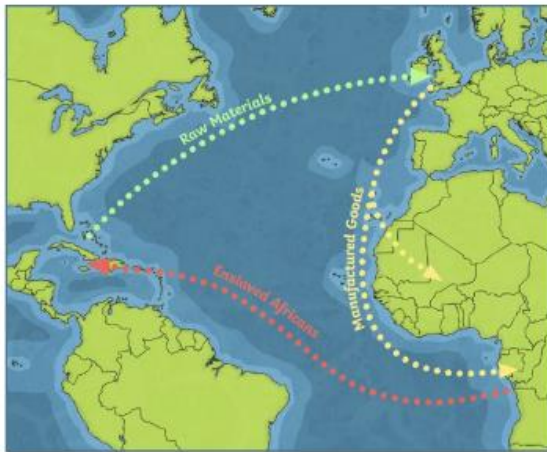


Hello Year5! Here is a reading comprehension sheet. Please read the text on the Transatlantic Slave Trade and then answer the questions. Remember some questions need you to answer in full sentences to get all those marks. I can't wait to see your work when we are back in the classroom and I hope you are all okay. – Miss Bosworth

The Transatlantic Slave Trade

For over 400 years, Europeans enslaved millions of people from parts of West Africa, transporting them across the Atlantic Ocean in awful conditions. These people were sold into a life of unpaid work and cruelty in the Americas. This was known as the transatlantic **slave trade**: a brutal period of history which resulted in the deaths of millions of African people.

The Triangular Trade



The Triangular Trade describes the three stages of the transatlantic slave trade during its most prolific period, between 1740 and 1810.

Firstly, huge ships travelled to West Africa carrying goods such as cloth, guns and ironware. After they arrived, these goods were exchanged for men, women and children who had been forcibly taken from their villages.

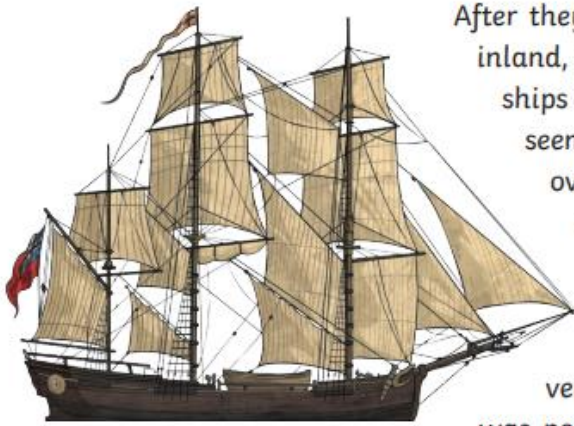
Throughout the middle passage across the ocean, people endured terrible conditions. The unsanitary, overcrowded and filthy ships spent months at sea. Many people died. When the ships arrived in the West Indies, their passengers were sold at auction to the highest bidder.

Thus, African people were bought and sold as if they were no more than an item in a shop. They were now enslaved people and were forced to work mercilessly on the plantations, growing crops with little chance of payment or freedom and labouring for long hours each day.

The third stage involved the ships returning with goods grown on the **plantations** by the enslaved Africans. These goods (such as sugar, coffee and cotton) were then sold to the people of Britain and beyond, completing the triangle. The process would then begin again.



What Was Life like for Enslaved People?



After they had been taken from their homes inland, the villagers were forced onto huge ships at the coast. Many of them had never seen the sea before. Ships often carried over 700 people at a time. They were chained together with little room to move because they were thought of simply as cargo by the ships' captains. The conditions were very dangerous to health: air quality was poor and many grew ill or even died as a result of illness, disease or maltreatment.

If they survived the middle passage, they were sold into slavery. People were separated from their friends and family and told to forget their earlier life. The masters of enslaved people gave them a new name and made them learn a new language. Enslaved people were then required to work for 14 hours, or even more, each day with harsh beatings for any mistakes or rebellion. However, many of the enslaved people did bravely rebel. Some were even able to earn their freedom and fight for an end to enslavement.

Olaudah Equiano's Story

Olaudah Equiano (1745-1797) was enslaved in West Africa as a child but was fortunate enough to survive and pay for freedom. He became an abolitionist – someone who was campaigning for an end to enslavement – and travelled to Europe to share his autobiography.

'The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano' was published in 1789. Due to its brutally honest account of enslavement, it persuaded readers to think differently. Thus, it became a powerful argument for **abolition**.

Did You Know...?

Olaudah Equiano toured Britain in order to share his story. He spoke to audiences in Birmingham, Nottingham, Manchester, Sheffield and Cambridge.

Abolition at Long Last

Eventually, British citizens began to recognise that enslaving people was unethical. In 1807, the Houses of Parliament outlawed enslavement. It was also abolished in the same year, but that didn't mean it 'disappeared' straight away. It wasn't for another 26 years, in 1833, that enslaved people began their freedom across the British Empire.

In the USA, enslavement continued in certain states even after it was abolished. The different attitudes of northern and southern states even led to the American Civil War (1861-1865). Furthermore, the civil rights movement of the 1960s happened because of the continued **segregation** of Black and White Americans over 100 years after enslavement was officially ended.



Glossary

abolition	The action of abolishing a system – in this case, enslavement.
plantation	An estate on which crops, such as coffee, sugar and tobacco, are grown.
segregation	The enforced separation of different ethnic groups in a country.
slave trade	Selling and buying human beings and taking away their human rights and freedoms.
unethical	Morally wrong and unacceptable behaviour.

Questions

1. Which phrase is most similar in meaning to **enslaved**? Tick **one**.

- To make someone a slave
- To ship people across an ocean
- To exchange people with goods
- To grow crops on a plantation

2. Which goods were exchanged for African people? Tick **two**.

- ships
- cloth
- sugar
- guns

3. Fill in the missing words.

Throughout the _____ passage across the _____, people endured _____ conditions.

4. Look at the section entitled **The Triangular Trade**. Find and copy a word which shows that people had little room to move on board the ships.

5. **They were now known as enslaved people and were forced to work mercilessly on the plantations, growing crops with little chance of payment or freedom.**

What does the word **mercilessly** mean in this sentence?

6. Look at the section entitled **What Happened to the African Villagers on the Middle Passage?** How did the conditions during the middle passage affect the health of African villagers on board?

The Transatlantic Slave Trade

7. **People were separated from their friends and family and told to forget their earlier life.**

What do you think the slave owners wanted to achieve by treating the newly enslaved Africans in this way?

8. Why do you think it was important for people such as Olaudah Equiano to talk to the citizens of Britain and Europe about enslavement and abolition?

9. Life improved for some people during the 1800s. Do you agree or disagree? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Agree / Disagree (circle **one**)

Well done Year 5! Now check your answers with the correct answers below.

Answers

1. Which phrase is most similar in meaning to **enslaved**? Tick **one**.

- To make someone a slave
- To ship people across an ocean
- To exchange people with goods
- To grow crops on a plantation

2. Which goods were exchanged for African people? Tick **two**.

- ships
- cloth
- sugar
- guns

3. Fill in the missing words.

Throughout the **middle** passage across the **ocean**, people endured **terrible** conditions.

4. Look at the section entitled **The Triangular Trade**. Find and copy a word which shows that people had little room to move on board the ships.

overcrowded

5. **They were now known as enslaved people and were forced to work mercilessly on the plantations, growing crops with little chance of payment or freedom.**

What does the word **mercilessly** mean in this sentence?

It means they were forced to work without mercy under hard conditions such as long hours each day.

6. Look at the section entitled **What Happened to the African Villagers on the Middle Passage?** How did the conditions during the middle passage affect the health of African villagers on board?

Pupils' own responses, such as: The conditions affected the villagers badly. The conditions were very dangerous to health because air quality was poor and many grew ill or died. They were chained together with little room to move.

7. **People were separated from their friends and family and told to forget their earlier life.**

What do you think the slave owners wanted to achieve by treating the newly enslaved Africans in this way?

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think they wanted to achieve control over the enslaved people and to make sure they worked hard on the plantations.

8. Why do you think it was important for people such as Olaudah Equiano to talk to the citizens of Britain and Europe about enslavement and abolition?

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think it was important because otherwise they would not have known about the cruel conditions of enslavement and what was happening on the middle passage. Also, they should know how their sugar, coffee and tobacco is grown.

9. Life improved for some people during the 1800s. Do you agree or disagree? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Agree / Disagree (circle **one**)

Pupils' own responses either agreeing or disagreeing with the statement, such as: Life was a little better for some people in some ways. Enslaved people were freed across the British Empire from 1833. However, enslavement continued in the USA after abolition. It also led to a war.