

Unit 4, Lesson 2

Enslavement in History

Warm Up:

1. Think of something that changed for you between yesterday and today.
2. Turn to a partner and explain the change.

Introduction:

Enslavement in the New World
(America)

compared to

Enslavement in the Old World

Resource 1: Enslavement in History

What is Enslavement?

“Slavery” has been defined as “when a person owns another person as property.” (source [here](#)) While this definition has been accepted in recent years, a better definition might be slavery is when a person CLAIMS to own another person as property. This definition rejects the idea that a person can actually own another human being while accepting the idea that people did believe this. Unfortunately, laws backed-up this belief in Colonial America.

Why Enslavement, Enslaved, and Enslaver and Not Slavery, Slaves, and Slaveowners?

Until recently, the terms slavery, slaves, and slaveowners were commonly used and they still are as people try to adjust to the use of new terms. The problem with those old terms is that they can suggest things that are both wrong and untrue. For example, calling people slaves can suggest that they are property and not human beings, or that they are not equal to other people. Using the term “enslaved” draws attention to the fact people were victims of a horrible institution or practice. Similarly, “slaveowner” can suggest that the enslaved people were property to be owned, rather than victims of people who mistreated others as property rather than human beings.

Did Enslavement Start in America or With Africans?

No. “Slavery existed from the earliest known history of Africa.” In fact, long before Columbus “discovered” America, people were being enslaved in Africa, America, Europe, and the Middle East. Using England as an example, 1 out of every 10 people living in that country was enslaved in the year 1086. Many of the enslaved were White people who came from an area of Europe known as the Slavic region. This is where the word “slave” comes from i.e., “Slav.” (Franklin and Higgenbotham, p 9-10)

Even though enslavement existed around the world, people living today know it was and still is wrong. No person should be able to claim that they “own” someone else or be able to force another person to work without pay.

Why were People Enslaved?

“The main purpose of American slavery was to make money for enslavers.” (source [here](#)) The enslavers used enslaved people to make profits and help build the American economy, while not paying the enslaved people for their work.

Who was enslaved?

The most common reason given for enslaving people involved wars. When armies fought, the winners enslaved their prisoners. Believe it or not, enslavers actually started wars so that they could win them then enslave the losers. Other reasons why people were enslaved included punishment for committing serious crimes and for owing money (debts) to other people. (White, Bay, Martin p 9)

What Changed when a Person Was Enslaved?

Many things changed and all for the worse. But the most important change was that the enslaved person was now considered to be the property of the enslaver. This meant that the enslaver could treat enslaved people like they treated any other piece of property. The enslaver could buy, sell, or give the enslaved person away to someone else, and no longer had to pay the enslaved people for their labor.

Let's Read!

Change Over Time

Character Map

Free



Enslaved

What
Changed?

Directions: Write each of the following under the FREE PERSON or the ENSLAVED PERSON to show what changed when a free person was enslaved.

- Could be bought
- Could not be bought
- Could be given away
- Could not be given away
- Could be sold
- Could not be sold
- Was considered property
- Could not be treated as property
- Was happy
- Was sad

Use the article,
*Enslavement in
History* to
complete the
character map.

CAUSES



EFFECTS



ENSLAVEMENT

Directions: Fill in the lines on the pigeon foot diagram to show some causes and effects of enslavement using the information that appears below:

- Could be sold
- Owed debts
- Made prisoner of war
- Treated like property
- Committed a crime
- Could be given away

Causes &
Effects of
Enslavement

Create a
Pigeon Foot
Timeline

1. **True or False** (circle the correct answer): People around the world were being enslaved before Columbus discovered America.
2. According to the reading, where were people enslaved before Columbus discovered America?
 - a. America
 - b. Africa
 - c. Europe
 - d. All of these places
3. According to the reading, why were some people enslaved in the Old World?
 - a. They were homeless
 - b. They came from Asia
 - c. They did not have jobs
 - d. They were prisoners of war
4. According to the reading, what changed when people were enslaved in the Old World?
 - a. They were whipped
 - b. They could not have children
 - c. They could never become free
 - d. They could be bought and sold
5. According to the reading, why were people enslaved in America?
 - a. Because they owed debts
 - b. Because they had special skills
 - c. Because they were a different race
 - d. Because they were from the Slavic region
6. Check three things that made enslavement in the New World different from enslavement in the Old World.
 - ___ in the New World, the people who were enslaved were not Europeans
 - ___ enslaved people in the New World were paid for their work
 - ___ those who were enslaved in the New World were enslaved for life
 - ___ the children of enslaved people in the New World automatically became enslaved
 - ___ enslaved people in the New World could not be sold
7. **True or False** (circle the correct answer): Enslavement still exists in the world today.

One final
“Check for Understanding”
Individually complete the
worksheet.