

## World History One DBQ: The Slave Trade



Medallion made by Josiah Wedgwood 1787

The following task is based on the accompanying documents 1-12. Some documents have been edited for this exercise. The task is designed to test your ability to work with historical documents. As you analyze the documents, take into account both the sources of the documents and the purpose of the document and the author's point of view.

## Directions:

1. Read the Historical Context & Answer the corresponding worksheet questions
2. Read the Documents & Answer the corresponding worksheet questions
3. Create a Thesis to answer the question presented in the “Task”
4. Write an Essay to answer the question (**The essay requires an outline, Introduction paragraph, 3 supporting body paragraphs and a Conclusion**)

-or-

Create a project which will present an answer to the question –

**(The Project must still integrate a thesis & three items supporting the thesis & a Conclusion)**

## Historical Context:

As all the Kings, Explorers and business financiers had hoped, the Americas were full of opportunities to make money. Gold, silver and other minerals could be mined, and tobacco, sugar and other crops could be grown on plantations. In order to make use of these resources there would have to be a reliable supply of laborers to do the work. The Native American population had dwindled due to disease and war and did not provide enough labor.

However, the Europeans had access to another cheap labor market that already existed, the African Slave Trade. While the use of slaves has existed in societies for millennia, it was not until the mid fifteenth century that Europeans began trading and capturing slaves from the African continent, just in time for the discovery of the Americas...

Between 1450 and 1870 over ten million humans were taken from Africa. This would have enormous consequences for both the African and American continents and for all the people involved, especially the slaves themselves.

**Task: Analyze the impact of the slave trade on the African and American Continents along with the people involved, especially the slaves themselves.**

Document #1: Letter about Spain's interactions with its colonies in 1559

From New Spain are obtained gold, silver and other things. One fifth of all profits go to the king. Great quantities of gold and silver used to be out in the open; with all of it gone, now gold and silver have to be mined.

The work is hard and the Spaniards are not willing to do the work, Natives who have become Christians are not allowed to be forced to do the work because the Emperor freed them.

So now it is necessary to acquire negro slaves [enslaved Africans], who are brought from the coasts of Africa. Their masters are making them work too hard and giving them too little to eat, they fall sick and the greater part of them die. . . .

Merrick Whitcomb, ed., "The Gold of the Indies — 1559," The University of Pennsylvania

Document #2 A description of institution of slavery

Slavery was one form of exploitation. Its special characteristics included the idea that slaves were property; that they were outsiders who were alien by origin or who had been denied their heritage through judicial or other sanctions; that coercion could be used at will; that their labor power was at the complete disposal of a master; that they did not have the right to their own sexuality and, by extension, to their own reproductive capacities; and that the slave status was inherited unless provision was made to ameliorate that status.

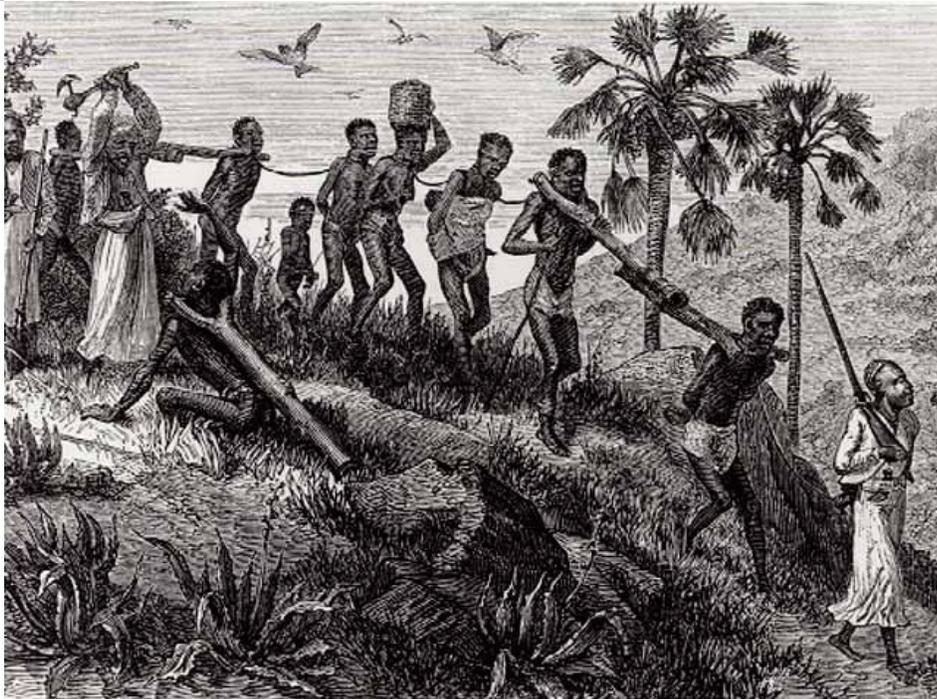
Paul E. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery A History of Slavery in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1983), p.1

### Document #3 Offobah Cugoano describes his capture into slavery

I was early snatched away from my native country, with about eighteen or twenty more boys and girls, as we were playing in a field. We lived but a few days' journey from the coast where we were kidnapped, and consigned to Grenada... We were soon led out of the way which we knew, and towards evening, as we came in sight of a town. I was soon conducted to a prison, for three days, where I heard the groans and cries of many, and saw some of my fellow-captives.

But when a vessel arrived to conduct us away to the ship, it was a most horrible scene; there was nothing to be heard but the rattling of chains, smacking of whips, and the groans and cries of our fellow-men. Some would not stir from the ground, when they were lashed and beat in the most horrible manner

### Document #4 *Slave Caravans on the Road* 1888



Thomas Wallace Knox *The Boy Travellers on the Congo*

Document #5 *The Case of our Fellow Creatures, the Oppressed Africans* 1784

This traffic is the principal source of the destructive wars which prevail among these unhappy people, and is attended with consequences, the mere recital of which is shocking to humanity. The violent reparation of the dearest relatives, the tears of married and parental affection, the reluctance of the slaves to a voyage from which they can have no chance of returning, must present scenes of distress which would pierce the heart of any, in whom the principles of humanity are not wholly effaced. This, however, is but the beginning of sorrows with the poor captives

Document #6 *An Account of the Slave Trade on the Coast of Africa* 1788

As very few of the Negroes can so far tolerate the loss of their liberty and the hardships they endure, they are ever on the watch to take advantage of the least negligence in their oppressors. Insurrections are frequently the consequence; which are seldom expressed without much bloodshed. Sometimes they are successful...

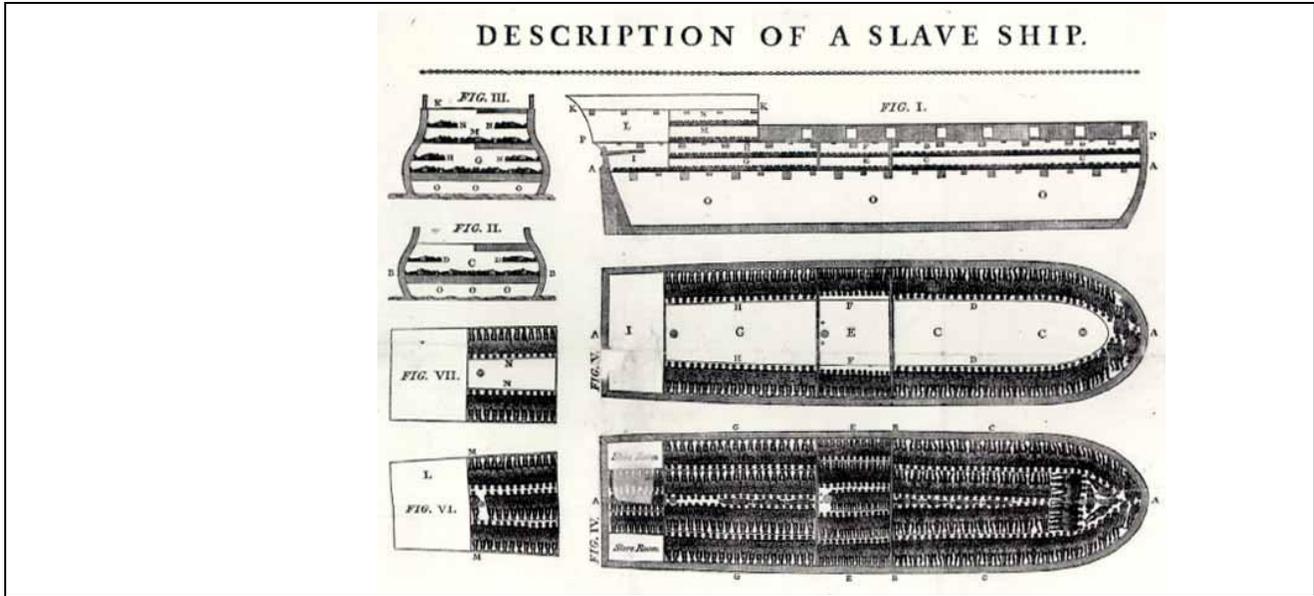
Alexander Falconbridge

Document #7 *Living Africans Thrown Overboard the Slave Ship Zong* 1781



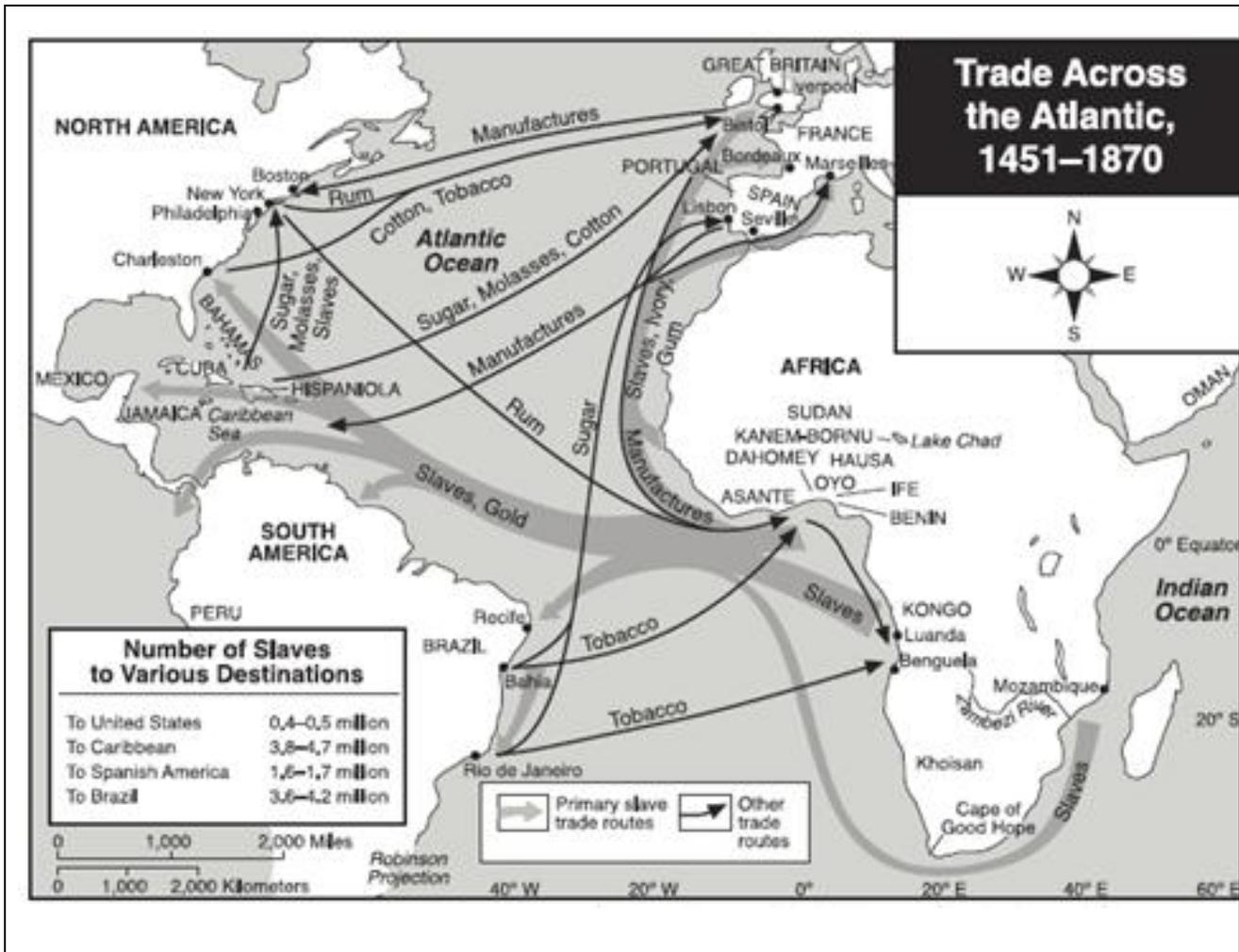
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part1/1h280.html>

Document #8 The Slave Ship the *Brookes* 1789



Wilberforce House, Kingston upon Hull City Museums and Art Galleries, UK

Document #9 Charting the Slave Trade 1451-1870



Hanes, *World History, Continuity and Change*, 1999

Document #10 James Ramsay, *Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of African Slaves in the British Sugar Colonies* (1784):

The ordinary punishments of slaves, for the common crimes of neglect, absence from work, eating the sugar cane, theft, are cart whipping, beating with a stick, sometimes to the breaking of bones, the chain, an iron crook about the neck... a ring about the ankle, and confinement in the dungeon. There have been instances of slitting of ears, breaking of limbs, so as to make amputation necessary, beating out of eyes, and castration...

In short, in the place of decency, sympathy, morality, and religion; slavery produces cruelty and oppression. It is true, that the unfeeling application of the ordinary punishments ruins the constitution, and shortens the life of many a poor wretch

Document #11 *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* 1789

Another negro man was half hanged, and then burnt, for attempting to poison a cruel overseer. Thus, by repeated cruelties, are the wretched first urged to despair, and then murdered, because they still retain so much of human nature about them as to wish to put an end to their misery, and retaliate on their tyrants. These overseers are indeed for the most part persons of the worst character of any denomination of men in the West Indies.

Unfortunately, many humane gentlemen, but not residing on their estates, are obliged to leave the management of them in the hands of these human butchers, who cut and mangle the slaves in a shocking manner on the most trifling occasions, and altogether treat them in every respect like brutes

Document #12 Whipping of a Fugitive Slave, French West Indies, 1840

