

Guide ~ Source E (Maryland Servant Laws)

Title of your primary source: **An Abridgement of the Laws of Maryland, now in force: Servants and Slaves. Runaways.**

Type of source & date: **law, 1790**

Author/creator: **Maryland Assembly**

What do you know about the creator of this source?

the assembly generally represented and supported the land-owning class

What information does this source give you about the living conditions of servants or what it was like to be an indentured servant in the colonies?

- **servants and slaves were not allowed to travel over 10 miles from home without a note from their master**
- **runaway servants were required to serve 10 extra days for each day they were gone**
- **aids to runaway servants were fined**
- **Indians who turned in runaways received a reward**
- **when their period of servitude was complete, male servants would receive a new hat, a new cloth (wool) suit, a new linen shift (shirt), a new pair of French shoes and socks, two hoes, an axe, and a gun; female servants would receive the same clothes and three barrels of corn**
- **people could not trade or deal with a servant without permission from the servant's master**
- **if they did not have a written contract, servants were required to serve 5 years if they were over 22, 7 years if they were between 15-18, and until 22 if they were under 15**
- **masters would be fined if they mistreated their servants by denying them sufficient food, drink, lodging, clothing or rest or if they worked them too hard; upon the third offence, servants would be set free**

Does this source present a **positive**, **negative**, or **neutral** view of indentured servitude?

Explain why?

- **encourage students to give their views of this and ask them to explain them/provide support**
- **positive**
 - **this shows that servitude would be enforced by the law of the colony; it also shows that servants had certain protections under the law**