Chapter 2 Study Guide: The Institution of Slavery in North America

This home-learning study guide is designed to help parents support their student in understanding Chapter 2: "The Institution of Slavery in North America." The content is broken down into manageable chunks with simplified explanations, vocabulary supports, sentence stems, and guided discussion questions.

Chapter Vocabulary

Help your child master these important terms. Use the simplified definitions, visual descriptions, and sentence stems to practice together.

Word	Simple Definition	Visual Cue / Picture Idea	Sentence Stem for Practice
Chattel slavery	The private ownership of one human being by another person.	Picture a padlock or chain around a price tag attached to a person.	*Chattel slavery meant that enslaved people were treated as...*
Inhumane	Extremely cruel; lacking kindness or mercy.	Picture a harsh, cold storm cloud over a crying face.	*Treating people without care or mercy is...*
Cargo	Goods or items carried by a ship, plane, or truck.	Picture wooden boxes and crates stacked tightly inside the hold of a ship.	*The ship moved its heavy _____ across the ocean.*
Tropical latitudes	Warm areas of the Earth located near the	Picture a bright yellow sun beaming down on	*Because the ship sailed through tropical latitudes, the weather was...*

	equator that stay hot all year.	the warm equator line on a globe.	
Procure	To get, gain, or obtain something.	Picture a hand reaching out to collect or purchase needed supplies.	*Planters wanted to _____ more workers for their fields.*

Section 1: The Origins of the Slave Trade

Key Ideas

- **History Before Colonization:** Slavery existed long before European exploration. For thousands of years, people around the world (including in Africa) enslaved people conquered in wars.
- **The Role of Portugal:** European involvement grew after 1415 CE when the Portuguese took the city of Ceuta in North Africa. Prince Henry of Portugal (Henry the Navigator) funded voyages to West Africa for riches and played a large role in creating the Atlantic slave trade.
- **Sugar Plantations:** Portuguese and Spanish settlers took over Atlantic islands (like Madeira, São Tomé, the Azores, and the Canary Islands). They realized the warm climate was ideal for growing sugar, a crop in high demand in Europe.
- **Shift to Enslaved African Labor:**
    - Spanish explorers conquered parts of Mexico, Peru, and Hispaniola in the Caribbean, forcing Indigenous people to work in gold and silver mines and on sugar plantations.
    - European diseases and war killed millions of Indigenous people.
    - European plantation owners in the Caribbean, Brazil (colonized by Portugal), and Barbados (colonized by England) turned to enslaved Africans as a cheap, cost-effective source of labor to maximize profits.

Parent Tip

Read this section aloud with your child. Point out how European demand for sugar drove the demand for cheap labor.

Discussion Questions

1. How did the growing demand for sugar lead to an increase in the slave trade?

2. Why did Spanish and Portuguese plantation owners stop relying on Indigenous workers and begin buying enslaved Africans?

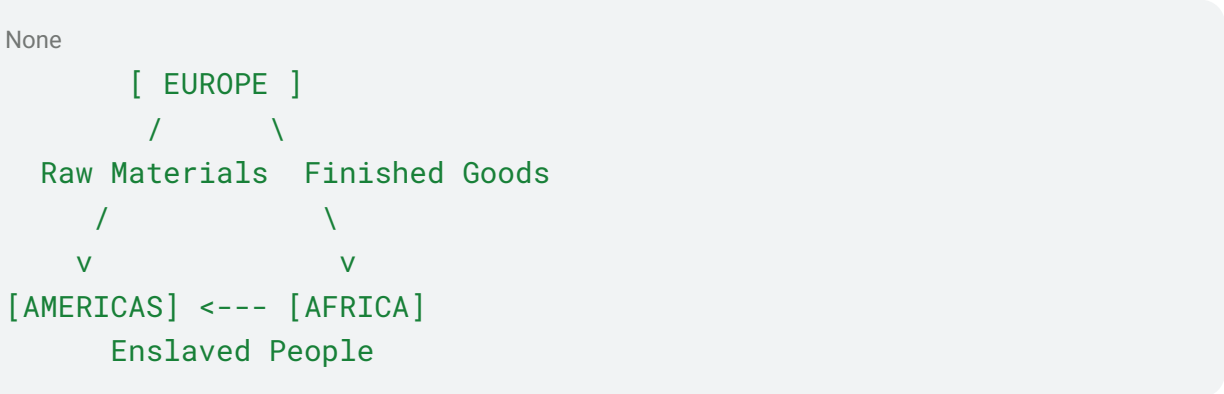
Student Sentence Stems

- *European landowners wanted enslaved workers because growing sugar required...*
- *Indigenous populations decreased because of European...*

Section 2: The Triangular Trade

Key Ideas

- **Trade Control:** Portugal started the Atlantic slave trade. Later, the Dutch took control of much of the slave trade. By 1655, the Dutch moved large numbers of enslaved people across the ocean. In 1664, England took control of New Netherland.
- **The Three Legs of the Trade Route:**
    1. **Leg 1 (Americas to Europe):** Ships carried raw materials grown on plantations (timber, tobacco, grain, sugar, and rice).
    2. **Leg 2 (Europe to Africa):** Ships carried manufactured goods (iron, guns, gunpowder, knives, cloth, and beads).
    3. **Leg 3 (Africa to the Americas):** Ships carried enslaved Africans to the Caribbean and North American colonies.
- **New England's Involvement:** New England ports (like Boston and Rhode Island) grew wealthy by making rum from Caribbean sugar and molasses, then trading that rum in Africa for enslaved people.



Parent Tip

Draw a triangle on a piece of paper. Label the three points "Europe," "Africa," and "Americas." Trace the paths with your child to show what was carried on each leg.

Discussion Questions

1. What items were shipped from Europe to Africa?
2. What raw goods were sent from the Americas back to Europe?

Student Sentence Stems

- *The three places involved in the triangular trade were...*
- *Ships leaving Europe carried items like...*

Section 3: The Middle Passage

Key Ideas

- **The Journey:** The forced ocean trip across the Atlantic Ocean from Africa to the Americas was called the **Middle Passage**. It lasted between 2 and 4 months.
- **Horrible Conditions:**
    - Enslaved people were treated as **cargo**, not human beings.
    - Between 150 and 600 people were packed onto a single ship. Each person was given a tiny space only about 6 feet long and 16 inches wide.
    - Ships sailed through **tropical latitudes**, causing temperatures below deck to rise above 100°F.
    - Primary source accounts, such as writings by Olaudah Equiano, describe suffocating heat, horrible smells, sweating, and painful iron chains (*galling of the chains*).
- **Death and Survival:** Disease spread rapidly in cramped quarters. Revolts and suicides took place as captives fought back or tried to escape the horror. An estimated 15% of enslaved Africans (1.5 to 2 million people) died during the journey.

Parent Tip

This is a heavy topic. Emphasize to your child that these terrible conditions show how cruel (**inhumane**) the slave trade was, and highlight the strength of those who survived.

Discussion Questions

1. Why was the Middle Passage so dangerous for the captured Africans?
2. How does Olaudah Equiano describe the air and conditions below the ship's deck?

Student Sentence Stems

- *The journey across the ocean was called the...*
- *Enslaved people suffered on the ships because...*

Section 4: Regional Differences in the Thirteen Colonies

Key Ideas

- **First Arrival (1619):** A Dutch ship brought the first captured Africans to James River, Virginia, trading them to English colonists for food.
- **Changing Laws:** Early on, some Africans became free landholders, but colonies soon created harsh laws defining slavery by race, religion, and heredity. Massachusetts legally recognized slavery first in 1641.

Comparison of Colonial Regions

Colonial Region	Climate & Soil	Role of Slavery	Key Facts
New England Colonies	Cold winters, poor soil; bad for large cash crops.	Small scale; worked as domestic servants, farm hands, tradespeople.	Ports like Boston and Rhode Island grew rich trading rum for enslaved people. Rhode Island passed a ban in 1652, but it was not enforced.
Middle Colonies	Moderate farming conditions; economy did not rely heavily on slavery.	Enslaved people did household chores, worked harbor docks, planted fields, or were hired out.	New York City had a large slave market on Wall Street (>40% of households held slaves). Quakers (Germantown Petition, 1688) opposed slavery.
Southern Colonies	Rich soil, warm climate; perfect for large plantations.	High dependence; crucial to the agricultural economy.	Planters **procured** enslaved Africans to work massive tobacco (VA, MD, NC), rice, and indigo (SC) fields instead of paying indentured servants.

Discussion Questions

1. Why did Southern colonies have a much higher percentage of enslaved people than New England colonies?
2. What group in the Middle colonies actively protested against slavery in 1688?

Student Sentence Stems

- *Southern colonies used more enslaved labor because they grew cash crops like...*
- *In New England, enslaved workers usually worked as...*

Section 5: Plantation Life and Forms of Resistance

Key Ideas

- **Hardship & Loss of Rights:** Families were broken up at public auctions. Enslaved people had no legal rights: they could not travel without permission, could not testify in court, and in many colonies were legally forbidden from learning to read or write.
- **Active Resistance:** Some enslaved people rose up in armed rebellions or ran away. The **Stono Rebellion of 1739** near Charleston, South Carolina, was one of the largest slave uprisings in the thirteen colonies.
- **Subtle Resistance:** Enslaved people found clever ways to resist daily control without getting caught:
    - Working slowly on purpose.
    - Pretending to be sick.
    - "Accidentally" breaking work tools.

Parent Tip

Help your child see that breaking tools or working slowly were intentional ways for enslaved workers to fight back against unfair treatment.

Discussion Questions

1. What was the Stono Rebellion of 1739?
2. What were three subtle ways enslaved people resisted their enslavement every day?

Student Sentence Stems

- *One form of active resistance was...*

- *Enslaved workers subtly resisted by...*

Section 6: Keeping African Culture Alive

Key Ideas

- **Skills and Talents:** Africans brought rich skills to the colonies. They were experienced farmers, engineers, artisans, musicians, and artists.
- **Crafts & Traditions:**
    - Artisans created metalwork with traditional African designs.
    - Women wove ornate baskets and rugs, and hand-sewed decorative, functional quilts.
    - These skills were passed down across generations.
- **Community & Culture:**
    - After working grueling days from sunup to sundown, enslaved families gathered in their cramped wooden cabins.
    - They shared folktales where smaller, weaker characters outwitted larger, stronger ones.
    - They preserved traditional music, dance, and religious customs, often blending African beliefs with Christianity.
    - Blending these traditions created a unique **African American culture**.

Parent Tip

Talk about how storytelling, crafts, and music helped people stay strong and connected to their heritage during difficult times.

Discussion Questions

1. What kind of crafts did enslaved women make to preserve their tradition?
2. Why do you think folktales about small animals tricking bigger ones were popular among enslaved people?

Student Sentence Stems

- *Enslaved people passed down their traditions by...*
- *By blending African customs with American traditions, they created...*