

PROJECT TITLE: Participants in the Transatlantic Slave Trade: Reconciliations and Ramifications.	
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CLASSROOM PRACTICE

1. HI Overview & Teaching Thesis:

I think that most students never bother asking the most obvious question of all when it comes to this event. Why would rational human beings involve themselves in the capturing, transporting, and sale of other human beings? The various interests in the Trade were not all inherently evil. The interesting part of history is the exploration into the grey areas. This hands-on lesson will give teachers and students the ability, through the use of primary source documents, to investigate the question of ‘why’? Why over 11 million Africans were captured, sold, and transported to the Americas between 1450 and 1867. Five separate interests will be explored. - ***Northern merchants, British business interests, sugar cane plantation owners, African traders and Southern plantation owners.*** How could they reconcile their role? What were the ramifications for their involvement? This kit will also provide extension activities that allow the students to take on the role of prosecuting and defense attorneys as they put the interests on trial.

2. Suggested Grade Level and Length of Activities:

11th Grade U.S. History and Advanced Placement U.S. History.

The lesson is designed to be taught in 3 Blocks / 5 Singleton classes. It can be modified to accommodate a shorter time frame.

3. Significance & Relevance:

We live in a world where the concept of responsibility has taken a back seat to finger pointing and playing the blame game. History provides us with an incredible tapestry to explore when, where and how people have skirted being accountable. This lesson, while focusing on the Transatlantic Slave Trade, will transcend the time and reinforce the fundamental importance of taking responsibility for your actions.

Virginia Standards of Learning: VUS.1

- The student will demonstrate skills for historical and geographical analysis and responsible citizenship, including the ability to
 - a) identify, analyze, and interpret primary and secondary source documents, records, and data, including artifacts, diaries, letters, photographs, journals, newspapers, historical accounts, and art, to increase understanding of events and life in the United States;
 - b) evaluate the authenticity, authority, and credibility of sources;
 - f) develop skills in discussion, debate, and persuasive writing with respect to enduring issues and determine how divergent viewpoints have been addressed and reconciled

Virginia Standards of Learning : VUS.2

- The student will describe how early European exploration and colonization resulted in cultural interactions among Europeans, Africans, and American Indians.

Virginia Standards of Learning: VUS.3

- The student will describe how the values and institutions of European economic and political life took root in the colonies and how slavery reshaped European and African life in the Americas.

Selected State & National Standards –

NSS-USH 5-12.1 Era 1: Three Worlds Meet (Beginnings to 1620)

- Understands comparative characteristics of societies in the Americas, Western Europe, and Western Africa that increasingly interacted after 1450
- Understands how early European exploration and colonization resulted in cultural and ecological interactions among previously unconnected peoples

NSS-USH 5-12.2 Era 2: Colonization and Settlement (1585 to 1763)

- Understands why the Americas attracted Europeans, why they brought enslaved Africans to their colonies, and how Europeans struggled for control of North America and the Caribbean
- Understands how the values and institutions of European economic life took root in the colonies, and how slavery reshaped European and African life in the Americas

OAH Historical Inquiry Skills –

Historical Analysis and Interpretation:

- 3A: Students will demonstrate the ability to differentiate between primary source documents. Using APPARTS, they will critically evaluate the documents credibility.
- 3B: Students will be able to distinguish commonalities and differences between a variety of documents.
- 3D: Through exploring the documents, students will be able to consider the variety of motives held by the various interests in the slave trade

Historical Issues-Analysis and Decision Making:

- 5A: Students will read and interpret primary source documents dealing with the Slave Trade. They will explore how various interests reconciled their role and the ramifications for their involvement.

4. Lesson Objectives –

Lesson #1 Objectives:

- Students will be able to define the various interests that played a role in the Transatlantic Slave Trade. (15 minute class discussion)
- Students will be able to classify and identify which documents relate to what particular interest in the slave trade. They will have to decide as to whether the documents connect to northern merchants, British business interests, sugar cane plantation owners, African slave traders, or southern plantation owners. (25 minute group document analysis)
- Students will be able to define the term “collective responsibility” and apply the concept to a contemporary event. (15 minute class activity)

Lesson #2 Objectives:

- Students will be able to critically assess a variety of documents to determine potential justifications for a participant’s involvement in the slave trade. (30 minute group document analysis)
- Students will be able to critically assess a variety of documents to determine potential ramifications for a participant’s involvement in the slave trade. (30 minute group document analysis)
- Students will prepare and discuss their findings in a PowerPoint presentation. (30 minute prep time)

Lesson #3 Objectives:

- Students will be able to process information relative to six separate participants in the slave trade. (25-minute student interaction with classmates PowerPoint presentations.)
- Students will be able to make critical judgments on the level of complicity on the part of the six groups. (45 minute individual to group processing.)

5. Lesson Plans or Instructional Activities –

- **Lesson 1: Introducing Content, making relevant hook & document analysis.**

(Hunt for Solutions) – This backwards design lesson is designed to introduce the content to the class prior to formal instruction. It is a great way to introduce content in a non-threatening way. Working in small groups, students will be given 10 questions that will be addressed throughout the lesson. They will also be given a selection of possible answers. They will then be tasked with matching what they believe are the correct answers to the respective questions. Each group will have a different colored pack of sticky notes. They will use these notes to attach their answers to the appropriate question which are posted throughout the room. These sheets will remain up

throughout the lessons. As the information is revealed, the students will be encouraged to revisit their responses and correct them.

(Relevant Hook: Collective Responsibility) – Using a contemporary issue such as the BP oil spill, develop a discussion using spiraling questions. Establish a basic understanding of the event and then brainstorm who they think is to blame for the tragedy. You will probably get a variety of responses but reinforce the fact that more than BP is to blame in this case. Using political cartoons and other visuals can help fuel the discussion. Bring the discussion to a close by asking if they have ever been involved in something that they regretted. How did they justify their involvement? What were the ramifications for their actions? This is the lead-in to the lesson.

(Document Analysis) – The class will engage in a discussion centering on who participated in the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Focus the discussion on five separate groups.

- North American Merchants
- British Business Interests
- African Traders
- Southern Plantation Owners
- Caribbean Sugar Cane Plantation Owners

Break the class into five mixed ability groups of 3-5 each. Students will be given a set of 35-40 documents. Using APPARTS they are to determine which documents relate to what particular interest. They will make their sort in preparation for the next class.

Lesson 2: Reconciling and Ramifications – Students groups will be assigned one particular interest in the slave trade. Using the documents that they sorted during the previous class, they will analyze them to determine which documents could be used to reconcile their interest in the slave trade. They will then determine which documents best reflect the ramifications of their participation in the trade. The group will then prepare either a PowerPoint presentation or one on conventional flip-chart. Their presentation will focus on the reconciliation and ramifications aspect relevant to their specific interest.

- **Lesson 3: Judgment Day-** This lesson gives the students to take what they've learned and apply some critical thinking skills as they sit in judgment. The flip-chart / PowerPoints from the previous lesson will be spread out around the class. They will do a gallery walk to revisit the merits of each participant's justifications and ramifications for their involvement. After they have rank ordered them, the class will work towards a consensus.
- (Formal Assessment) – Have students write a formal editorial to the newspaper of their choice. They need to synthesize the content from the past classes and carefully construct an argument centering on the theme of collective responsibility relative to the transatlantic slave trade. They need to stake out a position relative to the overarching question of:

Why did a variety of interests involve themselves in the Transatlantic Slave Trade and what were the ramifications for their participation?

6. Technology (if applicable) -

- **Lessons 1 and 2:** A Wikispace site - <http://complicity.wikispaces.com/> - will be available to students in schools that have access to laptops. They will then access the documents electronically and prepare their respective presentations in a PowerPoint format.

7. Modifications, Differentiation, and Extensions –

- **Lessons 1 and 2:** These modifications will give teachers and students the ability, through the use of primary source documents, to investigate the question of ‘why’?

Put the five separate interests on trial:

- Students will be placed in mixed ability groups of 3-4. They will be tasked with preparing a tribunal relative to a specific interest in the Trade.
- Using the primary source materials, they will prepare a prosecution and a defense relative to their assigned interest.
- The assessment will be two-fold. The first will be based on the quality of their presentation. (A rubric will be provided at the outset.) The second will tie into the summary of the lesson.
- They will be expected to write a newspaper article synthesizing the five separate tribunals.

Creating Venn Diagrams

- Distribute 2-4 documents reflecting a particular interest to each student.
- Have them research the documents and create a Venn diagram profiling the differences and commonalities that their particular interests shared.
- Students will then present their findings to the class.

8. Related Materials and Resources:

Lesson 1 Materials (attached):

- Packet of 29 documents
- Packet of same 28 documents (annotated teacher set)
- Dailynews.com photo of BP Oil Spill
- Fredericksburg.com Political Cartoon
- Copy of the Hunt for Solutions Questions
- Copy of the Hunt for Solutions Questions with key
- Copy all the potential answers
- Copy of individual question sheets that are spread around the room
- SCIM-C Historical Inquiry Framework for Document Analysis
- Blank APPARTS worksheet
- Sample APPARTS worksheet to model for the students
- Blank Venn Diagram
- PowerPoint Guided Questions

Lesson 2 Materials (attached):

- Packet of 29 documents
- Packet of same 28 documents (annotated teacher set)
- PowerPoint Template for student’s assignment
- Presentation rubric
- PowerPoint Guided Questions

Lesson 3 Materials (attached)

- Rank order guidelines for reconciliations/ramifications
- Editorial Rubric
- Gallery Walk matrix
- PowerPoint Guided Questions

9. Instructional Bibliography

Fascinating books that offer up excellent perspective on the Slave Trade:

- Farrow, A., Frank, J., Lang, J. (2006), *Complicity: How the North Promoted, Prolonged, and Profited from Slavery*. Ballentine Books
The authors take an in depth look at how reliant the North was on slavery. Industries such as insurance, textiles, and the slave trade itself are all explored in an interesting and revealing fashion.
- Rediker, M. *The Slave Ship a Human History*. (2007) Penguin Books, London
This book is amazing. It is a great anecdotal history of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. As the title alludes to the focus of the book is on the human beings directly involved in the Trade. This is a quick read that offers up countless anecdotes that you can share with your class.

Worthwhile websites where you can some information quickly:

- <http://pbs.org/wnet/slavery/index>
This website offers up excellent links tied into the PBS documentary *Slavery and the Making of America*. Oral histories, in depth profiles, great primary source material that's organized in a very user-friendly fashion.
- <http://www.slavenorth.com/index>
This website's focus is on slavery in the North. It breaks it down by colony/state with excellent overviews on each region's relationship with slavery.
- <http://www.dur.ac.uk/4schools/Slavery4/CS1intro.htm>
This site offers up excellent primary source material with the focus on pro and anti slavery arguments.
- <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5801>
This site, out of George Mason University, is a treasure trove of documents dealing with a broad spectrum of American history. There is an abundant amount of primary source material dealing with slavery in America.
- <http://docsouth.unc.edu>
This site is dedicated to documenting the American South. It is a very user-friendly site that offers up thousands of documents that can be easily accessed.
- <http://www.history.ac.uk/ihr/Focus/Slavery/articles/petley.html>
I found this site particularly helpful when coming up with proslavery arguments focusing in on the Sugar Cane industry in the Caribbean.
- <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library>
This site is incredibly useful on a variety of topics. I found some fascinating documents here – one profiling New York City Mayor Fernando Wood's State of the City Address in which he calls for New York to secede with the South at the beginning of the Civil War.

- http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/abolition/building_britain_gallery
This site opened up great evidence on the impact that the Slave Trade had on the economic emergence of Great Britain. The site has great visuals with succinct summaries that tie it all together.
- <http://abolition.e2bn.org/slavery>
This site has a significant amount of primary source documents plus the added feature of audio recordings that accompany the readings.
- <http://massmoments.org>
This website has good primary sources. They're made up almost exclusively of letters written in 17th century Massachusetts. Many of these letters specifically reference slavery and its impact on the emerging colony.
- <http://www.masshist.org/endofslavery>
This is a very user friendly site that allows the reader to quickly access a wide variety of documents with the focus on issues from the slave trade to the lives of individual African Americans living in Massachusetts.
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/africa/features/storyofafrica>
This is a great site that offers up solid documents profiling the African experience relative to slavery. The site has a lot of letters written that open up new perspectives on the role that Africans played in the Transatlantic Slave Trade.
- <http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk>
I love this site. It is very accessible and has a wealth of material focusing in on Liverpool's role in the Trade. The site's strength is in its primary source material and well written essays that illuminate the role that this British city played in the slave trade.