Y8 History Knowledge Organiser – How significant was the slave trade to Britain?

Glossary

Slavery	When a human being is owned by another.
Transatlantic slave trade	The trade of enslaved people across the Atlantic ocean.
Royal African Company	(RAC) English company that had a **monopoly** on **slave trade** in the West coast of Africa.
Raw materials	Basic materials used to produce other goods.
Plantation	Large farm that only grows one type of crop.
Resistance	Fighting something and refusing to accept it.
Abolition	Making something illegal, stopping it.

1. Precolonial Africa

West Africa had many kingdoms before the Europeans took over, like Mali, Kongo and Songhai. One of the most powerful was the **kingdom of Benin**:

- Founded by the Edo people;
- Ruled by kings called Obas, who were worshipped like gods;
- Famous for their artwork in bronze and brass;
- Located in present-day Nigeria.

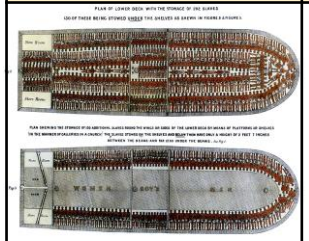
2. The Triangular Trade

The trading route taken by British sailors during the transatlantic slave trade had **three stages**, forming a triangle on the map. Each region provided something the other needed. See picture:

- **12.4 million people** were enslaved between 1532 and 1832
- One third of these people travelled on British ships
- The children of enslaved people automatically also become slaves. This is called **chattel slavery**.

3. Life as an enslaved person

Middle Passage → **Sale** → **Plantation**



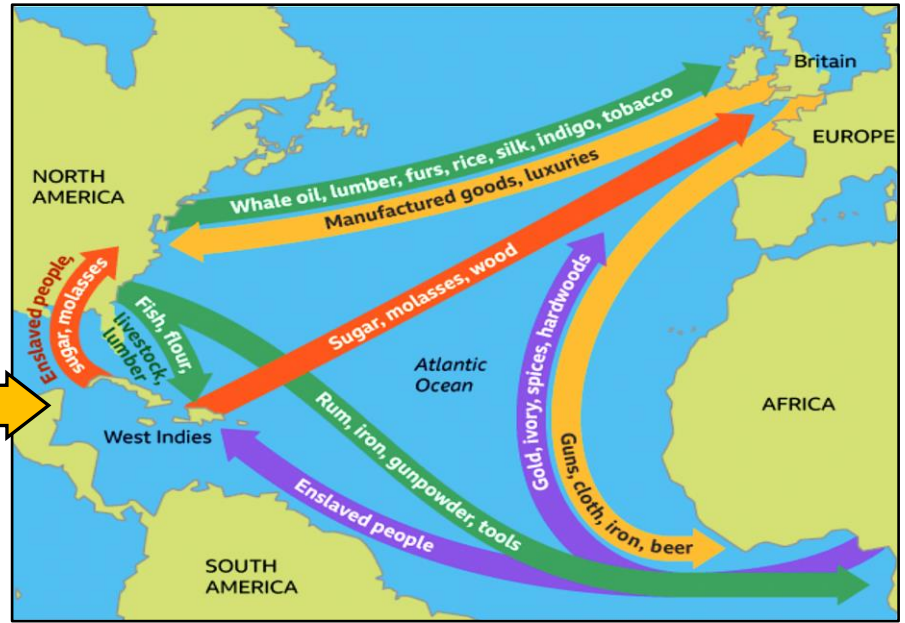
- Second 'leg' of the triangular trade;
- **2 million** people died en route;
- **Conditions:** cramped, people chained together, terrible food, filth, disease and abuse

After arriving in the Americas, enslaved people would still be treated as cargo. They were sold by:

1) **Auction**: to the highest bidder; *or*

2) **Scramble**: where buyers paid an agreed fixed sum

- Work 6-day weeks
- Obey the **overseer** (person who stopped slaves escaping and punished them if they tried).
- Sleeping in shacks
- Legally belonged to the 'master'



4. Impact on Britain

Port cities: Liverpool, Glasgow and Bristol went from small ports to major cities within 100 years. Shipping industry and slave owners' profits grew.

Empire: Britain had a monopoly of slave trade in parts of Africa – this made the empire even richer. Slavery existed in all British colonies.

Industrial Revolution: Growth of British industries depended on raw materials made with slave labour (e.g. cotton). Mills and factories were built with slavery profits.

Banking: British banks financed slaving voyages and insured slave ships. The government borrowed money from these banks to pay off slave owners.

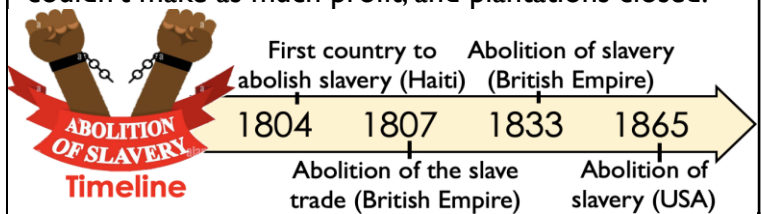
5. Resistance & abolition

Factors that led to the end of slavery:

Resistance: Enslaved people resisted by working slowly, breaking tools, running away, teaching themselves to read & write, and sometimes using violence. Punishment was severe if they were caught.

Abolitionists: Some white Europeans campaigned in Parliament for the end of slavery based on Christian beliefs about equality and justice.

Loss of money: Sugar prices dropped in the late 1700s, meaning plantation owners and slave traders couldn't make as much profit, and plantations closed.



Y8 History at BCA:

	Autumn		Spring		Summer	
	1	2	1	2		2
Year 8	**Civil War**	**Age of "discovery" & British Empire**		**Industrial revolution**	**Slave trade (Bristol)**	**Civil Rights**
Links to	Rebellion & KS3 king power/divine right	P2 GCSE (American West), WWI, KS3 slave trade		WWI and KS4 Medicine	KS4 American West, Industrial revolution, British Empire	Holocast, human rights, rebellion, suffragettes, slave trade.
TC	Interpretation	Change and continuity		Sources	Significance	Change and continuity

Understanding the curriculum

Why are we studying this topic?	Students can understand the roots of some contemporary racial inequalities and wider issues in Europe, Africa and the Americas. They will appreciate the role Britain played in this process and how ordinary people here were affected by this trade.
How does it link to previous learning?	In earlier topics in year 8, we have already covered the British empire and the industrial revolution – both of which were hugely impacted and made possible by the existence of slavery elsewhere in the world.
How will it link to future work?	This will set the scene for students to understand the civil rights movement in the USA and Britain, as well as improving their culture capital for Personal Development. Links to Paper 2 GCSE topic (American West), e.g. American Civil War and Exodusters.

Threshold concept this term: SIGNIFICANCE

Good historians understand historical significance. This means they can explain the significance (importance) of events by looking at the changes that resulted from them. They are able to select and justify criteria for making judgements about the importance of historical events.