

**KS3 History knowledge organiser:
Year 8 Spring term 1 When and why did Britain
end the Slave Trade?**

Section 1: Key words

Abolition	When something is abolished or banned, like the slave trade in 1807
Discriminate	To treat unfairly favourably or unfavourably, especially on the basis of race or gender
Homeward Passage	The third stage in the transatlantic slave trade with ships carrying items grown or made in the Caribbean or the Americas, such as sugar or tobacco, to Europe to sell (see also Triangular trade)
Middle Passage	The sea journey undertaken by slave ships from West Africa to America and the Caribbean.
Oppression	Domination by others in a harsh or unwanted way
Outward Passage	The first stage in the transatlantic slave trade with ships carrying goods from Europe to trade in Africa for captured Africans (see also Triangular trade)
Overseer	Person on a plantation paid a wage to organize the work of the enslaved people; manager
Plantation	A large area of farmland, or estate, planted with particular crops.
Racism	A belief that one group of people is inferior, or superior to another because to their race.
Resistance	To fight and protest against an authority or power that you think is wrong.
Return Passage	The third stage in the transatlantic slave trade with ships carrying items grown or made in the Caribbean or the Americas, such as sugar or tobacco, to Europe to sell (see also Triangular trade)

Section 2: Timeline of the Slave Trade and abolition in the British Empire

16th and 17th centuries	Portuguese traders took slaves from Africa to work in the Portuguese colony of Brazil and the Spanish colonies of South America. As many as 350,000 Africans were taken in this way as slaves to the Americas.
1562	First English slaving expedition led by Sir John Hawkins
1655	Jamaica is captured and also becomes part of the Empire with slaves being sold to plantation owners.
1672	The Royal African Company was set up to trade African slaves to the sugar plantations of the West Indies.
1778	Slavery made illegal in Scotland.
1787	A group of 12 Christian men led by M.P. William Wilberforce form a group with the aim of abolishing slavery, The Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade. The campaigners boycotted sugar, wrote letters and presented petitions. One member, Thomas Clarkson went on a speaking tour, showing people chains and irons and a model of a slave ship.
1789	Olaudah Equiano publishes The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African. He also forms the 'Sons of Africa' , a group of ex slaves who campaign against the slave trade.
1790	The first bill for the Abolition of the Slave Trade fails.
1791	Slave rebellion on the island of St Domingue (later Haiti) led by Toussaint L'Ouverture .
1792	House of Lords reject an Abolition Bill passed by the House of Commons.
1804	Slave rebellion on the island of St Domingue successful and the first independent black state outside Africa - Haiti - is established.
1807	On 25 March, transatlantic slave trade abolished by the British Parliament.
1833	The Abolition of Slavery Act is passed by the British Parliament, abolishing the practice of slavery in all British territories.

A diagram that shows how the Slave trade triangle worked.



Section 3: What was the Trade Triangle?

The slave trade began with Portuguese (and some Spanish) traders, taking mainly West African (but some Central African) slaves to the American colonies they had conquered in the 15th century. British sailors became involved in the trade in the 16th century and their involvement increased in the 18th century when the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) gave them the right to sell slaves in the Spanish Empire. 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':

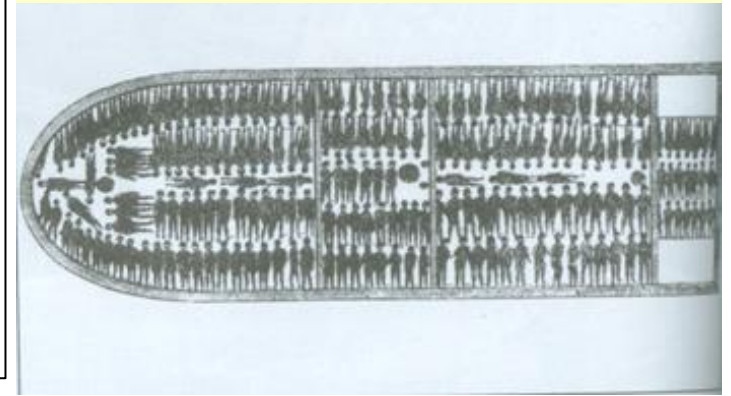
- ☑ West African slaves were exchanged for trade goods such as brandy and guns.
- ☑ Slaves were then taken via the 'Middle Passage' across the Atlantic for sale in the West Indies and North America.
- ☑ Finally, a cargo of rum and sugar taken from the colonies, was taken back to England to sell.

Section 4: What was the Middle Passage?

The voyage from Africa to the New World of the Americas was called the Middle Passage. Slave ships usually took between six and eleven weeks to complete the voyage. Slave ships made large profits by carrying as many slaves as possible across the Atlantic to sell at auction. There were two methods of loading the ship: It was expected that some would die but a large number would survive the voyage. A ship's hold was cramped - only five feet high, with a shelf running round the edge to carry yet more slaves. The slaves were loaded in so close together that one captain described them as being 'like books on a shelf'.

- ☒ Slaves were chained and movement was restricted.
- ☒ Slaves were unable to go to the toilet and had to lie in their own filth. Sickness quickly spread.
- ☒ Slaves were all chained together. If a slave died, the body could remain in the hold for hours, still chained to other living slaves.
- ☒ The state of the hold would quickly become unbearable – dark, stuffy and stinking. The heat and the foul air were so bad that a candle would not burn.
- ☒ African slaves were often unable to digest the food carried by the European crew, making the sickness worse. Many weakened quickly and died.
- ☒ Sick slaves were often denied food and left to die.
- ☒ The crew often mistreated the slaves – women could be subject to rape.
- ☒ Slaves were usually forced to dance on deck for an hour a day to keep them fit. Any resistance was dealt with harshly
- ☒ Some slaves became suicidal. There are accounts of slaves drowning by throwing themselves overboard rather than enduring any more.

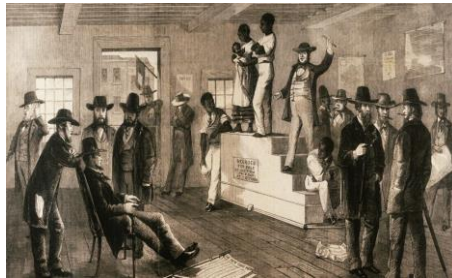
A plan from the slave ship, *the Brookes* showing how slaves were packed onto it.



Section 5: A life of Slavery

- When enslaved Africans arrived in the Americas, they were often alone, separated from their family and community, unable to communicate with those around them.
- The following description is from **'The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano'**: "*When we arrived in Barbados (in the West Indies) many merchants and planters came on board and examined us. We were then taken to the merchant's yard, where we were all pent up together like sheep in a fold. On a signal the buyers rushed forward and chose those slaves they liked best.*"
- Depending on where they had arrived, the enslaved Africans were sold through agents by public **auction** or by a **'scramble'**, in which buyers simply grabbed whomever they wanted. Sales often involved measuring, grading and intrusive physical examination.
- Life expectancy was **short**, on many plantations only 7-9 years.
- It was a life of endless labour. They worked up to 18 hours a day, sometimes longer at busy periods such as harvest. There were no weekends or rest days.
- The dominant experience for most Africans was work on the **plantations**

A Poster from 1861 advertising a slave auction



Slaves working on a sugar plantation in Jamaica in the 1800s.



Section 6: When and why was Slavery abolished?

There were 4 main reasons why Slavery was abolished in the British Empire:

1. Slavery wasn't making as much money:

- The price of sugar decreased in the 1770s forcing plantation owners out of business meaning demand for slaves was reduced.
- Some people said that slaves did not work hard enough to make plantations profitable.

2. Slaves helped end slavery:

- **Toussaint L'Ouverture's** slave rebellion in St Domingue in 1790 resulted in slavery being outlawed and the island being renamed Haiti.
- The rebellion proved that slaves could resist their owners and run a country successfully.

3. Black people proved the racists wrong:

- Slaves successfully persuaded judges in courts to free them.
- Olaudah Equiano tirelessly campaigned to convince the people of Britain that slavery was wrong.

4. The anti slavery campaigners:

- 12 Christian men including **William Wilberforce** formed a group to abolish slavery. Wilberforce made lots of speeches in Parliament.
- This helped the slave trade to be abolished in 1807 and slavery in the British Empire was abolished in 1833.



Toussaint L'Ouverture



Olaudah Equiano



William Wilberforce