

LESSON ONE: THE SLAVE TRADE

INTRODUCTION

In Africa, as in the rest of the world, slavery was a common practice dating to ancient times. Criminals, debtors, war captives, or the poor were most likely to become slaves. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Arabs and Europeans began to engage in “slave raiding” in Africa. Individuals taken in slave raids were used to meet labor needs in Europe and some areas of Africa.

After Europeans reached the Americas, the need for a labor source increased dramatically. In South America, slaves worked in the mines and on plantations. In the North American colonies, slaves were used for tobacco and rice cultivation. By the 1750s, slaves were the primary cargo exported from Africa. During the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries the slave trade displaced millions of Africans to the New World.

In traditional Arab and African cultures slaves were not necessarily enslaved for life. But, when it was discovered that huge profits could be made through selling slaves to plantation owners, attitudes began to change. Europeans came to associate bondage with African birth and descent. Consequently, children inherited their parents’ status as slaves.

OBJECTIVES

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Make and list five inferences about the physical and emotional impact of being enslaved.
2. Describe the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the impact it had upon the people who were a part of it.
3. Validate or disprove their inferences by gathering evidence from primary sources.
4. Identify bias and point-of-view in primary source materials.
5. Describe the experience of the Middle Passage as a part of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the impact it had upon the people who were part of it.
6. Write an editorial, from the perspective of an imbedded reporter, on the nature of the experience of the Middle Passage for all who were involved.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Engraving: “Traite des Negres”
Print Information Sheet: “Traite des Negres”
Background Information on Olaudah Equiano
Olaudah Equiano on Travel, Quotes on Travel 1–4
Background Information on Dr. George Pinckard
George Pinckard on the Journey, Quotes 1–2
Background Information on Thomas Phillips
Thomas Phillips on the Journey, Quotes 1–2
Background Information on Dr. Alexander Falconbridge
Dr. Alexander Falconbridge on Ship Size
NoteFolio™ Files: PASSAG1, PASSAGE2, and PASSAG3
TI-83 Plus or TI-83 Plus Silver Edition
TI Keyboard
NoteFolio™ Application for the TI-83 Plus

TI-Presenter™ (optional)
Linking Tip Sheet (optional)

PROCEDURE

SETTING THE STAGE

1. Distribute copies of the **PASSAG1**, **PASSAGE2**, and **PASSAG3** NoteFolio™ files to students. Divide the class into four groups of equal size and assign numbers to students within each group.
2. Make a transparency of the print “Traite des Negres” and project it on the wall (or butcher paper). The image should be life size and extend from floor to ceiling.
3. Explain to students that they are making observations, describing only what can be physically seen in the print. Ask students to look closely at the image. Have one student select an individual from the image and describe that person for the class. For example, the student may select the African in the boat and give the following description: “He has very dark skin. He has a cloth around his waist. He has chains on his wrists. He looks like he is crying.”

Ask a second student select and describe another individual in the print. For example, the student may select the man raising a stick against the African and give the following description: “The man has English clothes and is raising a stick against the African man. The Englishman is holding the African man by the arm.”

Ask other students, one at a time, to follow the same procedure until all the characters in the print have been described.

4. Have students begin drawing inferences about what is taking place in the print. Students should make educated guesses or draw relationships based upon their original observations, recording a minimum of five inferences per group in NoteFolio™ file **PASSAG1**. Each group should appoint a recorder to type in each inference using the keyboard.
5. When all of the groups’ inferences have been recorded in NoteFolio™ file **PASSAG1**, the recorder should link his or her completed file to each group member so it can be accessed and used in a later part of the lesson (see Linking Tip Sheet).

STRATEGY

1. Distribute to each group one of the following sets of primary sources:
 - a) Background Information on Olaudah Equiano
Olaudah Equiano on Travel, Quotes 1–4
 - b) Background Information on Dr. Alexander Falconbridge
Dr. Alexander Falconbridge on Ship Size
 - c) Background Information on Dr. George Pinckard
Dr. George Pinckard on the Journey, Quotes 1 and 2

d) Background Information on Thomas Phillips
Thomas Phillips on the Journey, Quotes 1 and 2

2. Give each group time to read their designated primary sources.
3. Have each group appoint a recorder/discussion facilitator to open the NoteFolio™ File **PASSAG2** and begin discussing the questions found there. As the group discusses each question and comes to a consensus on the answer, the recorder should type in the answers using the keyboard. When all three questions have been discussed and answered, the recorder should link NoteFolio™ file **PASSAG2** to the rest of the group members so each member has a composite answer set on their TI-83 Plus.
4. Assign students in each group a number from one to four. Re-group students, making certain the new groups are composed of students from each of the previous four groups. Have each new group designate a recorder/discussion facilitator to open NoteFolio™ File **PASSAG3** to recreate, based on all the new viewpoints, the most balanced account possible of what is going on in the print.
5. When all of the new groups have completed their stories, have students return to their original group. Have the original groups open NoteFolio™ File **PASSAG1** to analyze its original inferences. Ask the students: Which inferences were accurate? Based on their new knowledge, which inferences need to change? The class should strive to account for the differing interpretations of the trans-Atlantic journey.

EVALUATION

Explain to students that they will assume the role of an embedded reporter. The reporter has been traveling with either the slaves who were brought to North America on a slave ship or the Europeans who are involved in the slave trade. Their task is to write an editorial about the Middle Passage experience using the information that was collected and recorded in their three NoteFolio™ files. The editorial piece should cover the “5Ws” (who, what, when, where, and why), and must develop a thesis statement. Each student should have at his or her disposal the following NoteFolio™ files:

- a) File 1, **PASSAG1**—Original inferences
- b) File 2, **PASSAG2**—Question sets for primary resources, collected analysis
- c) File 3, **PASSAG3**—Story of what is going on in the print “Traite des Negres”

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Project various “anonymous” editorial reports for the class. Ask students the following questions:

- What facts in the story might be questionable?
- What other perspectives might need to be considered?
- What makes this a believable or balanced account?

Bring to the classroom references to the recent war in Iraq to help students think about the issues involved in good journalistic reporting and accurate historical portrayals and/or recreations.



"Traite des Negres," engraved by George Morland, Paris, France, ca.1790–1791.

PRINT INFORMATION SHEET: “TRAITE DES NEGRES”

This image is an engraving made from the earliest recorded painting of a slave trading scene, George Morlands’s *Execrable Human Traffic*, 1788. The intention of the image was to bring to the public eye the inhumanity of the slave trade. In the foreground, a woman with her child clinging to her is being taken to a boat, and an African man is being subdued by two European men. The background depicts a variety of tiny images of slaves being rounded up and placed in boats. The text on the print roughly translates as:

“What infamous deed of a merchant, who is not apparently a person. The other sells the property of nature.”

“This vile trade is abolished by the National Convention on the 16th Pluvius, the Second Year of the French Republic, one and indivisible.”

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON OLAUDAH EQUIANO

Olaudah Equiano (ca. 1745–1797) was the son of a tribal chief in the interior of Nigeria. He was eleven years old when he was taken as a slave in 1756. He was sold twice in Africa and a third time at a slave market on the Guinea coast. After reaching Barbados, he was sold to a Virginia plantation owner. He was later purchased by an English ship's captain. Olaudah learned English, became a skilled seaman and was baptized. In 1766, he bought his freedom for £40. His autobiography, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African*, was written in 1789.

OLAUDAH EQUIANO ON TRAVEL—QUOTE 1

The first object, which saluted my eyes when I arrived on the coast, was the sea, and a slave ship, which was then riding at anchor, and waiting for its cargo. These filled me with astonishment, which was soon converted into terror when I was carried on board. I was immediately handled, and tossed up to see if I were sound, by some of the crew; and I was now persuaded that I had gotten into a world of bad spirits, and that they were going to kill me. Their complexions, too, differing so much from ours, their long hair, and the language they spoke (which was very different from any I had ever heard), united to confirm me in this belief. Indeed, such were the horrors of my views and fears at the moment, that, if ten thousand worlds had been my own, I would have freely parted with them all to have exchanged my condition with that of the meanest slave in my own country. When I looked round the ship too, and saw a large furnace of copper boiling and a multitude of black people of every description chained together, every one of their countenances expressing dejection and sorrow, I no longer doubted of my fate; and, quite overpowered with horror and anguish, I fell motionless on the deck and fainted.

Source: Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African* (New York, NY, 1791). Courtesy, Duke University Special Collections.

OLAUDAH EQUIANO ON TRAVEL—QUOTE 2

I was not long suffered to indulge my grief; I was soon put down under the decks, and there I received such a salutation in my nostrils as I had never experienced in my life; so that, with the loathsomeness of the stench, and crying together, I became so sick and low that I was not able to eat, nor had I the least desire to taste anything. I now wished for the last friend, death, to relieve me; but soon, to my grief, two of the white men offered me eatables; and, on my refusing to eat, one of them held me fast by the hands, and laid me across, I think, the windlass, and tied my feet, while the other flogged me severely. I had never experienced anything of this kind before, and, although not being used to the water, I naturally feared that element the first time I saw it, yet, nevertheless, would I have got over the netting, I would have jumped over the side, but I could not; and besides, the crew used to watch us very closely who were not chained down to the decks, lest we should leap into the water; and I have seen some of these poor African prisoners most severely cut, for attempting to do so, and hourly whipped for not eating.

Source: Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African* (New York, NY, 1791). Courtesy, Duke University Special Collections.

OLAUDAH EQUIANO ON TRAVEL—QUOTE 3

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 perspiration, so that the air soon became unfit for respiration, from a variety of loathsome smells, and brought on a sickness among the slave, 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 became 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 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. 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 heightened my apprehensions, and my opinion of the cruelty of the whites.

Source: Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African* (New York, NY, 1791). Courtesy, Duke University Special Collections.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: OLAUDAH EQUIANO ON TRAVEL—QUOTE 4

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 slave. 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.

Source: Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African* (New York, NY, 1791). Courtesy of Special Collections, Duke University.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON DR. GEORGE PINCKARD

Dr. George Pinckard, a member of the Royal College of Physicians in Great Britain, accompanied a British military expedition to the West Indies in 1795 as deputy inspector general of the hospitals for the army. The entries come from letters he wrote home about his experiences while he was in Barbados. He visited two slave ships, one American and one British.

Dr. Pinckard describes an American ship that had arrived from the coast of Guinea and was bound for Savannah, Georgia. He later attended the sale of a cargo of slaves from a Dutch ship at the new town of Amsterdam in the West Indies. It was a festive day, a kind of “public fair.”

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: DR. GEORGE PINCKARD ON THE JOURNEY—QUOTE 1

The cargo consisted of a hundred and thirty slaves, of whom two-thirds were males and one-third females. The two sexes were kept separate by a partition, or bulk-head, built from side to side, across the ship, allotting the waist to the men, and to the women, the quarterdeck. A great majority of them were very young, being from ten to eighteen years of age. We were pleased to observe that an air of cheerfulness and contentment prevailed among them. In a few only we remarked despondency, and dejection of countenance. Both sexes were without apparel, having only a narrow band of blue cloth put around the waist, and brought to fasten before, so to serve the office of a fig leaf, worn by our first parents in the fruitful garden of Eden.

. . . Many of them had marks upon the skin which appeared to have been made by cutting instruments. These, we learned, were distinctive of the nation to which they belonged. Some had their teeth cut, or filed to sharp points, giving them a very hideous and canine appearance. They looked well fed and healthy, although some had an eruption, called the cra-cra upon the skin.

. . . We saw them dance, and heard them sing. In dancing they scarcely moved their feet, but threw about their arms and twisted and writhed their bodies into a multitude of disgusting and indecent attitudes. Their song was a wild and savage yell, devoid of all softness and harmony, and loudly chanted in harsh monotony.

Their food is chiefly rice which they prepare by plain and simple boiling. At the time of messing they squat around the bowl in large bodies, upon their heels and haunches, like monkeys, each putting his paws into the platter to claw out the rice with his fingers. We saw several of them employed in beating the red husks off the rice, which was done by pounding the grain in wooden mortars with wooden pestles sufficiently long to allow them to stand upright while beating the mortars placed at their feet. This appeared to be a labour of cheerfulness. They beat the pestle in tune to the song and seemed happy; yet nothing of industry marked their toil, for the pounding was performed by indolently raising the pestle and then leaving it to fall from its own weight.

Source: Pinckard, Dr. George. *Notes on the West Indies*. London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1806. Courtesy, Library of Virginia.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: DR. GEORGE PINCKARD ON THE JOURNEY—QUOTE 2

The comfort and health of the slaves were promoted with every care. Being fond of washing in cold water, they were encouraged to free use of it; and their persons, as well as the whole ship, were kept remarkably clean. They were plentifully fed, and in the daytime were dispersed about the ship, so as to be prevented as much as possible from assembling together in close unwholesome crowds. Mirth and gaiety were promoted among them. . . . I may truly say, that a more general air of contentment reigned among them than could have been expected.

They seemed to regard the master of the vessel more in affection than fear; and although strictly obedient, they did not appear to be at all under the influence of terror.

Source: Pinckard, Dr. George. *Notes on the West Indies*. London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1806. Courtesy of the Library of Virginia.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THOMAS PHILLIPS

Captain Thomas Phillips, master of the *Hannibal* of London, gives a stark picture of life aboard his ship on a slaving voyage to Africa in 1693–1694.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: THOMAS PHILLIPS ON THE JOURNEY—QUOTE 1

They are fed twice a day, at 10 in the morning and 4 in the evening, which is the time they are aptest to mutiny, being all upon deck; therefore all that time, those of our men who are not employ'd in distributing their victuals to them, and settling them, stand to their arms; and some with lighted matches at the great guns that yawn upon them, loaded with partridge, till they have done and gone down to their kennels between deck. Their chief diet is call'd dabbadabb, being Indian corn ground as small as oat-meal in iron mills, which we carry for that purpose; and after mix'd with water and boil'd well in a large copper furnace, till 'tis as thick as pudding. About a peckful of which in vessels, call'd crews, is allow'd to 10 men, with a little salt, malagetta and palm oil, to relish.

They are divided into messes of ten each, for the easier and better order in serving them. Three days a week they have horse-beans boil'd for their dinner and supper, great quantities of which the African Company sends aboard for that purpose. These beans the Negroes extremely love and desire, beating their breast, eating them and crying "Pram, Pram" which is "Very Good." They are indeed the best diet for them, having a binding quality, and consequently good to prevent the flux, which is the inveterate distemper that most affects them, and ruins our voyages by their mortality.

The men are all fed upon the main deck and fore-castle, that we may have them under command of our arms from the quarter-deck, in case of disturbances. The women eat upon the quarter-deck with us and the boys and girls upon the poop. After they are once divided into messes, and appointed their places, they will readily run there in good order of themselves afterwards. When they have eaten their victuals clean up (which we force them to for to thrive the better), they are order'd down between decks, and every one as he passes has a pint of water to drink after his meat [meal], which is serv'd them by the cooper out of a large tub, fill'd beforehand ready for them...

Source: Phillips, Thomas, *Journal, Vol. VI, A Collection of Voyages and Travels*. London: Awnsham and John Churchill, 1746. Courtesy, Library of Virginia.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: THOMAS PHILLIPS ON THE JOURNEY—QUOTE 2

When often at sea, in the evenings, would let the slave come up into the sun to air themselves, and make them jump and dance for an hour or two to our bag-pipers, harp and fiddle, by which exercise to preserve them in health; but notwithstanding all our endeavour, 'twas my hard fortune to have great sickness and mortality among them.

Having bought my complement of 700 slaves, 480 men and 220 women, and finish'd all my business at Whidaw, I took my leave of the old king. . . . I set sail the 27th of July in the morning, accompany'd with the East-India Merchant, who had bought 650 slaves, for the Island of St. Thomas. . . from which we took our departure on August 25th and set sail for Barbadoes.

We spent in our passage from St. Thomas to Barbadoes two months eleven days, from the 25th of August to the 4th of November following; in which time there happened such sickness and mortality among my poor men and Negroes. Of the first we buried 14, and of the last 320, which was a great detriment to our voyage, the Royal African Company losing ten pounds ten shillings, being the freight agreed on to be paid by the charter-party for every Negro delivered alive ashore to the African Company's agents at Barbadoes. . . . The loss in all amounted to near 6500 pounds sterling.

Source: Phillips, Thomas, *Journal, Vol. VI, A Collection of Voyages and Travels*. London: Awnsham and John Churchill, 1746. Courtesy, Library of Virginia.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON DR. ALEXANDER FALCONBRIDGE

In 1788, Dr. Alexander Falconbridge published a book in England entitled *An Account of the Trade on the Coast of Africa*. Falconbridge described his experiences as a surgeon aboard slave ships. In this excerpt, he discusses the crowded conditions on slave ships.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: DR. ALEXANDER FALCONBRIDGE ON SHIP SIZE

This devastation, great as it was, some years ago was greatly exceeded by a Liverpool ship. . . . This ship, though a much smaller ship than in which I have just mentioned, took on board at Bonny at least six hundred Negroes. . . . By purchasing so great a number, the slaves were so crowded that they were obliged to lie one upon another. This caused such a mortality among them that without meeting with unusually bad weather or having a longer voyage than common, nearly one half of them died before the ship arrived in the West Indies. [Bonny is located near Old Calabar and the Windward Coast of Africa.]

That the public may be able to form some idea of the almost incredibly small space into which so large a number of Negroes were crammed, the following particulars of this ship are given. According to Liverpool custom she measured 235 tons. Her width across the beam, 25 feet. Length between the decks, 92 feet, which was divided into four rooms, thus:

Store room, in which there were	
not any Negroes placed	15 feet
Negroes' rooms: men's rooms—about	45 feet
Women's rooms—about	10 feet
Boys' rooms—about	<u>22 feet</u>
Total room for Negroes	77 feet

Exclusive of the platform before described, from 8 to 9 feet in breadth, and equal in length to that of the rooms. . . .

Source: Falconbridge, Alexander. "*An Account of the Slave Trade on the Coast of Africa.*" London, 1788. Courtesy, Archives and Special Collections Department, University of Connecticut.

TIP SHEET

Transferring data from device to device

1. Begin by connecting the two calculators by a link cable using the outlet in the bottom of the device.



2. On the receiving calculator press the **[2nd]** key followed by the **[X,T,Θ,n]** button.

```
SEND RECEIVE
1:All+...
2:All-...
3:Prgm...
4:List...
5:Lists to TI82...
6:GDB...
7:Pic...
```

3. Then choose Receive and press **[ENTER]**. The calculator will wait for the transmission from the sending device

```
SEND RECEIVE
1:Receive
```

Waiting...

4. On the sending calculator press the **[2nd]** button followed by the **[X,T,Θ,n]** button. To transfer an application choose “Apps” from the list. To transfer data for an application choose “AppVars” from the list

```
SEND RECEIVE
8:Matrix...
9:Real...
0:Complex...
A:Y-Vars...
B:String...
C:Apps...
D:AppVars...
```

5. The screen will display the available applications or application variables. Move the **[↓]** key to the desired program and press **[ENTER]**. This will place a solid square in front of the desired program(s).

```
SELECT TRANSMIT
*ClgHelp APP
*Organize APP
*Periodic APP
*Prob Sim APP
*PuzzPack APP
▶*Start-up APP
■*StudyCrd APP
```

6. Press the **[▶]** key to choose TRANSMIT

```
SELECT TRANSMIT
1:Transmit
```

7. Press **[ENTER]** and the data will be transferred. Both calculators will reflect the transfer.

```
Receiving...
▶*BUDGET AVAR
Done
```

```
▶*BUDGET AVAR
Done
```

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This TI-83 Plus lesson was adapted from *Slavery: A Colonial Odyssey*, a lesson unit available from the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. For more information on this lesson unit and other Colonial Williamsburg instructional materials and classroom resources, visit <http://www.history.org/teach>, or call 1-800-688-6473.

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Janet P. Brooks, AP U.S. History teacher, Liverpool High School, Liverpool, NY

Charles R. Coon, Adjunct Professor of Education, State University of New York at
Oswego, Oswego, NY

Bob Van Amburgh, Instructional Supervisor for Social Studies, City School District of
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Kathryn Robinson, teacher and Texas Instruments T³ Instructor, Parkville High School,
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Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Department of Education Outreach staff

Texas Instruments staff