Unit 2: Slavery, From Africa to America

- All racial groups and some religious groups (for example, Jews, Christians and Muslims) have been enslaved at some point in time; Africans hold no monopoly on serving as slaves. Anglo-Saxons and Franks, for example, were among the Europeans who were enslaved during the Middle Ages.
- Slavery traditionally existed in some African societies, its nature there, similar to the nature of bondage in some other slave systems found throughout the world, was radically different from the system found in the Americas. Slaves in Africa, for example, usually did not pass on their status to their offspring, and they often were allowed opportunities for social mobility.
- The Portuguese are acknowledged by historians to have started the trans-Atlantic slave trade.
- In 1441 two Portuguese explorers, Nino Tristao and Antonio Goncalves, sailed to what is today Mauritania in West Africa, kidnapped twelve natives, and returned home to present them as gifts to Prince Henry the Navigator.
- By 1460, seven hundred to eight hundred African slaves were taken annually into Portugal and between 1460 and 1500 about fifty thousand slaves had been taken out of Africa, most brought into Europe, where they were used mainly as domestic servants and artisans and in farming. The remainder were used in the Azores, Madeira, Canary, and Cape Verde islands on sugar plantations in a system that served as a model for the cultivation of commercial crops later in the Americas.
- The principal areas of Africa from which enslaved Africans were obtained were West Africa (Senegal to Gabon – fifty-five percent); Central Africa (Congo and Angola – twenty-five percent); and East Africa (mainly Mozambique -- twenty percent).
- Those taken specifically to the United States were drawn from West Africa (Senegal to Gabon – seventy-three percent); Central Africa (Congo and Angola – twenty-five percent); and East Africa (mainly Mozambique -- two percent).
- The removal of enslaved Africans from Africa followed a general pattern, starting in West Africa, then shifting eastward and southward over time. The following areas successively became the focal point of obtaining slaves: Senegambia/Sierra Leone, Windward Coast, Gold Coast, Bight of Benin, Bight of Biafra, Congo/ Angola, and Mozambique.
- Five leading slave importing countries in the Americas: Brazil (forty percent), Haiti (nine percent), Jamaica (eight percent), Cuba (seven percent) and the United States (four percent).
- During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries many African slaves became part of what was called the triangular trade. Under this trading network, rum from the British colonies of North America was carried to West Africa (Guinea Coast) and traded for slaves. These slaves were then carried to the West Indies, where they were used to cultivate sugar. The molasses produced
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from the sugar was then sold, along with more slaves, to the British colonies in North America. From the molasses rum would be produced in North America and the cycle would start again.

- The trans-Atlantic slave trade ended in 1873. Its decline had begun as early as 1803 when Denmark abolished its slave trade. Great Britain and the United States followed in 1808, Holland in 1814, and France in 1815.
- [http://www.nps.gov/timu/historyculture/kp_annakingsley.htm](http://www.nps.gov/timu/historyculture/kp_annakingsley.htm)
- [http://fcit.coedu.usf.edu/florida/photos/industry/kingsl/kingsl.htm](http://fcit.coedu.usf.edu/florida/photos/industry/kingsl/kingsl.htm)
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