

The African Slave Trade and Middle Passage

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Overview

In the course of teaching the World Cultures curriculum, a teacher finds him/herself running into periods of time which the students grab a hold of and want to run away with a certain area of discussion. The one area that always grabs my students' attention is the discussions about the Slave Trade and the Middle Passage. The thing that impresses me about my students when we come to this area of the curriculum is that they always have a good amount of prior knowledge that I can draw upon. Some of the things they do remember are suicides, branding, chains, and other gory details. Then I pose the question of why? And then I ask them how? There aren't really a whole lot of good answers. I always ask myself why this is. Of course, the middle school curriculum pays more attention to slavery in America, and African-American History concentrates on the hardships of slavery also. The World Cultures curriculum allows for those delicate questions. I always enjoy the challenge of making students respond to these questions because it is a level of thinking that is usually reserved for the PSP or CAS level. But the students in mainstream can search their own minds to try to find answers to these questions also, and they are usually pretty impressive when they do.

I have put together a unit that allows students to draw on their prior knowledge and then build on it. Students need to draw out the facts, but they need to examine the facts and use critical thinking to examine why and how the dehumanization of the Africans happened. They also need to try to figure out how it started, and why it continued for so long.

In my unit you will find some comprehensive lessons that allow for the students to use prior knowledge, cooperative learning, technology, and critical thinking to examine the Atlantic Slave Trade. Students will be challenged to go beyond what they already know and produce some theories on why and how this happened. It will

open up a new set of ideas for the students to follow and allow them to not relate the Slave Trade with its gory details, but allow for them to examine the intricacies of the Slave Trade.

Rationale

My rationale for building this unit was pretty much stated above. The students relate the Slave Trade to its gory details, but often forget why and how it happened. This unit that I am building can be used in African American History, World Cultures, and even out Middle School US History which discusses the Slave Trade. The middle school class is where most of the students acquire the prior knowledge of the Slave Trade, some also take African American History and bring those experiences to my class. But in the World Cultures curriculum, there is an overriding theme of imperialism that sweeps the book. Every area of the world that I cover ends up discussing the growth of western influence on the area. Every part of the world today has been influenced by imperialism, and the biggest example is Africa, where Europeans carved up the continent gaining whatever they needed for economic gain and finding some way to justify it. Even the trading of human beings became acceptable, and that is what brought the western world into the dominant position it has had on the world everyday since (Harms 212).

The Slave Trade is debated among professionals constantly. There are hundreds of books and articles written about it every year, so the information is there to provide for the students and they could always find it on their own, but they won't, that is why we are there. The thing that my students have a difficult time understanding is the basic history of slavery. To be a slave throughout most of history was extremely different in most cases than to the ideas that our students have about slavery. It was usually not as negative of a situation that our students understand it to be. But the Atlantic Slave Trade went far beyond the levels of human cruelty that had been established in the past. When an initiative on or against a group of people is motivated solely on a means of economic gain, we now see that it can lead to very tragic events. More tragic than anything the likes of human kind had ever seen.

Slavery had been established long before the Atlantic Slave Trade. Milton Meltzer, who has written over 80 books on Jewish, African, and African-American history, makes the point that slavery began the same time one of the greatest technological developments happened in human history -The Agricultural Revolution. He suggests that when humans were a hunting and gathering society, you would end up having to do more work in keeping a captive, than if you would just kill them or simply let them go. If you had a captive, you would have to feed your captives and drag them along unwillingly wherever you went which common sense indicates would be very unreasonable. Therefore, when people learned to farm and civilization developed, it was, in turn, common sense to keep people that you

defeated in war. Why do all the work of raising a farm when you could have your captives do the work for you (Meltzer 6)? This is a concept that the students always love to hear, and I usually get a few comical comments from the crowd. The consensus is usually that they understand the natural development of slavery; and begin to change their ideas about what slavery was and what it became. They often become entranced by the fact that slavery didn't seem to be a racial issue, just an issue over power and dominance. Once the students begin to see this concept, they always want a little more, they begin to see that a pre-conceived notion they had about something is actually changing a bit. This is an exciting time because students will naturally develop the debate about slavery and how the Slave Trade was even more of a racial issue than they thought of before. This is an idea that the students sometimes try to run away with, which is great, but there are only so many arguments that can be made, so it is nice to hit them with a little more facts about slavery. Since the racial debate may be going on, it is time to redirect them. Norman Macht and Mary Hall indicate and describe in their book the Arab-African Slave Trade and Zanzibar and the East African Slave Trade (15-21). In their descriptions they give detailed accounts that there was a slave trade going on in Africa long before the Europeans or whites got involved. This enables the students to quickly shift gears and begin to analyze and interpret information rather than develop arguments about the information. They begin to see that the Slave Trade may have been a natural development of businessmen rather than a completely racial issue. This begins the series of questions about why it became a racial issue, and why just Africa?

Thomas Howard in *Black Voyage* indicates that the first Africans traded into slavery were taken to Portugal by native traders in 1442. There were ten Africans taken into slavery from the Rio de Oro (237). He uses this to guide readers through the argument that slavery was this development of business, rather than racially motivated. But he does later make the point that the Africans were thought to be more suited for the weather in the Americas and were reasonably easier to subjugate than the Native Americans (331). This is where the unit really begins. I believe I will be able to generate these arguments by using the lesson I have created. I think all of the ideas that I have previously discussed will come out in the course of the unit. The preparation is the part that is integral. Every argument and every twist and turn and pre-conceived notion of slavery comes out when events such as the Middle Passage are discussed, so there needs to be preparation and knowledge there to back up and counter any comment that is made.

Objectives

By the end of this unit students will be able to demonstrate their knowledge of the slave trade – from its beginning, its development, and to its final conclusion. The students will also describe why and how the Slave Trade happened. They will discuss and analyze every aspect of the Slave Trade and even slavery before the Slave Trade.

The students will demonstrate their ability to interpret and analyze images, primary source documents, and web resources to fully understand every aspect of the Slave Trade. The students will demonstrate their ability to research using the Internet and will answer a series of questions about the slave trade. Finally, the students will demonstrate their complete understanding of imperialism and economic concepts that motivated some of the most tragic events the world has ever seen.

Strategies

I will have the students interpret and analyze primary source documents and research by utilizing a variety of different sources. There are primary source documents, websites, revised biographies and artwork that will be used to help students comprehend the different aspects of slavery and the Slave Trade. Students in the end will have to use persuasion to argue the facts that something like this shouldn't have happened. They will be put in the time frame of the slave trade and argue why the dehumanization of the Africans should not take place, and why the slave trade should be completely outlawed.

Classroom Activities

1. In my first activity, I use this interview written by Jennifer Hunt in *Time* magazine. She is interviewing David Eltis who wrote a book *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas* describing some interesting perspectives on the slave trade. I have set up some discussion questions that may challenge some of the students' traditional beliefs of why slavery and the Slave Trade took place.
2. The second lesson is about Olaudah Equiano. It is an excerpt from his autobiography *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa the African*. This excerpt deals with his experiences during the Middle Passage. I have detailed some guided reading questions so students are sure to read every aspect that a primary source felt important enough to discuss in his autobiography. The guided reading questions take the students straight through the excerpt and should create some good discussion. This is often the area which students usually seem to have the most prior knowledge in.
3. This lesson will deal with something that always comes up in discussions and that is the suicide of some Africans and living slaves thrown overboard. There is an interesting article about the ship *Zong*, and their hopes to collect insurance money on lost cargo during their voyage. I included the WDWVHW model for its simplicity in explaining why the ships crew decided to do what they did.

4. This lesson allows the students to use their skills navigating a website while learning about another way to express ideas and convey a story. I started out with a brief introduction of who Tom Feelings is, to give the students the knowledge of where the artist they will be researching earned his credentials. Tom Feelings uses this online pictorial to express his emotions and knowledge of the Middle Passage. I will have the students either independently or with a partner to go through the website and answer questions about some of the artwork and brief narratives that they will experience. The final question will allow the students to explore their emotions related to the Middle Passage and some of the artwork that is expressed by Tom Feelings.
5. The final lesson will attempt to bring all of the prior knowledge that the students have gained to the forefront. The students will read about Thomas Clarkson and William Wilberforce, two abolitionists who worked to end the slave trade. The students will gain information on arguments that were being used to try to persuade Western European governments to end the slave trade in their countries. The students will be asked to write a persuasive essay using the knowledge they have gained from Olaudah Equiano, Tom Feelings, Clarkson and Wilberforce to try to persuade governments to end the slave trade. The students will be then told to compose a speech that will be given to the class.

***I have included all of the lessons in the appendix.**

Annotated Bibliography/Resources

ONLINE PICTORIAL

<http://www.juneteenth.com/middlep.htm>

African Slaves Thrown Overboard

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part1/1h280.html>

African Slaves Thrown Overboard

http://www.umich.edu/~ece/student_projects/slavery/the_zong.html

Benson, Kathleen and Haskins, James. *Bound For America: the Forced Migration of Africans to the New World*. New York. Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Books. 1999. (Independent descriptions of both Europe in 1492 and Africa in 1492. Very descriptive visuals of different restraints that were used on the imprisoned.)

Berlin, Ira. *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America*. Cambridge. The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. 1998. (Prologue takes a look at race and slavery not as a social construction but as a historical construction.)

Feelings, Tom. *The Middle Passage: White Ships: Black Cargo*. New York, Dial Books. 1995. (Completely illustrations. The story of the Middle Passage through art.)

Fogel, Robert William. *Without Consent or Contract: The Rise and Fall of American Slavery*. New York. WW Norton and Company. 1989. (Great first chapter on the origins of the slave trade and the general characteristics of New World Slavery.)

Frank, Andrew. *The Birth of Black America: The Age of Discovery and the Slave Trade*. New York. Chelsea House Publishers. 1996. (A few photographs of Africans in captivity may help convey that this didn't happen too long ago. Discusses complications and uneasy relationships Europeans had with coastal kingdoms.)

Harms, Robert. *The Diligent: A Voyage Through the Worlds of the Slave Trade*. New York. Basic Books. 2002 (Excellent book on many different historical perspectives about the history of slavery and the slave trade. Great comprehensive look at the world before and during the times of the slave trade.)

Hatt, Christine. *Slavery: From Africa to the Americas*. New York. Peter Bedrick Books. 1997. (Great two-page descriptions on every aspect of the slave trade.)

Howard, Thomas. *Black Voyage: Eyewitness Accounts of the Atlantic Slave Trade*. Boston. Little, Brown and Company, 1971. (Very good chronology of the Atlantic Slave Trade. Index vii-x.)

Kennerly, Karen. *The Slave Who Bought His Freedom: Equiano's Story*. New York: E.P. Dutton & CO., INC. (Interesting third person point of view of the Equiano story. Very similar and a bit easier to read. Some segments given to a class may be better coming from Kennerly because of the accurate language.)

Lester, Julius. *To Be a Slave*. New York. The Dial Press, 1968. (Detailed account of what it "felt" like to be owned by someone else and to be treated as property.)

Macht, Norman L. and Hull, Mary. *The History of Slavery*. Sand Diego. Lucent Books. 1997. (Reference for African slavery. Describes Arab-African slave trade and Zanzibar and the East African Slave Trade.)

Meltzer, Milton. *All Times, All Peoples: A World History of Slavery*. New York. Harper and Row, 1980. (Simple descriptions of what a slave was, and how people came to be slaves. The book also makes the point that the agricultural revolution causes slavery.)

Meltzer, Milton. *Slavery II: From the Renaissance to Today*. Chicago. Cowles Book Company, 1972. (Depicts European reasoning for slave trade. And there is a very long description of the Middle Passage.)

Meltzer, Milton *They Came in Chains: The Story of the Slave Ships*. New York, Benchmark Books, 2000. (Good reasoning in justification of Europeans regarding slave trade. There is a shorter chronology of the slave trade that includes great illustrations and personal accounts.)

Newman, Shirlee P. *Child Slavery in Modern Times*. New York. Franklin Watts, 2000. (To bring emotion and relevancy to child slavery in modern times the book gives examples of slavery in the world today.)

Spears, John R. *The American Slave-Trade: An Account of its Origin, Growth, and Suppression*. Port Washington, New York. Kennikat Press, INC., 1967. (Concentrates on American Naval Involvement with the American Slave Trade.)

Thornton, Jeremy. *Immigration and the Slave Trade: Africans come to America 1607-1830*. New York. PowerKids Press, 2004. (Children's book that is only twenty-five pages. Great for middle school.)

Appendices-Standards

Appendix A

Pittsburgh Public Schools Communication Standards

1. All students use effective research and information management skills, including locating primary and secondary sources of information with traditional and emerging library technologies.
2. All students read and use a variety of methods to make sense of various kinds of complex texts.
4. All students write for a variety of purposes, including to narrate, inform, and persuade, in all subject areas.

5. All students analyze and make critical judgments about all forms of communication, separating fact from opinion, recognizing propaganda, stereotypes and statements of bias, recognizing inconsistencies and judging the validity of evidence.
6. All students exchange information orally, including understanding and giving spoken instructions, asking and answering questions appropriately, and promoting effective group communications.
8. All students compose and make oral presentations for each academic area of study that are designed to persuade, inform, or describe.

Pittsburgh Public Schools Citizenship Standards-10th Grade

1. All students demonstrate an understanding of major events, cultures, groups and individuals in the historical development of Pennsylvania, the United States and other nations, and describe the patterns of historical development.
3. All students describe the development and operations of economic, political, legal and governmental systems in the United States, assess their own relationships to those systems, and compare them to those in other nations.
4. All students examine and evaluate problems facing citizens in their own communities, state, nation and world by incorporating concepts and methods on inquiry of the various social sciences.
5. All students develop and defend a position on current issues, confronting the United States and other nations, conducting research, analyzing alternatives, organizing evidence and arguments, and making oral presentations.
7. All students demonstrate their skills of communicating, negotiating and cooperating with others.
8. All students demonstrate that they can work effectively with others.
9. All students demonstrate an understanding of the history and nature of prejudice and relate their knowledge to current issues facing communities, the United States and other nations.

Appendix B

INTERVIEW: David Eltis

TIME.com talks to the award-winning historian about his book and a new understanding of the slave trade

By [JENNIFER HUNT](#)

Thursday, Oct. 05, 2000

The [Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition](#) recently awarded its annual Frederick Douglass Prize for the best book on slavery written this year to [The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas](#) written by Queens University of Ontario Professor David Eltis. The book was chosen for its groundbreaking scholarship showing that it was the strength and prosperity of the African nation-states, rather any weakness or poverty that shaped the Atlantic slave trade and forced the Europeans to accommodate them to African customs and economics. The book also seeks to understand why Europe, the champion of individual freedom, helped to create the most pervasive system of slavery in history.

TIME.com spoke with Professor Eltis, a leading scholar on the African Diaspora, about his book:

TIME: In the book you posit that slavery and freedom emerged from the same roots in Western society. How did those contradictory concepts arise together?

ELTIS: They are not as contradictory as they first appear. Freedom from restraints for one individual may well result in slavery for another if there is an imbalance of power between the two individuals. The argument in the first and last chapters of the book is that Western definitions of freedom placed a greater emphasis on the rights of the individual versus the rights of the group than existed anywhere else in the world, and that this tendency was carried furthest in north-west Europe. The English colonies in the Americas were subject to weaker controls on the part of the imperial government than was the case in other imperial systems. In addition both before and after Columbian contact, north-west Europe had much less exposure to, and intercourse with non-European peoples than had the Portuguese and the Spanish. The English and Dutch were more likely to view non-European peoples as lying outside the social contract and therefore beyond the protection of the web of individual rights they were weaving for themselves. As long as some group is regarded as outsiders then freedom for insiders is perfectly compatible with enslavement and exploitation — as indeed happened in the Athenian city state. The greater the degree of freedom for insiders, the more onerous is slavery likely to be for outsiders.

TIME: Yes, but how is it that hundreds of years after the abolition of serfdom in Western Europe, western European nations engaged in the slave trade and slavery flourished in the New World? And why did it take so long for the idea of abolition to take hold in this country and the Caribbean, considering that Western Europeans had abolished slavery and serfdom among themselves?

ELTIS: Once more the insider-outsider divide is critical. At root, this is an expression of the contradiction in all human beings of the need to belong and at the same time to differentiate them. My argument is that societies do not usually enslave their own members, except for what is perceived as anti-social behavior. Between the Dark Ages and Columbian contact — aided by the concept of Christendom — Europe came to form an important element in the collective identities (that is the way people saw themselves as a group) of all western European peoples. Thus the French, Germans, English, etc. would fight each other and among themselves, but came to see slavery as a fate reserved for others — or non-Europeans. The concept of "insider" gradually came to encompass the whole of the sub-continent.

For example, after the Viking raids, prisoners of war were no longer enslaved as an alternative to death, but in the wars between the West and Islam, enslavement of prisoners continued on both sides.

TIME: How was African slavery different, "in scale and intensity" than previous forms of slavery and serfdom among Europeans?

ELTIS: To continue from the previous answer, the insider-outsider divide was, for whatever reason, much more localized in sub-Saharan Africa. "Africa" as a concept had no meaning for early modern Africans, so that the answer to the question of how could Africans enslave other African, is that they did not know they were African. Thus, on the coast both Europeans and Africans traded outsiders. In addition slavery in Africa was an important method of recruitment for the kinship group — and the kin group was perhaps more important than the individual as the basic unit of society. Slaves conferred prestige both to the group and the individual owner. Slaves were expected to labor, but their main function was not, or not only, economic. More important, as a member of a kin group, albeit one that might be exploited or sacrificed; a slave had status in society and could begin to acquire some elements of "insidership" almost from the start. Slave status in most societies was in fact eroded over time and down the generations, so that the individual or his descendants became less and less marginalized — or gradually entered into full membership of the group. None of this was true of slavery in the Americas.

TIME: In the later chapters of the book, you look beyond the economic effects of slavery and discuss the even more consequential effects of slavery on culture and

self-identification. What were the cultural ramifications of the African slave trade for Europeans, New World whites, Africans, and African Americans? How did it impact their self-identification?

ELTIS: Early modern Europeans were, obviously, first of all French or Dutch or English or Spanish, but in addition had some concept of "Europeanness." Africans identified with some much smaller political/cultural/religious entity. The trauma of the slave trade and slavery meant that in the New World Europeans added "whiteness" to their self-concept. Africans on both sides of the Atlantic also broadened their concepts of collective identity. European colonies extended rights of denization (a preliminary to citizenship) to those coming from any part of Europe — including Jews — before such rights were available in the respective mother countries. Evidence from slave ship revolts — collected as part of the transatlantic slave trade database project (now available on CD-ROM from Cambridge University Press) — suggests that African cohesiveness in resistance to the trade increased over the decades so that there was much more likelihood of a slave ship rebellion being successful in the second half of eighteenth century than a century earlier. From a broad five century perspective, everyone in the Atlantic World broadened their concept of the collective self, but for nearly four centuries of the Atlantic slave trade, collective identities were divided from each other along racial lines. This is what separates slavery in the Americas from its predecessors.

TIME: In what way were European aspirations in Africa thwarted by "African power"? To what degree was the slave trade a result of European/African compromise and agreement (as opposed to simply being imposed by Europeans)?

ELTIS: Until late in the nineteenth century Africans, aided by epidemiology, had the power to keep Europeans from colonizing their territory. Sugar, even in the Caribbean, was grown in micro-climates and these micro-climates existed in West Africa (eg, Sao Tome). Europeans attempted to establish plantations in Africa in the late seventeenth century. They did not have the political and military control to do so and were forced to treat with Africans as equals. The plantations were established in the Americas instead, and the expensive transatlantic slave was necessary to bring them labor. In this sense the slave trade was a result of African strength. Europeans bought slaves; they did not obtain them through European-led raids.

TIME: In your preface you say that it's important for a historian to "put distance between scholarship and the values of the society in which he or she functions." Was it easy for you to write with scholarly detachment about such a subject so heavy with ongoing emotional and political weight?

ELTIS: Document after document on the slave trade shows human beings making matter-of-fact decisions about the lives of others as though they were pieces of merchandise. There is no hint of guilt or recrimination. It is because we cannot understand this mind-set today, that, difficult as it is, we have to attempt to distance ourselves from modern values. If we do not do so, we will not come to understand how such things could happen, and if historians can't do this, then they have no function beyond story tellers.

Name _____
Date _____

Time.com interview with David Eltis. Author of The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas. Read the interview and answer the questions about some of the ideas that David Eltis discusses concerning the rise of slavery in the Americas.

Or, these questions can be used for discussion purposes when the article is used for classroom reading.

1. Describe the author's feelings that Freedom and slavery are not altogether contradictory?
2. Why was the concept of slavery a widely shared opinion in Europe even when the individual countries of Europe were often fighting against one another?
3. Did "Africans" justify enslaving other "Africans"? Why or why not?
4. How was the African Slave-Trade brought on by the strength of the Africans?
5. Why does the author say that historians need to look at the Slave trade from a distant perspective?

Appendix C



Olaudah Equiano, or, Gustavus Vassa, the African

According to his famous autobiography, written in 1789, Olaudah Equiano (c.1745-1797) was born in what is now Nigeria. Kidnapped and sold into slavery in childhood, he was taken as a slave to the New World. As a slave to a captain in the Royal Navy, and later to a Quaker merchant, he eventually earned the price of his own freedom by careful trading and saving. As a seaman, he traveled the world, including the Mediterranean, the Caribbean, the Atlantic and the Arctic, the latter in an abortive attempt to reach the North Pole. Coming to London, he became involved in the movement to abolish the slave trade, an involvement which led to him writing and publishing *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa the African* (1789) a strongly abolitionist autobiography. The book became a bestseller and, as well as furthering the anti-slavery cause, made Equiano a wealthy man.

The Middle Passage

This extract, taken from Chapter Two of the *Interesting Narrative*, describes some of the young Equiano's experiences on board a slave ship in the 'Middle Passage': the journey between Africa and the New World. Equiano's passage is between West Africa and the Caribbean island of Barbados, at that time a common voyage as the British plantation island was among the most easterly of the Caribbean islands.

At last, when the ship we were in had got in all her cargo, they made ready with many fearful noises, and we were all put under deck, so that we could not see how they managed the vessel. But this disappointment was the least of my sorrow. The stench of the hold while we were on the coast was so intolerably loathsome, that it was dangerous to remain there for any time, and some of us had been permitted to stay on the deck for the fresh air; but now that the whole ship's cargo were confined together, it became absolutely pestilential. 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 perspirations, so that the air soon became unfit for respiration, from a variety of loathsome smells, and brought on a sickness among the slaves, 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 become 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 a 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 happier 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 heighten my apprehensions, and my opinion of the cruelty of the whites. One day they had taken a number of fishes; and when they had killed and satisfied themselves with as many as they thought fit, to our astonishment who were on the deck, rather than give any of them to us to eat, as we expected, they tossed the remaining fish into the sea again, although we begged and prayed for some as well we could, but in vain; and some of my countrymen, being pressed by hunger, took an opportunity, when they thought no one saw them, of trying to get a little privately; but they were discovered, and the attempt procured them some very severe floggings.

One day, when we had a smooth sea, and a 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 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 to go out after the slaves. 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. During our passage I first saw flying fishes, which surprised me very much: they used frequently to fly across the ship, and many of them fell on the deck. I also now first saw the use of the quadrant. I had often with astonishment seen the mariners make observations with it, and I could not think what it meant. They at last took notice of my surprise; and one of them, willing to increase it, as well as to gratify my curiosity, made me one day look through it. The clouds appeared to me to be land, which disappeared as they passed along. This heightened my wonder: and I was now more persuaded than

ever that I was in another world, and that every thing about me was magic. At last we came in sight of the island of Barbadoes, at which the whites on board gave a great shout, and made many signs of joy to us.

Guided Reading Questions

Oludah Equiano-Gustavus Vassa, The African

1. How did Equiano eventually earn the price of his own freedom?
2. Where did Equiano first get involved with the abolitionist movement?
3. What is the name of his autobiography?
4. Why does he say they were put under deck at the beginning of the voyage?
5. Why was it dangerous to stay in the hold of the ship for a long period of time?
6. Why was Equiano kept on deck for much of the voyage?
7. What does he wish for to put an end to his miseries?
8. What did the crew of the ship do with the fish that were left after they were done eating them?
9. What happened to a couple of the imprisoned Africans when they were caught stealing some of the fish?
10. What did the two men that were chained together next to him do instead of continue on their voyage?
11. Who prevented more imprisoned Africans from jumping into the sea?
12. How many of the slaves that jumped overboard were caught by the ship's crew?
13. What happened when the crew returned with him?
14. How long did they sometimes go without any fresh air?
15. What do you think the "necessary tubs" were?
16. What did Equiano see for the first time while he was on the deck?

17. What did the crew member let him look through while he was on deck?
18. What did Equiano believe about everything around him?
19. Where did his ship take him?

Appendix D

Historical Documents

Living Africans Thrown Overboard



Heading for Jamaica in 1781, the ship *Zong* was nearing the end of its voyage. It had been twelve weeks since it had sailed from the West African coast with its cargo of 417 slaves. Water was running out. Then, compounding the problem, there was an outbreak of disease. The ship's captain, reasoning that the slaves were going to die anyway, made a decision. In order to reduce the owner's losses he would throw overboard the slaves thought to be too sick to recover. The voyage was insured, but the insurance would not pay for sick slaves or even those killed by illness. However, it would cover slaves lost through drowning.

The captain gave the order; 54 Africans were chained together, and then thrown overboard. Another 78 were drowned over the next two days. By the time the ship had reached the Caribbean, 132 persons had been murdered.

When the ship returned to England the owners made their claim -- they wished to be compensated the full value for each slave lost. The claim might have been honored had it had not been for former slave Equiano, then living in England, who learned

of the tragedy and alerted an abolitionist friend of his. The case went to court. At first the jury ruled in favor of the ship's owners. Since it was permissible to kill animals for the safety of the ship, they decided, it was permissible to kill slaves for the same reason. The insurance company appealed, and the case was retried. This time the court decided that the Africans on board the ship were people. It was a landmark decision.

On another voyage, on another ship, a similar incident occurred. On *La Rodour* in 1812, there was an outbreak of ophthalmia, a disease that causes temporary blindness. Both slaves and crew were afflicted. The captain, fearing that the blindness was permanent and knowing that blind slaves would be difficult if not impossible to sell, sent 39 slaves over the rails to their watery death. As with the captain of the *Zong*, he hoped that the insurance would cover the loss.

One Sentence Summary Assignment Worksheet.

Who (or What)? _____

Did/Does What? _____

To Whom? _____

When? _____

Where? _____

How? _____

Why? _____

Resulting One Sentence Summary

Appendix E

The Artist: Tom Feelings

Tom Feelings, well known artist and illustrator of children's books passed away on August 25, 2003. He was 70 years old.

A native of Brooklyn, New York, Feelings attended the school of Visual Arts for two years and then joined the Air Force in 1953, working in London as a staff artist for the Graphics Division of the Third Air Force. From 1959 until 1964 he worked as a freelance artist, his primary subjects drawn from the Black people of his community. In 1961, he went south to draw the people of Black rural communities: some of these drawings were published in Look magazine as part of a feature entitled "The Negro in the U.S."

In 1964, Feelings traveled to Ghana, where he spent two years working for the Ghana government's magazine, The African Review, teaching illustration, and serving as an art consultant for the government publishing house. In 1966, he returned to the United States to concentrate on illustrating books with African and African-American themes. To Be a Slave, written by Julius Lester and illustrated by Feelings, was chosen as the 1969 Newberry Honor Book, and was the first book of its kind to receive such an award. From 1971 - 1974, Feelings lived in Guyana, South America, working as a teacher and consultant for the Ministry of Education, and training young artists in textbook illustration.

Feelings received numerous awards for his illustrations. "Moja Means One," a Swahili counting book, and "Jambo Means Hello," a Swahili alphabet book, both written by Muriel Feelings, were chosen as Caldecott Honor Books in 1972 and 1974 and earned Brooklyn Arts Awards for Children citations from the Brooklyn Museum. "Jambo Means Hello" also won a Biennial of Illustrations award in Bratislava, Yugoslavia, The Horn Book Award from the Boston Globe in 1974, and a nomination for the American Book Award in 1982. "Something on My Mind" won the Coretta Scott King Award in 1978. The School of Visual Arts recognized him with its Outstanding Achievement Award in 1974. He has received eight Certificates of Merit from The Society of Illustrators, along with a National Endowment for the Arts Visual Artists Fellowship Grant in 1982. Feelings has been featured on numerous television programs.

In 1974, Feelings returned to New York, spending his time lecturing, attending exhibits throughout the country, and working on a book entitled "The Middle Passage," which depicts the journeys of slaves from Africa to America.

In His Own Words

"When I am asked what kind of work I do, my answer is that I am a storyteller, in picture form, who tries to reflect and interpret the lives and experiences of the people that gave me life. When I am asked who I am, I say, I am an African who was born in America. Both answers connect me specifically with my past and present ... therefore I bring to my art a quality which is rooted in the culture of Africa ... and expanded by the experience of being in America. I use the vehicle of 'fine art' and 'illustration' as a viable expression of form, yet striving always to do this from an African perspective, an African world view, and above all to tell the African story ... this is my content. The struggle to create artwork as well as to live creatively under any conditions and survive (like my ancestors), embodies my particular heritage in America."

Tom Feelings

The following website is a beautiful representation of Tom Feelings self-expression of the Middle Passage. This would be a great device to not only educate students about the Middle Passage, but to make them understand the human emotion it carried. The following questions take the students through the web-display and ultimately force students to express themselves while reflecting on the art. Particularly one painting that they felt most emotional about.

THE MIDDLE PASSAGE WEB ACTIVITY

By Tom Feelings

Use the website <http://www.juneteenth.com/middlep.htm> to answer the Guided Reading Questions.

1. How many people does Tom Feelings say died during the course of the African Slave Trade? -do some math.
2. What part of the Triangular Trade system brought human cargo from Africa to the New World? And where was the human cargo taken?
3. Why do you think John Newton quit going on Slave-trading voyages?
4. Why did sharks follow the slave ships?
5. What was the name of the man that led a successful uprising on the ship *Amistad*?

6. (implacable-**impossible to appease**: impossible to pacify or to reduce in strength or force (*formal*)
Why does Tom Feelings think that millions of Africans were able to survive?
7. What positive does Tom Feelings draw out of studying the Middle Passage?
8. Do you think the picture of the slaves crowded into the hold of the ship is a realistic representation of what these ships were like? Why or why not?
9. Why does Tom Feelings choose to tell the story of the Middle Passage through art rather than words
10. What do the Blues, Jazz and Spirituals teach us?
11. Take a look back through the presentation, and find a work of art that you find to be the most meaningful or moving to you. Tell me what you think the piece of art represents, and why it is so meaningful to you.

Appendix F

People & Events

Efforts to end the slave trade

1785 – 1807

A young student at England's Cambridge University decides to enter an essay contest, the theme of which is slavery. The student knows almost nothing about the topic, but delves into the subject anyway. He is enraged by what he reads, and writes a passionate, moving exposition that wins him the contest. It also inspires him to devote his life to the abolition of the slave trade. The student's name was Thomas Clarkson. He, along with another Englishman, William Wilberforce, would lead this fight to end the trade.

Opposition to slavery existed from the outset among enslaved Africans themselves. Even among Europeans, occasional opposition went back much further than Clarkson's 1785 essay -- almost back to the beginning of New World slavery itself. In 1643, the New England Confederation assisted runaway servants, including slaves. In 1652, Rhode Island declared that a slave must be freed after ten years of service. In 1676, slavery was prohibited in West New Jersey. The Quakers were another outspoken group against slavery. Their writings had great impact on the opinions of both Americans and Europeans.

In England, a humanitarian milestone was reached in 1772 when the courts decided in the famous Somerset Case that a slave became free as soon as he set foot on English soil. Slavery was abolished within England, but it was still permissible within the colonies, as was the slave trade itself.

Eliminating England's involvement with the slave trade would be no small task. Directly and indirectly, the trade supported many of England's industries, including textiles, sugar refining, and the manufacture of firearms.

In 1787, two years after writing his essay, Clarkson helped organize a group called the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade. The group wanted to make a case to Parliament, but first it needed evidence. So Clarkson traveled to Liverpool and Bristol, England's two major slave ports, to interview anyone with first-hand knowledge of the trade. With this ammunition, the group approached William Wilberforce, a Member of Parliament. He readily agreed to present their case.

The fight for abolition of the trade was joined by many others, including former slave ship captain John Newton, former slave ship surgeon Alexander Falconbridge, and ex-slave Olaudah Equiano. They, along with countless others, began to sway the opinion of the public.

In 1807, Parliament finally passed a bill that made it illegal for any English vessel to take part in the slave trade.

Incidentally, that same year the United States Congress enacted a law prohibiting the importation of slaves

Cooperative Learning Activity
Writing a persuasive paper and speech.

Pretend that you and your partner take on the roles of Thomas Clarkson and William Wilberforce. You are putting together a presentation for the English Parliament to try to convince them to abolish slavery and the slave trade. You have read many accounts about the slave trade and the Middle Passage, now you have to convince Parliament that the slave trade is evil and inhumane.

Construct a persuasive essay following the rubric that has been given to you. Remember to give credit where credit is due. Use examples given by John Newton, Tom Feelings, and Olaudah Equiano to try to convince parliament-your audience-that slavery and the slave trade should be outlawed.

Both of you need to be prepared to present your argument to the class. Divide the argument up so that one of you will be acting as Thomas Clarkson and the other William Wilberforce. When preparing your speech, remember to follow the Entry Slip Guideline on a persuasive speech.