

Triangular Trade and the Middle Passage

Lesson Description: This lesson provides opportunities for students to read about the Triangular Trade Route, share findings about various “legs” of the journey as well as work with maps and primary source materials relative to the costs of the slave trade to enslaved Africans. Finally, students will write and deliver a speech about abolishing the slave trade from the perspective of a U.S. Senator in the early 1800’s.

Grade Level: 4-5

Duration: 2-3 class periods

Prerequisite Economic Concepts: specialization, interdependence, costs, benefits

Maryland State Curriculum

Economics Standard: Students will develop economic reasoning to understand the historical development and current status of economic principles, institutions, and processes needed to be effective citizens, consumers, and workers participating in local communities, the nation, and the world.

- 4.A.4.a Explain how available resources have influenced specialization in Maryland in the past and present (Grade 4)
- 4.A.4.c Explain specialization and interdependence using triangular trade routes. (Grade 5)

History Standard: Students will examine significant ideas, beliefs, and themes; organize patterns and events; and analyze how individuals and societies have changed over time in Maryland, the United States and around the world.

- 5.A.1.c Describe the establishment of slavery and how it shaped life in Maryland. (Grade 4)
- 5.B. 2.c Describe the different roles and viewpoints of individuals and groups, such as: women, men, free and enslaved Africans, and Native Americans during the Revolutionary Period. (Grade 5)

Reading Standard (Comprehension of Informational Text): Students will read, comprehend, interpret, analyze, and evaluate informational text.

- 1.E.1.a Listen to critically, read, and discuss texts representing diversity in content, culture, authorship, and perspective, including areas such as race, gender, disability, religion, and socio-economic background. (Grade 5)
- 1.E.2 Use strategies to make meaning from text. (Grade 5)

Objectives: Given a variety of source materials, students will...

- locate and identify the Triangular Trade Route
- describe the benefits of the Triangular Trade to the regions involved
- describe the costs (consequences) of the Triangular Trade to the enslaved Africans who were forced to participate in it

Vocabulary

barracoon: an enclosure or barracks used for temporary confinement of slaves

goods: physically tangible objects that can be used to satisfy economic wants, including but not limited to food, shoes, cars, houses, books and furniture

Middle Passage: term used to describe the transatlantic voyage of slaves from Africa to the Americas

senate: upper house of the U.S. Congress to which two members from each state are elected by popular vote for a six-year term

senator: a member of the Senate

slave coffle: train of slaves fastened together

slavery: institution of owning slaves or holding individuals in a condition of servitude

Triangular Trade: shipping routes connecting Africa, the West Indies and North America in a transatlantic commerce of slaves and manufactured goods

voluntary: having power of free choice.

Teacher Materials

Transparency of Student Resource Sheet #2: *Middle Passage Graphic Organizer*

Student Materials

Atlas

2 pens/pencils of different colors

Student Resource Sheet #1: *The World*

Student Resource Sheet #1a: *The Triangular Trade*

Student Resource Sheet #2: *Middle Passage Graphic Organizer*

Document Set #1:

Student Resource Sheet #3: *Slave Coffle*

Student Resource Sheet #4: *Wooden Yokes Used in Slave Coffles*

Student Resource Sheet #5: *Slave Barracoon, The Congo*

Student Resource Sheet #6: *Captured!*

Document Set #2:

Student Resource Sheet #7: *Plan of British Slave Ship "Brookes", 1789*

Student Resource Sheet #8: *Dancing the Slaves*

Student Resource Sheet #9: *The Slave Deck on the Wildfire*

Student Resource Sheet #10: *The Voyage*

Student Resource Sheet #11: *Africans Thrown Overboard from a Slave Ship*

Document Set #3:

Student Resource Sheet #12: *Slave Auction-Richmond, Virginia*

Student Resource Sheet #13: *Advertisement for a Slave Sale - Charleston, South Carolina*

Student Resource Sheet #14: *Sold!*

Student Resource Sheet #15: *Slave Sale - Richmond, Virginia*

Additional Resources

For the teacher:

Emert, Phillis, ed. Colonial Triangular Trade: An Economy Based on Human Misery. Carlisle, Massachusetts: Discovery Enterprises, Ltd., 1995.

For the students:

Equiano, Olaudah. The Interesting Narrative and Other Writings. Originally Published in 1789. New York: Penguin Books, 1995.

Haskins, James and Benson, Kathleen. Bound for America: The Forced Migration of Africans to the New World. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books, 1999.

Motivation

Distribute Student Resource Sheet #1. Using atlases, have students locate and label the following on Student Resource Sheet #1:

- North America
- South America
- Europe
- Africa
- Caribbean Islands (West Indies, i.e. Cuba, Haiti, Dominican Republic, etc...)
- Atlantic Ocean
- Caribbean Sea

After all students have completed labeling their maps, have them use one color and draw a line connecting the following:

- Europe to Africa
- Africa to the Caribbean Islands (West Indies)
- Caribbean Islands (West Indies) to Europe

Using a different color, students should draw a line connecting the following:

- Europe to Africa
- Africa to North America
- North America to Europe

Ask: What shape is made? (triangle)

Explain to students that this shape represents the movement of people and goods that was the slave trade. Because of its shape, it was known as “Triangular Trade.” Tell them that they will be examining this exchange of goods in order to illustrate the fact that people trade because they expect to benefit.

Development

1. Divide the class into three groups. Each group will be responsible for one of the three “legs” on the Triangular Trade journey. Distribute Student Resource Sheet #1a: *The Triangular Trade*.
 - Students should read the section of Student Resource Sheet #1a that concerns their leg of the journey.
 - Using their map from the first activity, they should write the items that were traded between the regions.
2. Create a triangle that represents triangular trade on your classroom floor. After each group has completed the previous activity, reconvene the class. Students should report out by having one person from each group move from their port to the next explaining what they are bringing and speculate how these exports benefit that region. As the student is explaining what he is trading, the rest of the class should write those items down on the appropriate line on their map. Using information from the teacher background, explain to students how each region was benefiting from its exports.
3. Explain to students that enslaved Africans were traded as property or goods, just like the guns, sugar, tobacco and other products that were traded. While Triangular Trade was beneficial to those conducting the trade, it was not at all beneficial to the Africans who were enslaved and unwillingly became a part of the trade. Explain to students that they will

examine aspects of the Middle Passage to learn about the horrible conditions that enslaved Africans faced on their “leg” of the Triangular Trade.

4. Have students return to their work groups. Distribute Student Resource Sheet # 2: *Middle Passage Graphic Organizer* to all students. Distribute Document Set #1 to Group 1, Document Set #2 to Group 2, and Document Set #3 to Group 3. Each of the groups will be responsible for:
 - analyzing their document set
 - listing three facts about the conditions enslaved Africans faced during their assigned part of the journey
 - completing the corresponding section of Student Resource Sheet #2: *Middle Passage Graphic Organizer*.
5. After all groups have completed their section of the graphic organizer, bring the class together as a group. Display a transparency of Student Resource Sheet #2: *Middle Passage Graphic Organizer*. Have groups report their findings to the class and record it on the transparency. Have students also record the information on their organizer. Lead a discussion about the Middle Passage and the information they found.
6. Explain to students that the conditions of the Middle Passage and the institution of slavery that followed caused many people to doubt the benefits of the slave trade. One of the ways that they chose to express their concerns was through the political arena. In that arena, they advocated for the passage of laws that would abolish the slave trade.

Assessment

Distribute Students Resource Sheet #16: *Assessment: Writing a Speech* and have students prepare their speeches.

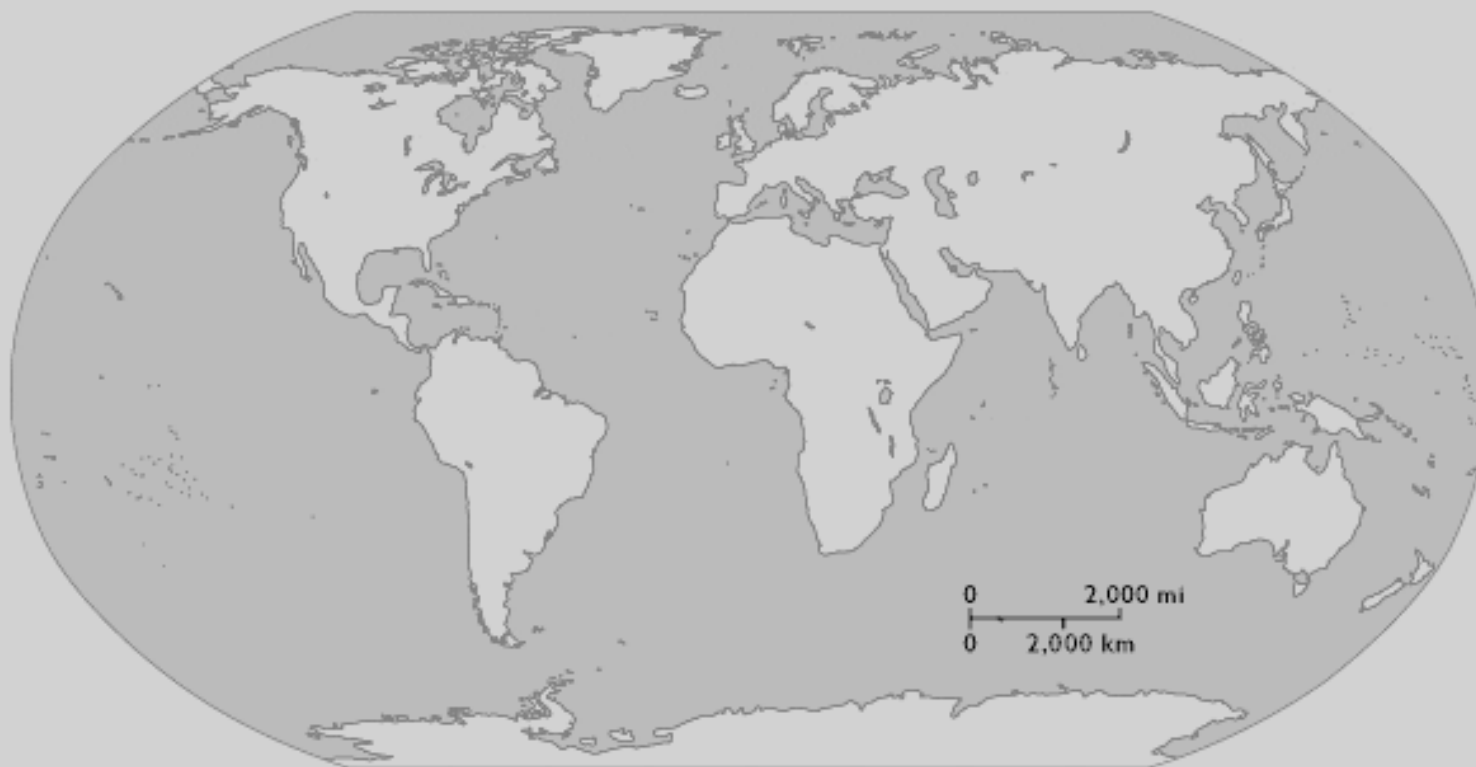
Closure

Have students present their speeches to the class. After all of the speeches have been presented, tell students that the United States Congress passed a law to eliminate the Slave Trade that went into effect in 1808. Have students hypothesize the results of this law on the institution of slavery in the United States. Share with students that the law was widely ignored for several years.

Thoughtful Application:

- Research the impact of the slave trade on the economies of the regions involved.
- Research the ways enslaved Africans reacted to their enslavement during the Middle Passage.

THE WORLD



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The Triangular Trade

European governments such as Great Britain, were attracted to the economic benefits of owning North and South American colonies. Ownership gave them access to the raw materials that the colonies possessed. The European nations soon found that slave labor was useful in the exploitation of the raw materials.

A trade route, shaped much like a triangle, began between Europe, Africa, and the North and South American colonies. During the first part or “leg”, European goods such as alcohol, firearms and textiles were shipped to West Africa. Once in West Africa, those goods were exchanged for enslaved Africans. Next, the enslaved Africans were shipped to the Caribbean, South America or North America in what became known as the “Middle Passage.” There, surviving Africans were traded for sugar, tobacco, rice, cotton and rum. Finally, these products were loaded onto ships that sailed to Europe. Once back in Europe, the trade began all over again.

Middle Passage Graphic Organizer

Enslavement in Africa

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- *
- *

Voyage Across the Atlantic

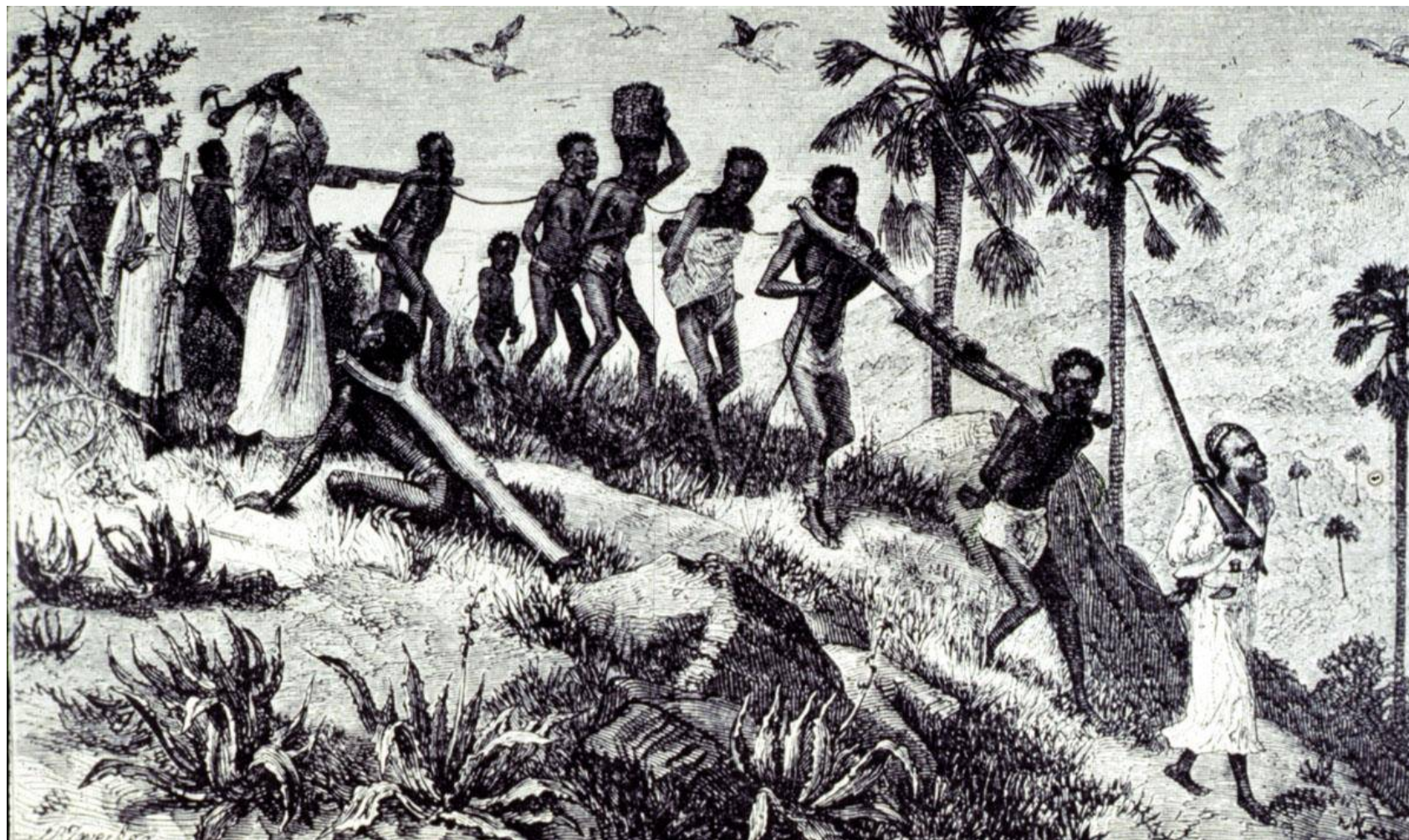
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Arrival in the Americas

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Student Resource Sheet #3

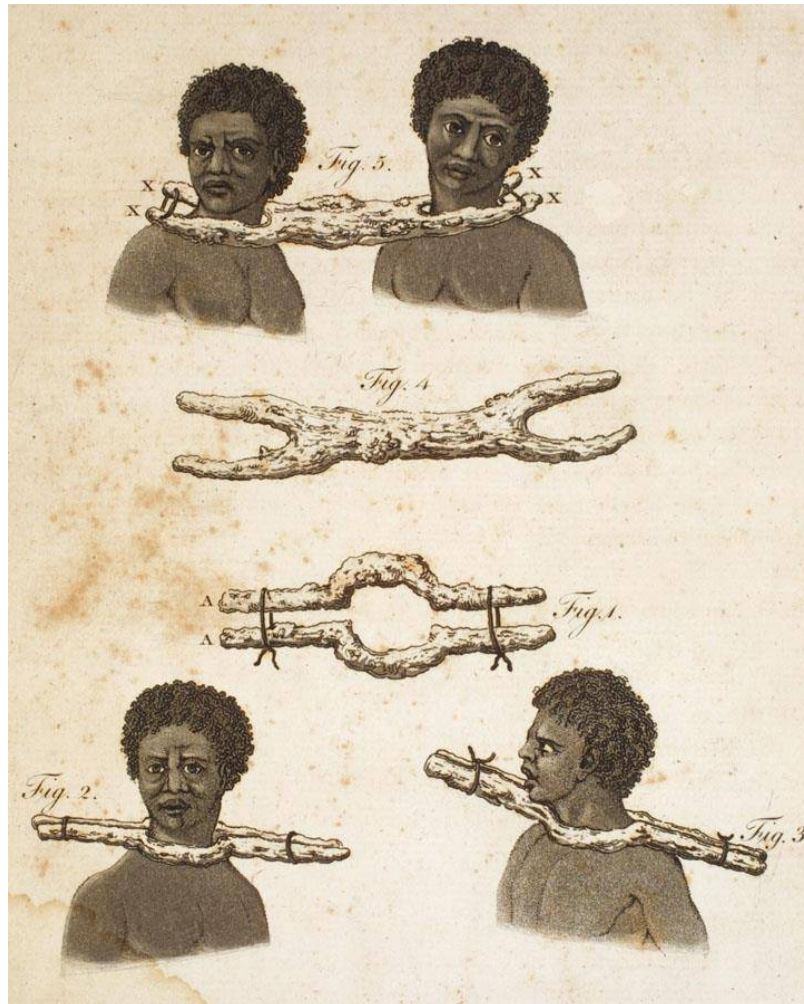
Slave Coffle



David Livingstone, *The Last Journals of David Livingstone, in Central Africa* (New York, 1875), facing p. 58. (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-36323)

<http://hitchcock.itc.virginia.edu/Slavery/details.php?filename=C014>

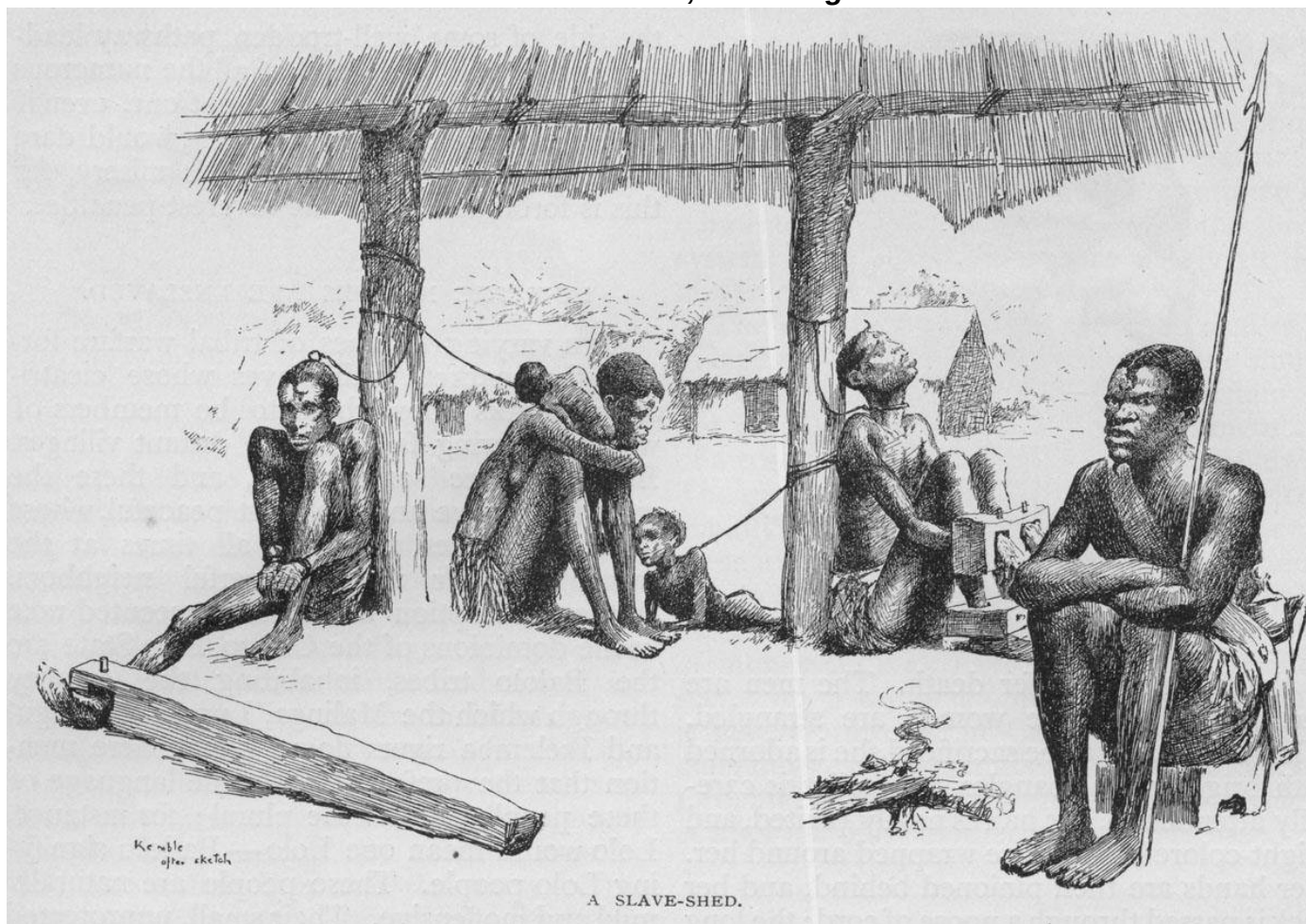
Wooden Yokes Used in Slave Coffles



Thomas Clarkson, Letters on the slave-trade, and the state of the natives in those parts of Africa, . . . contiguous to Fort St. Louis and Goree (London, 1791), plate 2, facing p. 36, figs. 1-5. (Copy in Library Company of Philadelphia)

<http://hitchcock.etc.virginia.edu/Slavery/details.php?filename=LCP-16>

Slave Barracoon, The Congo



E.J. Glave, *The Slave-Trade in the Congo Basin*. By one of Stanley's pioneer officers. Illustrated after sketches from life by the author (*The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine*), vol. 39, pp. 824-838. (Copy in Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library <http://hitchcock.etc.virginia.edu/Slavery/details.php?filename=C009>)

“Captured!”

Excerpt from:

Olaudah Equiano, The Interesting Narrative

“I was born in the year 1745, in a charming fruitful vale, named Essaka [The Benin Kingdom of Africa]...My father was one of [the] elders or chiefs...As I was the youngest of the sons, I became, of course, the greatest favourite with my mother, and was always with her; and she used to take particular pains to form my mind...In this way I grew up till I was turned the age of eleven, when an end was put to my happiness in the following manner...

One day, when all of our people were gone out to their works as usual, and only I and my dear sister were left to mind the house, two men and a woman got over our walls, and in a moment seized us both; and without giving us time to cry out, or make resistance, they stopped our mouths, tied our hands, and ran off with us into the nearest wood: and continued to carry us far as they could, till night came on, when we reached a small house, where the robbers halted for refreshment, and spent the night. We were then unbound, but were unable to take any food...

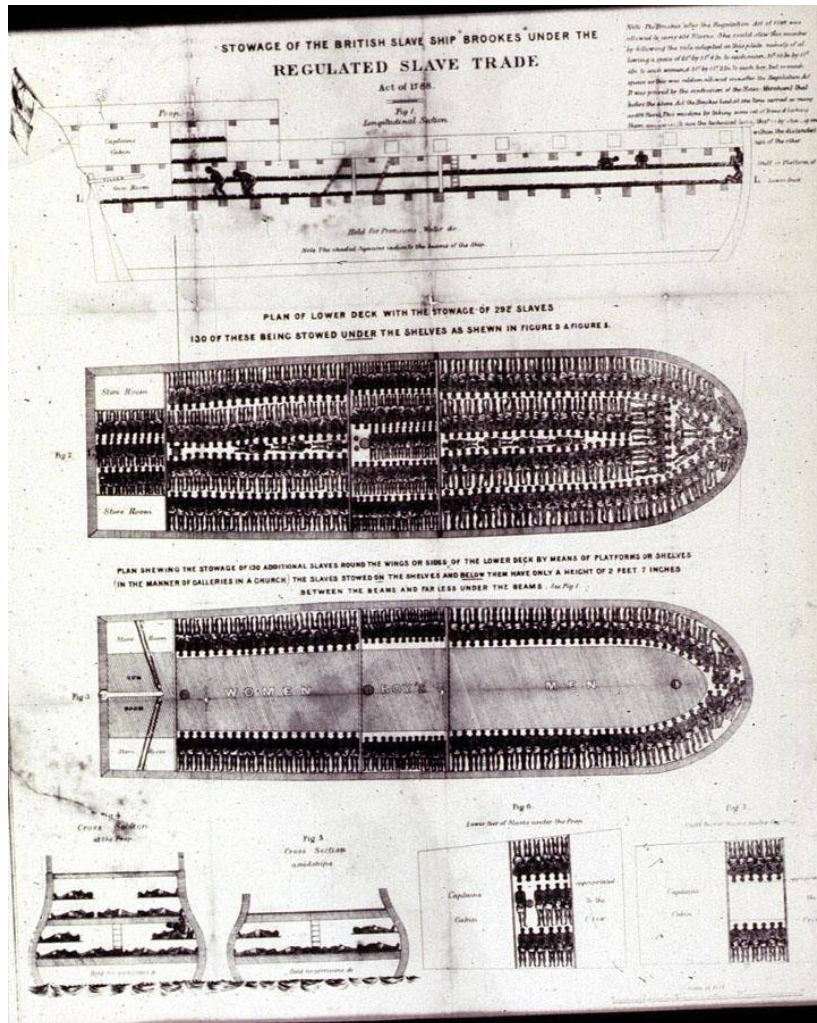
The next morning we left the house, and continued traveling all the day...I had now some hopes of being delivered; for we had advanced but a little way before I discovered some people at a distance, on which I began to cry out for their assistance; but my cries had not other effect than to make them tie me faster, and stop my mouth, and then they put me into a large sack....”

Source:

Equiano, Olaudah. The Interesting Narrative and Other Writings. Originally Published in 1789. New York: Penguin Books, 1995.

Student Resource Sheet #7

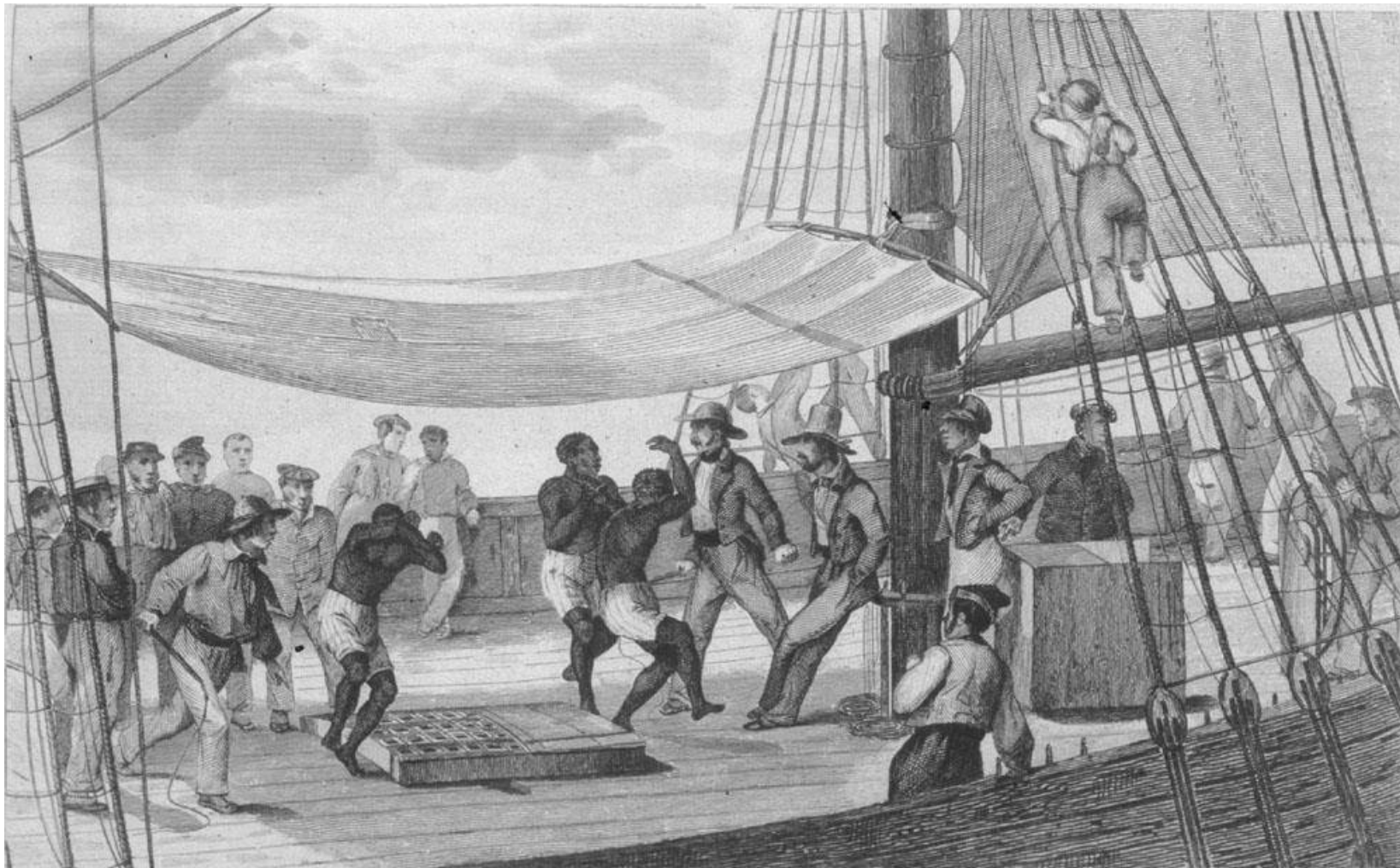
Plan of British Slave Ship "Brookes", 1789



Broadside collection, Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Library of Congress (Portfolio 282-43 [Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-44000]; also, Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library and Library Company of Philadelphia.

<http://hitchcock.etc.virginia.edu/Slavery/details.php?filename=E014>

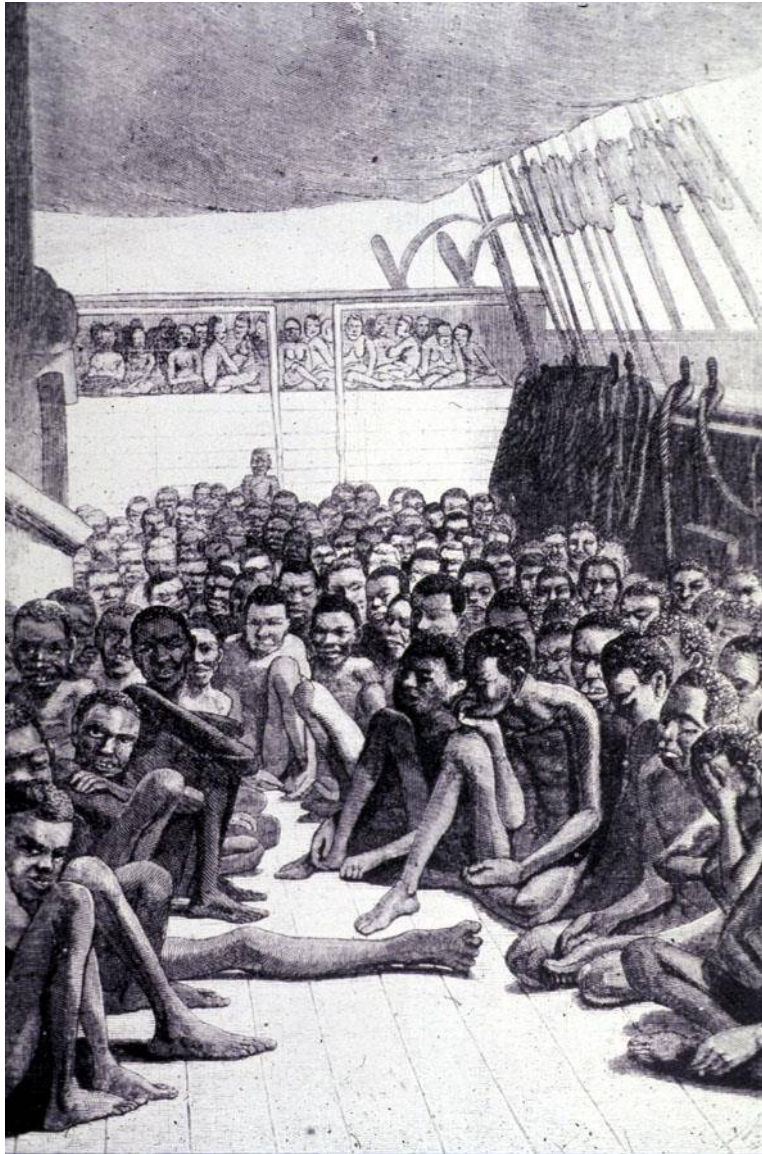
“Dancing the Slaves” – Early 19th Century



Am''d''e Gr''han (ed.), *La France Maritime* (Paris, 1837), vol. 3, facing p. 179. (Copy in British Library). Also published in Anthony Tibbles (ed.), *Transatlantic Slavery: Against Human Dignity*.

<http://hitchcock.itc.virginia.edu/Slavery/details.php?filename=E015>

The Slave Deck on the Wildfire



Engraved from daguerreotype, published in Harper's Weekly (June 2, 1860), vol. 4, p. 344 (Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library; also, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-41678)

<http://hitchcock.itc.virginia.edu/Slavery/details.php?filename=E027>

“The Voyage”

Excerpt from:

Olaudah Equiano, The Interesting Narrative

“...The first object which saluted my eyes when I arrived on the coast was the sea, and a slave ship...waiting for its cargo...When I was carried on board I was immediately handled, and tossed up, to see if I was sound...When I looked round the ship too, and saw a large furnace of copper boiling, and a multitude of black people of every description chained together, every one of their countenances expressing dejection and sorrow, I no longer doubted of my fate, and quite overpowered with horror and anguish, I fell motionless to the deck and fainted...”

...I was not long suffered to indulge my grief; I was soon put down under the decks, and there I received such a salutation in my nostrils as I had never experienced in my life; so that with the loathsomeness of the stench, and crying together, I became so sick and low that I was not able to eat, nor had I the least desire to taste anything. I now wished for the least friend, Death, to relieve me; but soon, to my grief, two of the white men offered me eatables; and on my refusing to eat, one of them held me fast by the hands...and tied my feet, while the other flogged me severely...

...The stench of the hold...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...This wretched situation was again aggravated by the galling of the chains...and the filth of the necessary tubs, into which the children often fell, and were almost suffocated...”

Source:

Equiano, Olaudah. The Interesting Narrative and Other Writings. Originally Published in 1789. New York: Penguin Books, 1995.

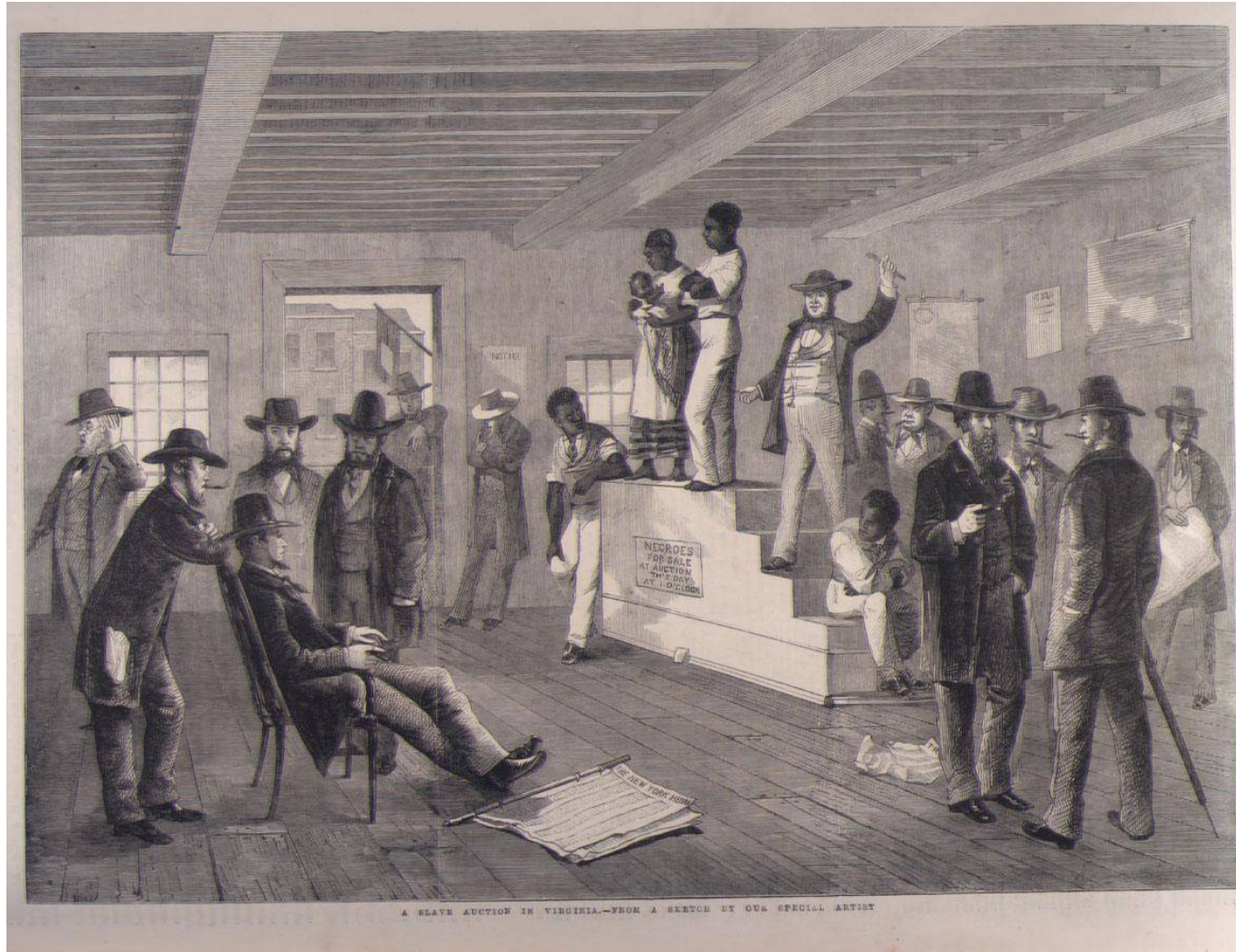
Africans Thrown Overboard from a Slave Ship



Copy in Library Company of Philadelphia; also Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-30833

<http://hitchcock.itc.virginia.edu/Slavery/details.php?filename=Trade-3>

Slave Auction - Richmond, Virginia



The Illustrated London News (Feb. 16, 1861), vol. 38, p.139. (Copy in Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library)
http://hitchcock.itc.virginia.edu/Slavery/details.php?filename=auction_Richd_1861

Advertisement for a Slave Sale - Charleston, South Carolina

TO BE SOLD, on board the
Ship *Bance-Yland*, on tuesday the 6th
of *May* next, at *Ashley-Ferry*; a choice
cargo of about 250 fine healthy

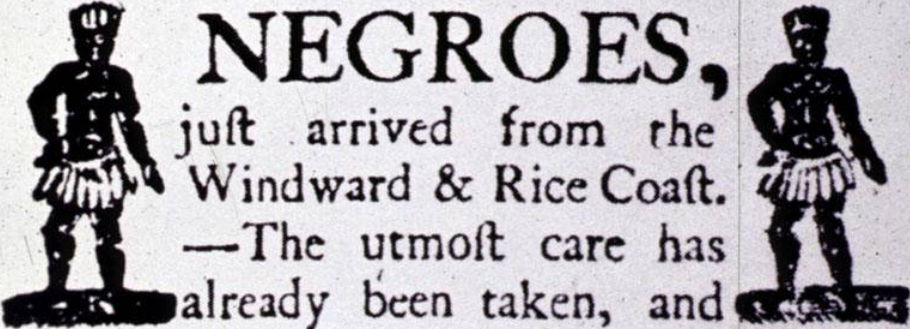
NEGROES,

just arrived from the
Windward & Rice Coast.
—The utmost care has
already been taken, and

shall be continued, to keep them free from
the least danger of being infected with the
SMALL-POX, no boat having been on
board, and all other communication with
people from *Charles-Town* prevented.

Austin, Laurens, & Appleby.

N. B. Full one Half of the above Negroes have had the
SMALL-POX in their own Country..



Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-10293

<http://hitchcock.itc.virginia.edu/Slavery/details.php?filename=H021>

“Sold!”

Excerpt from:

Olaudah Equiano, The Interesting Narrative

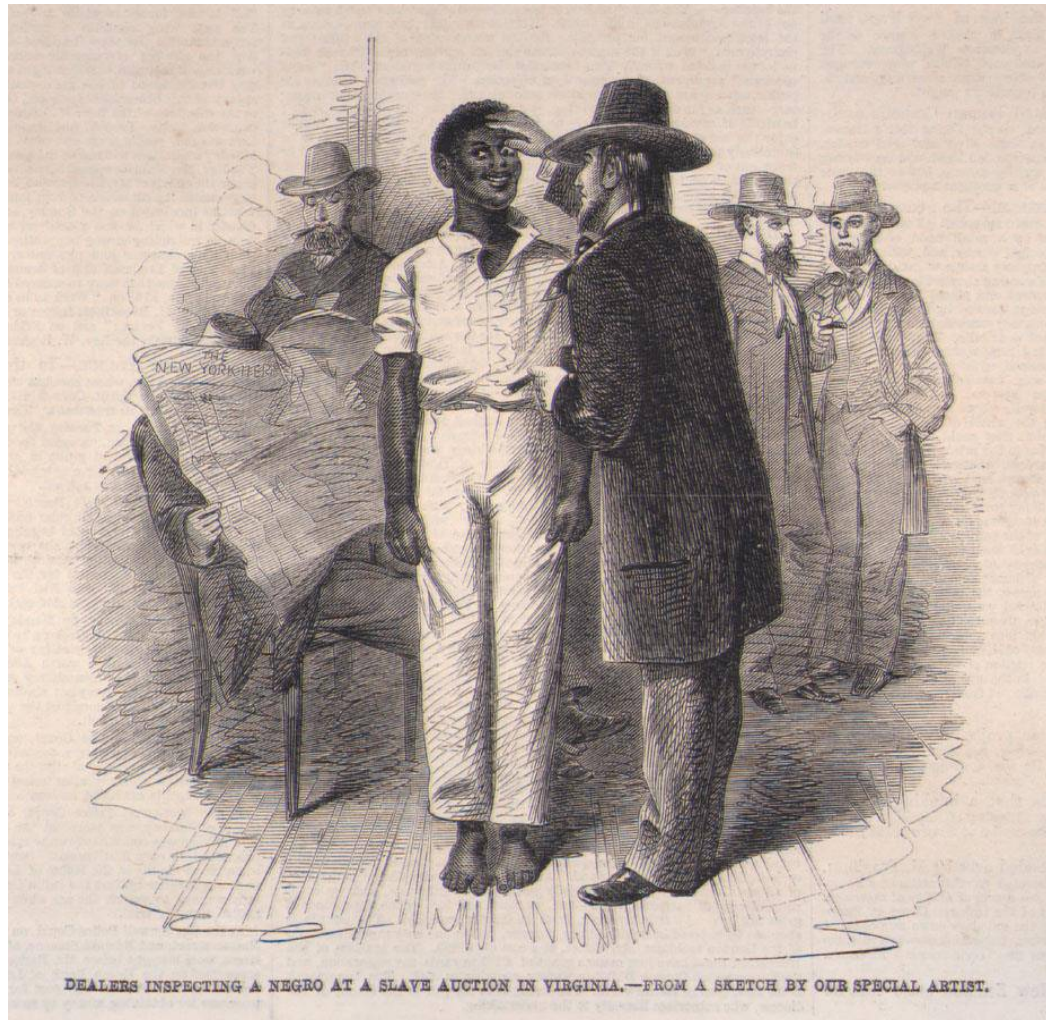
“...We were conducted immediately to the merchant’s yard, where we were all pent up together like so many sheep in a fold, without regard to sex or age...”

We were not many days in the merchant’s custody before we were sold after their usual manner, which is this: -On a signal given, (as the beat of a drum), the buyers rush at once in to the yard where the slaves are confined, and make choice of that parcel they like best. The noise and clamor with which this is attended, and the eagerness visible in the countenances of the buyers, serve not a little to increase the apprehensions of the terrified Africans...In this manner, without scruple, are relations and friends separated, most of them never to see each other again...”

Source:

Equiano, Olaudah. The Interesting Narrative and Other Writings. Originally Published in 1789. New York: Penguin Books, 1995.

Slave Sale - Richmond, Virginia



The Illustrated London News (Feb. 16, 1861), p. 138. (Copy in Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library)

<http://hitchcock.itc.virginia.edu/Slavery/details.php?filename=NW0027>

Assessment: Writing a Speech

It is 1806. You are a United States Senator who is trying to pass a bill which will abolish the slave trade. Write a 2-3 minute speech to convince your fellow senators to vote for the act abolishing the importation of slaves. Be sure to include the following:

- the benefits of the trade to all traders
- the consequences of trading people
- the horrors of the Middle Passage
- how the benefits of outlawing that trade far outweigh the benefits received in trading them

Plan your speech on the organizer below.

Reason #1 _____

Supporting details:

Reason #2 _____

Supporting details:

Reason #3 _____

Supporting details:
