

Year 8: What lay behind the horrors of the Slave Trade?

Term 1 in History will focus on the **story of slavery** through time. There will be short enquiries focused on different types of slavery, the slave trade and how slavery was abolished.

Key words and definitions

bonded labour	when a person is forced to work to pay off a debt.
trade	buying and selling
plantations	large farm where sugar is grown
merchant	a person who buys and sells products
empire	a group of countries ruled over by one powerful country
slave	a person who is the property of another
docks	areas where ships stop to unload their cargo
Triangular trade	a trading route between Britain, Africa and America
Middle Passage	the terrifying middle journey of the triangular trade route where slaves were transported from Africa to America
Chattel Slavery	Where slaves are the complete property of their master and can be bought and sold as their master wishes.
abolitionist	a group who wanted to abolish (get rid of) slavery and the slave trade
colony	a country or area which is owned by a powerful empire
William Wilberforce	The leader of the movement to abolish the slave trade.

Enquiry 1: Different types of slavery

Important events in the history of slavery through time

2nd Century – 4th Century: The Romans took millions of slaves from all over Europe to Italy.

17th Century: The Barbary Pirates from North Africa attacked European coastal towns as far away as Ireland and Cornwall.

1600: Portuguese traders used African slaves on their plantations in Brazil and the Caribbean

1650: England controlled the Caribbean islands and colonies in North America. Enslaved Africans were forced to work on their plantations.

1807: Britain abolished the slave trade

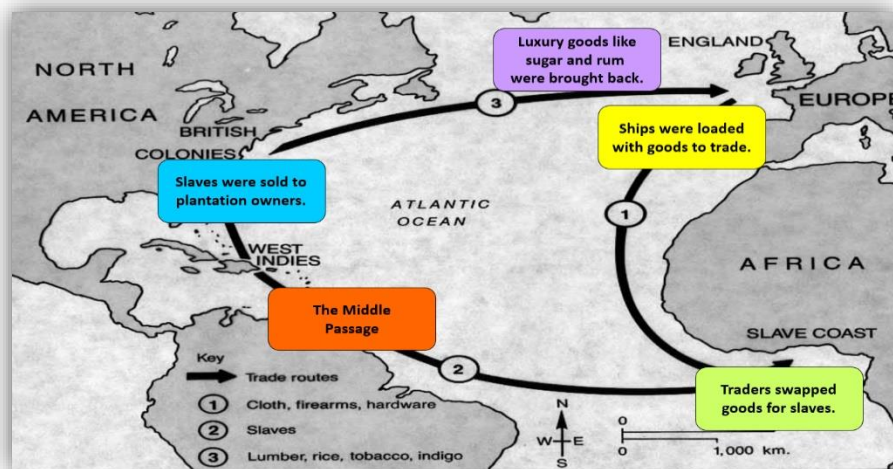
1833: Britain abolished slavery completely

1930s: Millions of people were used as forced labour in Russia, building canals and cutting timber.

21st Century: Over 300,000 children, some as young as 7, have been kidnapped and forced to become child soldiers fighting in wars.

Enquiry 2: What lay behind the horrors of the slave trade?

- The slave **trade** was all about **making money**.
- Sugar was a luxury, known as '**white gold**' and came from America and the West Indies.
- The slave trade worked by a **triangular trade system** (see diagram).



- The triangular trade **began** in the **British ports of Liverpool, London and Bristol**. Ships were loaded with textiles, swords, guns, gunpowder, iron, copper and other goods to trade overseas.
- The **population** of **cities** in Britain **grew** as people **moved** to get involved in the businesses which had come about because of the slave trade: ship builders, rope, sail and anchor makers, innkeepers, bankers and sugar refiners.
- The **second part** of the trade was in **Africa**. The ships from Britain sailed to the west coast of Africa where they **exchanged** the **goods** they had brought with them for people – **black slaves**. The great African kingdoms like the **Songhai didn't take part** in the trade but other kingdoms did. One of these was the **Benin** who became very **rich** by capturing people from other tribes and trading them for guns and other goods. This **caused war** between the African tribes.

- The slaves were taken on a **horrific journey** across the Atlantic called the **Middle Passage**. When the slaves reached America, they were **sold** to **plantation** owners who grew sugar or cotton.
- Slaves did **back breaking work** in high temperatures; they were the property of their masters so had **no rights**. If they tried to **rebel**, they could have their noses slit, ears cut off or faces branded; whipping was a common punishment
- The **final** part of the trade was the **return to Britain** with the **luxury goods** which could then be sold for **profit**. Sugar, cotton and tobacco were all products of the slave trade.
- Some slaves did try to **resist** – there were different types of resistance. For example: every day acts of resistance, escape, violent resistance and passive resistance.

Enquiry 3: How was slavery abolished?

- The **Abolition** Society was formed in 1787 to try to end the slave trade. Many people including a British MP called **William Wilberforce** and a former slave called **Olaudah Equiano** spoke out about ending the trade.
- In **1807** the British Parliament **banned** the slave trade; in **1833** all slaves in British lands were **freed** but it took till 1863 for American slaves to be freed.
- Laws can change reasonably quickly but **it takes much longer to change attitudes**.