

The British Empire

- Britain began to grow a big **empire** from the reign of Queen Elizabeth I (16th century). The British Empire grew significantly in the 18th century (despite losing America in 1779) to include the West Indies (Caribbean);
- Europeans came to **West Africa** in search of **people to enslave** to transport to the West Indies to work on plantations (huge farms);
- The four main products grown on plantations were **sugar, coffee, tobacco and cotton**;
- British people could now buy these goods cheaply; one of the reasons why they accepted the slave trade!

Kidnap!

- European slave ships sailed to Africa with **guns** to trade with African leaders;
- African leaders sent out men to kidnap defenceless people.

Middle Passage

- The journey from West Africa to America took **2 months!**
- Conditions on ships were terrible;
- Enslaved people were chained to one another;
- Causes of death: disease, starvation;
- Enslaved people were threatened with beatings, being thrown over-board.

Auction House

- Enslaved people were **sold** once they arrived in the West Indies;
- Painted with olive oil and gunpowder to hide any wounds;
- **Families were often split up** to upset the slaves;
- Many enslaved people were **branded** in case they escaped.

Plantation Life

- A variety of jobs; field hand (the 'first gang' did the heaviest work) house slave, nurse. Enslaved people worked 13-16 hours a day;
- **Overseers** (more powerful enslaved people) managed all the others and punished some;
- Dangers: getting wounded by a machete, falling into boiling sugar cane oil, neglected babies;
- Enslaved people could resist passively (without violence), actively (violently) by running away or fighting back;
- Punishments: neck braces, flogging, dogs chasing runaways. 'walkina the wheel'.

Year 8 Learn Sheet

Final Assessment *The Transatlantic Slave Trade*



Coffee shops were becoming very popular in the 1700s.



Ships from Liverpool transported **3 million** slaves.



Slave rebellions happened at sea – as with La Amistad in 1839.

Former slaves:

- Key individual: Equiano wrote about his experiences as a slave; his book became a best seller. Helped bring the crew of the slave ship Zong to justice.

Politicians:

- Toured the country;
- Key individuals: Wilberforce – MP, his speeches helped persuade other MPs to vote for abolition, Clarkson – Christian, wrote reports about the slave trade.

1807 – *Slave Trade Act ends the trading of slaves*

Who helps bring about abolition (the ending of slavery)?

Women:

- Did a lot of the background campaigning to end slavery;
- Used leaflets to persuade public;
- Key individual: Elizabeth Heyrick – helped set up the Anti-Slavery Society in 1823.

Why did people support the slave trade?

Money reasons

- It made many people **rich** from the sugar, cotton and coffee trades. Many in England believed that the only way to make money from Africa was through slavery.

Racist reasons:

- Many Europeans believed that Africans could be treated differently because of the **colour of their skin** and because they weren't Christians;

Ignorance:

- Many people didn't realise the true horrors of slavery – they thought life was good on **plantations**.