

NAME:

DATE:

CLASS:

DBQ FOCUS: Atlantic Slave Trade



Document-Based Question Format

Directions: The following question is based on the accompanying Documents (The documents have been edited for the purpose of this exercise.) This question is designed to test your ability to work with and understand historical documents.

Write a response that:

- Has a relevant **thesis** and **supports that thesis with evidence** from the documents.
- Cites evidence from included source perspectives.
- Analyzes the documents by grouping them in as many appropriate ways as possible. Does not simply summarize the documents individually.
- Takes into account both the sources of the documents and the author's points of view.

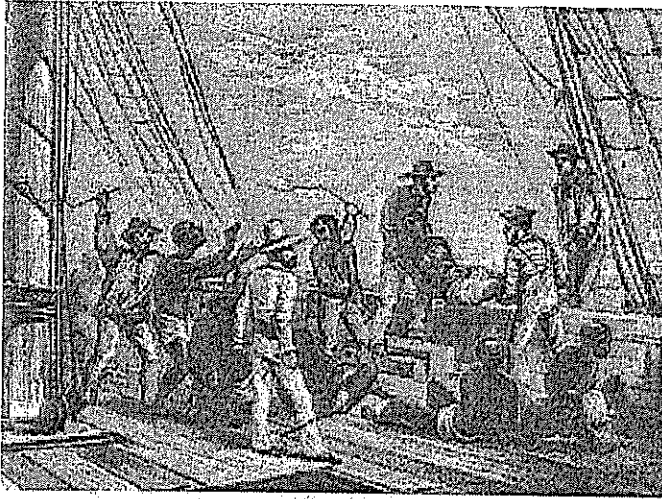
Historical Context: As all the Kings, Explorers and business financiers had hoped, the Americas were full of opportunities to make money. Gold, silver and other minerals could be mined, and tobacco, sugar and other crops could be grown on plantations. In order to make use of these resources there would have to be a reliable supply of laborers to do the work. The Native American population had dwindled due to disease and war and did not provide enough labor. However, the Europeans had access to another cheap labor market that already existed, the African Slave Trade. While the use of slaves has existed in societies for millennia, it was not until the mid fifteenth century that Europeans began trading and capturing slaves from the African continent, just in time for the discovery of the Americas... Between 1450 and 1870 over ten million humans were taken from Africa.

Question

How does the absence of humanitarian concerns influence the treatment of slaves during the slave trade?

Document 4

Source: *Living Africans Thrown Overboard the Slave Ship Zong 1781*

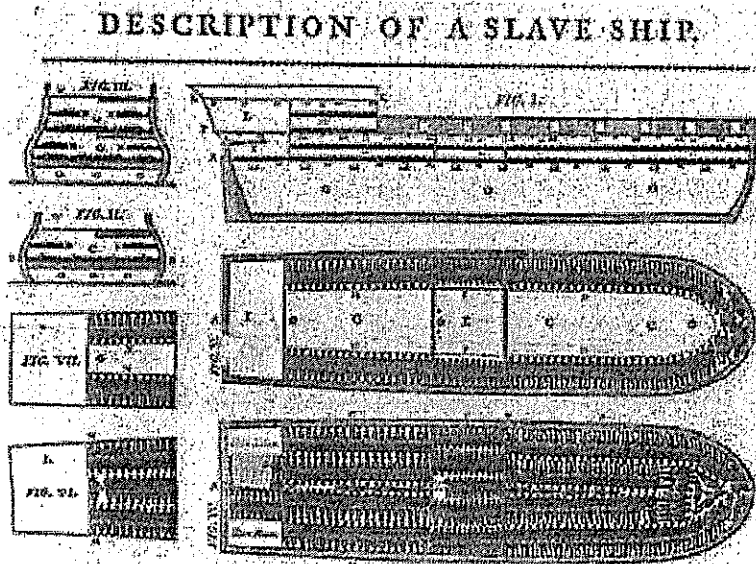


Student Analysis

It is said that the Africa and the New World are bridged from the bones of the Atlantic slave trade. How does this illustration support that notion?

Document 5

Source: The Slave Ship the *Brookes* 1789, Wilberforce House, Kingston upon Hull City Museums and Art Galleries



Student Analysis

Provide your thoughts on the conditions aboard slave ships.

Document 6

Source: Walsh, Robert, *Notices of Brazil in 1828 and 1829* (1831).

The height sometimes between decks was only eighteen inches, so that the unfortunate beings could not turn round or even on their sides, the elevation being less than the breadth of their shoulders; and here they are usually chained to the decks by the neck and legs. In such a place the sense of misery and suffocation is so great that the Negroes... are driven to a frenzy.

Student Analysis

Why would captive Africans become disoriented and mentally unstable during the middle passage?

Document 10

Source: Alexander Falconbridge, An Account of the Slave Trade on the Coast of Africa (London, 1788).

Alexander Falconbridge describes the reaction of enslaved Africans to their sale.

When the ships arrive in the West Indies ... Previously the sick or refuse slaves, of which there are frequently many, are usually conveyed on shore and sold at a tavern, by vendue or public auction. These in general are purchased...upon speculation, at so low a price as five or six dollars a head... Sometimes the captains march their slaves through the town at which they intend to dispose of them, and then place them in rows where they are examined and purchased.

The mode of selling them by scramble having fallen under my observation the oftenest, I shall be more particular in describing it. Being some years ago, at one of the islands in the West Indies, I was witness to a sale by scramble, where about 250 Negroes were sold. Upon this occasion all the Negroes scrambled for bear an equal price; which is agreed upon between the captains and the purchasers before the sale begins. On a day appointed, the Negroes were landed and placed together in a large yard belonging to the merchants to whom the ship was consigned. As soon as the hour agreed on arrived, the doors of the yard were suddenly thrown open and in rushed a considerable number of purchasers, with all the ferocity of brutes. Some instantly seized such of the Negroes as they could conveniently lay hold of with their hands. Others being prepared with several handkerchiefs tied together, encircled as many as they were able. While others, by means of a rope, effected the same purpose.

Various deceptions are used in the disposal of sick slaves and many of these must excite in every humane mind the liveliest sensations of horror. I have been well informed that a Liverpool captain boasted of his having cheated some Jews by the following stratagem. A lot of slaves afflicted with the flux, being about to be landed for sale, he directed the ship's surgeons to stop the anus of each of them with oakum. Thus prepared they were landed and taken to the accustomed place of sale, where, being unable to stand but for a very short time, they were usually permitted to sit. The buyers, when they examined them, oblige them to stand up in order to see if there be any discharge; and when they do not perceive this appearance they consider it as a symptom of recovery. In the present instance, such an appearance being prevented, the bargain was struck and the slaves were accordingly sold. But it was not long before discovery ensued...

Student Analysis

Upon arrival to the New World how are the sick or undesirable slaves treated?

Describe how a sale by scramble is conducted.

Why would the ship captain have intentionally covered up the diseased reality of the slaves in his control?