

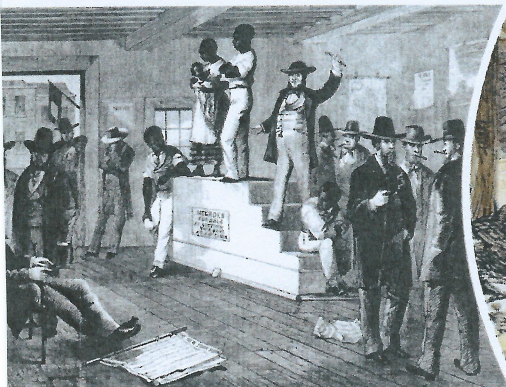
THE SLAVE TRADE

The voyage from Africa to the New World was a terrible experience for the captured Africans and many died during the ocean crossing.

After they arrived in America, slaves were sold in public auctions. Families were often divided up and small children were sometimes taken from their mothers and sold separately.

Slaves belonged to their owners and had no legal rights. They could not meet together in public and could not travel without permission. It was also illegal to teach a slave how to read or write.

In 1808, the Congress outlawed the slave trade with Africa. However, the system of slavery continued for more than 50 years. In 1863 Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, which freed slaves held in the Confederate States in the South and, two years later, the 13th Amendment to the US Constitution prohibited slavery throughout the country. Even so, many states, especially in the South, continued to discriminate against black Americans. The Civil Rights movement in the 1960s helped eliminate segregation, strengthened Black Americans' voting rights and made job discrimination illegal. In 2008, the US House of Representatives passed a resolution apologizing for American slavery and subsequent discriminatory laws.



SLAVE LIFE

The life of a slave was terribly hard and many slaves died within a few years of arriving in America.

Most worked on large cotton plantations. They planted and picked the crops and did other work on the farm. They worked without pay from early morning to sunset, watched by a boss called an 'overseer'. House slaves looked after the master's house and family. In many households, the treatment of slaves varied according to the colour of the slave's skin. Darker-skinned slaves worked in the fields, while lighter-skinned house servants had comparatively better clothing, food and housing.



3 Why are these dates important in the history of Black Americans?

- 1808
- 1863
- 1865
- 1960s
- 2008

4 Describe the living and working conditions of slaves.

Speaking

5 Class discussion. Discuss the following.

- Do you think any forms of slavery exist in developed countries today?
- Who are the slave owners? And the slaves?

Writing

6 Write a short text about slavery. Follow the guidelines:

- define slavery
- give a brief history of slavery in America
- give examples of any forms of slavery that exist today.

Links

- 'History timeline': UK, p. 37, USA, p. 45
- 'The spread of English', pp. 8-9
- 'The USA, a pluralist society', pp. 26-27
- 'Music', pp. 32-33