



Ethnic Studies Lesson 4B:

African Americans and the Slave Trade

TOPIC:

AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

GRADE LEVELS:

11-12

TIME:

1½ HOURS

California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Themes, Values, and Principles Alignment

Themes:

2. History and Movement
3. Systems of Power

Values and Principles:

4. Critique empire building in history and its relationship to white supremacy, racism, and other forms of power and oppression.
5. Challenge racist, bigoted, discriminatory, and imperialist/colonial beliefs and practices on multiple levels.

California English and Social Science Standards Alignment

English Language Arts Standards (11th and 12th Grade):**Reading—Informational Text (RI.11-12)**

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas. (RI.11-12.2)

Social Sciences Standards (11th and 12th Grade):**History-Social Science Content Standards—(Grades 9-12)**

Analyze the causes and consequences of European exploration and expansion in the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries. (7.11)

Analyze the influence of African kingdoms and the trans-Saharan trade on the development of Islamic civilization and African societies. (7.4)

Analyze the political, social, economic, and cultural impacts of the transatlantic slave trade on Africa, the Americas, and Europe. (8.7)

Lesson Purpose

Students will research the economic implications of the transatlantic slave trade and the horrors of the Middle Passage.

Essential Questions

How did economics drive the transatlantic slave trade, and what were the realities for those that endured the Middle Passage?

How has life changed for African Americans in the United States over the last 250 years?

Materials

[Slave Voyages](#)

[The National Park Service, Park Ethnography Program](#)

[Lesson 4B Worksheet](#)

[Unit 4 KWL Chart](#)

Vocabulary

triangle trade

chattel slavery

embarkation

Middle Passage

diaspora

disembarkation

Lesson Steps

Step 1:

- As a class, ask students what they already know about the terms *triangular trade system*, *European slave trade*, *transatlantic slave trade*, and *Middle Passage*. Make notes on this unit's KWL chart of what students have already studied.
- Let students know that they will be filling in any gaps in their knowledge of the European slave trade. Watch the video of [Slave Voyages: Henry Louis Gates introduces Slave Voyages 2.0 and some of its people](#) (video 6 minutes, 6 seconds). On the website's homepage, show students the four quick links at the bottom of the page that they will be using to answer this week's [WORKSHEET](#): Introductory Maps, 3D video reconstructions, Timeline, and Timelapse. Make sure to show students how they can unclick countries in the Timeline to change the data, as well as dropdown arrows to look at ports of embarkation and disembarkation. Also, show the quick overview video of the Timelapse tab as well. Create groups of four for students to review the tabs and answer the questions on the worksheet.
- When students have completed the research, have them join another group of four to check their notes. As a class, have students share their answers and expand on their answers if they are missing any key information. Add the students' additional questions to this unit's KWL chart for future reference.

Step 2:

- Have students return to their groups of four to resume their research. Have them answer the remaining three questions on the worksheet with information from [The National Park Service, Park Ethnography Program](#). Students who complete the research first may answer additional questions that were raised in class.

- When students have completed their research, have them join another group of four to check their answers. As a class, have student groups of eight share their responses. Make sure students understand the term *diaspora* as well as the economic implications of the triangle trade for Europeans, for Africans, and for those in the Americas.

Step 3:

- As a class, ask this unit's question, "How has life changed for African Americans in the United States over the last 250 years?" Have students share their answers. Make sure students understand the term *diaspora* as well as the economic implications of the triangle trade. Have students add what was learned on this unit's KWL chart as well as questions for future follow-up.

Essential Question Assessment, Application, Action, and Reflection

As time permits, or for homework, ask students to research modern-day slavery and the term *chattel slavery*. Ask students to read [National Underground Railroad Freedom Center: Modern Abolition](#). In a short written prompt, have students answer the questions, "How has slavery changed in the world since the 1500s? What is chattel slavery, and why might it have had a different impact on the legacy of slavery in North America vs. South America?"

Additional Readings and Resources

Dull, Laura J. "Teaching African Enslavement: A Pluralistic Approach." *The History Teacher* 51, no. 2 (2018): 189–220. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44817446>.

Hummel, Jeffrey R. *Emancipating Slaves, Enslaving Free Men: A History of the American Civil War*, 2nd ed. Open Court, 2014.

[Hummel, Jeffrey Roger. U.S. Slavery and Economic Thought, Concise Encyclopedia of Economics](#)

[National Underground Railroad Freedom Center: Modern Abolition](#)

Sowell, Thomas. "The Economics of Slavery." In *Markets and Minorities*. Basic Books, 1981, 82–102.

Sowell, Thomas. *Ethnic America: A History*. Basic Books, 1981, 183–224.

Sowell, Thomas. "Race and Slavery." In *Race and Culture*. Basic Books, 1994, 186–223.

Sowell, Thomas. "The Real History of Slavery." In *Black Rednecks and White Liberals*. Encounter Books, 2005, 111–169.

Sowell, Thomas. "The Slavery Card," in *The Thomas Sowell Reader*. Basic Books, 2011, 245–247.

NOTE TO EDUCATORS REGARDING ADDITIONAL READINGS AND RESOURCES: America is a pluralistic country, ethnically. It is also a pluralistic country politically—left, right, and center. Ethnic studies educators have ready access to resources from the left-of-center in the [2021 California Model Curriculum](#) and in the [Liberated Model Curriculum](#). This Comparative Cultures Ethnic Studies curriculum favors teachers exposing students to views from across the political spectrum. Educators often lack guidance to materials from outside the left-of-center. Therefore, in the sections on Additional Readings and Resources, the Comparative Cultures Ethnic Studies curriculum alerts educators to credible resources that provide an alternative to the other Model Curricula. In doing so, this curriculum encourages educators to acquaint students with evidence-based views from left, right, and center.

Ethnic Studies 4B: African Americans and the Slave Trade Worksheet

Use the quick links on the homepage of slavevoyages.org to complete the first seven questions.

1. What countries participated in the trade of Africans from Africa across the Atlantic?
2. What was life like for slaves aboard the slave ships? Why do you think there were nets on the sides of the ships?
3. Approximately how many Africans were moved from Africa across the Atlantic?
Approximately how many died?
4. Approximately how many voyages were made?
5. During what period of time did these trips take place?
6. What was the primary motivator for moving slaves from Africa to the Americas?
7. What additional questions do you have after viewing this data?

Use [National Park Service: Park Ethnography Program](#) to answer the following three questions.

8. What year did slaves begin arriving in the British colonies?
9. What percentage of slaves disembarked in British American ports?
10. What percentage of slaves disembarked in Brazil?

Ethnic Studies 4A: KWL Chart

KNOW	WONDER	LEARNED
<i>What do we think we already know about this topic?</i>	<i>What do we wonder about this topic? Write your questions below.</i>	<i>After the research is completed, what did we learn? Make sure to cite your source.</i>