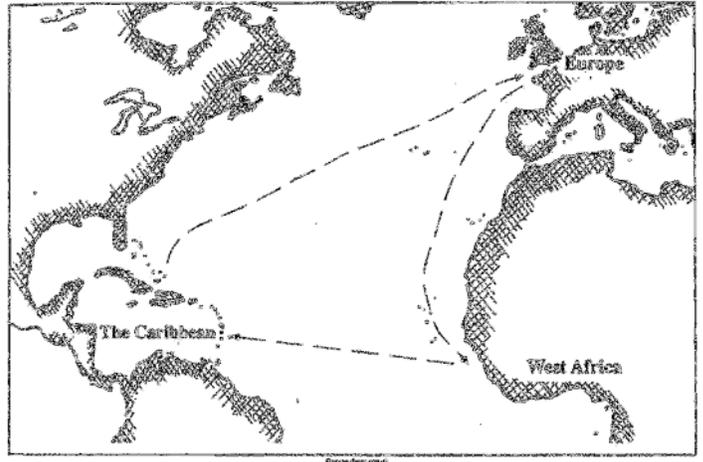


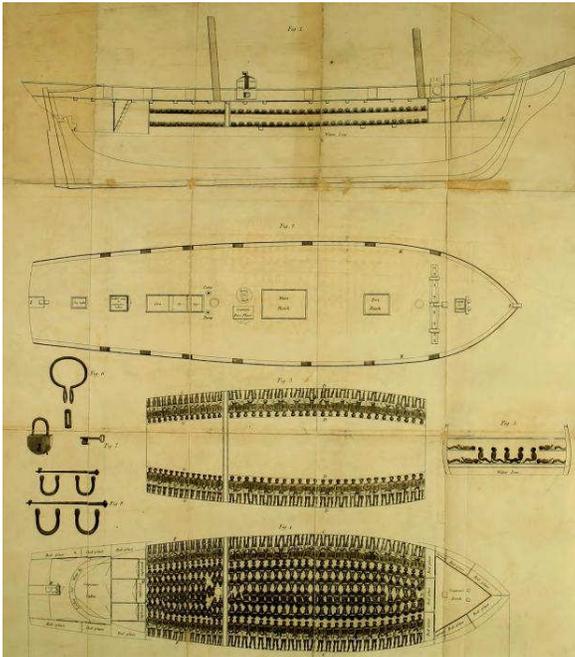
African Experience

1. What crops were grown in the Americas that were labor-intensive and helped lead to the slave trade?

2. Tribalism in Africa led to intense competition and warfare amongst tribes. Prisoners were sold into slavery in exchanged for manufactured goods, weapons, and rum. Which one of these goods was most valuable to tribes that looked to expand their power and influence in the region?



3. Once Africans boarded the slave ships for the journey to the Americas, what percentage did not survive the six to eight week voyage?



4. Most slave ship captains were paid for each slave they started the journey with, regardless of whether they survived the journey to the Americas or not. For this reason, most captains were "_____ packers," cramming as many people on board as possible. If a slave died on board, or showed signs of illness, they would be tossed overboard. _____ were used as 'proof of purchase.'

5. When the Atlantic Slave trade was outlawed in 1807, what started happening to tribal kingdoms that gained power and influence during the trade's existence?

6. The concept of slavery was not new to Africa or Europe. Both had versions of it throughout their history. How were the Atlantic slave trade and American slavery different than previous versions of slavery on other continents?

7. Explain how Tribalism created competition amongst tribes in Africa? In other words, how did the slave trade turn into an arms race between tribes, where the best defense was a good offense?

8. How did the Atlantic slave trade contribute to a racist ideology that continues to this day?

Autobiography of a Former Slave (Modified)

Olaudah Equiano was born in West Africa. As a young boy, he was kidnapped by an African tribe and sold to European slave traders, who took him to Virginia. He eventually purchased his freedom and moved to England, where he became active in the abolition movement. He later wrote an autobiography describing his experiences as a slave. This is one of the only accounts of the Middle passage from the perspective of a slave. These are excerpts from Equiano's autobiography.

I was soon put down under the decks, and there I received such a smell 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 last friend, death, to relieve me; but soon, to my grief, two of the white men offered me food; and, on my refusing to eat, one of them held me fast by the hands, and laid me across I think the **windlass**, and tied my feet, while the other **flogged** me severely. I had never experienced anything of this kind before. . . .

The crew used to watch us very closely who were not chained down to the decks, in case we would leap into the water: and I have seen some of these poor African prisoners most severely cut for attempting to do so, and hourly whipped for not eating. This indeed was often the case with myself. . . .

I feared I should be put to death, the white people looked and acted, as I thought, in so savage a manner; for I had never seen among any people such instances of brutal cruelty; and this not only shown towards us blacks, but also to some of the whites themselves. One white man in particular I saw, when we were permitted to be on deck, **flogged** so unmercifully with a large rope near the foremast, that he died . . . and they tossed him over the side. . . . This made me fear these people the more.

Source: Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, Or Gustavus Vassa, the African*, 1789.

Vocabulary

loathsomeness: unpleasantness

windlass: machine used to raise the anchor

flogged: whipped

1. Who was Equiano? How might his background have influenced what he wrote about the Middle Passage?
2. How might the conditions on the ship have been connected to the diseases that were so common among slaves?
3. Why do you think slaves were punished for not eating?