

The Transatlantic Slave Trade

Name: _____

The Slave Trade started in the 1700s when European merchants began going to Africa to “capture slaves” to take to the New World (Americas) to trade for other goods. The profits made from the global trade of sugar, tea and coffee were the major driving force behind the triangular trade. For centuries it provided substantial quantity of venture capital for the development of the western European economy. These trade goods were being grown and produced in the 13 colonies, specifically the lower colonies

Africans transported to the Americas were part of a transatlantic **trading network known as the Triangular Trade**. Over one trade route, Europeans transported manufactured goods to the west coast of Africa. There, traders exchanged goods for captured Africans. The Africans were then transported across the Atlantic and sold in the West Indies. Merchants bought sugar, coffee, and tobacco in the West Indies and sailed to Europe with these products.

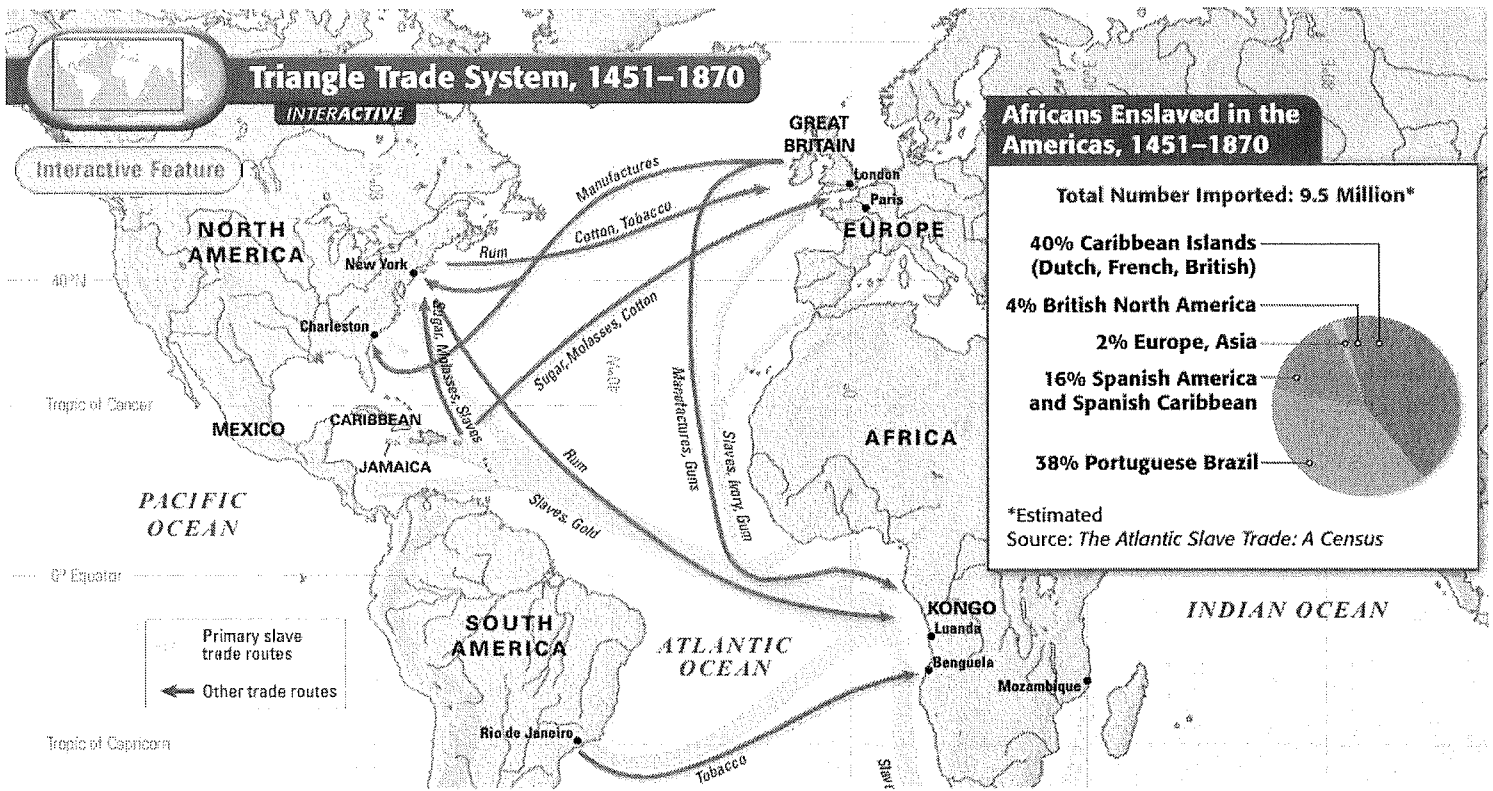
On another triangular route, merchants carried rum and other goods from the New England colonies to Africa. There they exchanged their merchandise for African slaves. The traders transported the Africans to the West Indies and sold them for sugar and molasses. They then sold these goods to rum producers in New England.

Various other transatlantic routes existed. The “triangular” trade encompassed a network of trade routes crisscrossing the northern and southern colonies, the West Indies, England, Europe, and Africa. The network carried a variety of traded goods.

The Triangle of Trade consisted of three major journeys:

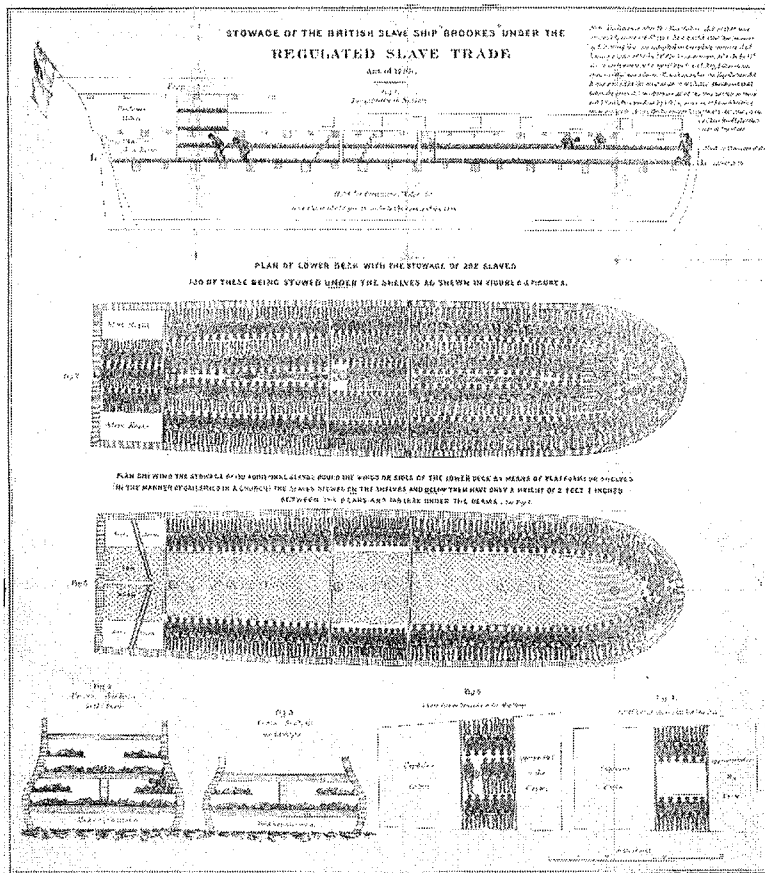
1. The **outward passage** from Europe to Africa carrying manufactured goods.
2. The **middle passage** from Africa to the Americans (Caribbean) carrying African captives and other commodities.
3. The **homeward passage** carrying sugar, tobacco, rum, rice, cotton and other goods back to Europe.





The Middle Passage

The Brooks Ship



The middle passage across the Atlantic was brutal.

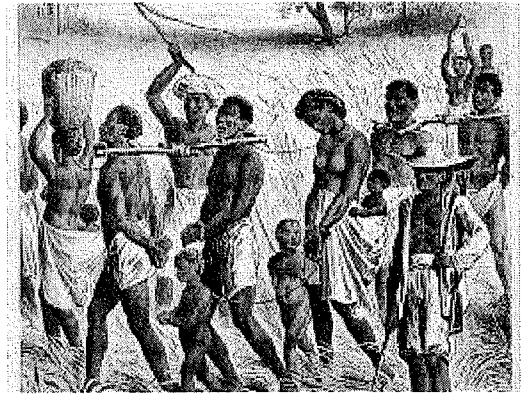
The voyage that brought captured Africans to the West Indies and later to North and South America was known as the middle passage. It was considered the **middle leg** of the transatlantic slave trade.

Sickening cruelty characterized this journey. In African ports, European traders packed Africans into the dark holds of large ships. On board, Africans endured whippings and beatings from merchants, as well as diseases that swept through the vessel. Numerous Africans died from

disease or physical abuse aboard the slave ships. Many other committed suicides by drowning. Scholars estimate that roughly 20 percent of the Africans aboard each slave ship perished during the brutal trip.

How did the merchants get away with it??

Sailors who worked on these ships would return with stories of what they witnessed on ships and plantations. However, few would speak out in fear of being refused further work by merchants, ship owners, and captains in the trade.



It was a very profitable business often making a high rate of return on investment. We know this from accountant books. Powerful trading interests tried to prevent any regulation or abolition (the end of slavery) of the slave trade using a fierce campaign of misinformation, lies and delaying tactics.

The Truth

In order to expose the truth public about the triangular trade, it was necessary to show conditions on the ships and plantations.

To counter historical European notion that African people were 'little more than savages', African and British abolitionist worked tirelessly to demonstrate the truth.

- **They showed object depicting the great cruelty and suffering caused by the trade.**
- **The revealed images showing the degrading treatment of enslaved people.**
- **They also displayed the sophisticated African artifacts.**

These items shocked the British public, and educated them about Africa, plantation life, and enslavement.

