

Historical Source Gallery Walk - Teacher's Guide

Overview and Background to Activity

This activity is designed as a gallery walk to help analyze a variety of historical sources. It should be done as a complement to existing lessons on the slave trade, as little new content is introduced here. This activity is primarily focused on skill building. Analyzing sources is the backbone of historical inquiry. Historians spend long periods of time gathering information from archives which house a variety of documents that help us to better understand the past. These documents can be as exciting as personal letters and intimate journal entries, or they can be more mundane tax records and official census reports. More than just documents, sources can be artwork, music, oral history interviews, and personal objects. Individually these sources shed some light on the past, but taken all together a richer historical picture can develop and help to make the past more accessible.

This activity tries to get students to think critically about historical sources, while also putting these sources in conversation with one another. This is an attempt to have students “think like a historian” and put into practice some of the basic skills that professionals use every day when they encounter archival sources. Many of the questions on the graphic organizers are aimed simply to get students thinking about the source while also thinking about their preexisting knowledge of the institution of slavery. These skills are not limited to professional historians, however. Analyzing sources helps build important critical thinking skills that are important for literary analysis, interrogating bias in the news and other media, and many other skills.

Sources should be placed around the classroom with students going from station to station and responding to each particular image with the assigned graphic organizer. Each source will have background information on the reverse side of the sheet, however students should only engage with this information after completing each page of the graphic organizer. This activity can be done individually, in partners, or in small groups. Alternatively, these images may be made into packets and assigned to students as a worksheet for an in-class activity or a take-home assignment.

The activity is designed to take two class periods to complete. The first class period should include the power point presentation of various sources, a discussion on terminology and the first two stations on the gallery walk. The second class period should involve the final two gallery walk stations, a 10 minute free-write session for students to reflect on what they've learned from this activity, followed by a whole class discussion that incorporates what students wrote in their free-writes. If time is limited, the lesson can be reduced into one class session. We recommend using only one document per station, in particular documents 1, 3, 6, and 7. The reflection at the end should not be cut for time. Due to the nature of this topic, a scaffolded conversation about the difficult subject matter will ensure students walk away with a strong understanding of slavery that is free from any misconceptions. It also helps students engage with difficult histories and voice their own thoughts and opinions in a safe environment.

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Connect a variety of primary and secondary sources to their previous understanding of slavery
- Understand that slavery was an institution that touched many aspects of life in the 17th-19th centuries.
- Connect the use of sources to their importance in the field of history as a way of building a better understanding of the past.

Suggested Grade and Course

This activity is designed for a middle school (Grade 6-8) social studies course. It can be adapted for use in a high school history class with modifications to the questions. The images are appropriate for grades 6 and up, but the provided questions are targeted specifically towards the younger age group.

Standards

Common Core:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7: Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5: Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally).

NCHS

-Historical Thinking Standard 4: **Obtain historical data** from a variety of sources, including: library and museum collections, historic sites, historical photos, journals, diaries, eyewitness accounts, newspapers, and the like; documentary films, oral testimony from living witnesses, censuses, tax records, city directories, statistical compilations, and economic indicators.

Activities and Procedures

For this activity, students can work individually, paired up, or placed into small groups.

Day One

1. Prior to students arriving in the classroom, set up four stations around the room with documents in pairs. Students should have four pages of graphic organizers corresponding to each station
 - (Station A: documents 1&2. Station B: documents 3&4. etc..)
2. Begin the class with the presentation that is part of this lesson plan. It contains examples of historical sources related to slavery. It begins with a free write with the following questions:
 - What type of documents do you/your family/your teachers/etc.. use?
 - How do you think people find out about events in the past?
 - Other than newspapers, letters, and other paper documents, are there other materials we get information from today? *Follow-up:* Do you think we can find these things in the past?

- (Note: Student answers will likely be limited in scope. They may think people learn history from books. Their thoughts on documents people use might be centered around legal documents and other formal documentation rather than everyday items like receipts or emails. This exercise should help broaden their view of what sources can be used.)
 - Going through the presentation, there will be a variety of sources. The aim is to expose students to the myriad of sources that historians can use to learn about the past. You can even pause after certain slides and ask if students can think of any other examples.
 - At the end of the presentation, there should be a brief explanation of terminology surrounding the word *Negro*. Due to this term being used frequently in historical sources, it is important to address with the class that the term is not acceptable to use today, but that it is historically important. The term *Negro* comes from the Spanish and Portuguese word for the color *black* as a way to differentiate between Europeans and Africans on the basis of skin color. In English colonies and the United States, the term *negro* was used as synonym for “slave,” not just in casual speech, but even in laws. European colonists used the term to minimize African’s humanity by defining them by their skin color and by connecting that skin color to enslaved status. In effect it defined a separate class of people, different from white society at the time. After emancipation, the term evolved again. The word Negro in the early 20th century mirrored the use of African-American or Black American today, it was not necessarily derogatory. Marcus Garvey, a Black activist, created an organization called the Universal Negro Improvement Association. W.E.B Du Bois, a Black intellectual, published a groundbreaking study titled *The Philadelphia Negro*. Some of the greatest baseball players of all time played in the Negro Leagues. In the second half of the twentieth century, especially in the wake of the Civil Rights Movement, because of the term *negro* had historic connections to slavery, Americans of African descent asserted a preference for the terms Black and/or African American, instead, and *negro* fell out of accepted usage.
3. Break the students apart and send them to each station. Students should spend around 10 minutes for the first two stations filling out the boxes on their graphic organizer. (This portion should take about 25 minutes of the class period, including transitions from station to station.)
 4. After students complete the second station, have them do a brief think-pair-share about what they encountered today. This can be done in their station groups, or broken up amongst the larger class as well. As part of their discussion, have students turn in an exit ticket that consists of the most interesting thing they learned and a question these sources inspired. Both can be taken from their graphic organizers.

Day 2

5. Begin the class with a reminder of what the class experienced the day before. This would be a great time to review some of the exit ticket content with the class to help get them back into the investigative mindset.
6. Break students off into their groups from the previous class and go through the remaining stations.

7. After students have completed the stations, regroup as a whole class for a reflective discussion. To prepare for the discussion, have students do a 5-10 minute free-write to jot down their thoughts on the questions below. These are designed to get students to think critically about sources. There are no wrong answers; students should feel free to brainstorm and think out loud here. At the end of the free-write, bring the class back together and have them discuss their responses together. (Reflecting on these sources and the activity is vitally important to this exercise. Slavery is a heavy topic, one whose importance to American history should be unpacked by students and reflected on more than other topics. The discussion questions are an attempt for students to think about all the sources in combination with one another, while also thinking back to prior knowledge of the slave trade)
 - What do these sources tell you *overall* about the slave trade?
 - What are three things that surprised you most about these sources? Why?
 - What are three things that confirmed what you already knew about the slave trade?
 - Thinking of all these documents together, what are some other sources you think would help you understand slavery better?
 - Is it difficult to see all these sources? What is so hard about seeing documents about slavery?
 - Why do these sources help you understand slavery/the past better?

Citations for Powerpoint Presentation

Slide Four

West Africa Map:

William Snelgrave, "A New Map of that Part of Africa called the Coast of Guinea," in Snelgrave, *A New Account of Guinea* (London, 1754). The image is reproduced courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University.

Accessible at: <https://slavevoyages.org/resources/images/category/Places/21>

Slide Five

The Caribbean and North American Mainland:

Henry Popple, Map of the British Empire in America with the French and Spanish Settlements (London, 1733) The image is reproduced courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University. Accessible at:

<https://slavevoyages.org/resources/images/category/Places/13>

The Senegal River:

Jean Baptiste Labat, *Nouvelle Relation de l'Afrique Occidentale...* (Paris, 1728), vol. 2, p. 124. The image is reproduced courtesy of the Pitts Theology Library, Candler School of Theology, Emory University. Accessible at:

<https://slavevoyages.org/resources/images/category/Places/11>

Caribbean Islands:

Joan Blaeu, *Insulae Americanae* (Amsterdam, 1662) The image is reproduced courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University. Accessible at:

<https://slavevoyages.org/resources/images/category/Places/5>

Slide Six

Enslaved People Liberated from the Slave Ship *Zeldina*:

The Illustrated London News (Jun. 20, 1857), vol. 30, p. 595. The image is reproduced courtesy of the Manuscript, Archives and Rare Book Library, Emory University. Accessible at:

<https://slavevoyages.org/resources/images/category/Slaves/5>

Slide Seven

The Old Plantation:

"Plantation Dance, South Carolina, ca. 1785-1795", *Slavery Images: A Visual Record of the African Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Early African Diaspora*, accessed October 27, 2021,

<http://www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/item/998>

Slide Eight

Fort Cormatin:

D.O. Dapper, *Description de l'Afrique ... Traduite du Flamand* (Amsterdam, 1686; 1st ed., 1668), between pp. 284-85. This image is reproduced courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University. Accessible at:

<https://slavevoyages.org/resources/images/category/Places/1>

Slave Deck of the Albaroz, Prize to the Albatross:

"Slave Deck of the Albaroz, Prize to the Albatross", *Slavery Images: A Visual Record of the African Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Early African Diaspora*,

accessed October 27, 2021,

<http://www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/item/3003>

Slide Nine

Register of Africans from the Schooner “Indagadora”:

British National Archives, Foreign Office, ser. 84, vol. 166, p. 154. The image is reproduced courtesy of the British National Archives. Accessible at:

<https://slavevoyages.org/resources/images/category/Manuscripts/100>

Slide Ten

Register of Africans from the Schooner “Francisco”:

British National Archives, Foreign Office, ser. 84, vol. 4, p. 263. The image is reproduced courtesy of the British National Archives. Accessible at:

<https://slavevoyages.org/resources/images/category/Manuscripts/5>

Other Documents

Images Reproduced courtesy of the United States National Archives. Accessible at: <https://docsteach.org/documents/documents>

Slides Eleven - Fourteen

All Images:

These images are part of the historical collection digitized by, and on view at, the National Museum of African American History & Culture. Accessible at:

<https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/collection/>