Mapping the Impacts of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade

Grade Level: 6, 7, 8, 9
Subject Areas: World History, Social Studies, Earth Science, Marine Biology

Lesson Summary:

In this lesson, students will learn about the history of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and how this system has impacted our contemporary world. Through a study of maps, maritime travel, and oceanography, students will investigate the political and economic climates that supported the extensive slave trade, and will gain a deeper understanding of how a system of this kind has impacted the lives of individuals throughout history and today.

Common Core Standards:

Grades	**6-8**	**9**
Mathematics	6.RP.A, 6.NS.A-C, 6.EE.A-C, 6.SP.A-B, 6.G.A 7.RP.A, 7.NS.A, 7.EE.A-B, 7.SP.A-C, 7.G.A-B 8.EE.A-C, 8.G.A-C, 8.G.A-C, 8.SP.A	HSN.Q.A HAS.CED.A HSG.MG.A HSG.GPE.A-B HSS.ID.A-C HSS.IC.A-B
English Language Arts	W.6.1-10, SL.6.1-6, L.6.1-6 W.7.1-10, SL.7.1-6, L.7.1-6 W.8.1-10, SL.8.1-6, L.8.1-6 RH.6-8.1-10, RST.6-8.7-10	W.9-10.1-10, RH.9-10.1-10, SL.9-10.1-6, L.9-10.1-6, RST.9-10-7-10

Learning Objectives:
After completing this lesson, the student will be able to:

- conduct extensive research and interpret the global impact of slavery.
- analyze the interrelationships between historic sites and the distribution of colonial powers around the world.
- read and interact with different kinds of maps.
- critique the information embedded within maps to identify whether further information is needed.
- articulate the movement of bodies of water and trade winds that facilitate maritime transportation (taking into consideration both the past and contemporary worlds).

Lesson Description:
The trans-Atlantic slave trade comprised a system of forced displacement and exploitative labor, shifting a population of 10-12 million from western Africa to the Americas. The slave trade represents a critical historical period with wide-reaching ramifications that continue to manifest in the contemporary world. In understanding the growth and breadth of the slave trade across the Atlantic Ocean, we can approach the study of globalization and the birth of the world's economies.

In this lesson, students will utilize an online and interactive map as a mode for learning about the global participation in the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Along the way, students will learn how to read various maps, research the historical slave trade in terms of economic motivations and environmental factors, and cite primary sources.

As a class, navigate to www.CyArk.org, and click on the Themes tab. Find the Atlantic Slave Trade Theme, and open the interactive map. This map visually connects heritage sites associated with the slave trade to each other and to the maritime routes between them.

Encourage students to open the same webpage to explore individually and prompt the following questions:

- What information does this map give you?
- How is this information presented? Think about how graphics communicate data.
- What do you understand about historical colonial powers and their respective economies?
- Reflecting on what you can learn from this map, what other specific information do you need to understand the global impact of the slave trade, and where might you find resources for this information?

Guide the class in a research and essay assignment to further understand the slave trade. By utilizing and properly citing primary sources, students should be encouraged to explain:

- The timeline of the historic slave trade and abolition laws.
- Environmental factors that facilitate maritime travel along the triangular trade route.
- Which political entities played critical roles in the slave trade, and in what ways?
- What is the difference between raw and manufactured goods, and how are these elements directly linked to global economies?
- Who was aboard slave ships, what were their roles, and what did they carry with them?
- What has been recorded regarding resistance at sea, such as slave revolts?

Students may present their papers to the class, and provide the teacher with complete bibliography.

Student Project:
Divide the class into groups of 4-5 students. Using the Internet and library resources, each student group will research historical construction styles of slave ships typical of the years 1600-1850. Pay attention to the size of the interior spaces where those enslaved were held,

mast typologies, and associated political or national flags. Student groups will then construct a model of a historic slave ship, using materials of their choice, and present their ship to the class while explaining its national designation, construction typology, occupancy thresholds and living conditions, and hypothesized travel routes in relation to the above factors.

After group presentation, prompt a discussion about how maritime travel has changed since this time period.

Resources:

CyArk website: www.CyArk.org

The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database: http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/index.faces