

The Middle Passage Activity#1

A) *"The stench of the hold...was so intolerably loathsome that it was dangerous to remain there for any time...but now that the whole ship's cargo were confined together, it became absolutely pestilential. The closeness of the place and the heat of the climate, added to the number in the ship which was so crowded that each had scarcely room to turn himself, almost suffocated us"*

Oludah Equiano (a freed slave writing about his experience in the middle passage)

B) "[Slaves] had sufficient room, sufficient air, and sufficient provisions. When upon deck, they made merry and amused themselves with dancing. As to mortality... it was trifling. In short, the voyage from Africa to the West Indies was one of the happiest periods of a Negro's life."

Unknown ship captain writing about the middle passage

1.) Are the above texts primary or secondary sources? Explain.

2.) Identify one similarity and one difference between the texts.

3.) What are your thoughts about Text B? How does this passage show us one problem that can be encountered when using primary sources?

The Middle Passage Activity #2

The Middle Passage did not begin with the transatlantic voyage, but with the capture and sale of Africans, and ended with their forced 'adjustment' to life in the Americas. It is one of history's most horrific chapters, showing the human capacity for both cruelty and insensitivity and strength and survival. It is difficult to calculate the numbers of Africans that were transported; estimates have ranged from five million to 30 million. Further millions died during capture and on the journey across the Atlantic. History has seen few social disruptions on such a scale.

The voyage itself took between 6 and 8 weeks. The enslaved Africans were chained together by the hand and the foot, and packed into the smallest places where there was barely enough room to lie on one's side. They had no idea where they were going, or what was going to happen to them. Through all this misery and suffering, new African identities were created, forming a basis for a new transnational culture. Within these ships, Africans from different countries, regions, cultures and with different languages learned to communicate with each other; many conspired to overthrow their captors together.

British eyewitness accounts were used to support the anti-slavery campaign. Alexander Falconbridge, a former slave ship's surgeon wrote his Account of Slave Trade on the Coast of Africa in 1788 which described the loss of life, the state of the holds below deck, and how some severely depressed Africans willed themselves to die:

"A woman was dejected from the moment she came on board, and refused both food and medicine; being asked by the interpreter what she wanted, she replied 'nothing but to die', and she did die".

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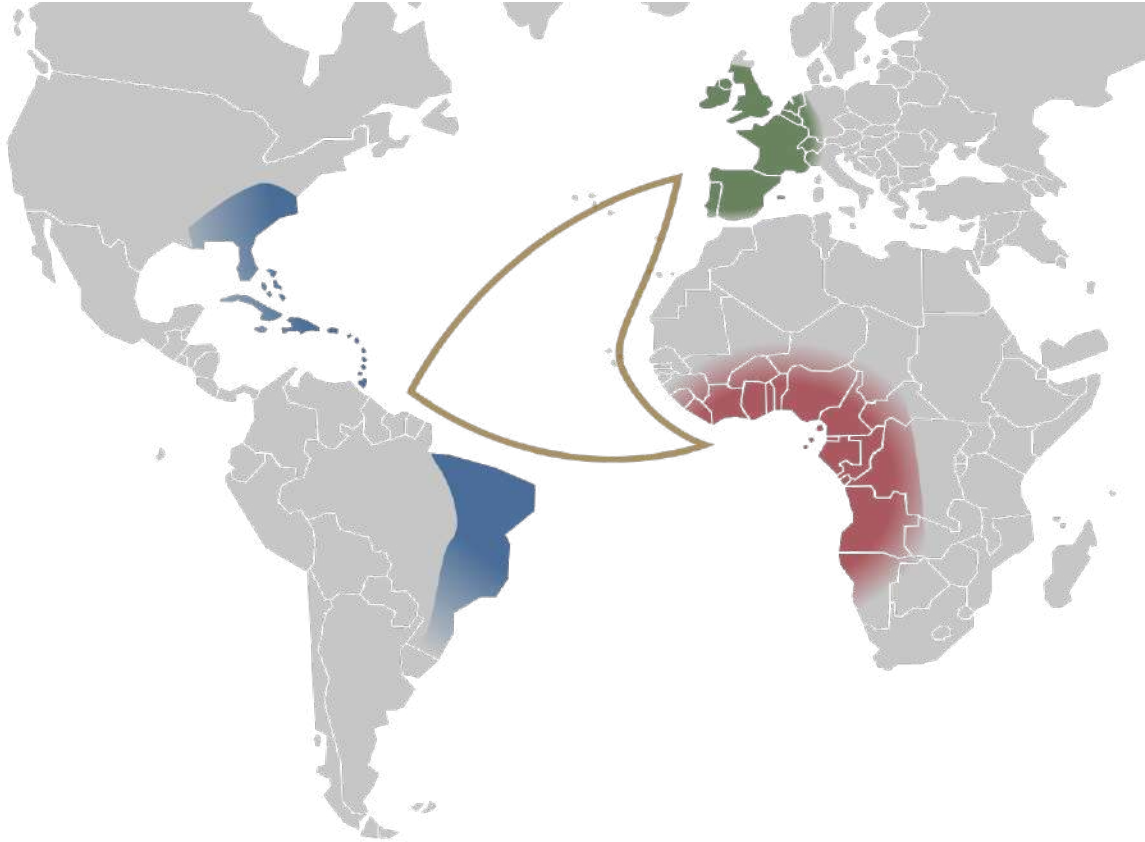
1.) Is this document a primary or secondary source of information? Explain.

2.) According to the document how many Africans were transported through The Middle Passage?

3.) What were two hardships faced by Africans in The Middle Passage?

4.) Were most Africans traveling the middle passage from the same places? Explain.

The Middle Passage Activity#3



- 1.) Create a title for the map that best represents the entire image.
- 2.) Label the middle passage.
- 3.) Label where the flow of raw materials occurred.
- 4.) Label where the movement of manufactured goods occurred.
- 5.) What were three types of raw materials that moved from place to place?

- 6.) What were three types of manufactured good that moved from place to place?

The Middle Passage Activity #4

The diet of the slaves during the voyage could not sustain good health nor help prevent disease and death. Slaves were fed twice a day—at eight in the morning and at four in the afternoon. Groups of ten would be given one bucket of food, which they ate out of with their hands. The food was terrible and the worst was horse beans. Horse beans were the cheapest food you could get in Europe at the time. They were boiled into a pulp served with a pepper laced “slabber-sauce”*. According to Falconbridge, “Most of the slaves have such an aversion to the horse beans, that unless they are narrowly watched, when fed upon deck, they will throw them overboard or in each others faces when they quarrel” (1973: 22). Therefore, slaves were not getting the balanced nutrition they needed and they became unhealthy, weak and even more susceptible to diseases.

* according to various sources slabber-sauce could have been a mixture of rotten beef, fish and salt, or a mixture of peppers, palm oil and flour.

1.) Is this document a primary or secondary source of information? Explain?

2.) According to the document what was one main reason slaves “could not sustain good health” on their journey through The Middle Passage?

3.) Would the quote from Falconbridge be considered a primary or secondary source? Explain.

The Middle Passage Activity #5

The cold-blooded state of affairs and the brutal process of The Middle Passage began on the coast of West Africa where enslaved Africans were held prisoners by their African captors. Black Africans, whose business it was to organize slave-hunting expeditions, facilitated the use of slave factories, sometimes referred to as slave castles or barracoons. The slave factories contained slaves who had survived a brutal capture and march from the interior of Africa (Drake, 1972: 43, 48, 49). Many of these slaves were prisoners of war from native conflicts/slave hunting (Conneau, 1976: 104). Some of them were common criminals (Falconbridge, 1973: 15).

Although the black traders who dealt in African slaves were careful not to reveal the circumstances under which slaves were collected, Alexander Falconbridge, a surgeon who was involved in the slave trade, had reason to believe that most of the slaves were victims of a heartless action known as kidnapping (1973: 13). He goes on to say that, "It frequently happens that those who kidnap others are themselves, in their turns, seized and sold. A negroe in the West-Indies informed me that after having been employed in kidnapping others, he had experienced this reverse. And he assured me that it was a common incident among his countrymen" (Falconbridge, 1973: 14).

1.) Is the above document a primary or secondary source of information? Explain.

2.) Define "baracoons".

3.) According to the text, who was Alexander Falconbridge? How should we rate the reliability of Falconbridge as a trustworthy source of information?

3.) According to the text what would often happen to Africans that participated in the enslavement of other Africans?
