

The Transatlantic Slave Trade

The Triangular Trade

Activity : Trading Places

Task A: Divide the class into small groups.

Give each group a copy of the A4 map on page 6 and a set of information slips on page 7.

Tell each group to place the information cards on the correct places on the map. Some of these will be at particular points, some will be along the arrows. Students could make brief notes on the map.

When they have completed this, ask them the set of questions below either aloud or written on the board.

Why was this called the triangular trade?
Why was it said that a profit was made on each leg of the triangle? And who was involved in the trade at each point?

Why do you think the 'human cargo' was so squashed during the middle passage?

What happened to the slaves when they arrived in the Caribbean? Why was this, for some, one of the worst parts of the trade?

Task B: Tell students to imagine the following scenario

You are a very active member of the anti-slavery campaign. You want to expose the slave trade for what it is, but you need hard evidence. You have managed to get yourself taken on as an ordinary sailor on a slave ship, or 'slaver'. Your task is to write a report for the Anti-Slavery Society that exposes the truth about the slave trade.

For further evidence you could also refer to the excerpts from the writings of Olaudah Equiano (p8) and Thomas Clarkson (p21) The report could include information about:

How you were taken on board.

What it was like when you got to the West Coast of Africa.

What happened to the slaves when they were brought on board.

What the conditions were like during the voyage.

What you saw when your ship reached the end of the middle passage.

What the ship was filled with for the return journey and how the crew acted when you arrived back in Liverpool.

AIM:

The aim of Activity 2 is to explore how the Transatlantic Slave Trade worked and to provide students with the basis for an extended writing task.

It assumes that students have watched part 1 of the video and that they have been introduced to the subject of Transatlantic Slave Trade.

Sources should be placed in relevant places on the map, either on the arrows if they refer to the journey between Africa, the Caribbean and Europe, or where appropriate in particular countries.

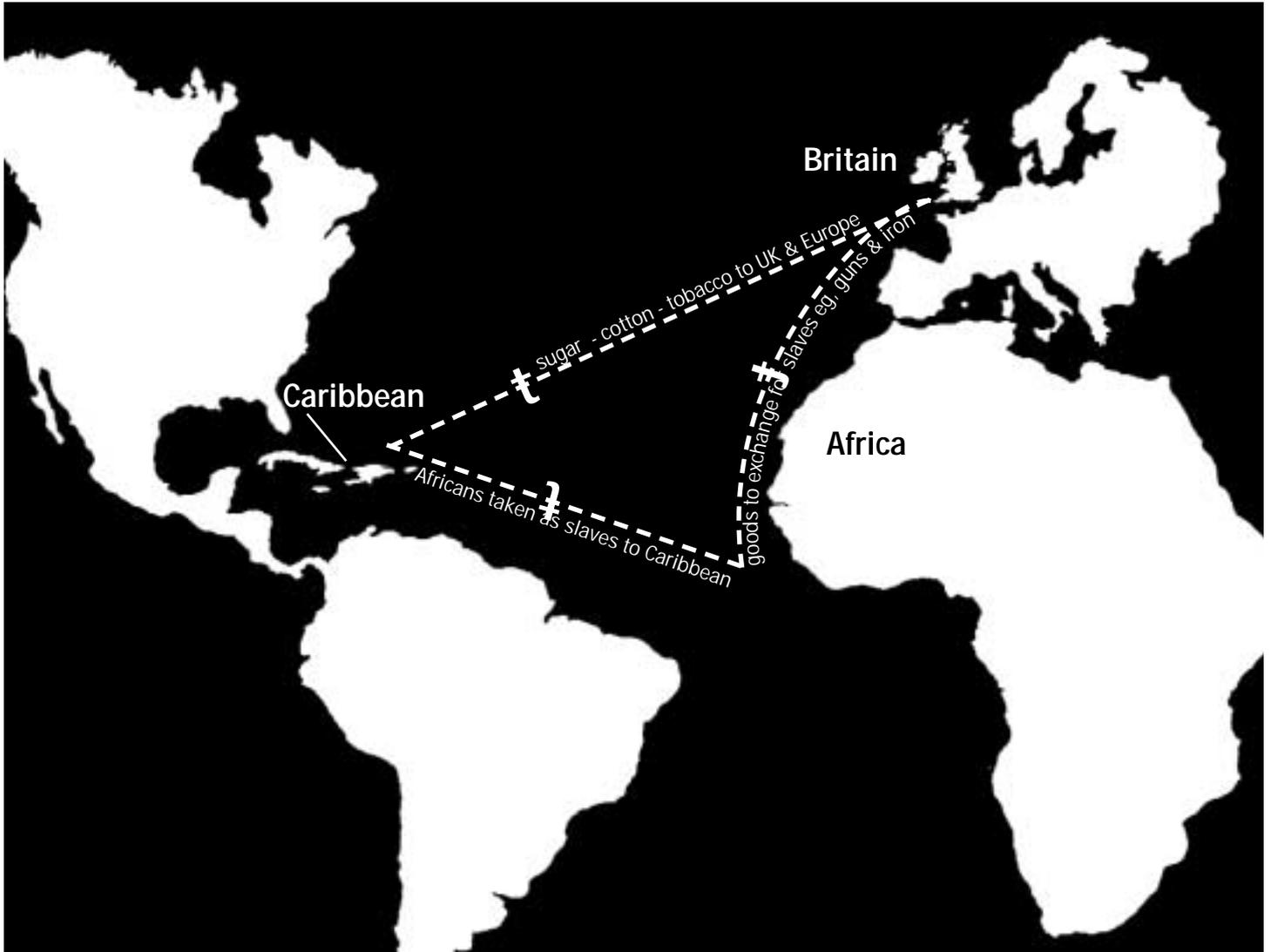
Teachers should rewrite the sources if the language is too difficult for students.

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ACTIVITY : Trading Places

MAP OF THE TRIANGULAR TRADE



The Transatlantic Slave Trade

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ACTIVITY : Trading Places

Information Cards

'The poor creatures, thus cramped for want of room, are likewise in irons, for the most part both hands and feet, and two together, which makes it difficult for them to move, to rise or lie down, without hurting themselves.'
(John Newton in his *Journal of a Slave Trader, 1788*)

After the slaves had been sold, the money was used to buy sugar, rum, tobacco, coffee (and cotton from America). These precious commodities were taken to Britain where they were sold for much higher prices. The owners of the ships and cargo made a fortune.

'The Chief Accra was one of the principal men catchers and slave dealers in Old Calabar Accra and his men went up the river to two villages... and waiting in ambush till night-fall rushed into the villages with lighted torches, and set fire to anything that would burn... Out rushed the frightened Negroes for safety, when they were immediately pounced upon by Accra's men, and bound hand and foot with ropes and chains, and then thrown into the canoes.'
(*Liverpool and Slavery, An Historical Account of the Liverpool-African Slave Trade, published 1884*)

'At last we anchored off Bridgetown (in Barbados). Many merchants and planters (plantation owners) came on board and examined us attentively. They also made us jump. We were penned up like so many sheep. On a given signal the buyers rushed forward at once into the yard where the slaves are confined, and make the choice of the parcel they like best. In this manner, without scruple, relations and friends were separated, most of them never to see each other again.'
(*Olaudah Equiano, The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, 1789*)

Ships left Britain for the West Coast of Africa carrying a wide range of British goods. These included: woollen cloth, guns, brass, cutlery (especially knives), beer, beads and glass. African leaders and merchants wanted these goods and were prepared to trade for them.

I plan to invest the profit from the slaving voyage in a new business, of what I am not yet sure.
(*A contemporary account, 1800*)

Saturday 15th August, 1752: King Peter (African chief) came on board ... brought a fine man slave with him ...
Paid King Peter for this man and lent him goods for three slaves. Monday 17th August: At daylight went to the King's town. He showed me two fine men, which I brought on board with me.
Refused a woman.
(*John Newton in his Journal of a Slave Trader, 1788*)

After the British goods had been exchanged for slaves, the slaves were taken across the Atlantic to the Caribbean or to the East Coast of America. This journey was called the 'Middle Passage'.

'The slaves are divided into three classes called gangs, the first of which consists of the most healthy and strong, both males and females, whose chief business is... during crop time to cut the canes, feed the mills and attend to the manufacture of the sugar. The second gang is composed of young boys and girls and pregnant females who weed the canes and do other light work. The third gang consists of young children, attended by an old woman, who collect green food for the pigs and weed the garden.'
(*A description 1807*)

'I was soon put under the decks where... the heat and the crowding, which meant that each had scarcely room to turn himself, almost suffocated us. There was sickness among the slaves of which many died. This situation was aggravated by the rubbing of the chains and the filth of the lavatory buckets...
One day, two of my wearied countrymen who were chained together, preferring death to such a life of misery, jumped into the sea.'
(*Olaudah Equiano, The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, 1789*)

Accounts of goods traded for slaves, Dicky Cove, 1700

April 18:
Traded 2 half barrels of powder and one small looking glass for:
Men 0 Women 1
Boys 0 Girls 0

May 6:
Traded 48 dozen large knives, 39 sheets and 8 half cases of spirits for:
Men 3 Women 0
Boys 0 Girls 1

June 30:
Traded 6 carbines (guns), 1 firkin of tallow (wax), 28 sheets, 2 brass pans and 8 tankards for:
Men 2 Women 1
Boys 0 Girls 0
(*Accounts for slave ships 'Daniel' and 'Henry'*)

'Well, gentlemen, I am glad to say, all things considered, Captain Roberts has made a good voyage... and here I find the captain's bill shows:

400 men slaves
230 women slaves

630 total
100 died
530 sold at Jamaica

Averaging £60 per head, this gives £31,800. The rum and sugar is all well sold. After paying all bills there is a clear profit of £24,000.'

(*Liverpool and Slavery, An Historical Account of the Liverpool-African Slave Trade, published 1884*)

Monday May 11th:
'Made a timely discovery today that the slaves were forming a plot for an insurrection (uprising). Surprised 2 of them attempting to get their irons off, and upon further search ... found some knives, stones, shot and a cold chisel.'
(*John Newton in his Journal of a Slave Trader, 1788*)