Transatlantic Slavery and its Legacies

Textbook

This is an introductory reading on the history of Transatlantic Slavery. You do NOT need to know all of this in detail, however it should give you a nice overview of the context of what is to come…

Read and take brief notes – with the questions as a guide.

Chapter 1: Enslavement	***Chapter 2 : Abolition***	***Chapter 3: Legacies***
1. *Africa before transatlantic slavery* 2. *Development of transatlantic slavery* 3. *Britain and North America* 4. *Britain and the Caribbean* 5. *Britain and Africa* 6. *London, sugar and slavery* 7. *The Middle Passage* 8. *Conditions on the plantations* 9. *The structure of work + Urban Enslavement* 10. *Cultural and social life* 11. *Enslaved Families*	12. *Change: the campaign to abolish the British slave trade and slavery* 13. *Formerly enslaved people who campaigned for the abolition of the slave trade and slavery* 14. *British abolitionists who campaigned for the abolition of the slave trade and slavery* 15. *Uprisings by the enslaved in the Caribbean* 16. *Amelioration*	17. *The abolition of slavery and compensation* 18. *Apprenticeship* 19. *The Caribbean after 1833*

Chapter 1: Enslavement

1. Africa before transatlantic slavery

- Africa is the birthplace of humanity. Human remains found in Ethiopia are 3.5 million years old, the oldest in the world. Stone chopping tools which are 1.8 million years old have been found in Tanzania, the first known technological invention. Africa prior to European contact was a complex continent made up of different ethnic groups each with their own societal structures, laws, governments and economies. Great empires existed in centralised and organised formations. Alongside this small groups of farmers and hunters lived independently. In the Middle Ages one of the greatest kingdoms was that of Mali in what became modern Senegal.

- In West Africa a complex system of trade developed based on skilled craft and manufacture. From the eighth century traders from other parts of Africa and the Middle East began to penetrate into the region. They brought with them the Muslim religion and many communities converted to Islam. The slave trade from West Africa into the Middle East had existed for many years. West Africans were captured, bought and sold by Arab traders.

- However, the focus of trade was primarily on gold. Perhaps the most famous of African emperors was Mansa Musa of the kingdom of Mali who ruled between 1312–27. The inscription on the Atlas depicted above reads 'This Black lord is called Musa Mali, Lord of the Black people of Guinea. So abundant is the gold which is found in his country that he is the richest and most noble king in all the land.'

- The rich and diverse history of the great African kingdoms can be seen today in the collection of the British Museum. The Africa Galleries contain numerous examples of the fine art and crafts of highly skilled people. African art dates back to the earliest terracotta sculptures of the Nok culture in 500 BC and ranges from the gold statues of the Ashanti of Ghana, to the carved wooden figures of the Baluba tribes of the Congo, to the elaborate head dresses of the Bambara of West Africa, to the wooden masks of the Dogon people, to the magnificent Benin bronzes and the great brass life-sized heads of the Yoruba people of Ife.

- The world's first civilised society developed in the Nile Valley, in Egypt. The ancient Egyptians were the first to produce cloth to wear, wine to drink and grow crops such as wheat and lentils to eat. The ancient Egyptians built the first Great Pyramid of Giza, which was as high as a forty-storey building. In 300 BC the Sudanese people invented a script with 23 letters and 4 vowels. Hundreds of these texts survive and some are on display in the British Museum. Gold coins were minted in Ethiopia 1500 years ago, only Rome, Persia and the Kushan kingdom in northern India in the world were also doing so.

- One of the reasons why Europeans know so little about this history is because of the ways in which the historiography has been impacted on by the racial ideas that came out of both slavery and colonisation. By insisting that Africa was a place without civilisation, Western powers could justify their treatment of African people and the seizure of their lands.

- Peoples from the continent of Africa were dispersed and scattered across the globe against their will because of slavery. All these people took their

traditions and accomplishments with them and many managed to retain them and reform their identities in a new world

Key Questions:
1. Why do Europeans know so little of African history?
2. What purpose did this ignorance serve and why?

2. Development of transatlantic slavery

- Slavery and the trade in enslaved people have existed since prehistoric times in most parts of the world. The use of enslaved people was a feature of many ancient civilisations including the Chinese, Indian, Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Aztec, Mayan, Arabic and European societies. People were enslaved for different reasons; through capture in war, capture through raids, when a person owed a debt or when a person had committed a crime. There was slavery in Africa before European contact but it was very different from transatlantic slavery. For example, in Africa enslaved people could be considered, over time, to be a dependent of the family they served, or even a member of the slave-owner's extended family. In some societies, the children that slave-owners had with enslaved people could not be killed or sold. After three or four generations, enslaved people could change their status and be reintegrated into the network of their 'new' family. Enslaved people could work themselves free. They could marry their masters' daughters and even inherit his property. This shows how some could progress from enslaved to free person in these societies. There are no 'good' forms of slavery – these conventions did not mean that enslaved people enjoyed their captivity. Slavery is a system that dehumanises people by treating them as property – this is the over-riding fact governing all forms of coercive and unfree labour.

- Between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries the capture and sale and of Africans led to the removal of millions people from the continent. This depended both on collaboration with local African leaders and the brute force of Europeans. The rise of the Kingdom of Dahomey (now the nation of Benin) depended on its leader's involvement in the sale of people. The slave trade led to rising demand in many of these coastal kingdoms of European produced goods such as guns, alcohol, and fabrics. There were also Africans who resisted the attempts made by Europeans to impose their own form of culture and politics. One example is the uprising of those living in Mombasa, Kenya against the Portuguese in 1631.

- All this was to change when the Portuguese began voyages of exploration along the African coast. In 1441, ten Africans were sent to Portugal by the explorer Gonzalves who presented them to Prince Henry. It was hoped to convert them to Christianity and then return them to Africa as missionaries. This did not happen and more and more Africans were sent to Portugal as servants; by 1445 public auctions of Africans were held in Portugal. By 1460 between 700 and 800 Africans were exported annually to Portugal. The arrival of the Portuguese and other Europeans meant some African merchants began to deliver fellow Africans to the west coast of Africa to sell to the Europeans as slaves.

- When the Spanish arrived in the Americas from the 1490s they dispossessed the indigenous (local) population from their land. They cleared the land to

grow crops for export back to Europe, but this land needed lots of labour. The Spanish settlers enslaved the local population and forced them to work for their benefit. In the process, many died from overwork and European diseases. The Spanish needed more labour to replace the indigenous population and so copied the Portuguese practice of buying enslaved Africans and transporting them to their plantations and mines in the Caribbean, Central and South America. At this stage Britain, despite two slave trading voyages in the 1560s, was more interested in gaining wealth through trade in goods, war, piracy and plunder. Prize money from the Caribbean brought in between £100,000 and £200,000 per year. The British looked at Spanish colonisation and saw how even greater riches could be obtained through the colonisation of overseas land.

Key Questions:

3. **How does Slavery always 'dehumanise'?**
4. **Who began the the practice of Europeans buying enslaved African people?**
5. **Who started taking them over to the Americas and why?**

3. Britain and North America

- One of the first British colonies was established by the Virginia Company in Virginia, North America in 1607. The colonisers were expected to grow staples and engage in commercial enterprise including the export of crops and raw materials back to Britain. After a very difficult start, the British colonisers began growing tobacco and were soon exporting large amounts to Britain for the domestic market and re-export into Europe. In 1619, a Dutch slave trader exchanged his cargo of enslaved Africans in Virginia for food from the colonists. The Africans were given a similar legal status to that of the indentured servants sent out from Britain to work on the tobacco plantations. Whilst some people were indentured as a form of punishment for breaking the law, others consented to become indentured servants as a way of escaping poverty. Indentured servants had their passage to the Americas paid for them and were supposed to work for a set period of time before they became free. Once free they could purchase land and enslaved people and become planters themselves. There were abuses in the system and many people had the length of their indenture increased, conditions were very harsh and many died. However, in contrast an enslaved person could only become free if they were manumitted by their owner or if they were permitted to purchase their freedom.

- Historians have offered various theories to explain the sudden shift from European indentured labour to African enslaved labour in North America. As late as 1670, in Maryland, European indentured servants outnumbered African servants by a ratio of nearly 4:1 but by the early 1690s this ratio had reversed so that Africans outnumbered indentured Europeans by 4:1. The decision to purchase shiploads of enslaved Africans direct from Africa from the 1670s was made by a small group of wealthy tobacco planters who concluded that temporary European servants could no longer meet the need of large landowners for a cheap and expanding supply of labour to cultivate and export tobacco. The demand for tobacco in Britain and Europe, was now outstripping supply; planters knew that high profitability could be achieved by purchasing enslaved Africans and forcing them to work on the tobacco plantations without wages.

Key Questions:

6. **What was the difference between indentured servants and enslaved persons in North America?**
7. **Why did British plantation owners move away from indentured labour and towards enslaved workers?**

4. Britain and the Caribbean

- Shortly after establishing a presence in Virginia, the British established colonies in Bermuda (1612), St. Christopher (1624), Barbados (1627), Nevis (1628), Montserrat and Antigua (1632), the Bahamas (1648), and Jamaica (1655). By 1660, the white population in these islands had reached 47,000. Like the American colonies, the British used poor European indentured servants to labour on the Caribbean plantations alongside large numbers of enslaved Africans. In Barbados, plantation owners switched from tobacco and cotton to large-scale sugar production. By the 1650s Barbados produced an annual sugar crop valued at over £3 million in today's money. This was greater than the value of all the other colonies in the Americas put together. Indentured servants were considered unsuitable for sugar plantations and unlikely to endure the severe work regime needed for large-scale sugar production. The profitability of sugar combined with its intensive labour practices meant slave labour came to define production. In 1645, Barbados had 5,850 enslaved Africans working in the fields, by 1698 the number had increased to 42,000. Jamaica soon followed Barbados into 'sugar and slavery'. In 1656, the colony had a population of 1,410 enslaved Africans but by 1698 there were over 42,000 people living in slavery. The mortality rate for enslaved Africans was high. This was due to overwork, abuse, malnutrition and resistance. Thus the planters purchased thousands of enslaved Africans annually to maintain its existing labour population. The Caribbean economy therefore relied on the combination of the trade in slave-produced commodities and the trade in human beings.

- At the same time the British government, whose treasury benefited directly from the customs duties of the sugar trade, made sure that the colonies were supplied with enslaved Africans through its sponsorship of the Royal African Company (see below). The British government also made sure that sugar profits from its colonies would only benefit the British state and not foreign rivals. They introduced a series of 'Navigation Acts' between 1651 and 1660 which declared that goods from the colonies could only be transported to Britain and Ireland in British ships. Colonial goods had to be exported to Britain first before being re-exported to other countries and British colonial-produced sugar was charged lower duties than sugar produced in the colonies of other European powers making foreign sugar more expensive.

Key Questions:

8. **By the end of the 17th century, what was the most profitable crop in the Caribbean?**
9. **What did the 'Navigation Acts' in 1651 & 1660 ensure?**

5. Britain and Africa

- Britain's initial interest in West Africa before the seventeenth century was for trade in goods only – redwood, hides, ivory, pepper, wax and gold. Here they faced the might of the Dutch who controlled European trade off the West African coast. Britain's interest in the African slave trade took hold with the introduction of sugar cultivation in Barbados in the 1640s. This created a demand for enslaved Africans to work on the Caribbean plantations. In 1660, a group of English aristocrats formed the Company of Royal Adventurers into Africa, which was allowed monopoly trading rights in the Gambia for purchasing gold and providing 3,000 enslaved Africans per year for the colonies.

- In 1672 the Company of Royal Adventurers into Africa was given a royal charter by King Charles II and became the Royal African Company. The Company was awarded a monopoly on purchasing, transporting and selling enslaved Africans to work on the British colonial plantations of the Caribbean and North America. African gold was coined as 'guineas' (the name given to West Africa) and the currency was marked with an elephant - the Company's symbol. The Company set up a fort on St. James Island in the Gambia for the purpose of trading in gold, ivory and enslaved people. The future King of England, James, Duke of York, was governor of the company. In a series of wars with the Dutch, the Company gained control of the Cape Coast in modern-day Ghana and made its headquarters there.

- The Royal African Company set out to supply 5,600 enslaved Africans annually to the Caribbean and Virginia colonies as well as trade in goods. By the 1690s the threat of the Dutch had disappeared; for although they had the largest share of the gold trade, the British had the largest share of the slave trade. Many enslaved Africans were transported to the Americas by illegal ships (interlopers) who operated outside of the Company's monopoly, but whose owners wanted to make money from the slave trade. Between 1679 and 1682, the Royal African Company carried out 70 slave voyages but interlopers carried out 32 voyages offering enslaved Africans at a cheaper price. The colonies often purchased enslaved Africans from non-Company traders. Soon the Company was in debt and their situation was made worse by war with the French between 1689 and 1697, when the French captured Fort St. James and its privateers captured British ships.

- Following the Glorious Revolution in 1688, the new government of King William III was less favourable to monopolies. In 1698 the British government introduced free trade in the slave trade. This meant independent traders could invest in the supply of enslaved Africans to the colonies as long as they paid 10% to the Royal African Company. After 1712, all slave trading with Africa was free trade. This change in practice inevitably led to more European voyages to purchase slaves, which meant African slave traders were now asked to capture and kidnap more Africans. Historians have noted that the African trade in gold supplied only 7% of gold for the Royal Mint in 1689. However, the supply of enslaved Africans to British colonies in the Caribbean and North America by British slave traders meant that the wealth created by sugar cultivation in the Americas directly contributed to the growth of the British economy.

Key Questions:

10. **What kicked off mass exploitation of West Africa by the British?**
11. **What was the purpose of the Royal African Company?**

12. **After 1712, the Slave Trade expanded, why?**

6. London, sugar and slavery

- Colonial commerce was big business for Britain. Enslaved Africans produced coffee, ginger, pimento, indigo, cotton and tobacco, but it was sugar that has had the most lasting effect on the British. As a consequence of Britain's involvement in slavery and the slave trade, the mass consumption of sugar became commonplace, and no longer a luxury food for the wealthy. In the years 1700-1709 British per person consumption of sugar per annum was 4lb, by 1780-1789 it was 12lb and by 1809 it was 18lb. The main reason for the growth in consumption was the introduction of drinks from India, China and the Americas such as tea, coffee and chocolate. On their own they had quite a bitter taste, but sweetened with sugar they became addictive and formed part of the daily diet. Sugar was also used in bread, porridge and treacle - the staple food of the working class. Soon the British used sugar in a wide array of popular puddings, cakes and pastries. All this increase of consumption was the result of the labour of enslaved Africans.

- British ports grew in the era of an expanded overseas empire, colonial commerce and slave trading. The major ports where the slave trading business took place were London, Bristol and Liverpool. There were also minor ports involved such as Lancaster, Whitehaven, Glasgow and Plymouth. London was the centre of finance for the trade in both enslaved Africans and the commodities they produced. The historian David Richardson estimates that between 1698 and 1809 as many as 3,103 ships cleared from London transporting 740,145 enslaved Africans to the colonies. London was the headquarters of the Royal African Company, which was based in Leadenhall Street in the City. Other traders to Africa were also London based. The headquarters of the South Sea Company, which had been awarded the Asiento (the right to trade slaves in Spanish-controlled territories) was in London on the corner of Threadneedle Street and Bishopsgate. Between 1713 and 1731 they transported 64,000 Africans into slavery.

- Merchants, operating from their counting houses in the City, lent money to Caribbean planters, sold their produce and provided them with plantation equipment and luxury goods from Britain. Many merchants became very rich from the commission they charged for organising the shipping, warehousing, insurance and distribution of commodities such as sugar. Plantation economies like Jamaica became heavily indebted places. It was possible for a planter to use both their plantation and their enslaved population as collateral for borrowing money from merchants. If a plantation owner could not repay the debt then the merchant could foreclose and claim either the plantation, the enslaved Africans on it or sometimes both. In this way many powerful merchants also became plantation and slave-owners. Merchants and insurers often frequented London's coffee houses, such as the Jamaica Coffee House in St. Michael's Alley in the City where loans and insurance for slave trading voyages were arranged.

- London was also the leading importer of sugar into Britain. In the year before the slave trade was abolished, London imported 2,344,999 hundredweights of sugar compared to 556,470 by Liverpool, 356, 848 by Glasgow and 342, 583 by Bristol. One of London's wealthiest sugar importers was George Hibbert (1757-1837). He financed a number of plantation owners in Jamaica and helped to build Europe's largest enclosed dock system in 1802 on the Isle

of Dogs. The vast warehouses were used to store the imported sugar. Today one of the surviving warehouses is home to the Museum of London in Docklands. The Society of West India Planters and Merchants, the mouthpiece of the proslavery lobby, often met at the London Tavern on Bishopsgate in the City to discuss how they would oppose the abolition campaigns.

- The profits from these ventures were often reinvested into slave trading, plantations and the ownership of enslaved people. Investment in the slave economy was a risky business – ships could be lost at sea, the enslaved might rise up or a counting house might collapse under the weight of unpaid debt. Whilst some made vast fortunes that sustained family dynasties, many more went bankrupt. For those men and women who went in search of a new life in the Caribbean the dangers could prove fatal. Disease was rife and death and destitution awaited many of those who made the voyage. For those people who were successful, sugar and slavery could elevate them from meagre beginnings to the highest ranks of society. For most planters the ultimate sign of success was the ability to return to Britain to become country gentlemen. These people became known as 'absentees'. They represented an important way in which wealth produced in the colonies returned to Britain. Lampooned in some parts of society for their gluttony, opulence and lack of metropolitan taste, absentee plantation owners were an important conduit for wealth created in the colonies. These were individuals who were determined to leave their mark on British society through marriages, investments, country-house ownership, politics, and cultural patronage. This powerful and influential group went on to form one of the greatest obstacles in the road to abolition.

Key Questions:

13. **What drove the expansion of Transatlantic Slavery?**
14. **What impact did this have on London?**
15. **Who else made money from Slavery and how?**
16. **Who were the absentees and what was their status in British society?**

7. The Middle Passage

- Transatlantic slavery resulted in many tragic consequences for generations of Africans. It is estimated that 12 million Africans were forcibly displaced from Africa into a life of slavery in the Americas and elsewhere. There are no figures for how many Africans died resisting their capture or, having been captured, died of their mistreatment on the way to the coast, or in barracoons (holding pens) awaiting the slave trading ships.

- An estimated one and a half million Africans died during the 'middle passage' from Africa to the Americas. These deaths were mostly as a result of the practice of packing enslaved Africans in chains in inhumane and unsanitary conditions for weeks on end. Large numbers died from gastrointestinal disorders, but many also died through resistance, whether by the ending of their own lives or in struggles with the crews for their freedom. The British accounted for 27,000 of these slave trading voyages first to Africa, then across the Atlantic to transport Africans to a life of slavery.

- Different ships known as West Indiamen brought back sugar, tobacco and other slave-produced goods to Britain for sale. The route became known as the 'Triangular Trade' although some ships went on to trade with North America and others returned in ballast (empty) from their slave trading voyages. Lives were purchased using a variety of objects including beads, guns, finished cotton pieces as well as manilas, a bracelet currency long used in Africa, which was adapted by the European slave traders.

Key Questions:

17. **How many people were enslaved during the TAST?**
18. **How many died on the middle passage and why?**
19. **Why did some refer to it as the 'Triangular Trade'?**

8. Conditions on the plantations

- In order to produce tropical commodities to meet European demand, plantation owners had to establish a legal basis for relations between enslaved Africans and their owners. Between 1661 and 1688 slave codes were drawn up which maintained that owners were responsible for feeding, sheltering, and clothing the enslaved Africans. Despite the existence of such codes, the experience of slavery often involved malnutrition and bad treatment. Enslaved people could not give evidence in court and therefore they could not substantiate any claims of abuse. The planters made up the judiciary in the colonies and out of mutual self-interest would be unlikely to punish slave-owners who beat, raped, maimed and even killed enslaved people.

- Enslaved Africans were considered chattel: once they had been purchased in the colonies they became the property of someone else. This meant they had no rights in law and could be treated as brutally as the owner wanted. People who had survived the horrific voyages across the Atlantic faced immediate separation from those they had formed relationships with on board the ship, the loss of their African identity through the renaming process and prohibition of their native languages, religions and customs. Violence was an everyday part of life in the Caribbean. With very few Europeans compared to the population of enslaved Africans, fear, inspired through extreme forms of brutality, became the way in which the Europeans maintained control. Although enslaved Africans were considered to be valuable property, keeping the population subdued was worth more to the planters. Flogging was a way of extracting labour from the enslaved as well as a punishment for relatively minor infractions. Enslaved Africans who took part in uprisings were tortured and executed.

Key Questions:

20. **What were the 'Slave Codes' for and what did they say?**
21. **Why was it known as 'Chattel Slavery' and what did this mean?**

9. The structure of work and Urban Enslavement

- A 'plantation system' was established and involved a variety of jobs such as slave drivers, field workers, skilled workers such as carpenters or

blacksmiths, marginal workers, jobbing gangs and domestics. A hierarchy, often but not always based on skin tone, was established among the enslaved. Work in the great house was considered to be higher status than work in the fields. Although the labour could be less physically exhausting, enslaved people who worked in the houses were exposed to increased contact with their enslavers. They were expected to pander to their owners every whim at all hours of the day and night. For many women, working in the house could leave them more vulnerable to sexual abuse. Enslaved mistresses were sometimes described euphemistically as 'housekeepers'.

- During the intensive harvest period the enslaved had to work day and night all week long. However, outside of this period they were allowed some time away from working for their owners. This time was often used to tend to what was known as the provision grounds. In some islands, enslaved people supplemented their meagre rations by growing their own fruit and vegetables, sometimes they also owned livestock. If they were able to grow more than they needed then they might be allowed to sell their produce at what were known as the 'slave markets'. Earning money at the markets enabled some enslaved people to buy their freedom, but not all enslaved people were allowed to engage in independent economic activity. The enslaved were expected to maintain their huts which meant they spent time on repairs and maintenance.

- Not all enslaved people worked on plantations, a small but significant proportion lived in urban areas. About half of those living in towns worked as domestics within the homes of merchants, government officials, and tradesmen. Like domestic workers on plantations, these enslaved people often lived very closely with their enslavers. They were often better clothed and fed than those working in the fields, though this was done in order to reflect the status of their owners rather than for their own comfort. They were also more susceptible to the whims and moods of those whom they served. Enslaved people who lived in towns also worked outside of the home in various industries and trades such as fishermen, shopkeepers, transport workers, as well as skilled and general labourers. Working away from the eyes of their 'owners' meant these people experienced a bit more control over their labour. This was especially true for skilled labourers who were sometimes able to hire themselves out; this income enabled some to pay for their freedom.

Key Questions:

22. **What was the usual hierarchy of work within a 'Plantation System'?**
23. **Why was all enslaved labour dangerous in different ways?**
24. **What were 'provision grounds' ?**
25. **What other jobs outside of the 'plantation system' existed for enslaved persons?**

10. Cultural and social life

- The enslaved kept in touch with their own cultures and developed new 'creole' forms of identity. Singing, music and dancing were an important part of self-expression and provided a degree of escapism. Some of the songs used Christian metaphors to talk about the enslaved peoples' desire for freedom. Enslaved Africans created new forms of folk culture that reflected their experiences of slavery. They told folk stories such as the tales of Anansi the Spider and Brer Rabbit. These stories had encrypted meanings and often

involved the triumph of their unlikely heroes over seemingly unbeatable foes.

- Religion played a vital role in the lives of enslaved Africans. Some practices such as Obeah, which was derived from African spiritual tradition, were illegal and punishments for such practices included transportation and death. A strong feature was belief in the power of healing and casting spells. Some enslaved people believed that Obeah had the power to ward off evil spirits and gave them a sense of collective identity. The people who practiced it were powerful figures in the community and could inspire and lead others. They were consulted for cures for illness, for arbitration of disputes, punishment for wrong doing and for prediction of future events. They had to hide this power from their owners or face punishment. Another religion was Myalism. Myal men believed they were in direct contact with the spirit world. They performed rituals close to, or around, trees. The form it took was usually drumming and dance until people reached a frenzy. The spirit first took control of the Myal men and then their followers. These ceremonies were designed to protect followers from evil spirits. The evil spirits were often conceived of as the people who had stolen them from Africa.

- After the abolition campaign began in the 1780s there was an increased pressure on slave-owners to Christianise and educate the enslaved. Wishing to appear as benevolent, some slave-owners adopted this idea claiming that the enslaved were far better off in the Caribbean where they could be exposed to the cultivating influence of European culture and religion. From the mid-1750s, some plantation owners allowed missionaries to convert enslaved Africans to Christianity, although they failed to remove all African cultural traces. The Anglican missionaries were preferred by the ruling classes in the Caribbean because they tended to support the status quo. Many of them owed their livings to the plantation owners and therefore were compliant in their benefactors demands regarding the appropriate preaching of the gospel. The Anglican missionary institution the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts even owned its own plantation in Barbados following a bequest in the will of Christopher Coddrington in 1710.

- The non-conformist missionaries and in particular the Baptists converted large numbers of enslaved people with the message that the brotherhood of Christ believed in equality not just in heaven but also on earth. These churches soon became a form of alternative society, a home-from-home, where enslaved people from different plantations mingled for worship and stayed for conversation and friendship. They also created a new type of African leader from the educated class of enslaved people who preached the word of the Bible. For these reasons Baptist missionaries were particularly despised by the planters, most of whom were Anglicans. They suspected that the missionaries were engaged in subversive abolitionist activities. An uprising broke out in Jamaica during the Christmas of 1831 led by Samuel Sharpe, an enslaved man who was a deacon at the Burchell Baptist Church. The rebellion became known as ‘The Baptist War’ and it played an important role in bringing about the ending of slavery in 1833.

- Christian holy days were celebrated by the enslaved and they were given time off at Christmas. On these occasions special clothes and costumes were worn and food was prepared. People paraded through the plantations or town singing, dancing and playing music. They often incorporated their own culture into these festivals such as the figure of Jonkonnu (John Canoe).

Using the carnival-esque of these occasions, figures like John Canoe could make fun of passers-byes, including the Europeans.

Key Questions:

26. **What does 'creole' mean and what examples are there?**
27. **What role did Religions of the enslaved Africans play? (give example).**
28. **What role did Religions of the enslavers play? (give example).**
29. **Why was the non-conformist Church different and how?**

11. Enslaved Families

- The survival of the family unit for enslaved Africans was extremely difficult. Africans had been separated from their ethnicities in Africa. They were forcibly transported in horrific conditions which often led to the deaths of friends, loved ones and members of their group. On arrival in the Americas, families that had managed to stay together could be auctioned off separately. There were usually greater numbers of men than women. Even if enslaved men and women developed relationships, they were often undermined by Europeans working on the plantations who took enslaved women as sexual partners. Consensual and non-consensual relationships between Europeans and enslaved Africans resulted in a growing mixed heritage population in the Caribbean. The principle, set out in Slave Codes and laws in the colonies, stated that the offspring of Enslaved Africans were automatically the property of the parent's owner. Some European men took responsibility for their offspring; they could purchase their freedom and pay for their education. Some sent their children back to Britain to escape the rigid colour lines of a slave society. Others left their children in slavery viewing the practice as a means of increasing the population of enslaved people.

- The cabins or huts where enslaved families lived were basic. They provided some privacy and gave mothers space to pass on cultural attributes to their children. Childhood amongst the enslaved was brief. As soon as a child could be productive they were set to work. The types of work they could undertake depended on their age. Some were set to work weeding the canes, or in the kitchens, whilst others took care of smaller children, the sick or elderly. The yard outside acted as a focal point for their social life, where people met to talk, gossip, play music and tell stories. As the abolition campaign became more powerful in Britain encouraging the enslaved to form families became increasingly important. The abolitionists wanted to preserve and strengthen the family unit and pushed for marriages between the enslaved to be recognised

Key Questions:

30. **Why was 'family life' so difficult to build or maintain for enslaved people?**
31. **What happened to 'mixed heritage' populations and why?**

Chapter 2: Abolition

12. Change: the campaign to abolish the British slave trade and slavery

- The campaign which resulted in the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 must be looked at separately and chronologically from the campaign for the abolition of slavery in 1833. The campaigns to abolish the slave trade and later slavery occurred on both sides of the Atlantic – in Britain and in the Caribbean – and involved both Britons and Africans.
- Africans resisted enslavement from the beginning of the process. Resistance took a number of forms including mutiny at sea – at least 1 in 10 slave trading voyages experienced a revolt. We know about these mainly through records left by Europeans as part of court cases such as those related to the Amistad along with information recorded in personal papers. As not all uprisings were recorded, there are likely many more that we do not know about.
- On the plantations suicide, the sabotage of work, running away, the control of reproduction and armed uprisings were some of the ways the enslaved resisted their captivity. Despite the terrible retribution for taking part in open acts of resistance the enslaved rose up periodically. In the context of a violent slave society retaining a sense of self and surviving should also be considered as a form of resistance.
- In Britain the campaign to effect parliamentary change involved a core leadership of abolitionists as well as a mass movement of people from across Britain. Campaigning involved new and old methods of protest including petitioning and abstinence from slave-produced commodities. The abolitionist movement in Britain also included African people. Individuals like Olaudah Equiano and Mary Prince told their stories to the British public. It was this kind of interaction which allowed the British public to see the human suffering that slavery caused.

Key Questions:

1. **What was different between the 1807 campaign and 1833 campaign?**
2. **Who were the 'original' abolitionists and in what ways did they resist?**
3. **Who were the abolitionists in Britain?**

13. Formerly enslaved people who campaigned for the abolition of the slave trade and slavery

Example 1: Jonathan Strong Case (1765)

- Jonathan Strong was an enslaved African who was brought from Barbados to London. In 1765 Strong was brutally beaten by David Lisle, the slave-owner who had brought him to London. His battered body was discovered by William Sharp, the brother of Granville Sharp (1735-1813), a prominent civil servant. The Sharps took Strong to St. Bartholomew's hospital and when he recovered found him employment. When Lisle attempted to sell Strong back into slavery he refused to go and Granville Sharp represented him in court. The case was eventually dismissed and Strong won his freedom. His case was an important step in the legal history of abolition.

Example 2: James Somerset Case (1772)

- In 1771 an enslaved man called James Somerset arrived in England with his enslaver. Somerset was able to escape but when his master found him he was put on a ship bound for Jamaica. Granville Sharp put the case before Lord Mansfield, Lord Chief Justice of England. In 1772, Mansfield's verdict was that there was no legal basis for slavery in English law. This was regarded by many as effectively abolishing slavery within Britain; however, in practice this instead meant that no person could be removed from England to slavery on the colonies. When news of the case reached the colonies, many Africans mistakenly believed it would only be a matter of time before they would become free.

Example 3: Olaudah Equiano (c.1745-1797)

- Details of Equiano's early years have been the subject of academic dispute. In his autobiography he claimed that he had been born in Nigeria and that at the age of eleven he had been abducted with his sister and forcibly transferred to Barbados and then America. He was sold to a Royal Navy officer who renamed him Gustavas Vassa. Following that he was purchased by a Quaker called Robert King who converted Equiano to Christianity and taught him to read and write In 1766, at the age of 21, Equiano had saved enough money to buy his own freedom. From 1777 onwards he lived in London and became involved in the abolition movement. It was Equiano who told Granville Sharp about the slave ship Zong massacre. He was a prominent member of the 'Sons of Africa', a group of twelve African men who campaigned for abolition. In 1789, he published his autobiography, The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa, the African. He toured the country, using the book to expose the horrors of slavery. In 1792 he married an Englishwoman called Susannah Cullens and they had two daughters, Anna Maria and Joanna.

Example 4: Mary Prince (1788-post 1833)

- Mary Prince was an enslaved woman who lived in Devonshire Parish in Bermuda. When Mary was 12 years old, her family was split up and she and her two younger sisters were each sold away from each other. She was treated harshly and often flogged. Eventually she was sold again and this time she was put to work in the salt pans in the Turks and Caicos Islands. This form of labour was particularly harsh - many people suffered from heat and sun exposure and the salt caused sores on the skin and flesh of their legs. In 1814 she was sold yet again, to John Adams Wood of Antigua. In 1828 the Woods family sailed to London and it was here that Mary asserted her freedom. Doing so meant she could not return to Antigua where her husband had purchased his own freedom. She left the household and began working for the antislavery campaigner Thomas Pringle. In 1831 an account of her experiences was published after she dictated her story to Susanna Strickland. It is one of the only texts we have of the experiences of women under British slavery.

Key Questions:

4. **What do the experiences of Jonathan Strong reveal about slavery at the time?**
5. **What do the experiences of James Somerset reveal about slavery at the time?**
6. **What do the experiences of Olaudah Equiano reveal about slavery at the time?**
7. **What do the experiences of Mary Prince reveal about slavery at the time?**

14. British abolitionists who campaigned for the abolition of the slave trade and slavery

- Example 1: the Quakers
- In Britain and North America, a campaign to end the slave trade is believed to have started with a non-conformist Christian group – the Quakers – founded by George Fox in 1657. The Quakers believed that everyone was equal in the eyes of God and no one person had the right to own another. In 1688 there was a small protest against slavery by Quakers in Pennsylvania. In 1696 the Pennsylvania Yearly Meeting of Quakers made the first official pronouncement against slavery. The American Quakers continually put pressure on the London Yearly Meeting of Quakers to denounce slavery. In 1727 the London Yearly Meeting officially expressed disapproval of the slave trade but not slavery as many Quakers owned enslaved Africans themselves. In 1761 the London Yearly meeting banned the owning of enslaved people and stated that any Quaker who continued would be disowned. In 1783 the London Yearly Meeting presented their first petition against the slave trade to Parliament signed by 273 Quakers. The Quakers began to develop relationships with other abolitionists like Thomas Clarkson and Granville Sharp. Nine of the twelve founding members of the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade were Quakers.
- Example 2: Granville Sharp and the Zong Massacre (1782)
- In 1782 the Zong was transporting 442 enslaved Africans across the Atlantic. After Captain Luke Collingwood lost his way, the journey was extended by weeks and the Africans became ill and began to die. Hoping to make an insurance claim when he returned to Britain, the Captain decided to throw 132 enslaved Africans into the sea. He later claimed this was to save supplies and limit the spread of disease. The insurance company did not believe him and they went to court in an effort to avoid paying for the dead Africans. The case was about insurance fraud and not murder. The case was heard twice, the first time the insurers were instructed to pay, but the second time new evidence was introduced before Lord Chief Justice Mansfield and he agreed that the Captain and crew were at fault. Despite this, no one was tried for the murder of the Africans. The high profile case raised important questions in British society about the humanity of the enslaved. Many anti-slave trade campaigners used the case in future speeches.
- Example 3: William Wilberforce (1759-1833)
- In 1783 William Wilberforce, M.P. for Yorkshire, met Rev. James Ramsey, a ship's surgeon. Ramsey told Wilberforce about the horrific conditions enslaved Africans endured on the middle passage. In 1786 Wilberforce embraced Evangelical Christianity and his interest in humanitarian reform grew. He received a letter from Sir Charles Middleton which re-opened his interest in the slave trade. He made his first speech against the slave trade in Parliament in 1789 and presented his first bill to abolish the slave trade in 1791. It was easily defeated by 163 votes to 88. During the 1790s Wilberforce reintroduced the Abolition Bill almost every year but little progress was made. During the war with France, abolition of the slave trade was seen as unpatriotic because it would hand the profitable trade over to the enemy. Following the successful revolution of enslaved people in the French colony

of Saint Domingue (now Haiti), many people in Britain were frightened that any talk of freedom would inspire the enslaved rise up in the British Caribbean.

- Example 4: Thomas Clarkson (1760-1846)

- In 1785 Cambridge University held an essay competition which Clarkson won with the title 'Is it right to make men slaves against their will?' This began a lifelong campaign. In 1787 the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade was founded by a committee of twelve members including Clarkson. Later they persuaded William Wilberforce MP to be their spokesman in the House of Commons. Clarkson was given the responsibility of collecting information to support the abolition of the slave trade. This included interviewing 20,000 sailors and obtaining equipment used on the slave-ships such as iron handcuffs, leg-shackles, thumb screws, instruments for forcing open enslaved people's jaws and branding irons. His inspired use of imagery included the use of a diagram of the slave ship Brookes; this has become one of the most famous icons of the abolition campaign. Clarkson was instrumental in getting Olaudah Equiano's book circulated and he arranged for him to speak in Cambridge. He helped to create a mass movement outside Parliament with thousands of people attending meetings and signing petitions. From 1823 he was involved with the Society for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery and campaigned against slavery across the world.

Key Questions:

8. **What do the experiences of the Quakers reveal about slavery at the time?**
9. **What do the experiences of Granville Sharp reveal about slavery at the time?**
10. **What do the experiences of Wilberforce reveal about slavery at the time?**
11. **What do the experiences of Thomas Clarkson reveal about slavery at the time?**

15. Uprisings by the enslaved in the Caribbean

- Uprisings often saw cooperation between free people of African descent and the enslaved. They had a variety of aims, from the amelioration of their condition within slavery to total revolution and overthrowing the system. Those involved in uprisings were inspired by both African and European ideas of freedom. Many of those working in the colonies had known freedom in Africa and felt it was their right to be free. Additionally, events occurring on the world stage had an impact. The Seven Years War (1754-1763), the American Revolution (1775-1783), and the French Revolution (1789-1799) all saw various Europeans nations, and those of European descent in America, fight each other over territory, ideology and power. This was the age of revolutions and notions of liberty and tyranny were being debated openly – ironically for societies that were deeply involved with slavery, people were willing to die for the cause of freedom.

Example 1: Tacky's War (1760)

- Tacky was an enslaved Coromanti African from the coastal town Fanti in the central part of present day Ghana. He had been a chief and went on to lead a rebellion of enslaved Africans in Jamaica between May and July of 1760. It was the most significant rebellion to take place since an insurrection in 1733 in St. John and prior to the Haitian Revolution. It began on Easter Monday in

the parish of St. Mary before moving inland. The rebels moved from plantation to plantation destroying property and killing those Europeans they encountered. They intended to overthrow the British and establish themselves independently. They were betrayed by another enslaved person and the militia and the Maroons were sent out to deal with the rebels. In fear of retribution some supporters returned to their plantations. Tacky fought on until he was killed by a Maroon.

Example 2: Haitian Revolution (1791)

- In 1791, the largest and most important revolt took place in Saint Domingue, a French colony which produced 50% of the world's coffee and 30% of its sugar. 500,000 enslaved Africans liberated themselves, set the plantations on fire and killed their masters. They were led by Toussaint L'Ouverture (1743-1803) an educated man who had formerly been enslaved and who had been living free since 1776. In 1795, the British saw a chance to seize the island from the French. The navy invaded but failed dismally. 60% of the soldiers died and the British left in 1798. France tried to recapture the island but also failed. It was a long, hard struggle that resulted in the deaths of 100,000 enslaved and formerly enslaved people and 24,000 French colonists. It eventually resulted in 1804 in the establishment of an independent country and the abolition of slavery in Haiti. No other revolt was as successful and other colonies had to wait more than 150 years before they became independent. The revolt put fear into the heart of all plantation owners across the Americas. The Haitians paid a heavy price for their freedom. In 1825 the French demanded the payment of 150 million francs in return for recognising Haiti as an independent nation. They claimed it was compensation for their loss of property during the Haitian Revolution. The 'debt' was only finally repaid by the Haitians in 1947.

Example 3: Fédon's Rebellion 1797

- This rebellion in Grenada in 1795 was led by Julien Fédon, a French-speaking free man of mixed heritage who owned a plantation. The uprising was against British rule, and involved many free people of colour as well as enslaved people. Although the expressed aim was not the end of slavery, it was felt this would occur if a French Republican regime was instituted. Fédon is thought to have been influenced by the French Revolution. Although the British regained control of the island, tension remained until slavery ended.

Example 4: Bussa's Rebellion (1816)

- Following the introduction of slave registers in Trinidad and St. Lucia in 1813, there was a series of debates in Parliament in 1816 regarding their introduction across the rest of the Caribbean. Abolitionists wanted to make sure that slave trading abolition was being adhered to. They also wanted to track mortality on the plantations in a bid to improve conditions and eventually abolish the institution. However some enslaved Africans in the Caribbean mistakenly thought that slavery had been abolished. As a result in 1816 an African named Bussa led a slave revolt in Barbados. Bussa was killed in battle, but others fought on until they were overpowered. 300 people were tried afterwards. Just under half were executed and many other were exiled from Barbados.

Key Questions:

12. **What do the events of Tacky's War reveal about slavery at the time?**

13. **What do the events of Haitian Revolution reveal about slavery at the time?**
14. **What do the events of Fedon's Rebellion reveal about slavery at the time?**
15. **What do the events of Bussa's Rebellion reveal about slavery at the time?**

16. Amelioration

- In 1823 the Society for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery was set up by William Wilberforce and his successor to the parliamentary leadership of the abolition movement Thomas Fowell Buxton. In 1824, a pamphlet was printed by Eliza Heyrick calling for 'Immediate not Gradual Abolition' – this was the first abolitionist pamphlet by a woman. The mid-1820s were characterised by a series of policies that were designed to reform the institution of slavery – this was known as the period of amelioration. At the heart of the issue was a contest between the abolitionists, who thought amelioration would prepare the enslaved for freedom and the proslavery lobby, who thought that reform from within the institution would save it or at the very least prolong its ending.

- In 1823 the Foreign Secretary George Canning introduced a series of measures for the improvement, or amelioration, of conditions for the enslaved in the Caribbean. He had already discussed the proposals with members of the proslavery lobby – the Society of West India Planters and Merchants – and they had assured him that they would be able to get the colonial assemblies (who controlled the internal law-making of the Caribbean colonies) to agree to the terms. Trinidad was the first colony to adopt the measures in 1824. It was hoped that the others would follow suit. The Jamaica Assembly was particularly resistant to the changes because they argued that these measures undermined the principle that each colony should legislate for its own internal affairs. Amelioration therefore also formed part of a discussion on how the empire should be run and where ultimately power lay – with the imperial parliament or with the colonial legislature. The measures for amelioration included:

    - The encouragement of formal marriage
    - The abolition of the whip
    - Religious instruction for the enslaved
    - The right of the enslaved to purchase their freedom
    - The appointment of a protector of the enslaved in the colonies who would provide official returns of births, deaths, marriages, punishments and manumissions

Although reluctant to adopt these changes, many colonists felt that in order to prevent abolition they had to demonstrate to the British government that they could reform the institution of slavery from within.

Key Questions:

16. **What happened, legally, to Slavery during the 1820s and why?**
17. **What was the debate between the 'abolitionists' and the 'ameliorationists'?**

Chapter 3: Legacies

17. The abolition of slavery and compensation

- In 1832, a new Whig Government brought about the Great Reform Act which made Parliament less corrupt. Rotten borough seats were considered to be a sign of what was known as 'Old Corruption'. These seats were bought and sold between powerful political interests. The proslavery lobby had purchased rotten borough seats in the past in order to have their voice heard in Parliament. The abolition of these kinds of practices meant the proslavery lobby was a diminished force in Parliament. Coupled with parliamentary reform, there had been an important uprising of the enslaved in Jamaica in 1831. The uprising in Britain's largest Caribbean colony meant that discussion about the cost of the continuation of slavery was high on agenda.

- In 1833 Parliament passed an act abolishing slavery in the Caribbean, Mauritius and the Cape of Good Hope. The road to abolition had been a long and fraught one. Slave-owners had long argued that they had bought into the system in good faith; it was a legally sanctioned commercial activity and many had staked their fortunes on investing in it. Enslaved people were classed as a form of property during a period in which property ownership was a near-sacred principle. The issue of compensating slave-owners had first been raised in the 1780s when a serious organised abolitionist campaign was launched. In 1831 Thomas Fowell Buxton discussed the issue at a general meeting of some two thousand members of the Anti-Slavery Society. Buxton declared that 'if compensation were to be made, the compensation was due from them [the planters] to the Negro – compensation for evils without number and for years of unrewarded toil.' However, he acknowledged that 'the planters had a just claim upon their accomplice in iniquity, the British Government.' Whilst some abolitionists, including the Birmingham born Quaker Joseph Sturge, rejected calls for compensation outright, they were a minority voice. Fearful that the issue could threaten to derail plans for abolition, and in respect of prevailing ideas about property, many abolitionists accepted the measure.

- As part of the measures taken by the British government to end slavery, £20 million of compensation was paid to the slave-owners and a period of apprenticeship was forced upon the formerly enslaved people. The amount represented approximately 40 per cent of government expenditure, although at the time the state was much smaller than today. The value of the £20 million can be calculated in today's money (2014) using a variety of different indicators:

    - Retail Price Index = £1.6 billion
    - Real wages = £16 billion
    - National Debt = £30 billion
    - GDP = £80 billion
    - State expenditure = £200+ billion

- The government borrowed the money from a syndicate organised by Nathan Mayer Rothschild. The loan was incorporated into the national debt, a move which was presented as a form of atonement for what had been described as a 'national sin'. A commission was appointed by Parliament to decide who should receive the money and on what basis. As individuals came forward, each claim was documented. Before the money was paid, officials were sent out to the colonies to validate the claim. If the claim was deemed to be

genuine then the money was paid via the National Debt Office of the Bank of England. Valuations of the enslaved were made according to gender, age, skill and the productivity of the individual colony in which they laboured. Crudely speaking this meant that, for example, an enslaved person in the profitable colony of British Guiana was deemed more valuable than their counterpart in Jamaica where the sugar economy had been in decline. Disentangling the claims and counter-claims meant that whilst most payments had been made by 1838, some cases dragged on into the 1840s and beyond.

- The records of the Slave Compensation Commission offer an insight into the history of slave-ownership in Britain. These records are housed in the National Archive at Kew and consist of the 'proceedings of the assistant commissioners who were sent to the several colonies, valuers' returns, registers of claims with indexes, original claims and certificates, counter-claims, adjudications in contested cases, certificates for compensation and lists of awards, commissioners' hearing notes and minutes, accounts.' The bureaucratic records that the compensation process produced offer a snap-shot of who the slaveowners were at the end of slavery. In this sense we must recognise their limitations as a source on slave-ownership because they do not tell us who the slave-owners were in the earlier and more profitable period of the eighteenth century.

Key Questions:

1. **How did the 1832 Great Reform Act encourage the 1833 Abolition Act?**
2. **What did the 1833 Act specifically bring about?**
3. **What did many abolitionists, like Thomas Buxton, accept in return and why?**
4. **How and how much compensation was paid?**
5. **Why do these records have great value to a historian (aka us?) studying Transatlantic Slavery?**
6. **What are the limitations of these records as a historian studying Transatlantic Slavery?**

18. Apprenticeship

- When the formerly enslaved were legally emancipated on 1 August 1834, they entered a period known as apprenticeship. The initial scheme outlined that 'praedial slaves', those who worked in the fields, would serve six years while 'non-praedial slaves', domestics and skilled workers, would serve four years. Children under the age of six became immediately free. The specifics of this legislation could vary between the different colonies (although they could not be longer than the time periods specified). In the end, the scheme was ended for all the formerly enslaved after four years.

- The system was framed by its supporters as a period in which the formerly enslaved would learn how to become waged labourers. It was also a time when slave-owners had to begin learning how to manage without slavery. The formerly enslaved were expected to pay part of the cost of their freedom by providing up to 45 hours of free labour per week for their former enslavers. Beyond this time they were in theory supposed to be able to negotiate wages or not work at all. The end of legalised slavery meant that former slave-owners no longer owned the bodies of the previously enslaved, but apprenticeship meant that they continued to own a great portion of

their labour. There was general dissatisfaction with the system from both sides; former slave-owners were aggrieved about the curtailing of their power while the formerly enslaved wanted more freedom. The system was riven with problems of abuse and overwork.

- The historian Thomas Holt has described this period as a 'half-way covenant' because in many respects the relationship between the planter and the worker continued to operate as it had done during slavery. Special Magistrates were appointed to oversee disputes between the planters and the apprentices and were mostly appointed in Britain. The Magistrates had the power to decide on punishments for the apprentices. Whilst the whip had theoretically been banned new punishments including working on the wheel were introduced to ensure discipline in the work force. Even under the auspices of the Special Magistrate the use of the whip continued.

- There were some exceptions to the apprenticeship system. Two islands, Antigua and Bermuda, did not have a period of apprenticeship, but rather moved directly to wage labour. Additionally, enslaved people who were in England and children who were under the age of six when the emancipation act was passed, were made free in 1834. This freedom placed some children in a precarious position as some former owners withdrew care provisions for them, and in some cases, barred their parents from caring for them as well.

- Many abolitionists believed this was simply slavery by another name. Joseph Sturge and Thomas Harvey wrote an important work The West Indies in 1837: Being the Journal of a Visit to Antigua, Montserrat, Dominica, St. Lucia, Barbadoes, and Jamaica. The document revealed continued abuses, poor conditions and discrimination.

- In 1834 The Royal Gazette reported that the apprentices in Jamaica had demanded to know if this was a situation that had been sanctioned by the King. In 1835 apprentices in St. Kitts threatened to go on strike if they were not paid wages. Their counterparts in Trinidad and Essequibo issued a similar threat. As with opposition to slavery by the enslaved, the apprentices carried out everyday acts of resistance through slow labour, lateness, the destruction of agricultural implements and a rejection of the authority of their former masters. Opposition to apprenticeship by formerly enslaved people and British reformers brought about its early ending.

Key Questions:

7. **Why weren't the formerly enslaved immediately free?**
8. **What was the reaction to the apprenticeship system by the enslaved? By abolitionists?**
9. **Why does Holt describe it as a 'half-way covenant' (agreement).**
10. **Who did not have to follow the apprenticeship system?**

19. The Caribbean after 1833

- Forms of unfree and coerced labour continued in the Americas and the Caribbean after 1838. The end of slavery in the British Empire saw an increase in slave-produced goods from Brazil, Cuba, and United States. The trade in enslaved Africans, though made illegal by the British state in 1807 and by successive European states in the years that followed, continued into the 1860s in the many Caribbean and Central and South American colonies. The process then was not a simple one of law, but a change in behaviour that took over 50 years. Many British individuals and companies continued to be

involved in the trade as well, despite the law. In those places where the trade in human beings had become illegal, illicit trading took place. Also, the trade in people within and between colonies and nations in the Americas also occurred. The British Navy has been celebrated for intercepting the slaving vessels of other nations to free Africans on their way to being enslaved, but little is said about what became of the people who were known as 'Liberated Africans'. These people were rarely repatriated to Africa. Rather they were often made to serve a form of apprenticeship in British Caribbean islands, and some formed their own communities, such as Kingstown in Tortola in the Virgin Islands.

- The formerly enslaved received no form of compensation. Many continued working on the same plantations where they had been enslaved and then apprenticed. Some people of African descent had limited representation in the local assemblies. In some islands, such as Jamaica and Grenada, the planters relinquished their assemblies in favour of direct crown rule from Britain. The surrender of power stemmed from the fear that the formerly enslaved would eventually take over the assembly and rule in their own interests. In other places, such as Barbados, the Bahamas and Bermuda, the need to own property of a set value helped to bar most of the formerly enslaved from the ability to vote and gain seats in the legislatures of those islands.

- After slavery, the limited availability and conditions of work meant many from smaller island migrated in search of work to the newer British colonies of Trinidad and Guiana which were demanding labour. The demand for cheap labour in these and other British colonies, both in the Caribbean and elsewhere, led to the introduction of indentured labourers from India and China. Before the 1840s, Indians escaping poverty at home travelled to Mauritius. After 1840 migration to the Caribbean increased greatly and continued into the early 20th century. The system was fraught with abuses and though many stayed, some sought to return to India.

- Both the formerly enslaved and formerly indentured labourers desired land to form their own communities, but the demands of large scale agricultural production along with the political and social order of colonial societies made this difficult. The struggle for rights continued within these islands until the era of decolonisation in the British Caribbean began with independence for Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago in 1962 and ended with the independence of St Kitts and Nevis in 1983. Some of the smallest islands remain British Overseas Territories today. For many, independence was heralded as the fulfilment of the promise of emancipation as the descendants of the formerly enslaved took over the reins of political power. And yet, the systemic inequalities established through enslavement and colonialism still have legacies that are felt throughout the Caribbean today. People living in the Caribbean face health, education and job insecurity and the islands rely heavily on tourism for income. These are affected by fluctuations in the global economy and by environmental issues caused by the tourism on which they rely. The contemporary reparations movement seeks to address the long-term consequences of enslavement.

Key Questions:

11. **Why did Slavery not end in the Caribbean even after 1838?**
12. **What continuities existed after 1838 for the enslaved?**
13. **Why did planters (former slave owners) give over direct rule back to Britain?**

14. **What did many formerly enslaved workers do after 1838?**
15. **What did Planters do to try and bring down (deflate) wages of their workers?**
16. **What are the legacies of Slavery that exist even to this day and why?**