



Slavery, Society, and Apartheid

The focus of this lesson plan is the 1733 St. John Slave Revolt in the Caribbean.

Subject

World History

Grade level

6-8

Duration

Three class periods

Objectives

Students will

- discuss general information about the Atlantic slave trade;
- review facts about the St. John revolt and brainstorm individuals and groups involved in the rebellion; and
- write a personal account from the point of view of one person involved in the revolt.

Materials

- Computer with Internet access
- Paper, pen or pencil
- *Slavery, Society, and Apartheid* video and VCR (or DVD and DVD player)

Procedures

1. After watching the program, discuss general information about the Atlantic slave trade. Begin by telling students that from 1500 to 1870, about 11 million Africans were captured and taken on ships to the Americas. Discuss the following questions based on what they learned in the program:
 - What was the triangular trade? (*The triangular trade was the slave trade connecting Africa, the Americas, and Europe.*)
 - Why were slaves considered "black gold"? (*They were valuable because they provided inexpensive labor for plantations in the Americas.*)
 - Were the slaves always captured by Europeans? Explain. (*No, they were often captured by other African groups.*)
 - What were some goods traded for slaves? (*cloth, metalware, firearms, ammunition, rum*)
 - Was the slave trade that began in the 16th century Africa's first experience with slavery? Explain. (*No, African nations had a long history of capturing and trading other groups into slavery.*)

- What was the middle passage? What was it like? (*The middle passage was the dangerous voyage from Africa to the Americas. It was a very difficult journey, as slaves fell to disease and brutal treatment; sometimes nearly half in a ship died.*)
 - Describe the experience of slaves traded at St. Thomas Island and other markets. (*They were inspected like cattle, branded, and often separated from their families.*)
2. Next, review facts about St. John Island featured in the program:
- Where is St. John Island? (*in the Caribbean Sea*)
 - Why were African slaves traded to St. John Island in the 1700s? (*to plant and harvest sugarcane*)
 - What European country established St. John as their colony? (*Denmark*)
 - What significant event took place there in 1733? (*Slaves lead a revolt against the plantation owners.*)
 - Who led the revolt? (*two chieftains from the African nation Akwamu*)
 - Did the Akwamu leaders who led the rebellion want to abolish slavery? (*No; they intended to take over the island, enslaving anyone who was not with them.*)
 - How did the Akwamu leaders spread the word of the revolt to the Akwamu on plantations and in remote jungle camps? (*talking drums*)
 - Were all the slaves on St. John part of the rebellion? (*No; some slaves even warned colonists of the rebel attacks*)
 - Did the slaves end up in control of St. John Island? (*No, they were overthrown in less than a year.*)
3. Ask students to brainstorm individuals or groups who were affected by the revolts. Write their answers on the board with a brief description of their role in the revolt.
- Governor Philip Gardelin (in charge of sugarcane business; put strict slave code into effect)
 - Johannes Sodtmann (plantation owner and Gardelin's son-in-law; first target in the 1733 rebellion)
 - Akwamu Chieftains (enslaved leaders of Africa's Akwamu nation who led the revolt)
 - Danish soldier who escaped the garrison attacked by rebels
 - Slaves who warned colonists of rebels and helped them escape
 - Kroyer Family (owned small plantation on Brown Bay; killed in rebel attack; their two young male slaves were rescued)
 - Female slave (no name provided) who joined the rebellion at Brown Bay
 - Peter Durloo (plantation owner; the battle between the rebels and remaining colonists took place at his plantation)
 - Free Negro Corps (slaves recruited to fight the rebels; rewarded with property)
 - Mingo Tamarind (captain of a group from the Free Negro Corps; known for his harsh and effective command)
4. Ask students to consider how the people on this list would have viewed the St. John Revolt. What were the different motivations, risks, or fears? Have students choose one person from the list above and write a personal account of the revolt. Their account should answer the following questions (considered from the selected person's point of view):
- What is your role in the revolt?

- Do you support the revolt? Why or why not?
 - What do you stand to gain or lose?
 - Do you feel the attacks on the plantation owners are justified?
 - What do you see as the ideal outcome of the revolt?
5. Have students share their accounts with the class. After students have read their accounts, discuss the motivations and feelings of the different people or groups. Did all the slaves participate in the revolt? Was the revolt meant to abolish slavery on St. John's? Were white colonists the only enemy the rebels faced?
 6. Conclude by talking about the significance of the St. John Revolt. If the slaves did not end up in control of the island, why is it important? (*St. John was the first black state in the Americas; it was the first black revolution to occur in America.*) Why do islanders still celebrate the revolt today? (*They view the slave revolt as an expression of the human spirit; they left a legacy of strength.*)

Evaluation

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

3 points: Students recalled several key details about the slave trade and the St. John Slave Revolt; participated actively in class discussions; wrote a thoughtful, comprehensive account with several details from the program.

2 points: Students recalled some key details about the slave trade and the St. John Slave Revolt; participated somewhat in class discussions; wrote a satisfactory account with some details from the program.

1 point: Students recalled few or no key details about the slave trade and the St. John Slave Revolt; did not participate in class discussions; wrote an incomplete account with few or no details from the program.

Extensions

For the "Atlantic Slave Trade" segment: Have students explore the life of a slave named Olaudah Equiano at the Discovery Channel School Web site, "A Slave on Three Continents" (<http://school.discovery.com/schooladventures/slavery/equiano.html>). Through images and excerpts from Equiano's personal accounts, this interactive timeline tells the story of Equiano's life, including his capture in Africa, his passage to America, his experience as a slave in America, and his fight for freedom.

For the segments "Apartheid Takes Hold" and "The End Of Apartheid": After watching these programs, ask students to define apartheid. (*A political policy that segregated races and gave special privileges to whites.*) Where was apartheid instituted? (*South Africa*) When was apartheid abolished? (*1990*) Using what they learned in the programs, ask students to write an essay about what life was like for black South Africans under apartheid. They should address these questions: Where did they live under this policy? Why were they powerless to change the laws? Why were blacks dependent on whites? Why couldn't they improve their lives or move to another country? What were the consequences for people who publicly opposed apartheid? Describe how one organization or person fought to abolish apartheid.

Vocabulary

colony

Definition: A country or area that is ruled by another country

Context: In 1733, St. John Island was a colony of Denmark.

middle passage

Definition: The dangerous sea voyage from Africa to the Caribbean

Context: More than 11 million enslaved Africans were taken to the Americas through the middle passage.

triangular trade

Definition: The slave trade that connected Africa, the Americas, and Europe

Context: The Danish bought slaves with the cash they made selling Caribbean rum in the triangular trade.

Academic Standards

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) has developed national standards to provide guidelines for teaching social studies. To become a member of the NCSS, or to view the standards online, go to <http://www.socialstudies.org>.

This lesson plan addresses the following thematic standards:

- Time, Continuity, and Change
- Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
- Power, Authority, and Governance

Credit

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