

Slavery

Analyzing Visual Primary Sources

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Introduction

Primary sources are the building blocks of history. Using these sources to introduce students to historical periods offers students the opportunity to become historians themselves—to analyze the evidence, form hypotheses, and learn how to support arguments based on evidence. They learn what it means to interpret the past in ways that provide meaning for the present. Textual primary sources can often be difficult for students to engage with because they are often couched in unfamiliar language from a different historical era. Visual primary sources can prove more appealing and accessible to students, and they also involve different types of “reading” skills.

How to Use This Product

This PowerPoint® presentation is designed to walk students through the process of primary source interpretation. Slides help to focus students’ attention and train them how to “read” visual primary sources. Targeted questions and enlarged insets from images help to train students to see deeper into the historical record, to uncover evidence that, though plainly before their eyes, is not always obvious at first glance.

The posters provide visual reinforcement for the images analyzed in the presentation. Use them before or after the PowerPoint® analysis for either pre- or post-reading activities. In addition, we have provided extra images on each disc so that once the students are trained in the skills of analyzing visual primary sources they can further hone their skills. You can print them out and distribute as handouts for in-class or independent study, or you can import the images into PowerPoint® for students to analyze individually or with the class as a whole.

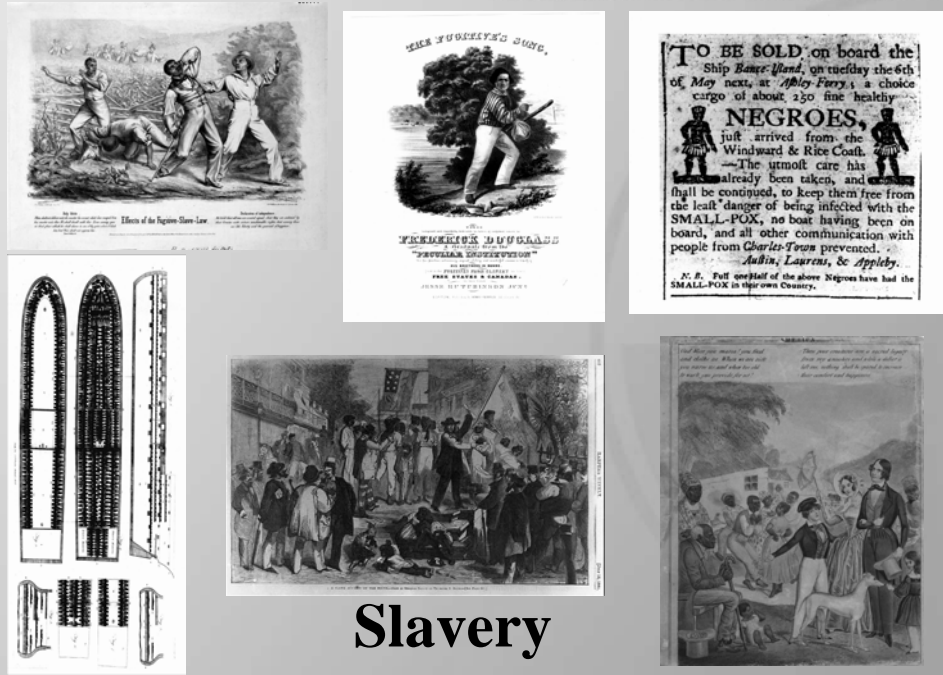
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We look forward to hearing from you.

Dr. Aaron Willis
Chief Education Officer
Social Studies School Service

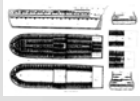
Analyzing Visual Primary Sources



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Slavery existed in the European colonies of the West Indies beginning in the 1500s. The colonists obtained slaves from Africa. As settlers increasingly occupied the present-day United States beginning in the 1600s, slavery became more central to the economy there, particularly in the South. Slaves performed labor-intensive work on southern plantations that grew cotton, tobacco, and other crops. The raw materials produced on these farms were generally sent back to Europe, where factory workers made them into finished products, such as clothing. This presentation will discuss these various aspects of slavery and the slave trade.

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- Middle Passage: journey across the Atlantic
- The Triangular Trade

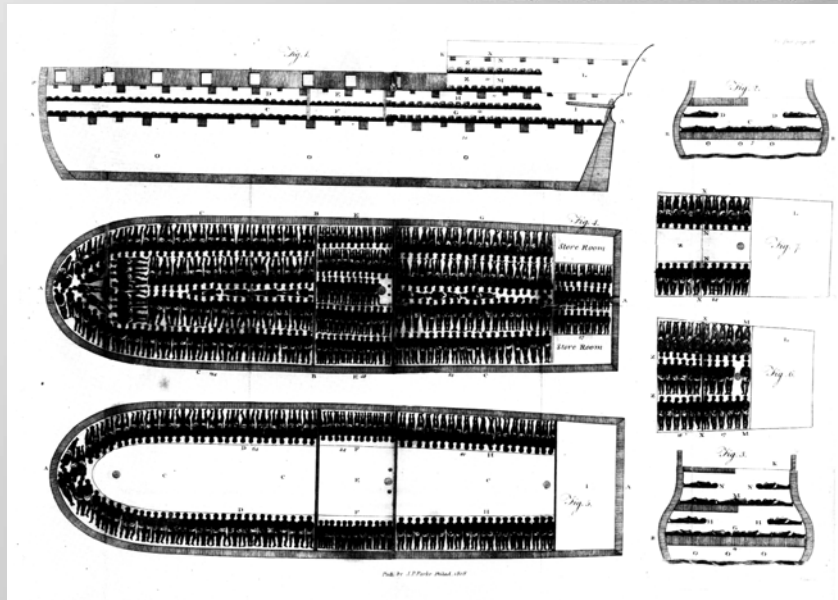
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European slave traders bought most of their slaves from African traders who had already captured other Africans in war, kidnapped them, or subdued them by other means. Approximately half of the slaves captured in the African interior did not survive the journey to the coast. The African traders sold the surviving slaves to European slave traders in exchange for firearms and other goods.

Many of the slaves waited long periods of time in captivity along the West African coast. They were then forced onto ships bound for America. The journey across the Atlantic Ocean, called the Middle Passage, was unimaginably brutal. Slaves were branded with hot irons and shackled to the ship's deck or inner spaces. Ships typically held several hundred slaves who did not have enough room to stand, had difficulty breathing due to a lack of ventilation, and often had no receptacles for their own waste. Disease was common, and many slaves died along the way.

The Middle Passage was, from the European perspective, the middle leg of a three-pronged trip from Europe to Africa, Africa to North America, and North America back to Europe. Together, this three-way journey was called the Triangular Trade. Trade items from Europe to Africa included firearms, gunpowder, brandy, and other goods. Traders exchanged these items for slaves, who were sent to North America. The slaves produced cotton and other raw materials, which were shipped to Europe on the third leg of the Triangular Trade.



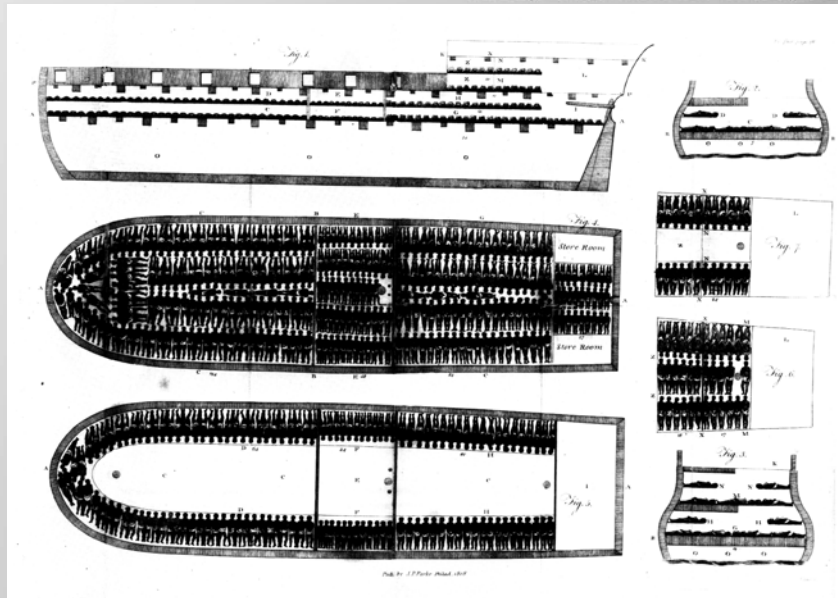
The Middle Passage

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Give students approximately one minute to view this image, then proceed to the following slides.

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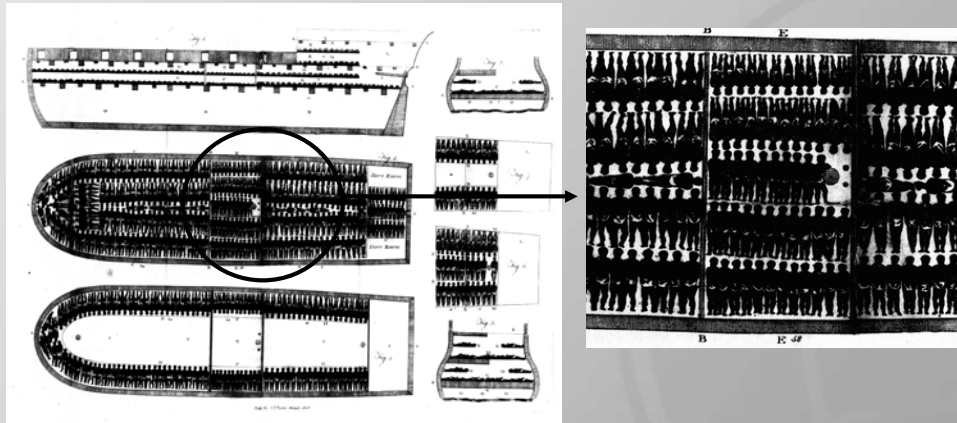
What does this appear to be a picture of?

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This is a sketch of a slave ship called the *Brookes*, from Liverpool, England. The larger image on the top shows the entire ship from one side. The other images show different sections of the ship. For example, the two large drawings below the one of the entire ship show two different bird's-eye views of the ship. The sketches on the right show cross-sections of other parts of the ship. In each section, you can see dark lines drawn very close to each other. These lines are sketches of the slaves being transported on the ship.

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- Do the slaves appear to be standing, sitting, or lying down?
- Can you tell which direction their heads are facing? Remember that you have a bird's-eye view of this section.

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If you look closely, you can see that the slaves are lying down. Their heads are facing toward the inner part of the ship.