he received a request from the sultan of Morocco to return home.”
The trans-Atlantic slave trade seriously affected the demographic growth of many African societies directly, and had a more subtle impact on many others. The disruption caused by the forced migration of many young men from villages meant a shift in marriage patterns as the number of marriageable men declined. For many societies on the West coast of Africa during the trans-Atlantic slave trade, populations either declined, remained constant, or had very little growth, usually suffering a varying disproportion between the numbers of men and women. For the Upper Guinea Coast, for example, the export of enslaved people during the latter half of the eighteenth century reduced the regional population, and halted growth into the first decade of the nineteenth century. During this period the ratio of men to women dropped to below eighty men per one hundred women. In those societies where there were few captives taken, population growth was more constant, although demographic effects of the slave trade were still a factor. The disruption caused by inter-tribal warfare and the capturing of Africans for the European market often heightened the effects of natural disasters such as disease or famine. The effects of a famine could be greatly magnified if fewer people of a village were available to produce food, and a higher death toll as a result would reduce the population even more. As well, the continual interaction between villages brought about by the migrations of captives across Africa facilitated the spread of diseases, further disrupting the growth of populations. These disruptions were especially devastating for the region of Angola, where an increase in slave exports in the nineteenth century resulted in an even greater decline in population. It has been estimated that in 1600, the population of Africa stood at about 50 million people, or thirty per cent of the combined populations of the New World, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. By 1900 the population of Africa had grown to 70 million, but made up only ten per cent of the total combined population. Furthermore, the population of Africa in 1850 has been estimated to have been only about half of what it would have been had slavery and the slave trade not been a factor in African history.

Questions
1. What was the short-term impact of the trans-Atlantic Slave trade on the population of Africa?
2. What was the long-term impact of the trans-Atlantic Slave trade on the population of Africa?
Olaudah Equiano Describes Capture and Enslavement in Africa


**Capture:** One day, when all our people were gone out to their works as usual, and only I and my dear sister were left to mind the house, two men and a woman got over our walls, and in a moment seized us both, and, without giving us time to cry out, or make resistance, they stopped our mouths, and ran off with us into the nearest wood. Here they tied our hands, and continued to carry us as far as they could, till night came on, when we reached a small house, where the robbers halted for refreshment, and spent the night. When we went to rest the following night they offered us some victuals; but we refused it; and the only comfort we had was in being in one another’s arms all that night, and bathing each other with our tears. We were soon deprived of even the small comfort of weeping together. The next day proved a day of greater sorrow than I had yet experienced; for my sister and I were then separated. At length, after many days traveling, during which I had often changed masters, I got into the hands of a chieftain, in a very pleasant country. This man had two wives and some children, and they all used me extremely well, and did all they could to comfort me; particularly the first wife, who was something like my mother.

**Enslavement:** Although I was a great many days journey from my father’s house, yet these people spoke exactly the same language with us This first master of mine, as I may call him, was a smith, and my principal employment was working his bellows, which were the same kind as I had seen in my vicinity. They were in some respects not unlike the stoves here in gentlemen’s kitchens; and were covered over with leather; and in the middle of that leather a stick was fixed, and a person stood up, and worked it, in the same manner as is done to pump water out of a cask with a hand pump. I believe it was gold he worked, for it was of a lovely bright yellow colour, and was worn by the women on their wrists and ankles.

**Failed Escape:** I ran into a thicket that was hard by, and hid myself in the bushes. Soon afterwards my mistress and the slave returned, and, not seeing me, they searched all the house, but not finding me, they thought I had run away, and the whole neighbourhood was raised in the pursuit of me. I had before entertained hopes of getting home, and I had determined when it should be dark to make the attempt; but I was now convinced it was fruitless, and I began to consider that, if possibly I could escape all other animals, I could not those of the human kind; and that, not knowing the way, I must perish in the woods. I at length quitted the thicket, very faint and hungry, for I had not eaten or drank any thing all the day; and crept to my master’s kitchen, from whence I set out at first, and which was an open shed, and laid myself down in the ashes with an anxious wish for death to relieve me from all my pains.

**Sold and Sold Again:** In a small time afterwards I was again sold. I was now carried to the left of the sun’s rising, through many different countries, and a number of large woods. The people I was sold to used to carry me very often, when I was tired, either on their shoulders or on their backs. From the time I left my own nation I always found somebody that understood me till I came to the sea coast. The languages of different nations did not totally differ, nor were they so copious as those of the Europeans, particularly the English. They were therefore easily learned; and, while I was journeying thus through Africa, I acquired two or three different tongues. In this manner I had been travelling for a considerable time, when one evening, to my great surprise, whom should I see brought to the house where I was but my dear sister! I did not long remain after my sister. I was again sold, and carried through a number of places, till, after travelling a considerable time, I came to a town called Tinmah, in the most beautiful country I had yet seen in Africa. It was extremely rich, and there were many rivulets which flowed through it, and supplied a large pond in the centre of the town, where the people washed. I was sold here for one hundred and seventy-two of them by a merchant who lived and brought me there. I had been about two or three days at his house, when a wealthy widow, a neighbour of his, came there one evening, and brought with her an only son, a young gentleman about my own age and size. Here they saw me; and, having taken a fancy to me, I was
bought of the merchant, and went home with them. Her house and premises were situated close to one of those rivulets I have mentioned, and were the finest I ever saw in Africa: they were very extensive, and she had a number of slaves to attend her.

The language of these people resembled ours so nearly, that we understood each other perfectly. They had also the very same customs as we. There were likewise slaves daily to attend us, while my young master and I with other boys sported with our darts and bows and arrows, as I had been used to do at home. In this resemblance to my former happy state I passed about two months; and I now began to think I was to be adopted into the family, and was beginning to be reconciled to my situation, and to forget by degrees my misfortunes, when all at once the delusion vanished; for, without the least previous knowledge, one morning early, while my dear master and companion was still asleep, I was wakened out of my reverie to fresh sorrow, and hurried away even amongst the uncircumcised.

**Transported to the Sea Coast:** All the nations and people I had hitherto passed through resembled our own in their manners, customs, and language: but I came at length to a country, the inhabitants of which differed from us in all those particulars. I was very much struck with this difference, especially when I came among a people who did not circumcise, and ate without washing their hands. They cooked also in iron pots, and had European cutlasses and cross, bows, which were unknown to us, and fought with their fists amongst themselves. Their women were not so modest as ours, for they ate, and drank, and slept, with their men. But, above all, I was amazed to see no sacrifices or offerings among them. In some of those places the people ornamented themselves with scars, and likewise filed their teeth very sharp. They wanted sometimes to ornament me in the same manner, but I would not suffer them. At last I came to the banks of a large river, which was covered with canoes, in which the people appeared to live with their household utensils and provisions of all kinds. I was beyond measure astonished at this, as I had never before seen any water larger than a pond or a rivulet: and my surprise was mingled with no small fear when I was put into one of these canoes, and we began to paddle and move along the river. Thus I continued to travel, sometimes by land, sometimes by water, through different countries and various nations, till, at the end of six or seven months after I had been kidnapped, I arrived at the sea coast. It would be tedious and uninteresting to relate all the incidents which befell me during this journey, and which I have not yet forgotten; of the various hands I passed through, and the manners and customs of all the different people among whom I lived: I shall therefore only observe, that in all the places where I was the soil was exceedingly rich. There were also vast quantities of different gums, though not used for any purpose; and every where a great deal of tobacco. The cotton even grew quite wild; and there was plenty of red-wood. I saw no mechanics whatever in all the way, except such as I have mentioned. The chief employment in all these countries was agriculture, and both the males and females, as with us, were brought up to it, and trained in the arts of war.

**Questions**

1. Of what origin were the two men and one woman who captured Equiano and his sister?
2. What is meant by, “bathing in each other’s tears”?
3. Why was Equiano separated from his sister?
4. What were some of the similarities of the places that Equiano kept encountering?
5. Why do you think Equiano tried to escape? Was he successful? Why or why not?
6. Why did Equiano feel so comfortable with some of his captives?
7. What was Equiano’s impression of the seacoast?
Impact of Europeans on the Benin Kingdom

Source: http://www.uiowa.edu/~africart/toc/history/giblinstate.html#benin

When Portuguese mariners became the first Europeans to visit this part of West Africa in 1486, the obas (rulers) benefited from trade with them. Esigie, who ruled from about 1504 to 1550, established close contacts with the Portuguese and, according to some accounts, learned to speak and read Portuguese. The obas established a royal monopoly over trade in pepper and ivory with European and Benin became an important exporter of cloth. Benin prevented the depletion of its own population by prohibiting the export of males slaves during the 16th and 17th centuries, although it did import and resell captives purchased by Europeans elsewhere in West Africa.

Wealthy and powerful obas became the patrons of artists and craftspeople. Under Esigie the artists of Benin produced their most famous work. Because trade brought copper and brass into the kingdom, metalworkers were able to refine techniques of bronze and brass casting which had been known in Benin since the 13th century. They produced a remarkable series of bronze bas-reliefs lining the walls of the oba’s palace.

Historians of Benin know relatively little about the kingdom’s history during the 18th century, although they recognize that slaves supplanted cloth as Benin’s major export after it abolished the prohibition on slave exports. The 19th century is often described by historians as a period of steady decline culminating in the conquest of Benin by the British in 1897. Like much of West Africa, Benin’s economy was disrupted by the decision of the British in 1807 to abolish the slave trade. Meanwhile, militarily formidable Islamic states to the north of Benin posed a new threat and one seized control of Benin’s northern peripheries. To the west, the Yoruba state of Ibadan menaced Benin. As the nineteenth century wore on, European traders also established an increasingly threatening presence.

This context of decline and external menace has been used by historians to explain an infamous aspect of Benin’s history, the practice of human sacrifice. They have suggested that, faced with dwindling profits from trade and besieged by enemies on all sides, the obas resorted to ritual sacrifice as a way of overawing their subjects. “The intensification of human sacrifice in Benin City from the late 1880s,” writes the Nigerian scholar A.I. Asiwaju, “has been interpreted by some as evidence of the desperation of the rulers seeking ritual solution to the political problem of an imminent collapse.”

Questions
1. What role did the obas play in Benin society?
2. What was the Benin kingdom’s attitude toward slavery in the 16th and 17th centuries?
3. What role did the British play in the collapse of the Benin kingdom?

Use the following map to answer the questions below. Source: http://www.slaveryinamerica.org/geography/slave_trade.htm

1. From which section of Africa did slave ships depart?
2. To which section of the Americas were the most Africans sent?
3. Based on this map, what was the impact of the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade on Africa and the Americas?
AIM: What were conditions like for enslaved Africans on the Middle Passage?

BACKGROUND: The second leg of the Triangular Trade is often referred to as the “Middle passage.” On this leg of the trade, European ships carried enslaved Africans destined for sale in the Caribbean and on the North and South American mainland. The Middle Passage is characterized by its inhuman cruelty and hardship. Africans were crowded below deck in airless holds in order to maximize carrying capacity and profits. They were often laid out head to foot in a “spooning position.” The floors of the hold were covered with excrement and blood from ill and injured people. Perhaps 20% of the Africans on board failed to survive the trip across the Atlantic Ocean. Those who perished were thrown overboard. Some Africans chose to jump into the sea rather than face continued horros and the unknown. This lesson explores the experiences and observations of people who survived the Middle Passage as “cargo” and “crew.”

DO NOW: Examine Images of the Middle Passage and answer questions.

MOTIVATION: View the opening sequence of Amistad. The movie provides a vivid image of the horrors of the Middle Passage. Discuss the scene from Amistad and Images of the Middle Passage.

ACTIVITIES: The student read and compare selections by Alexander Falconbridge, a surgeon on a British slave ship and Olaudah Equiano, an enslaved African. Discuss, what are the differences between the two accounts of the Middle Passage? readings? If so what are they?

Viewing the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade from Different Lens
Create a chart comparing Alexander Falconbridge and Olaudah Equiano.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Similarities</th>
<th>Differences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alexander Falconbridge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olaudah Equiano</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

KEY QUESTIONS:
How did watching the scene from Amistad make you feel?
What impact does the Middle Passage pictures have? What is their purpose?
How do the passages by Falconbridge and Equiano compare to the images and the movie version?
What is the overall image that you get from Falconbridge’s writings?
What is the overall image that you get from Equiano’s writings?

SUMMARY QUESTIONS:
Who do you think gives a more accurate viewpoint of the Middle Passage? Why?

HOMEWORK OPTIONS:
1. Find two newspaper articles about the same story. The articles have to be from different papers. Bring in both articles and create a chart listing the similarities and differences between the same story.
2. From the pictures and text, students create their own drawings or dioramas depicting the Middle Passage.
3. Imagine you are a crew member on a slave ship. Write a letter to a family member about what you have witnessed on board.

APPLICATION: Why do some people who see the same thing look at it in a different way? Can you name other instances or circumstances where people have different viewpoints about the same experience?

[Activity Sheet A - Images from the Middle Passage is designed for middle and regents level students. Activity sheets B -Alexander Falconbridge’s Account of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, C - The Life of Olaudah Equiano and Activity Sheet D- Viewing the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade from Different Lens are intended for regents level students. Activity Sheet E - Daily Routine on the Slave Ships and F - Middle Passage Cross Word Puzzle are intended for middle level students.]

Lesson developed by Douglas Cioffi and Emily White
A. Images from the Middle Passage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image Description</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Body positions of slaves in the hold of French slave ship L’Aurore. Enslaved Africans were forced to lie spoon-like to occupy as little space as possible and maximize profits. From “Dessins extraits du livre de Jean Boudriot (1784).” The Library at The Mariners’ Museum.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ancre.fr/vaisso05-e.htm">http://www.ancre.fr/vaisso05-e.htm</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slave cargo by Thomas Clarkson in Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of Human Species (1786).</td>
<td>Miley.wlu.edu/hist366/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Wildfire was from New York City. In 1860, the ship was intercepted near the Congo River with a cargo of 510 enslaved Africans.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part1/1h300b.html">http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part1/1h300b.html</a>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions
1. Write a brief paragraph describing each image.
2. What common theme do you see in all four images?
3. In your opinion, what purpose does each of these images serve?
B. Alexander Falconbridge’s Account of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade

Source: http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part1/1h281.html

As a surgeon on British slave ships in the late 18th century, Alexander Falconbridge had first-hand knowledge of the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. In his memoir, *Black Voyage-Eyewitness Accounts of the Atlantic Slave Trade*, he discussed the purchase and storing of human cargo on the African coast, the Middle Passage, and the sale of enslaved Africans in the West Indies.

The hardships and inconveniences suffered by the Negroes during the passage are scarcely to be enumerated or conceived. They are far more violently affected by seasickness than Europeans. It frequently terminates in death, especially among the women. But the exclusion of fresh air is among the most intolerable. For the purpose of admitting this needful refreshment, most of the ships in the slave trade are provided, between the decks, with five or six air-ports on each side of the ship, of about five inches in length and four in breadth. The fresh air being thus excluded, the Negroes’ rooms soon grow intolerable hot. The confined air, rendered noxious by the effluvia exhaled from their bodies and being repeatedly breathed, soon produces fevers and fluxes which generally carries off great numbers of them.

During the voyages I made, I was frequently witness to the fatal effects of this exclusion of fresh air. I will give one instance, as it serves to convey some idea, though a very faint one, of their terrible sufferings. . . . Some wet and blowing weather having occasioned the port-holes to be shut and the grating to be covered, fluxes and fevers among the Negroes ensued. While they were in this situation, I frequently went down among them till at length their room became so extremely hot as to be only bearable for a very short time. But the excessive heat was not the only thing that rendered their situation intolerable. The deck, that is the floor of their rooms, was so covered with the blood and mucus which had proceeded from them in consequence of the flux, that it resembled a slaughter-house. It is not in the power of the human imagination to picture a situation more dreadful or disgusting. Numbers of the slaves having fainted, they were carried upon deck where several of them died and the rest with great difficulty were restored. It had nearly proved fatal to me also. In a quarter of an hour I was so overcome with the heat, stench and foul air that I nearly fainted, and it was only with assistance I could get back on deck. The consequence was that I soon after fell sick of the same disorder from which I did not recover for several months. . . .

The place allotted for the sick Negroes is under the half deck, where they lie on the bare planks. By this means those who are emaciated frequently have their skin and even their flesh entirely rubbed off, by the motion of the ship, from the prominent parts of the shoulders, elbows and hips so as to render the bones quite bare.

And some of them, by constantly lying in the blood and mucus that had flowed from those afflicted with the flux and which is generally so violent as to prevent their being kept clean, having their flesh much sooner rubbed off than those who have only to contend with the mere friction of the ship. The excruciating pain which the poor sufferers feel from being obliged to continue in such a dreadful situation, frequently for several weeks, in case they happen to live so long, is not to be conceived or described. Few, indeed, are able to withstand the fatal effects of it. The utmost skill of the surgeon is here ineffectual.

As very few of the Negroes can so far brook the loss of their liberty and the hardships they endure, they are ever on the watch to take advantage of the least negligence in their oppressors. Insurrections are frequently the consequence; which are seldom expressed without much bloodshed. Sometimes these are successful and the whole ship’s company is cut off. They are likewise always ready to seize every opportunity for committing some acts of desperation to free themselves from their miserable state and notwithstanding the restraints which are laid, they often succeed. . . .

**Questions**

1. After reading the passage, what is meant by enumerated, noxious, emaciated & insurrection?
2. What seems to be the biggest problem that the “slaves” have to deal with aboard the ship?
3. Why do you think the surgeons are ineffective aboard the ship?
4. Do you think that the author is sympathetic to the slave’s experience aboard the ship? Explain why or why not.
C. The Life of Olaudah Equiano

Oloudah Equiano was born in Benin on the west coast of equatorial Africa in 1745, and was kidnapped and sold into slavery when he was eleven. While enslaved, he worked on a Virginia plantation as the servant for a British naval officer and for a Philadelphia merchant. After purchasing his freedom, he wrote his memoirs and became active in the anti-slavery movement. The full text of *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Oloudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vasa, Written by Himself* (London, 1789) is available on the web at docsouth.unc.edu.

The stench of the hold while we were on the coast was so intolerably loathsome, that it was dangerous to remain there for any time, and some of us had been permitted to stay on the deck for the fresh air; but now that the whole ship’s cargo were confined together, it became absolutely pestilential [disease]. The closeness of the place, and the heat of the climate, added to the number in the ship, which was so crowded that each had scarcely room to turn himself, almost suffocated us. This produced copious perspirations, so that the air soon became unfit for respiration, from a variety of loathsome smells, and brought on a sickness among the slaves, of which many died, thus falling victims to the improvident avarice [greed], as I may call it, of their purchasers.

This wretched situation was again aggravated by the galling of the chains, now become insupportable; and the filth of the necessary tubs, into which the children often fell, and were almost suffocated. The shrieks of the women, and the groans of the dying, rendered the whole a scene of horror almost inconceivable. Happily perhaps for myself I was soon reduced so low here that it was thought necessary to keep me almost always on deck; and from my extreme youth I was not put in fetters [chains]. In this situation I expected every hour to share the fate of my companions, some of whom were almost daily brought upon deck at the point of death, which I began to hope would soon put an end to my miseries.

Often did I think many of the inhabitants of the deep much more happy than myself. I envied them the freedom they enjoyed, and as often wished I could change my condition for theirs. Every circumstance I met with served only to render my state more painful, and heighten my apprehensions, and my opinion of the cruelty of the whites. One day they had taken a number of fishes; and when they had killed and satisfied themselves with as many as they thought fit, to our astonishment who were on the deck, rather than give any of them to us to eat as we expected, they tossed the remaining fish into the sea again, although we begged and prayed for some as well as we could, but in vain; and some of my countrymen, being pressed by hunger, took an opportunity, when they thought no one saw them, of trying to get a little privately; but they were discovered, and the attempt procured them some very severe floggings [whipping].

One day, when we had a smooth sea and moderate wind, two of my wearied countrymen who were chained together (I was near them at the time), preferring death to such a life of misery, somehow made through the nettings and jumped into the sea: immediately another quite dejected fellow, who, on account of his illness, was suffered to be out of irons, also followed their example; and I believe many more would very soon have done the same if they had not been prevented by the ship’s crew, who were instantly alarmed. Those of us that were the most active were in a moment put down under the deck, and there was such a noise and confusion amongst the people of the ship as I never heard before, to stop her, and get the boat out to go after the slaves. However two of the wretches were drowned, but they got the other, and afterwards flogged him unmercifully for thus attempting to prefer death to slavery. In this manner we continued to undergo more hardships than I can now relate, hardships which are inseparable from this accursed trade. Many a time we were near suffocation from the want of fresh air, which we were often without for whole days together. This, and the stench of the necessary tubs, carried off many.

Questions
1. What were some of the worst parts aboard the ship?
2. When the author writes about the inhabitants of the deep and their freedom, what is he referring to?
3. Why did people try to jump off the ship?
E. Daily Routine on the Slave Ships

Source: http://beatl.barnard.columbia.edu/students/his3487/lembrich/seminar54.html

A. During periods of good weather, were brought up on deck in the morning. The men were shackled together with iron chains, while the women and children were allowed to roam about on deck. At about nine o’clock in the morning they were given their first meal of the day. Captives from different sections along the west African coast would often be fed different meals. Those from the Northern part of the Guinea Coast would be fed boiled rice, millet, or cornmeal. People from the Bight of Biafra had stewed yams, and those from still farther south in the Congo River region would be fed starchy manioc, cassava flour, or banana-like fruits. Sometimes a few lumps of raw meat would be thrown in with their food to keep them healthy. It was also at this time in the morning that the enslaved Africans were given their daily ration of a half-pint of water in a small pan, called a pannikin.

B. In the late afternoon came the captives’ second and only other meal of the day. Sometimes it was the same as their first, but most captains were not that humane. The afternoon meal usually consisted only of horse beans, very large beans which are used to feed horses. They were the cheapest form of food available. The beans were boiled until they were pulpy and then covered with a mixture of palm oil, flour, and water. To cover up the horrible taste, large amounts of red pepper, called “slabber sauce,” were added.

C. The captains needed to keep the enslaved Africans in acceptable physical condition if they were to be sold at high prices, so each morning after breakfast the slaves were “danced” on deck, in order to give them exercise. Still shackled together, the men were forced to jump up and down until often the flesh of their ankles was raw and bleeding from the iron chains which bound them together. The women and children, who were free of such bonds were better able to dance to the rhythm that was pounded out on an African drum or iron kettle, sometimes with the accompaniment of a fiddle or African banjo played by a crew member. The enslaved Africans, otherwise kept miserably in the “tween decks”, enjoyed this dancing, as it was their only form of physical recreation during the entire day.

D. During the morning exercises members of the crew roved about the deck carrying whips and would beat people who refused to “dance”. Although most whips were made only of simple rope, the wicked cat-o’-nine-tails was also used aboard many slavers. Consisting of nine cords coated with tar, each with a knot at the end, the cat-o’-nine-tails could slash the skin of an enslaved African’s back to ribbons in only a few lashes.

Questions
1. What do you think was the most difficult part of being imprisoned on a slave ship?
2. What would you have done to survive if you were on board?

F. Middle Passage Cross Word Puzzle

Across
3. Large amounts of red pepper that was used to cover up the horrible taste of the cheap food.
5. Shackled together, the men were brought to the top of the decks to do this for exercise.

Down
1. A whip used to beat the slaves consisting of nine cords coated with tar, each with a knot at the end.
2. Where the slaves were kept on the ship.
4. Daily ration of water in a small pan.
AIM: How many Africans died because of the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade?

BACKGROUND: Historians do not know how many people died as a result of the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Estimates vary greatly. Sometimes historians disagree about who should be counted as a casualty. Sometimes records were not kept or did not survive. Because they were involved in a business venture designed to make profits, the best documented evidence for mortality is from ship’s records from the Middle Passage. There are also reliable records for the survival rate of Africans in the New World. The most widely debated numbers are for deaths during capture, transport from the interior to the coast, and at coastal collection points. An estimated 11 million Africans survived the voyage across the Atlantic Ocean on slave ships from 1600 to 1870. Between 1.5 and 2 million people died on the trip (approximately 15%). As many as one-third of the enslaved Africans who arrived in the New World, perhaps 4 million people, failed to survive the first five years of enslavement. A high estimate for mortality directly caused by the slave trade while people were still in Africa is 6 million deaths. This figure does not include people who died in warfare stimulated by the European desire for slave labor. How many Africans died as a result of the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade? While we will never know the actual number, a reasonable estimate is between ten and twelve million people. Sources: Klein, H. (1999). *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (Cambridge); Thomas, H. (1997). *The Slave Trade* (Simon & Schuster); Walvin, J. (1999). *The Slave Trade* (Sutton); Williams, E. (1944). *Capitalism and Slavery* (Chapel Hill).

DO NOW: Read section A of “Morality caused by the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.”

MOTIVATION: Discuss the story of Equiano Olaudah.

ACTIVITY:
(1) Examine charts A-E and answer the questions.
(2) Use the information from the charts and your answers to the questions to write a one page (250 word) essay describing the mortality and human cost of the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.
(3) Create graphs to illustrate your text.
(4) Present finding to class.

Note: As students examine the charts, they will discover that estimates based on different sources vary and that information they might want to have is missing. This can be used to promote a discussion of how historians try to make sense out of an incomplete historical record.

SUMMARY: What was the human cost of the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade?
APPLICATION: Was the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade an example of genocide?

QUESTIONS FOR STUDENT RESEARCH PROJECTS:
What countries were the leading participants in the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade?
What areas in Africa were the major sources for slave labor?
What were the main New World markets for enslaved labor?
What were the principle occupations for enslaved workers in different New World sites?
What were the major trans-Atlantic shipping routes?
Which countries and sources supplied enslaved labor for particular markets?
How did conditions differ for enslaved Africans in different New World sites?
What were the short term and long term impacts on African societies of the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade?
What contributions did people of the African diaspora make to New World societies?
Mortality caused by the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade

A. “The stench of the hold while we were on the coast was so intolerably loathsome, that it was dangerous to remain there for any time, and some of us had been permitted to stay on the deck for the fresh air; but now that the whole ship’s cargo were confined together, it became absolutely pestilential. The closeness of the place, and the heat of the climate, added to the number in the ship, which was so crowded that each had scarcely room to turn himself, almost suffocated us. This produced copious perspirations, so that the air soon became unfit for respiration . . . and brought on a sickness among the slaves, of which many died, thus falling victims to the improvident avarice, as I may call it, of their purchasers. This wretched situation was again aggravated by the galling of the chains, now become insupportable; and the filth of the necessary tubs, into which the children often fell, and were almost suffocated. The shrieks of the women, and the groans of the dying, rendered the whole a scene of horror almost inconceivable.”


B. Historians do not know how many people died as a result of the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Estimates vary greatly. Sometimes historians disagree about who should be counted as a casualty. Sometimes records were not kept or did not survive. Because they were involved in a business venture designed to make profits, the best documented evidence for mortality is from ship’s records from the Middle Passage. There are also reliable records for the survival rate of Africans in the New World. The most widely debated numbers are for deaths during capture, transport from the interior to the coast, and at coastal collection points.

An estimated 11 million Africans survived the voyage across the Atlantic Ocean on slave ships from 1600 to 1870. Between 1.5 and 2 million people died on the trip (approximately 15%). As many as one-third of the enslaved Africans who arrived in the New World, perhaps 4 million people, failed to survive the first five years of enslavement. A high estimate for mortality directly caused by the slave trade while people were still in Africa is 6 million deaths. This figure does not include people who died in warfare stimulated by the European desire for slave labor. How many Africans died as a result of the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade? While we will never know the actual number, a reasonable estimate is between ten and twelve million people.

Assignment: (1) Examine charts A-E and answer the questions. (2) Use the information from the charts and your answers to the questions to write a one page (250 word) essay describing the mortality and human cost of the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. (3) Create graphs to illustrate your text.

A. Enslaved Africans Transported to the New World


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country involved in the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade</th>
<th>Voyages</th>
<th>Slaves Transported to N.W.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>4,650,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>2,600,00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>1,600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>4,200</td>
<td>1,250,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British North America &amp; U.S.</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>54,200</strong></td>
<td><strong>11,000,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions
1. Which country transported the most enslaved Africans to the New World?
2. How many enslaved Africans were brought to the Americas?
3. How many enslaved Africans were on an average voyage?
B. Africans Taken from Africa


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Point of Origin</th>
<th>Number of People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senegambia/Sierra Leone</td>
<td>2,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windward Coast</td>
<td>250,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivory Coast</td>
<td>250,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold Coast (Ashanti)</td>
<td>1,500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slave Coast (Dahomey)</td>
<td>2,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>2,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroons/Gabon</td>
<td>250,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loango</td>
<td>750,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo/Angola</td>
<td>3,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique/Madagascar</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>13,000,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions
1. What was the origin of most Africans?
2. How many Africans are believed to have been enslaved?

C. Average Slave Mortality during the Middle Passage


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Number of Ships Involved</th>
<th>Mortality Rate on Board</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1590-1699</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1700-1749</td>
<td>1,091</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1750-1807</td>
<td>2,571</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1808-1829</td>
<td>1,350</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830-1867</td>
<td>553</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,966</strong></td>
<td><strong>12.4%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions
1. When were the most ships involved in the slave trade?
2. When was slave mortality the greatest?

D. Initial Arrival Point in the New World for Enslaved Africans


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Number of People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>4,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish America</td>
<td>2,500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British West Indies</td>
<td>2,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French West Indies</td>
<td>1,600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch West Indies</td>
<td>500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British North America &amp; U.S.</td>
<td>500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>28,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>11,128,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions
1. Where were most enslaved Africans sent?
2. Approximately 13 million people left Africa and 11 million arrived in the Americas. What happened to the missing 2 million people?

E. First Employment in the Americas


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Number of People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sugar Plantations</td>
<td>6,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffee Plantations</td>
<td>2,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mines</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Domestic or Household Labor</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton Fields</td>
<td>500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cocoa (Chocolate) Fields</td>
<td>250,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>250,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>11,000,000</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Questions
1. What was the most common work for newly arrived Africans?
2. In your opinion, what would conditions be like for these newly arrived Africans? Explain.
AIM: What do first person accounts tell historians about the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade?

DO NOW: Read excerpts from Olaudah Equiano Describes the Middle Passage.

MOTIVATION: Why do you think that there are not many accounts of the experiences of slaves during the slave trade? What do you think they would have said?

ACTIVITIES: After students discuss about the life of Olaudah Equiano separate the class into groups. Each group must complete the handout that is provided. They can choose to create a cover either as a group or individually.

HOMEWORK / APPLICATION: Listen to and discuss the history of the song “Amazing Grace.”

[This is primarily intended as a middle level group lesson. Activity C – “Captain Richard Drake, Revelations Of A Slave Smuggler,” could be used with a regents level class.]

John Newton and “Amazing Grace”

Sources: http://www.gospelcom.net/chi/GLIMPSEF/Glimpses/glmps028.shtml
www.flash.net/~gaylon/jnewton.htm

John Newton was a sailor on the Greyhound, a vessel involved in the Atlantic Slave trade. He had been a sailor from the age of eleven. In March, 1748, the Greyhound was caught in a north Atlantic storm off of the coast of Sierra Leone. The storm ripped its sails and splintered and tore away one side of the ship. The sailors had little hope of survival but they continued to pump out water in an effort to trying to keep the boat afloat. March 21, 1748 was the eleventh day of the storm. Newton, who was too exhausted to pump water, was tied to the helm where he tried to hold the ship to its course. He remained there from one o'clock in the afternoon until midnight.

While waiting for death, John Newton underwent a religious awakening and believed he had experienced God’s grace. Although Newton continued as a slave-trader, his life had been transformed. He eventually abandoned the sea and became a Protestant minister. As part of his duties, he composed hymns, including one that described his experience as a slave trader and his eventual redemption. It was called “Amazing Grace.” John Newton also became an activist in the campaigns to end the slave trade and abolish slavery.

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.

Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils and snares,
I have already come;
Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me,
His Word my hope secures;
He will my Shield and Portion be,
As long as life endures.

Yea, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess, within the veil,
A life of joy and peace.

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,
The sun forbear to shine;
But God, Who called me here below,
Shall be forever mine.

Questions:
1. What different types of work did John Newton do during his lifetime?
2. What caused him to change the way he lived?
3. What evidence is provided that his conversion was sincere?
4. What do we learn about the slave trade from the story of John Newton and “Amazing Grace”?

Lesson developed by Doug Cioffi and Emily White
A. Olaudah Equiano Describes the Middle Passage


“One day, when we had a smooth sea and moderate wind, two of my wearied countrymen who were chained together (I was near them at the time), preferring death to such a life of misery, somehow made through the nettings and jumped into the sea: immediately another quite dejected fellow, who, on account of his illness, was suffered to be out of irons, also followed their example; and I believe many more would very soon have done the same if they had not been prevented by the ship’s crew, who were instantly alarmed. Those of us that were the most active were in a moment put down under the deck, and there was such a noise and confusion amongst the people of the ship as I never heard before, to stop her, and get the boat out to go after the slaves. However two of the wretches were drowned, but they got the other, and afterwards flogged him unmercifully for thus attempting to prefer death to slavery.”

Questions
1. Where is this taking place?
2. Why did the Africans leap overboard?
3. In your opinion, why did the ship’s crew try to rescue them?

B. Group Assignment (Source: http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USASships.htm)

1. Read your selection.
2. What is the title of the autobiography?
3. In your opinion, is this title appropriate?
4. How was this individual involved in the slave trade?
5. How was this person’s life similar to or different from Olaudah Equiano’s?
6. Pretend you are designing the cover and title for this person’s autobiography. You may also use any information you have gathered about the Slave Trade or other accounts of slavery. Be creative, but make sure the title and cover are historically appropriate, and relate to the person you read about and their personal struggle.

GROUP 1. Ottobah Cugoano was kidnapped as a child in Africa and sold as a slave to plantation owners in Grenada. He remained in the West Indies until purchased by an English merchant. He was taken to England where he worked as the man’s servant. Cugoano learned to read and write and in 1787 he published an account of his experiences.

Ottobah Cugoano, Narrative of the Enslavement of a Native of Africa (1787)

We were taken in the ship that came for us, to another that was ready to sail from Cape Coast. When we were put into the ship, we saw several black merchants coming on board, but we were all drove into our holes, and not suffered to speak to any of them. In this situation we continued several days in sight of our native land. And when we found ourselves at last taken away, death was more preferable than life; and a plan was concerted amongst us, that we might burn and blow up the ship, and to perish all together in the flames: but we were betrayed by one of our own countrywomen, who slept with some of the headmen of the ship, for it was common for the dirty filthy sailors to take the African women and lie upon their bodies; but the men were chained and pent up in holes. It was the women and boys which were to burn the ship, with the approbation and groans of the rest; though that was prevented, the discovery was likewise a cruel bloody scene.

But it would be needless to give a description of all the horrible scenes which we saw, and the base treatment which we met with in this dreadful captive situation, as the similar cases of thousands, which suffer by this infernal traffic, are well known. Let it suffice to say that I was thus lost to my dear indulgent parents and relations, and they to me. All my help was cries and tears, and these could not avail, nor suffered long, till one succeeding woe and dread swelled up another. Brought from a state of innocence and freedom, and, in a barbarous and cruel manner, conveyed to a state of horror and slavery, this abandoned situation may be easier conceived than described.
Group 2. Zamba Zembola, the son of a king of a small community in the Congo, was born in about 1780. When he was in his early twenties he was invited by a Captain Winton, to accompany him to America on his slave ship. After arriving in America, he was kidnapped and sold as a slave. Zamba worked on a plantation for over forty years before he managed to achieve his freedom.

Zamba Zembola, The Life and Adventures of Zamba and African Slave (1847)

Captain Winton told me in the course of our voyage, that, in the early part of his experience in the slave-trade, he had seen slaves where they were literally packed on the top of each other; and consequently, from ill air, confinement, and scanty or unwholesome provision, disease was generated to such an extent that in several cases he had known only one-half survive to the end of the voyage; and these, as he termed it, in a very unmarketable condition. He found, therefore, that, by allowing them what he called sufficient room and good provisions, with kind treatment, his speculations turned out much better in regard to the amount of dollars received; and that was all he cared for.

After being about 15 days out to sea a heavy squall struck the ship. The poor slaves below, altogether unprepared for such an occurrence, were mostly thrown to the side, where they lay heaped on the top of each other; their fetters rendered many of them helpless, and before they could be arranged in their proper places, and relived from their pressure on each other, it was found that 15 of them were smothered or crushed to death. The captain seemed considerably vexed; but the only grievance to him was the sudden loss of some five or six thousand dollars.

Group 3. Thomas Clarkson was born in Wisbech in 1760. He was educated at St. John's College, Cambridge, and was afterwards ordained as a deacon. In 1785 Cambridge University held an essay competition with the title: “Is it rights to make men slaves against their wills?” Clarkson had not considered the matter before but after carrying out considerable research on the subject submitted his essay. Clarkson won first prize and was asked to read his essay to the University Senate. On his way home to London he had a spiritual experience. He later described how he had “a direct revelation from God ordering me to devote my life to abolishing the trade.” Clarkson contacted Granville Sharp, who had already started a campaign to end the slave-trade. In 1787 Clarkson and Sharp formed the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade. Of the twelve members on the committee, nine were Quakers. Influential figures such as John Wesley and Josiah Wedgwood gave their support to the campaign. Later they persuaded William Wilberforce, the MP for Hull, to be their spokesman in the House of Commons. Thomas Clarkson was given the responsibility of collecting information to support the abolition of the slave trade. This included interviewing 20,000 sailors and obtaining equipment used on the slave-ships such as iron handcuffs, leg-shackles, thumb screws, instruments for forcing open slave's jaws and branding irons. In 1787 he published his pamphlet, A Summary View of the Slave Trade and of the Probable Consequences of Its Abolition. Clarkson was a brilliant writer and Jane Austen, who completely disagreed with his views on slavery, was so impressed with his writing style that she claimed after reading one of his books that she was “in love with its author.”

Thomas Clarkson interviewed a sailor who worked on a slave-ship and published the account in his book, Essay on the Slave Trade (1789). “The misery which the slaves endure in consequence of too close a stowage is not easy to describe. I have heard them frequently complaining of heat, and have seen them fainting, almost dying for want of water. Their situation is worse in rainy weather. We do everything for them in our power. In all the vessels in which I have sailed in the slave trade, we never covered the gratings with a tarpawling, but made a tarpawling awning over the booms, but some were still panting for breath.”
C. Captain Richard Drake, Revelations Of A Slave Smuggler


The preface to this book describes the author as elderly and living in poverty in one of New York City’s worst communities. The narrative was supposedly “dictated” by Drake, but its legitimacy has been questioned. The slave traders he describes are actual historical figures, but historians do not know whether the events of Drake’s own life are fact or fictional. Some suspect the book was written by abolitionists to arouse opposition to slavery. Read and discuss these passages and then draw pictures or create three dimensional dioramas to illustrate the text.

**Questions**

1. How did Drake’s uncle acquire Africans for the trans-Atlantic slave trade?
2. What were conditions like for Africans who were being taken into slavery?
3. In your opinion, why would some historians suspect that this story was written by abolitionists opposed to slavery?

A. My uncle was making up a kaffle of slaves from several lots brought in by hunting parties. A kaffle is the common name for a train of slaves driven to the rivers or sea-coast. My uncle had a standing bargain for supplies, so there was no chaffering concerning prices. He bought by the twenties allowing so much merchandise for each score of picked negroes. A thirty-gallon keg of brandy, a half dozen pieces of colored cottons, and twenty-five pounds of gunpowder, were given for any prime lot. Different articles, such as iron spear-heads, coral beads, tobacco, and gilt trinkets, were exchanged proportionately for other lots. When the slaves were brought in by the hunters, they were fastened to stakes driven in the ground, by couples. Every morning my uncle went out to inspect a new batch driven in during the night. A mulatto overseer was his principal examiner - a burly, savage fellow, who knocked the poor blacks about without mercy. He would fell a negro senseless on the slightest provocation, and was constantly lashing them with a knotted leather whip. I ventured to remonstrate with my uncle about such treatment of the slaves, and was told that this mulatto was considered the best kaffle-driver on the coast.

B. The business of inspection and choice of stock was done in a shady wood, near the centre of the town, where my uncle’s quarters were. Shakoes whip cracked a signal for each squad’s arrival and my uncle, in shirt and duck trousers, with a palm-leaf hat, walked up and down the fettered line, smoking his cigar. Shakoe was a sort of negro doctor as well as overseer, and could tell an unsound slave almost by a glance. He handled the naked blacks from head to foot, squeezing their joints and muscles, twisting their arms and legs, examining teeth, eyes, and chest, and pinching breasts and groins without mercy. The slaves stood in couples, stark naked, and were made to jump, cry out, lie down, and roll, and hold their breath for a long time. Women and girls were used no more gently than the men by this mulatto inspector.

C. The day before we were to start from Gambo, the branding was done. The slaves were fetched up singly, made to lie down on their faces, and thus held by a big negro, whilst another kept the branding irons hot in a fire close by, and a third applied them between the shoulders of the shrieking wretches. At first there was horrible yelling, for the poor people expected to be tortured to death and I was called upon to talk to them in their own lingo, though my assurances had not much effect. Shakoe plied his leather till it became actually crusted with blood.

D. Our march to the river was a painful one. Shakoe and his assistant “devils,” as the slaves, no doubt, considered them all, marked their way with blood. When we reached the Qua, and marched along its banks to the Calabar depot, I let the whole kaffle pass me, and the slaves presented a deplorable appearance as they moved along, scarred and bleeding.

E. Our kaffle numbered one hundred and fifty full-grown males and females, and about a hundred youths of both sexes. Dr. Maxwell and the two skippers of the vessels were at the station to receive us. Here the kaffle was overhauled and barber’s work done. The heads of all slaves, without distinction of age or sex, were shaved, and they were scrubbed with sand, standing in the water. The schooners were fitted with bulkheads, in the fashion of regular slavers, and the sexes divided on each side.
AIM: Solomon Northup’s Odyssey: What did it mean to be enslaved in the American South?

BACKGROUND: Solomon Northup was a free Black man and a citizen of New York State. He lived in Saratoga Springs with his wife and three children. Northup was a skilled carpenter and violinist and also worked on the Lake Champlain Canal and on construction of the Troy and Saratoga railroad. In 1841, Solomon Northup was kidnapped by slave traders and his freedom papers stolen while on a trip to Washington, DC. He was transported to Louisiana and sold as a slave. In Louisiana, Northup worked on cotton plantations until he was able to smuggle a letter to his wife and friends in New York. Using a New York State law designed to protect free Black citizens from being sold into slavery, they secured his freedom through the courts. Northup was finally released from bondage after twelve years as a slave. When he returned to New York, abolitionists helped him publish his memoirs as part of their campaign to abolish slavery. Solomon Northup’s account is especially important as an historical because he is able to describe slavery from the point of view of a free man and a skilled worker. It is also unique because Northup was enslaved on plantations in the “deep” South. Sources: Eakin, S. and Logsdon, J., eds. (1967). Twelve Years a Slave. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State U. Press; Aptheker H. (1973). A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States, v 1; Northup, S. (1853). Twelve Years a Slave, Narrative of Solomon Northup. Auburn, NY; http://docsouth.unc.edu/northup/nytarticle.html.

DO NOW: Examine the introduction to Solomon Northup and the illustrations from his memoir.

MOTIVATION: Why is the story told by Solomon Northup considered historically unique? In your opinion, how does his experience as a free man in a free state help him to report on work and living conditions for enslaved Africans in the American South?

GROUP TASK: Each group shall read one of the documents and answer the following questions. Groups will report back to the full class.
1. What did you learn about slavery in the United States from each passage?
2. What questions do you have about what is reported in the memoir?
3. What would you have done if you were in Solomon Northup’s position? Why?
4. What would you have done if you were an abolitionist and learned about Northup’s story? Why?

SUMMARY: Based on the memoir by Solomon Northup, what did it mean to be enslaved in the American South?

APPLICATION: During Solomon Northup’s early years as a slave, he committed “slave crimes” that could have been punished by death, such as resisting a whipping and fighting back. How do these early instances show his inability to give up the idea of freedom as he once knew it? Why were the laws and punishments for slaves so harsh?
A. Illustrations from Solomon Northup (1853). Twelve Years a Slave

Solomon Northup was a free Black man and a citizen of New York State. He lived in Saratoga Springs with his wife and three children. Northup was a skilled carpenter and violinist and also worked on the Lake Champlain Canal and on construction of the Troy and Saratoga railroad. In 1841, Solomon Northup was kidnapped by slave traders and his freedom papers stolen while on a trip to Washington, DC. He was transported to Louisiana and sold as a slave. In Louisiana, Northup worked on cotton plantations until he was able to smuggle a letter to his wife and friends in New York. Using a New York State law designed to protect free Black citizens from being sold into slavery, they secured his freedom through the courts. Northup was finally released from bondage after twelve years as a slave. When he returned to New York abolitionists helped him publish his memoirs as part of their campaign to abolish slavery. Solomon Northup’s account is especially important as an historical because he is able to describe slavery from the point of view of a free man and a skilled worker. It is also unique because Northup was enslaved on plantations in the “deep” South. These illustrations are from Solomon Northup’s memoir. Examine them and answer the questions. In your groups, read the excerpts B-E and answer the questions. As an extra-credit assignment, draw your own pictures to further illustrate Solomon Northup’s story.

1. How is Solomon Northup being treated in this illustration?
2. Why do you think he was treated this way?
3. How do you think Solomon Northup and his family felt upon his arrival home after 12 years of captivity?

Task: Each group shall read one of the documents (B-F) and answer the following questions.
1. What did you learn about slavery in the United States from each passage?
2. What questions do you have about what is reported in the memoir?
3. What would you have done if you were in Solomon Northup’s position? Why?
4. What would you have done if you were an abolitionist and learned about Northup’s story? Why?
B. Solomon Northup Describes His Enslavement

1. “The pain in my head had subsided in a measure, but I was very faint and weak. I was sitting upon a low bench, made of rough boards, and without a coat or hat. I was hand-cuffed. Around my ankles also were a pair of heavy fetters. One end of a chain was fastened to a large ring in the floor, the other to the fetters on my ankles. I felt in my pockets to ascertain that I had not only been robbed of liberty, but that my money and free papers were also gone. Then did the idea begin to break upon my mind, at first dim and confused, that I had been kidnapped.”

2. “James H. Burch, as I learned afterwards, was a well-know slave-dealer in Washington, D.C. ‘Well, my boy, how do you feel now?’ said Burch, as he entered through the open door. I replied I was sick, and inquired the cause of my imprisonment. He answered that I was his slave, that he had bought me, and that he was about to send me to New Orleans. I asserted, aloud and boldly, that I was a free man. Burch ordered the paddle and cat-o’-ninetails to be brought in. The paddle, as it is termed in slave-beating parlance, was a piece of hardwood board, eighteen or twenty inches long, molded to the shape of an ordinary oar. The flattened portion, which was about the size of two open hands, was bored with a small auger (drill) in numerous places. The cat was a large rope of many strands, the strands unraveled, and a knot tied at the extremity of each. As son as these formidable whips appeared, I was seized and roughly divested of my clothing. With the paddle, Burch commenced to beat me. Blow after blow was inflicted upon my naked body. When his unrelenting arm grew tired, he stopped and asked if I still insisted I was a free man. I did insist upon it, and the blows were renewed, faster and more energetically. At length the paddle broke, leaving the useless handle in his hand. Still I would not yield. All his brutal blows could not force from my lips the foul lie that I was a slave. Casting madly on the floor the handle of the broken paddle, he seized the rope. This was far more painful than the other. My sufferings I can compare to nothing else than the burning agonies of hell!”

3. “Next day many customers called to examine the ‘new lot.’ He would make us hold up our heads, walk briskly back and forth, while customers would feel our hands and arms and bodies, turn us about, ask us what we could do, make us open our mouths and show our teeth, precisely as a jockey examines a horse which he is about to barter for or purchase. Sometimes a man or woman was taken back to the small house in the yard, stripped, and inspected more minutely. Scars upon a slave’s back were considered evidence of a rebellious or unruly spirit, and hurt his sale.”

C. Solomon Northup Describes Work and Living Conditions on a Cotton Plantation

1. “How heavily the weight of slavery pressed upon me. I must toil day after day, endure abuse and taunts and scoffs, sleep on the hard ground, live on the coarsest fare [food], and not only this, but live the slave of a blood-seeking wretch, of whom I must stand in continued fear and dread. . . . Tanner was in the habit of reading the Bible to his slaves on the Sabbath. He was an impressive commentator on the New Testament. The first Sunday after my coming to the plantation, he called them together, and began to read the twelfth chapter of Luke. When he came to the 47th verse, he looked deliberately around him, and continued, ‘And that servant which knew his lord’s will and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.’”

2. “His principal business was raising cotton. The ground is prepared by throwing up beds or ridges, with the plough. Oxen and mules are used in the ploughing. The women as frequently as the men perform this labor, feeding, currying, and taking care of their teams. . . . The beds are six feet wide. A plough drawn by one mule is then run along the top of the ridge, making the drill, into which a girl usually drops the seed, which she carries in a bag hung round her neck. Behind her comes a mule and harrow covering up the seed, so that two mules, three slaves, a plough and harrow are employed in planting a row of cotton. This is done in the months of March and April. In the latter part of August begins the cotton picking season. At this time each slave is presented with a sack. A strap is fastened to it, which goes over the neck, holding the mouth of the sack breast high, while the bottom reaches nearly to the ground. When a new hand, one unaccustomed to the business, is sent for the first time into the field, he is whipped up smartly, and made for that day to pick as fast as he can possibly. At night it is weighed so that his capability in cotton picking is known. He must bring in the same weight each night following. If it falls short, it is considered evidence that he has been laggard, and a greater or less number of lashes is the penalty. An ordinary day’s work is considered two hundred pounds.”
D. Solomon Northup Describes Work and Living Conditions on a Cotton Plantation

1. “The only respite from constant labor the slave has through the whole year, is during the Christmas holidays. It is the only time to which they look forward with any interest of pleasure. It is the time of feasting and frolicking and fiddling, the carnival season with the children of bondage. They are the only days when they are allowed a little restricted liberty. It is the custom for one planter to give a ‘Christmas supper,’ inviting slaves from neighboring plantations to join his own on the occasion. When the viands (food) have disappeared and the hungry maws of the children of toil are satisfied, then next in the order of amusement is the Christmas dance. My business on these gala days always was to play on the violin. Had it not been for my beloved violin, I scarcely can conceive how I could have endured the long years of bondage.”

2. “Marriage is frequently contracted during the holidays, if such an institution may be said to exist among them. The only ceremony required before entering into that “holy estate” is to obtain the consent of the respective owners. It is usually encouraged by the masters of female slaves. The law in relation to divorce, or to bigamy, is not applicable to property of course. If the wife does not belong on the same plantation with the husband, the latter is permitted to visit her on Saturday nights if the distance is not too far.”

3. “On larger estates an overseer is deemed indispensable. These gentlemen ride into the field on horseback armed with pistols, bowie knife, whip, and accompanied by several dogs. They follow in the rear of the slaves keeping a sharp lookout upon them all. The requisite qualifications in an overseer are utter heartlessness, brutality and cruelty. It is his business to produce large crops, no matter what amount of suffering it may cost. Goaded into uncontrollable madness, even the slave will sometimes turn upon his oppressor. One was executed a year ago for killing his overseer.”

E. Solomon Northup’s Wife Petitions For His Freedom (1852)

1. That your memorialist [petitioner], whose maiden name was Anne Hampton, was forty-four years old on the 14th day of March last, and was married to Solomon Northup, then of Fort Edward, in the county of Washington and State aforesaid, on the 25th day of December, A.D. 1828. . . . That the said Solomon, after such marriage, lived and kept house with your memorialist in said town until 1830, when he removed with his said family to the town of Kingsbury in said county, and remained there about three years, and then removed to Saratoga Springs in the State aforesaid, and continued to reside in said Saratoga Springs and the adjoining town until about the year 1841, . . . when the said Solomon started to go to the city of Washington, in the District of Columbia, since which time your memorialist has never seen her said husband. . . . [I]n the year 1841 she received information by a letter directed to Henry B. Northup, Esq., of Sandy Hill, Washington county, New York, and post-marked at New Orleans, that said Solomon had been kidnapped in Washington, put on board of a vessel, and was then in such vessel in New Orleans, but could not tell how he came in that situation, nor what his destination was. That your memorialist ever since the last mentioned period has been wholly unable to obtain any information of where the said Solomon was, until the month of September last, when another letter was received from the said Solomon, post-marked at Marksville, in the parish of Avoyelles, in the State of Louisiana, stating that he was held there as a slave.

2. That the said Solomon is about forty-five years of age, and never resided out of the state of New York, in which State he was born, until the time he went to Washington city, as before stated. That the said Solomon Northup is a free citizen of the State of New York, and is now wrongfully held in slavery, in or near Marksville, in the parish of Avoyelles, in the State of Louisiana, one of the United States of America, on the allegation or pretence that the said Solomon is a slave.

3. That your memorialist and her family are poor and wholly unable to pay or sustain any portion of the expenses of restoring the said Solomon to his freedom. Your excellency is entreated to employ such agent or agents as shall be deemed necessary to effect the restoration and return of said Solomon Northup, in pursuance of an act of the Legislature of the State of New-York, passed May 14th, 1840, entitled “An act more effectually to protect the free citizens of this State from being kidnapped or reduced to slavery.”

1. [C]omplaint was made before the Police of Washington against BURCH, for kidnapping and selling into slavery a free colored man. The warrant for his arrest was issued on the 17th instant by Justice Goddard, and returned before Justice Mansell. Burch was arrested and held to bail in the sum of $3,000, Shekels, a slave-trader of seventeen years standing, going his bail. . . . On the 18th instant, at 10 o’clock, both parties appeared before the magistrate. Senator Chase from Ohio, Gen. Clark, and Henry B. Northup, being counsel for the plaintiff, and J. H. Bradley for the defendant. . . . The prosecution offered the colored man who had been kidnapped, as a witness on the part of the prosecution, but it was objected to, and the Court decided that it was inadmissible. The evidence of this colored man was absolutely necessary to prove some facts on the part of the prosecution, as he alone was cognizant of them.

2. Mr. Shekels . . . testified that some ten or twelve years ago he was keeping public house in this city; that Burch boarded at the house and carried on the business of buying and selling slaves; that in that year, two white men came into his barroom and stated that they had a slave for sale. Mr. Burch immediately entered into a negotiation for his purchase. The white men stated that they were from Georgia; had brought the negro with them from that State, and wished to sell him to be carried back to that State; that the negro expressed a willingness to be sold in order to return to Georgia; Shekels, however, was unable to state the names of either of the white men, or the name of the colored man; was unacquainted with either of them previous to that time, and had never seen either since that transaction; that he saw them execute a bill of sale to Burch, saw Burch pay him $625 and take the bill of sale, and that he read that bill, but could not tell who was the vendor nor who was the person sold, as appeared by the bill of sale. . . .

3. Burch himself was next offered as a witness in his own behalf, to prove the loss of the bill of sale. His evidence was objected to by the prosecution, but was allowed by the Court. He testified that he had the bill of sale and had lost it, and did not know what had become of it. The counsel for the prosecution requested the Court to send a police officer to bring the books of Burch, containing his bills of sales of negroes for the year 1841 and previous years. They were fortunately procured, but no bill of sale was found of this colored man by any name. Upon this positive evidence that the man had been in the possession of Burch and that he had been in slavery for a period of more than eleven years, the Court decided that the testimony of the slave trader established the fact that Burch came honestly by him, and consequently discharged the defendant.
AIM: Whom do we choose to commemorate?


A number of well known figures in United States, including Presidents George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, owned enslaved African Americans.

1. In your opinion, should Americans honor “heroes” who were slave holders, promoted racist ideas or profited from the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade?

2. Examine the statements about Samuel F. B. Morse and Dr. James Marion Sims. Both men are honored by statues in New York City’s Central Park. In your opinion, should these statues remain? Explain.

Samuel F. B. Morse [Statue unveiled 1871]
Born. Charlestown, MA, 1791 • died. New York, 1872

A statue of Samuel Morse, an American painter and inventor, is located at the entrance of Inventor’s Gate on the east side of Central Park near 72nd Street. Morse is shown standing next to his best known invention and holding a strip of Morse Code. Morse was a founder and first President of the National Academy of Design established in 1825. Its office is just outside the park.

Did you know that in his journal, Morse wrote that “Slavery . . . is not sin. It is a social condition ordained from the beginning of the world for the wisest purposes, benevolent and disciplinary, by Divine Wisdom”?

Dr. James Marion Sims [Statue unveiled 1892]
Born. Lancaster Co., SC, 1813 • died. New York, 1883

On the outside wall of Central Park near 103rd street is a statue of Dr. James Marion Sims. Because he developed new surgical procedures and surgical instruments, Dr. Sims is honored as a pioneer and founder of modern medicine and gynecology. His work as a doctor helped to save the lives of women with childbirth problems, including enslaved African women. In 1853, Dr. Sims moved to New York City and established the Woman’s Hospital of the State of New York. He later established the Cancer Hospital, which is now known as the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center.

Did you know that between 1845 and 1849, Dr. Sims performed experimental gynecological operations on countless enslaved African women in the American south including over 34 experimental operations on a single woman without the benefit of anesthesia or any type of antiseptic? Many of the women he experimented on lost their lives to infection.
AIM: Dialogue: Is the U.S. responsible for reparations to descendants of enslaved Africans?

BACKGROUND: Democratic Dialogues employ many of the practices advocated by progressive and transformative educators (Apple and Beane, 1995; Banks, 1991; Bigelow, 1988; 1990). The success of the dialogues and the experience in democracy both depend on the gradual development of caring, cooperative communities over the course of a year (Noddings, 1992; Kohn, 1986). To encourage these communities, teachers work with students to create an atmosphere where they feel free to expose their ideas, feelings, and academic proficiencies in public without risking embarrassment or attack and being pressed into silence. Dialogues are not debates. As students learn about a topic the entire class “wins or loses” together.

The student dialogues are highly structured. Structure maximizes student freedom by insuring that all students have an opportunity to participate. It also helps to insure that classes carefully examine statements, attitudes, and practices that may reflect biases and demean community members.

While the dialogues are used to conclude units; preparation for the dialogues takes place all the time. At the start of the semester, students decide on the procedures for conducting dialogues so that everyone in class participates and on criteria for evaluating team and individual performance. Usually students want the criteria to include an evaluation of how well the team works together; the degree to which substantive questions are addressed; the use of supporting evidence; the response to statements made by the other team; whether ideas are presented effectively; and whether individual students demonstrate effort and growth. These criteria are codified in a scoring rubric that is reexamined before each dialogue and changed when necessary. Students also help to define the question being discussed. After the dialogue, students work in small groups to evaluate the overall dialogue, the performance by their team, and their individual participation.

The goal of a dialogue is to examine all aspects of an issue, not to score points at the expense of someone else. Teams are subdivided into cooperative learning groups that collect and organize information supporting different views. The teams also assign members as either opening, rebuttal, or concluding speakers. During dialogues, teams “huddle-up” to share their ideas and reactions to what is being presented by the other side. After dialogues, students discuss what they learned from members of the other team and evaluate the performance of the entire class.

An important part of the dialogue process is the involvement of students in assessing what they have learned. Students help develop the parameters for class projects and decide the criteria for assessing their performance in these activities. The benefit of this involvement for students includes a deeper understanding of historical and social science research methods; insight into the design and implementation of projects; a greater stake in the satisfactory completion of assignments; and a sense of empowerment because assessment decisions are based on rules that the classroom community has helped to shape.

From the dialogues, students start to learn that democratic society involves a combination of individual rights and initiatives with social responsibility, collective decision-making, and shared community goals. They discover that democracy frequently entails tension between the will of the majority and the rights of minorities and that it cannot be taken for granted. It involves taking risks and is something that a community must continually work to maintain and expand. Another benefit of the dialogue process is that it affords students the opportunity to actively generate knowledge without relying on teacher-centered instructional methods.

References

Dialogues developed by Michael Pezone, Jennifer Palacio, Lauren Rosenberg, Michelle Vevante and Monica Longo
Sample Rules for Student Dialogue

Choosing Teams: Students will select teams based on their opinions. Your teacher may reassign some students so the teams are equally balanced.

Preparation: Student teams will be divided into study groups of three or four students. Each study group will research a topic. Using the research, individual students will prepare regents style essays supporting their position. Study group members will edit each others' essays before the dialogue.

Procedure: There will be four rounds during the dialogue. Before round one, teams will meet together and plan their presentation. Students from each team will take turns speaking. In Round 1, five students from each team will introduce the team's views. After Round 1, teams will “huddle up” to think about what the other team said. In Round 2, students will take turns responding to the ideas of the other team. Teams will huddle up again after Round 2 to plan how to conclude the dialogue. In Round 3, three students will summarize the main ideas of their team. After Round 3, teams will meet again to evaluate what students have learned. In Round 4, students will discuss what they learned from the other team.

Nine Things to Do During the Dialogue:
6. Students should respect each other.
7. Students should not attack or interrupt each other.
8. One person speaks at a time. Everyone must participate.
9. After your turn to speak, take notes and share them with your teammates.
10. The discussion should be as free and open as possible.
11. Students should speak loudly and clearly.
12. Team members should take turns. Don't speak too long.
13. Teammates must make sure that everyone speaks.
14. Some people who are comfortable speaking to the whole class should wait until the end.

Nine Things to Remember:
4. People must listen to each other.
5. People must give reasons for their opinions.
6. People must present facts.
7. People have to believe what they are speaking.
8. People need to talk about the things that other people say.
9. Express your ideas clearly.
10. Learn and understand the ideas of other people.
11. Share opinions.
12. Discussion is more important than winning. There are no right answers.

Instructions for writing a persuasive statement
5. Copy the question you are being asked to answer.
6. Write a topic sentence, stating your answer to this question in a complete sentence.
7. Write at least three facts to support your opinion.
8. Finally, write a concluding sentence that sums up the facts.

Guidelines for Dialogue Reflection
4. Before the dialogue, my opinion was . . . .
5. Some of the strong arguments for the opposing side were. . . .
6. After the dialogue, my opinion is . . . .
7. My mind did/did not change mainly because . . . .
Dialogue: Is the U.S. responsible for reparations to descendants of enslaved Africans?

Documents:
A. 1842-1844. Reparations - Clues from the Dust-Bin of History
Source: Brooklyn Eagle, March 26, 1842
Legislature of New York
In the House a memorial of citizens of Williamsburgh, Kings Co., in reference to slavery was presented. The same having been read, in part Mr. Davezac moved that the farther reading be dispensed with. He proceeded to characterise it as a fire brand thrown into the House &c. &c. - but was interrupted by the speaker who declared that it was not in order to make a speech at this time upon this question.

Source: New York Tribune, March 30, 1844, p. 8, col. 3
New-York Legislature, Albany, Wednesday, March 28 (1844)
In Assembly, . . . (a) curious petition was presented from Wayne County, to pay the black citizens of the State for loss of services while in a state of slavery prior to 1827 - the sum fixed by the petitioners as due to these persons is $25,000,000; (laid on the table, after an unsuccessful motion by Mr. Youngs to refer the same to the Committee on Ventilation.)

B. Major General William T. Sherman, Savannah, Georgia, Special Field Orders, No. 15, January 16, 1865
Source: http://www.sewanee.edu/faculty/Willis/Civil_War/documents/Sherman115.html
I. The islands from Charleston, south, the abandoned rice fields along the rivers for thirty miles back from the sea, and the country bordering the St. Johns River, Florida, are reserved and set apart for the settlement of the negroes now made free by the acts of war and the proclamation of the President of the United States. . . .

III. Whenever three respectable negroes, heads of families, shall desire to settle on land, and shall have selected for that purpose an island or a locality clearly defined, within the limits above designated, the Inspector of Settlements and Plantations will himself, or by such subordinate officer as he may appoint, give them a license to settle such island or district, and afford them such assistance as he can to enable them to establish a peaceable agricultural settlement. The three parties named will subdivide the land, under the supervision of the Inspector, among themselves and such others as may choose to settle near them, so that each family shall have a plot of not more than forty acres of tillable ground, and when it borders on some water channel, with not more than 800 feet water front, in the possession of which land the military authorities will afford them protection, until such time as they can protect themselves, or until Congress shall regulate their title. . . .

IV. Whenever a negro has enlisted in the military service of the United States, he may locate his family in any one of the settlements at pleasure, and acquire a homestead, and all other rights and privileges of a settler, as though present in person. . . .

C. Bill Introduced by Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania, Fortieth Congress March 11, 1867
Source: http://www.nathanielturner.com/reparationsbill1867.htm
www.directblackaction.com/rep_bills/hr29_1867.txt
Be it enacted. . . That all the public lands belonging to the ten States that formed the government of the so-called “confederate States of America” shall be forfeited by said States and become forthwith vested in the United States. . . Out of the lands thus seized and confiscated, the slaves who have been liberated by the operations of the war and the amendment of the Constitution or otherwise, who resided in said “confederate States” on the 4th day of March, A.D. 1861, or since, shall have distributed to them as follows, namely: to each male person who is the head of a family, forty acres; to each adult male, whether the head of a family or not, forty acres; to each widow who is the head of a family, forty acres. . . .
D. The Brooklyn Slavery Class Action: More Than Just A Political Gambit

On March 26 [2002], a group of lawyers filed a lawsuit in federal court in Brooklyn, New York, that comprises one of the largest class actions ever filed in America. The case asks for relief for every descendant of African slaves brought to the United States. It was filed against three corporations - Aetna, CSX, and FleetBoston - but more names are promised. It seeks both injunctive relief (that is, a court order asking the companies to do, or refrain from doing, certain things) and damages.

E. Reparations Resolution for Descendants of Enslaved Africans in New York City
Resolution 41: Queen Mother Moore” Reparations Resolution for Descendants of Enslaved Africans in New York City:
Be it resolved: That a “Queen Mother Moore” Reparations for Descendants of Africans of New York City Task Force be established, and,
Be it further resolved: That this Queen Mother Moore Reparations Task Force be created by individuals and organizations of the New African Community of New York City in conjunction with the Black and Latino Caucus of the City Council, and,
Be it further resolved: That the Queen Mother Moore Reparations Task Force be funded by the City of New York for the duration of time deemed necessary by the Task Force to hold hearings, conduct research and recommend compensation to the New African Descendant Community of New York City for the debt owed for the enslavement of their African Ancestors during the colonial and post-colonial periods in New York City.

For additional information on the reparations debate: http://www.ubuntu.tv;

Follow-up Activity: Write a letter to your local Congressional representative expressing your views on the reparations debate that includes supporting evidence based on your individual research.