

The Slavery Quilt

Student objectives: Students will

1. Analyze the effects of the slave trade on the New World and African culture.
2. Understand the role of the Middle Passage in the slave trade.
3. Evaluate the violation of human rights as seen in the African slave trade.

TEKS: WH1.B; WH5.B; WH18.C

Materials Needed: Roots, a piece of white cotton sheeting for each student (optional)

Teaching Strategy:

1. Begin the study of slavery in the New World by having the students write down what they know about slavery in the New World.
2. Choose selected scenes from the mini-series, Roots. Suggested scenes include the birth and naming of Kunte Kinte, the capture of Kunte Kinte and the impact of this event on his family, and the trip across the ocean. Have the students take notes on their impressions of three characters in these clips: Kunte Kinte, the ship captain, and the slave trader.
3. Additional sources could be used to deepen the students' understanding of the slave trade in the New World. These might include the following texts:

Middle Passage by Tom Feeling

The African from Crossing the Danger Water: Three Hundred Years of African-American Writing, editor-Deirdre Mullane

The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano

Web site on the Middle Passage:

<http://beatl.barnard.columbia.edu/students/his3487/lembrich/seminar5.html>

4. Using the notes on the slave trade, have the students compose a poem about slavery. These can be original poems or formula poems can be used. Suggested ones include diamante or acrostic forms.
5. If the class slavery quilt is to be made, students are then given a piece of white cotton sheeting about 12 inches by 12 inches. They should transfer their poem using a good black ink pen to the cloth, being sure they have an original title. They should also be encouraged to illustrate their poem. The squares can then be sewn together in a slavery quilt to be on display during Black History Month.
6. A final evaluation writing can then be conducted with the students writing a short essay in which they explain the importance of protecting human rights using evidence from the study of the African slave trade.

GT/AP Extension: Have the students research the attempt by Jefferson to condemn the slave trade in the Declaration of Independence and the reasons this attempt failed. Discuss the differences in American history had this attempt not failed.