

The Middle Passage: An Inquiry

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African Americans in the Making of New England

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Grade 5

MA History and Social Science Standard Topic 1.6:

Describe the Triangular Trade and the harsh conditions of trans-Atlantic voyages (call the Middle Passage) for enslaved Africans.

Essential Questions:

- What reasons could captors have for the harsh treatment enslaved Africans endured on the Middle Passage?
- How would the conditions of the Middle Passage affect enslaved African's feelings about their future and enslavement?

Objectives:

- Students will be able to describe the harsh conditions enslaved Africans endured on the Middle Passage.
- Students will be able to compose and discuss questions generated by the primary and secondary source material.

Materials:

- Google presentation <https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1CeseEhxmkaJQfKYhIi75UIFAr1LrE-xY1uqxRKKuJJ8/edit#slide=id.p>
- Student response packet
- Timelapse video <https://slavevoyages.org/voyage/database#timelapse>
- Diagram of slave ship <http://www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/item/2061>
- 3D video <https://www.slavevoyages.org/voyage/ship>
- Olaudah Equiano Narrative <https://www.commonlit.org/texts/olaudah-equiano-recalls-the-middle-passage>
- The Slave Ship <https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/baquaqua/baquaqua.html>

Overview:

The inquiry addresses the conditions which enslaved Africans endured on the Middle Passage. It would be sandwiched between a unit on the origins of slavery in the colonies emphasizing New England and Massachusetts, Triangular Trade, and an examination of the institution of slavery throughout the 18th and 19th centuries.

Procedure in groups:

Day 1:

- Review slides 4-5 in the Google presentation to be sure students remember what Triangular Trade is and when/how slavery began in Massachusetts.
- Go over the essential questions and goals on slide 6.
- Pass out the student packet.
- Introduce the time lapse video on slide 7 and have students complete the activity.

Day 2-4:

- Pass out the first-hand accounts of Olaudah Equiano and Mohammad G. Baquaqua and have students complete the activity on slide 8. (Students will need comprehension and vocabulary support.) The content of the accounts may need to be edited for brevity and content.

Day 5:

- Have students watch the 3D video and view the slave ship diagram which you have passed out and complete the activity on slide 9.

Day 6:

- Have the students review all of their notes and discuss. They should work with their group to complete the activity on slide 10.

Day 7:

- Gather the class together and ask students to describe the treatment of enslaved Africans on the Middle Passage. Chart the responses.
- Discuss the essential questions and any other questions students have.

Extensions:

You may wish to have students complete a culminating activity for assessment. Options could include a narrative from the point of view of an enslaved person, an informational essay, poem, model, presentation, article, video, slide show or other method.

Sources:

Winthrop, John; Hosmer, James K. New York: Scribner's, 1908. *Winthrop's Journal: History of New England. 1630-1649*

The Body of Liberties of 1641 (Massachusetts Colony)

Tables <https://www.slavevoyages.org/assessment/estimates>

Timelapse video <https://slavevoyages.org/voyage/database#timelapse>

Diagram of slave ship <http://www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/item/2061>
3D video <https://www.slavevoyages.org/voyage/ship>
<https://www.commonlit.org/texts/olaudah-equiano-recalls-the-middle-passage>
<https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/baquaqua/baquaqua.html>

Note:

For an editable version of the slideshow please email a_brown@ludlowps.org

Name _____

Class _____

Group members:

1. Timelapse Video:

Observations <i>What do you notice in this source? What jumps out at you?</i>	Inferences <i>What does this make you think? What opinions or conclusions can you make?</i>	Importance <i>Why is this important?</i>

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What questions do you have about this source?

2. Olaudah Equiano Recalls the Middle Passage

Observations <i>What do you notice in this source? What jumps out at you?</i>	Inferences <i>What does this make you think? What opinions or conclusions can you make?</i>	Importance <i>Why is this important?</i>

What questions do you have about this source?

Mohamma G. Baquaqua, The Slave Ship

Observations <i>What do you notice in this source? What jumps out at you?</i>	Inferences <i>What does this make you think? What opinions or conclusions can you make?</i>	Importance <i>Why is this important?</i>

What questions do you have about this source?

3. 3D Slave Ship Video

Observations <i>What do you notice in this source? What jumps out at you?</i>	Inferences <i>What does this make you think? What opinions or conclusions can you make?</i>	Importance <i>Why is this important?</i>

What questions do you have about this source?

Slave Ship Diagram

Observations <i>What do you notice in this source? What jumps out at you?</i>	Inferences <i>What does this make you think? What opinions or conclusions can you make?</i>	Importance <i>Why is this important?</i>

What questions do you have about this source?

4. With your group, review the thoughts, observations and feelings you have about the Middle Passage.

Write down any questions you have about the Middle Passage, the enslaved Africans who were transported on the ships, and the white slave holders who paid for these voyages and purchased enslaved Africans.

Finally, talk about the essential questions with your group, and be ready to discuss them with the class.

Your Questions:

Discuss the essential questions:

What reasons could captors have for the harsh treatment enslaved Africans endured on the Middle Passage?

How would the conditions of the middle passage affect enslaved Africans' feelings about their future and enslavement?