



## Curriculum for lessons from 1619 to 1719

**Central Historical Question:**  
**How did slavery come to the British Colonies?**

### Virginia Company's Grim Reputation (Lesson one)

**Overview:** King James I granted a charter to the **Virginia Company** of London in 1606 for a joint-stock venture to establish an English colony on the New World continent in the northern hemisphere. The hope was to find valuable raw materials, such as gold and silver, to repay investors in England. The venture failed due to a lack of profit and the inability of the settlers to survive in the wilderness. After the 1622 Indian massacre in the **Anglo-Powhatan War**, the King revoked the company's charter in 1624 and remade the Virginia Company into a royal colony known as the **Virginia Colony**.

A review of events that led to the King's revocation of the original charter shows that **John Rolfe** in 1613 produced the first successful commercial tobacco crop in the Virginia Company that was acceptable to the English taste. Cultivating the crop demanded mass labor that was so burdensome that few could till the soil for long. The turnover in labor was monumental. Virginia's grim reputation of harsh working conditions, disease, starvation, beatings, and Indian raid killings made it challenging to attract the workforce needed to grow the tobacco and populate the Virginia Company.

Indentured servitude was a system devised to replace the workforce in the Virginia Company, and between 200,000 to 300,000 people were sent to the British Colonies from England, Ireland, and Scotland. When the first twenty blacks came in 1619, they were treated as indentured servants. Indentured servitude was harsh and unforgiving, and death came before many servants completed the terms of their contracts.

The Virginia Company's **headright system** was introduced in 1618; it became a scheme for those with money to secure land on the backs of the poor. Initially, each person was given freedom, citizenship, and a land grant of fifty acres after several years of indentured servitude. Later the land went, instead, to the wealthy businessmen who paid for the indentured servant's transportation to the new world. As a result, some indentured servants worked for more than fifteen years without ever becoming landowners.

### Objectives:

- To investigate primary and secondary resources for clarity of history.
- To understand the underprivileged were the original workforce in Jamestown.
- To understand indentured servitude.
- To study the forgotten history of Britain's white slaves sent to the American colonies.
- To understand that eventually, Britain sent convicts, vagabonds, and children to the colonies.



- What role did the indentured servant play in the colonial economy?
- To understand the conditions that affected the colonists' safety.
- To understand why indentured servitude became unimportant after 1800.
- To understand the causes of the workforce turnover at Jamestown.

### **Procedure:**

### **Historical-Critical Thinking:**

Instruct the students concerning the differences between **primary** and **secondary** resources. Ask students which of the following listed documents are reliable? Why? Why not? What do these documents tell the students?

**Teacher Guide:** Read the Teacher Guide before presenting the PowerPoint to the students. Print the following documents for class discussion and give them to the students **after** reviewing the materials and PowerPoint.

- Print **Broadsides** for class discussion and White Slavery advertisement June 27, 1840.  
Runaway of indentured servant John Cyas, October 31, 1763  
The arrival of tradesmen for sale, May 12, 1774  
The arrival of men, women, boys, and sale prices for their servitude  
Runaway boy, twelve years of age, a six-dollar award for his return, May 12  
Runaway indentured servant girl 12 or 13 years of age, May 10, 1832  
Runaway indentured servant, Thomas Hinnigan, May 7  
Philadelphia paper, B. Franklin, three postings of runaway indentured servants
- Print **letters** from **Richard Frethorne** (1623) and **Elizabeth Sprigs** (1756).  
Letters are found at the end of the Teacher's Guide, pages 13-14.
- Print **Felons and Rattlesnakes** article by Benjamin Franklin. (May 9, 1751)  
Benjamin Franklin's response to Britain's transporting 50,000 convicts to the colonies
- Print Transcription of **Letter** on the 1622 Indian Massacre by John Smith.  
John Smith was back in Britain when the **Powhatan** Indian attack occurred in 1622. Read the excerpt and determine how valuable his report is as a secondary resource.

**PowerPoint:** This lesson includes a downloadable PowerPoint that outlines the beginning of the long road to slavery. Use the supplemental documents and questions to understand the beginning British colony's use of the underprivileged poor on the road to slavery in the New World.

### **Asking Strategic Questions for Class Discussion:**

Ask students these questions for a better understanding of events in Jamestown.  
Were you aware of the term indentured servant?



Why did Britain send the poor and convicts to the colonies?  
Why do you think that indentured servitude became unimportant after 1800?

### **Video Recommendations:**

#### **A Nation Takes Root, Jamestown Museum Film (22:49)**

<https://video.search.yahoo.com/search/video; ylt=Awrc5plaKChhunIA0YT7w8QF; ylu=c2VjA3NIYXJjaAR2dGlkAw--; ylc=X1MDOTY3ODEzMDcEX3IDMgRhY3RuA2NsawRjc3JicHZpZANlbzNaWGpFd0xqR2Uyc0VFwGI5bFNBSWZNaF1TVFBQUFBQUJ3S0FKBGZyA21jYWZlZQRmcjIDc2EtZ3AEZ3ByaWQDUWdrWUpkVEdTbEtHa1YweXIQa0h1QQRuX3JzbHQDNTkEbl9zdWdnAzIEb3JpZ2luA3ZpZGVvLnNIYXJjaC55YWhvby5jb20EcG9zAzAEcHFzdHIDBHBxc3RybAMEcXN0cmwDMjYEcXVlcnkDamFtZXN0b3duJTlwZm9yJTlwY2hpbGRyZW4EdF9zdG1wAzE2MzAwMjE3OTY-?p=jamestown+for+children&ei=UTF-8&fr2=p%3As%2Cv%3Av%2Cm%3Asa&fr=mcafee&type=E210US0G91538#id=8&vid=60f8a69b6ba3bb25d6c917f619b4b9aa&action=view>

#### **The History of Jamestown (14:30):** (please view to determine if appropriate for young children)

<https://video.search.yahoo.com/search/video?fr=mcafee&ei=UTF-8&p=any+videos+on+the+Jamestown+colony&type=E210US0G91538#id=2&vid=1b4fa362005310988cacea59a197d9dc&action=click>

### **Activities:**

Indentured servants' letters to families in England.

Print copies of letters of Richard Frethorne and Elizabeth Sprigs from the **Teacher Guide** on pages **14-15**. Have children read both letters and compare the two experiences of the **indentured servants**. What was similar or different in their time in the colonies? Had anything changed when Frethorne wrote his letter in 1623 compared to Sprigs' letter dated in 1756? How desperate were they?

Richard Frethorne was a survivor of the Indian attack known as **Martin's Hundred**, the same day as the attack by the Powhatans on Jamestown. Richard died on February 16, 1624.

Are these letters reliable? Why? Why not?

Examining BroadSides: Hand out copies of **broadSides** for evaluation and class discussion. What can you tell from the broadsides about arriving indentured servants and those that ran away? How do the letters of Richard Frethorne and Elizabeth Sprigs help you understand why indentured servants would try to escape?



**Define these Vocabulary Words:** Broadsides; indentured servant; headright system; Martin's Hundred; Powhatans; John Rolfe; Virginia Company; Chief Powhatan; Anglo-Powhatan War (1622-1632); Virginia Colony; white slavery; primary resources, secondary resources.

### **Essay Test Question:**

Write a paragraph or provide an oral presentation about the early history of indentured servitude and include the following issues in your answer.

- What were the issues that caused sickness for the settlers?
- What skills did indentured servants have?
- What was the difference between the **Virginia Company** and the **Virginia Colony**?
- Why did the **Powhatan** Indians attack Jamestown and **Martin's Hundred** on March 22, 1622?
- What percentage of **indentured servants** completed their contract?
- What is **white slavery**?
- Why did indentured servitude end?

### **Recommended Resources:**

**Reading:** *Black History 1619-2091: An Illustrated and Documented African-American History*

#### **Websites:**

Historic Jamestown

<https://www.nps.gov/jame/learn/historyculture/the-virginia-company-of-london.htm>

Jamestown Rediscovery

<https://historicjamestowne.org/history/virginia-company/>

**YAAHA** Teacher Guides, PowerPoints, Blog, Videos at [www.YocumBlackHistory.org](http://www.YocumBlackHistory.org)

## **Britain's Solutions for Manpower in the Virginia Colony** (Lesson two)

**Overview:** In August 1619, the first twenty blacks that arrived at the **Virginia Company** were slaves but were treated as **indentured servants**. Indentured servants were black or white, male or female, and if Christian or baptized according to British law, were equal before the law. Once the servitude terms were served, no stigma remained. By 1625, there were only twenty-three blacks that lived in the colony. At



that time, there was no market for black slaves in the **Virginia Colony**. By 1650, three hundred fifty blacks were living in Virginia, and fifty were free.

The harsh working conditions would continue to place a great demand on attracting a new workforce to Jamestown, so Britain would continue to entice “**free willers**” to come with the hope and expectation for a better life. Britain also introduced the **headright system** in 1618. The headright system was a scheme for those with money to secure land in Virginia on the back of the poor. Initially, servitude promised that each was given freedom, citizenship, and a land grant of fifty acres after several years of indentured servitude. Unfortunately, wealthy businessmen imported indentured servants, and the land went to those who paid the settler’s passage.

From 1618 until 1775, English **convicts** were transported to the New World. **Benjamin Franklin** demanded an end to the convict trade by writing in the Pennsylvania Gazette: “rattle-snakes seem the most suitable returns for the human serpents sent to us by our mother country.” (Article in supplement page, Lesson One)

Interestingly, **Britain** brought sugar cane to **Barbados**, which had near-perfect environmental conditions for that crop. At first, Britain used indentured servants to grow the labor-intensive crop. However, they would later use an indigenous labor force before relying on the slaves bought from Africa. Thus, the sugar colonies of the West Indies were exceedingly more important to Britain than the American Colonies.

### **Objectives:**

- To learn about the successful headright settlers, **Anthony and Mary Johnson**.
- To understand the first sanction of slavery with Anthony Johnson’s 1655 court ruling.  
<https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/court-ruling-on-anthony-johnson-and-his-servant-1655/>
- To understand the headright system and what it meant to Jamestown.
- To learn why did Britain send convicts, vagabonds, and children to the colonies.
- To learn how to use primary and secondary resources in history.
- To study Benjamin Franklin’s ***Felons and Rattlesnakes*** article.
- To understand why Barbados and other sugar colonies were more important to Britain.

### **Procedure:**

#### **Historical-Critical Thinking:**

In recounting a primary resource of John Rolfe’s entry into his record of the arrival of blacks in 1619, it has been noted that he was inaccurate in a few details. Read the passage **The Anthony & Mary Johnson Family: Successful Black Headright Settlers** to the students in chapter one in ***Black History 1619 to 2019***. Why did Rolfe write this entry? Is this reliable? Why or why not?



Students should be encouraged to understand the value of primary and secondary sources to gain information but should be cautious concerning the trust worthiness of that information. The economic changes in the history of the British colonies as they switched from indentured servitude to slavery will be studied in this lesson. In addition, students will discover what role the British government played in the expansion of slavery in the British Sugar Colonies in the next lesson, **The Roots of Slavery**.

**Teacher Guide:** Read the Teacher Guide before presenting the PowerPoint to the students. Prepare students for discussion and critical thinking by passing out supplement illustrations of the two indentured women servants. Knowing what you learned in lesson one, what can you determine about the conditions that faced women in Jamestown?

The painting *The Baker's Cart* (1656) by Frenchman Jean Michelin, is the type of destitute individuals picked up on the streets of Britain and sent to Jamestown. What clues can you gather about this family? What is the setting? What are they selling? What can you tell about their clothing?

**PowerPoint:** This lesson includes a downloadable PowerPoint that outlines the gradual change of the workforce from indentured servants, convicts to slaves from Africa. After 1680, the flow of indentured servants diminished and increasingly gave way to African slavery. However, by the middle of the eighteenth century, slavery existed in the agricultural labor system in the southern British colonies.

### **Asking Strategic Questions for Discussions:**

What is the importance of Anthony and Mary Johnson to the story of the first legal sanction of slavery in the British colonies? How did the Johnson family benefit from the headright system?

Lead a discussion about the headrights system using the teacher guide and PowerPoint for visual interest and the video link below about Anthony Johnson.

### **Video Recommendations:**

**Anthony Johnson** (Note Johnson arrived in Jamestown in 1619)

[https://video.search.yahoo.com/search/video; ylt=AwrJ7JzONSlh\\_LcAK5ZXNyoA; ylu=Y29sbwNiZjEEcG9zAzEEdnRpZANEMTA0NV8xBHNIYwNwaXZz?p=anthony+johnson+court+ruling55&fr2=piv-web&type=E210USOG91538&fr=mcafee#id=11&vid=994ea820f161b7503c4b40f8cd672e74&action=view](https://video.search.yahoo.com/search/video; ylt=AwrJ7JzONSlh_LcAK5ZXNyoA; ylu=Y29sbwNiZjEEcG9zAzEEdnRpZANEMTA0NV8xBHNIYwNwaXZz?p=anthony+johnson+court+ruling55&fr2=piv-web&type=E210USOG91538&fr=mcafee#id=11&vid=994ea820f161b7503c4b40f8cd672e74&action=view)

**Define These Vocabulary Words:** John Rolfe; White slavery; Anthony Johnson; John Casor; free-willers; headright system; Benjamin Franklin.

### **Essay Test Question:**

Write a paragraph or provide an oral presentation about the gradual shift of the workforce in the British colonies from indentured servitude to African slavery. Include the following points in your answer.



- Name at least four causes for the massive turnover in the British colonies.
- What were the free-willers?
- How did the headright system work?
- Why did Britain send convicts, vagabonds, and children to the colonies? What did they promise the convicts?
- What is the importance of the Northampton County court ruling in 1655 for Anthony Johnson?
- Why were the British Sugar colonies more important to Britain than the American colonies to Britain? Why was sugar so crucial to the British?

## **Recommended Resources**

### **Reading**

*Black History 1619-2091: An Illustrated and Documented African-American History*

*White Cargo* by Don Jordan and Michael Walsh

*Black Yellow-Dogs* by Ben Kinchlow

*White Cargo* by Don Jordan & Michael Walsh

*The Readers Companion to American History*, by Eric Foner & John A. Garraty

### **Websites**

YAAHA Teacher Guides, PowerPoints, Blog, Videos at [www.YocumBlackHistory.org](http://www.YocumBlackHistory.org)

Court case summary of Anthony Johnson

<https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/court-ruling-on-anthony-johnson-and-his-servant-1655/>

In his paper, Benjamin Franklin, open letter, *Pennsylvania Gazette*, to end the convict trade, May 9, 1751. <http://www.earlyamericancrime.com/convict-transportation/in-the-new-world/reaction>

## **The Roots of Slavery** (Lesson three)

**Overview:** Economic power and war are the roots of slavery. When American revisionist history is taught about slavery, America is portrayed as the villain on the world stage. Slavery is a universal institution older than the first human records and it flourished throughout the world. China was the greatest merchant of human beings. Arab Muslims enslaved Christians. Europeans enslaved other Europeans. Long before Europeans arrived, Africans enslaved other Africans.

The Transatlantic Slave Trade, or “triangular slave trade,” began in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century when sugar cane was brought to the Caribbean. By 1700, Barbados produced 8,000 tons of sugar a year to supply the sweet appetite in England. The valuable sugar cane crop needed a replaceable labor force. Economics,





as well as racism, shifted the workforce from convicts and indentured servants to slaves. Black slaves became the norm. Chesapeake planters in the American Colonies noticed how black slaves were a better long-term investment than indentured servants. After 1680, the flow of indentured servants diminished, and African slaves replaced those workers.

This lesson plan is essential not to diminish the responsibility of slavery in America but to understand how this institution undergirded the southern economy and eventually led to a Civil War between the North and South.

### **Objectives:**

- To study transatlantic maps of the slave trade.
- To discuss a brief history of slavery.
- To understand the role that Britain played in the slave trade. They did not start the slave trade but they perfected it. Britain brought more slaves to the West Indies than any other nation.
- To listen to the dramatization recordings of Olaudah Equiano & Quobna Ottobah Cugoana.
- To understand how to extrapolate information from maps for historical reference.

### **Procedure:**

Historical-Critical Thinking: Instruct the students concerning the differences between **primary** and **secondary** resources. Ask students which of the following listed documents are reliable? Why? Why not? What do these documents tell the students?

Teacher Guide: Read the teacher guide before presenting the PowerPoint to the students. Give them supplemental materials of the maps.

- Print copies of **Map A**, **Map B**, and **Map C**.
- Discuss all the information that can be obtained from these maps. What can you conclude?
- Look at the slave **ship diagram**. What can you tell about the slave ship diagram?
- Have students listen to the **slave dramatization recordings** before reviewing the PowerPoint.

PowerPoint: Present **PowerPoint** to students and use **teacher guide** for more information.

- Use slide 3 when playing the first **two capture recordings**.
- Use slide 5 when playing the second **middle passage recordings**.

### **Asking Strategic Questions for Class Discussion:**

After reviewing the two video recommendations below, 1807-The Year Britain Abolished Its Slave Trade, ask the students if they agree with the documentary based on what they know from these three lessons in this unit? Is the information reliable? Why? Why not?

### **Video Recommendations:**





Britain was the greatest slaving nation in history. The British were central to the Atlantic Slave trade and perfected it, carrying more Africans to the West Indies than any other nation. The slave trade depended on capturing slaves from inland tribes in Africa and transporting them to the coast to be shipped across the Atlantic. The tribes would sell them to the slave traders who would take them to the West Indies and later to the American colonies. Britain used dozens of ports, thousands of ships, tens of thousands of sailors who brought this human cargo to Barbados and other sugar colonies. Unfortunately, most people only know about Britain's abolished the international slave trade, and they do not know about their egregious history before that.

#### **1807 – The Year Britain Abolished Its Slave Trade, Part 1**

<https://video.search.yahoo.com/search/video?fr=mcafee&ei=UTF-8&p=video+on+Britain%27s+perfected+slave+trade&type=E210US0G91538#id=54&vid=eeefaaa88a1d5cd4976a47aaaf8748eb&action=view>

#### **1807 – The year Britain Abolished Its Slave Trade, Part 2**

<https://video.search.yahoo.com/search/video?fr=mcafee&ei=UTF-8&p=video+on+Britain%27s+perfected+slave+trade&type=E210US0G91538#id=57&vid=bffa7a2239296e1a54e9c876386ade38&action=view>

#### **Activities:**

Have students look at the 1830 and 1860 Census Bureau records.

- Ask them to find the number of **slaves** in each colony, **free blacks**, and the **total populations** in these states.
- What does this information tell you?
- Is this a primary resource or a secondary resource? Is it reliable?
- <https://www.census.gov/history/pdf/histstats-colonial-1970.pdf>
- <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1830/1830b.pdf>
- <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1860/population/1860a-02.pdf>

**Define Vocabulary Words:** Slave Coast, Atlantic Slave Trade, Gold Coast, Olaudah Equiano, Quobna Ottobah Cugoana, Middle Passage, sugar colonies, Barbados, Triangular Slave Trade, West Indies, Chesapeake planters.

**Essay Test Question:** Write a paragraph or provide an oral presentation about the growth of slavery during the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Include the following points in your answer.

- The middle passage and how blacks were treated.
- The role Britain played in the Atlantic Slave Trade.
- Describe what the triangular slave pattern was.
- Describe the role that warring African tribes played in the Atlantic Slave Trade.

#### **Recommended Resources:**



Reading:

*Black History 1619-2091: An Illustrated and Documented African-American History*

*The History of Slavery* by Norman L. Macht and Mary Hull

*The Tyranny of Experts* by William Easterly

*Original Intent* by David Barton

*The Readers Companion to American History*, by Eric Foner & John A. Garrarty

*White Cargo* by Don Jordon & Michael Walsh

Websites:

YAAHA Teacher Guides, PowerPoints, Blog, Videos at [www.YocumBlackHistory.org](http://www.YocumBlackHistory.org)

**Did black people own slaves?**

<https://www.theroot.com/did-black-people-own-slaves-1790895436>

**Top Ten Slave Owners**

<https://listverse.com/2017/06/06/top-10-black-slaveowners/>