



# SUBJECT: History

## UNIT: Why should Britain say sorry for the Slave Trade?

### The British Empire:

**1558-1603:** The British Empire begins to flourish under Queen Elizabeth I. **1600-1602:** Britain got to India and set up the East India Tea Company.

**1607:** the Spanish discover America. Britain travel over to claim some colonies for their own.

**1707:** Scotland and England unite! They are now the United Kingdom.

**1769-1770:** Captain Cook discovers New Zealand and Australia. These become part of the British Empire

**1783:** The colonies of America want their freedom back. They declare their independence

**1858:** All of India becomes directly under British rule.

**Mid 20<sup>th</sup> century:** After World War Two, the British colonies were effectively independent countries.



### Life on Plantations

**Living conditions:** Many had to build their homes. They tended to make them like the houses they had had in Africa. Living conditions were cramped (up to 10 per hut) and their beds usually made of straw or old rags.

**Food:** Sometimes they were given pots and pans for cooking, but more often, they had to make their own.

**Punishments:** Slaves could be beaten, whipped and be hung and left to die for reasons such as resisting slavery, not working hard enough,, stealing from his master, murdering a white man, Trying to run away..

**Free time:** Slaves would spend their free time mending their huts, making pots and pans and relaxing. Some slave owners allowed slaves one day a month off or a rest day. Slaves weren't allowed to read or write, but some were allowed to go to church.

**Jobs:** Three and four year olds would work weed plants or carry water cans. Between ages of nine and twelve-they would start to work in the field with adults. Picking cotton, and harvesting sugar cane etc.

Women would sometimes be used as domestic slaves e.g. cooking, cleaning, being a maid in the masters home



### Abolition

Abolitionists such as William Wilberforce organised huge petitions against slavery and made passionate speeches in Parliament. In 1807, Parliament made it illegal for any British person to buy or sell another human being. In 1833, Parliament decided to abolish slavery together.

### Slave Trade Triangle

The slave trade made a great deal of profit for those who sold and exchanged slaves. Therefore, they often ignored the fact it was inhuman and unfair. At least 12 million Africans were taken to the Americas as slaves between 1532 and 1832 and at least a third of them in British ships.

**For the British slave traders it was a three-legged journey called the 'triangular trade':**

1. West African slaves were exchanged for trade goods such as brandy and guns.

2. Slaves were then taken via the 'Middle Passage' across the Atlantic for sale in the West Indies and North America.

3. Finally, a cargo of rum and sugar taken from the colonies, was taken back to England to sell.

**The Middle Passage:** The Middle Passage was the crossing from Africa to the Americas, which the ships made carrying their 'cargo' of slaves. They had no knowledge of where they were going or what awaited them there. The voyage usually took six to eight weeks, but bad weather could increase this to 13 weeks or more.

-The slaves were packed below the decks of the ship. The men were usually shackled together in pairs using leg irons, or shackles

-People were packed so close that they could not get to the toilet buckets, and so lay in their own filth.

-Seasickness, heat and lack of air all contributed to the terrible smell.

-These conditions also encouraged disease, particularly fever and as a result, dysentery- a deadly form of diarrhoea would spread.

-Others died of harsh treatment and poor food.



### Slave Auctions

There were **two main ways to buy a slave.**

The **first was in an auction.** Slaves were paraded in front of buyers who would check in their mouths and check their bodies for injuries. They were then made to stand on a box and buyers would bid for them. They were sold to the person who bid the most. The **second was called a scramble.** A fixed price would be set for the slaves who would be kept in a cage. A horn would sound and the buyers would rush to the cage and grab the slave they like the best. Unhealthy, unsold slaves were left to die without food or water.

