Stolen Lives, Sweet Profits

Teacher		**Class**	Year 8
Subject	History	**Topic**	The transatlantic slave trade
Date		**Room**	
Lesson length	60 minutes	**Country**	United States

Students learn how Britain's triangular trade worked and who it harmed and enriched. They map profits in Britain and judge what abolition changed.

Curriculum links

- What was the Transatlantic Slave Trade and why was it abolished? [1]
- How did Britain build an empire around the world and what was life like in the empire? [1]

Learning objectives

- Students will explain the three legs of Britain's triangular trade.
- Students will describe effects on African communities and on Britain.
- Students will explain why the trade was abolished and what changed.

Success criteria

- I can outline the three sides of the triangular trade.
- I can describe two effects on Africa and two in Britain.
- I can explain what the 1807 Act banned and what remained.

What students already know

Ask: what goods came from Caribbean plantations to Britain, and who do you think grew them? Take 3-4 quick hands-up answers to link sugar to enslaved labour.

Key words

triangular trade	voyages linking Europe, West Africa and the Americas to swap goods and people [8]
Middle Passage	forced voyage carrying captive Africans across the Atlantic to the Americas [8]
plantation	large farm growing crops such as sugar using forced labour [8]
enslaved person	someone forced to work without pay who is treated as property [7]
abolition	official ending by law of buying and selling of captives [6]

Materials

- Slides 1-5, 7-8, 10-12
- Video clip 5 (0:00-3:31) on Slide 8
- Role cards for a merchant, a shipbuilder, a factory worker, a shopkeeper
- Mini whiteboards and pens
- Exit ticket slips or books

Before the lesson

- Print role cards in sets of four for groups, with two bullet points highlighted on each
- Test Slide 8 Video clip 5 (0:00-3:31) for sound and picture
- Set room with space for groups of four and mini whiteboards ready
- Have Slides 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12 ready to show in order

Lesson outline

0–5 min **Starter** 5 min · Whole class

To hook interest in sugar profits and recall what students know about empire and slavery.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 1 title and Slide 5 mystery sugar cane prompt.
2. Say the hook and hold up a packet of sugar or point to the picture.
3. Take quick hands-up ideas on who grew sugar and how merchants got rich.
4. Link answers to today's objectives on Slide 2 without giving everything away.

STUDENTS DO

1. Look at the sugar prompt and listen to the hook.
2. Offer ideas on who grew sugar and who got money from it.
3. Listen to the three objectives for the lesson.

Say: Follow the sugar in your tea back in time. Whose pockets did it fill before it reached the cup? Today we will trace that sugar from Caribbean plantations worked by enslaved people back to British ports and profits, and then to abolition.

Ask: This sweet crop made British merchants rich. Who grew it, and how? (Sugar cane, grown by enslaved people on Caribbean plantations forced to work without pay.) · What do you already know about Britain's empire and enslaved labour? (Britain had colonies, used enslaved Africans on plantations, and ships sailed between Britain, Africa and the Americas.)

Check understanding: Hands up for who can name sugar as plantation crop; if vague, point to Slide 5 prompt and restate one-line answer before moving on.

Support: Show the sugar picture and give sentence starter: Sugar was grown by ___ on ___. **Stretch:** Ask why sugar in Britain might tell us about lives far away in the empire.

Use: Slides 1, 5

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5–17 min **Teaching the triangle** 12 min · Whole class

To explain the three legs of Britain's triangular trade and the Middle Passage.

YOU DO

1. Show Slides 2, 3 and 4 and trace the circle with a finger on the map.
2. Model Leg 1 to Leg 3 step by step using the worked example below.
3. Stress that about 1.8 million Africans died on the voyage known as the Middle Passage [5].
4. Cold-call to label each leg with what was carried and which way it sailed.

STUDENTS DO

1. Follow the three legs on the slide and copy a small triangle with arrows in books.
2. Repeat back what each leg carried and the direction.
3. Note why full holds on every stage meant large profits.

Say: British ships sailed a money-making circle. Manufactured goods were transported from Europe to be traded in West Africa [8]. Then enslaved people were transported across the Atlantic and forced to work on plantations [8]. Then crops grown by enslaved people were sold in Europe [8]. Ships could sail with full holds on every stage, making large profits [6].

Worked example: One Bristol ship: Leg 1 - loads guns, cloth, iron and beer and sails from Bristol to West Africa where enslaved people were exchanged for trade goods [5]. Leg 2 - forces captive Africans across the Atlantic on the Middle Passage to the Caribbean. Leg 3 - loads tobacco, sugar and cotton grown by enslaved people and sails back to Britain to sell.

Ask: What was swapped in West Africa for captive Africans? (Trade goods such as guns, cloth, iron and beer [5].) · Why did merchants like the triangle rather than sailing back empty? (Because ships could sail with full holds on every stage, making large profits [6].) · What happened on the Middle Passage? (Enslaved people were forced across the Atlantic and about 1.8 million Africans died on the journey [5].)

Check understanding: All show mini whiteboards with Leg 1, Leg 2, Leg 3 labels; reteach any leg missed before group work.

Support: Give a triangle outline with Leg 1, 2, 3 starters and pictures of goods, people in chains, sugar.
Stretch: Ask why Bristol becoming the dominant slave trading port by the mid-18th century mattered for jobs [3].

Use: Slides 2-4

17–37 min **Main activity: profit chain** 20 min · Groups

To explain who in Britain profited from enslaved labour.

YOU DO

1. Put students in fours and give each group four role cards and a mini whiteboard.
2. Ask each student to read their highlighted bullets aloud, then build a chain with arrows.
3. Circulate, prompting use of facts on refining sugar, tobacco and chocolate and factory jobs.
4. Stop with 4 minutes left for two groups to read their money-flow chain in order.

STUDENTS DO

1. Read role aloud using the two highlighted bullets.
2. Draw arrows on mini whiteboard to show money flowing from plantations to each role.
3. Agree one sentence on who profited most directly and share with class.

Say: You are four people in Britain linked by sugar. Read your card, then draw arrows to show how money flowed from plantations to British jobs and profits. Use respectful terms such as enslaved people and focus on the system that made this happen.

Worked example: Role cards - a merchant: I invest money in a voyage from Bristol and profit directly from selling captive people and sugar [3]. A shipbuilder: I build and repair slave ships in Bristol and profit directly from the voyages [3]. A factory worker: I get a job in a factory refining sugar, tobacco and chocolate from Caribbean plantations [3]; factories provided many jobs for ordinary people who too benefitted [5]. A shopkeeper: I sell the finished sugar and tobacco in my shop to local people.

Ask: Who profited directly from the voyages? (Merchants, investors and shipbuilders profited directly from the voyages [3].) · How did ordinary people who never sailed still benefit? (Tradespeople and manufacturers made money refining goods such as sugar, tobacco and chocolate [3] and factories provided many jobs for ordinary people [5].)

Check understanding: Look at whiteboard arrows for plantation to merchant to factory to shop; if chain is backwards, model one arrow and ask group to fix the rest.

Support: Give each role card with two bullet points already highlighted to read aloud. **Stretch:** Ask groups to decide who knew most about where the money came from and who knew least, and why that matters.

Use: Slide 7

37–50 min **Why the trade ended** 13 min · Whole class

To explain abolitionist pressure and what the 1807 Act did and did not do.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 8 and play Video clip 5 (0:00-3:31), asking students to listen for campaigners, owners and the ban.
2. Teach the timeline: Society meeting in May 1787, 1807 Act, Royal Navy patrols from 1808.
3. Show Slide 10 bullets on 750,000 still enslaved and £20 million to owners.
4. Link resistance to pressure: everyday acts to large-scale rebellions were permanent [3] and helped end the trade [6].

STUDENTS DO

1. Watch the clip and note one abolitionist method and one owner argument.
2. Copy the 1807 versus still enslaved contrast in two short lines.
3. Vote true or false on: 1807 freed everyone in British colonies.

Say: The first meeting of the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade took place in London in May 1787 [6]. African writers such as Olaudah Equiano spoke out against inhumane treatment [6]. Owners said Caribbean plantations were important to Britain's economy [6]. Parliament passed an Act in 1807 stating all slave trading by British subjects was utterly abolished, prohibited and unlawful [6].

Worked example: What changed test: 1807 banned trading captives, but it did not end slavery itself and nearly 750,000 people remained enslaved in British colonies [6]. Later owners got £20 million in compensation with no payment to ex-slaves [6], and between 1820 and 1870 Royal Navy patrols seized over 1500 ships and freed 150,000 Africans [6].

Ask: Who campaigned against the trade and how? (The Society from 1787 lobbied Parliament and activists such as Olaudah Equiano spoke out against inhumane treatment [6].) · What did the 1807 Act ban, and what did it leave unchanged? (It banned slave trading by British subjects [6] but nearly 750,000 people stayed enslaved [6].)

Check understanding: True/false cards on 1807 freed everyone - expect false; if many say true, restate example and re-vote.

Support: Keep 1807, 750,000, £20 million and 150,000 on board as clues during questioning. **Stretch:** Ask why compensation only for owners plus Navy patrols shows abolition was slow and unfair.

Use: Video clip 5 (0:00–3:31), Slides 8, 10

50–60 min **Plenary debate and exit** 10 min · Pairs

To judge fairness of abolition and check all three objectives.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 11 question and give 2 minutes pair talk with ground rules for respectful language.
2. Take 3 quick views and sum up: trade ban mattered, but freedom delayed and money went to owners.
3. Show Slide 12 exit ticket and set 5 minutes silent writing.
4. Collect tickets and preview next lesson on empire and protest.

STUDENTS DO

1. Think, pair, share views on fairness for 2 minutes.
2. Listen to summary linking effects and abolition.
3. Complete exit ticket: learnt, surprising effect, still-question.

Say: Owners got £20 million. The enslaved got nothing. Was abolition fair? Discuss with your partner using evidence from today. Be respectful, use the term enslaved people, and you can pause or pass if you need to. Then write your exit ticket on your own.

Ask: Owners got £20 million. The enslaved got nothing. Was abolition fair? (No, because owners were paid while nearly 750,000 stayed enslaved then freed without payment [6]; yes it ended trading, but fairness was limited.) · What was one human and one economic effect on West Africa? (Families torn apart and millions forcibly removed had a devastating social, political and economic effect leaving communities without people needed to thrive [5].)

Check understanding: Read three exit tickets aloud; if objectives missed, name the missing leg or date for homework catch-up.

Support: Give sentence starters: Abolition was not fair because ___ . One effect was ___. **Stretch:** Ask for one line on why resistance by enslaved people should count as a cause of abolition [6].

Use: Slides 11-12

Common mistakes

Mistake	How to spot it	How to fix it
Thinking the 1807 Act freed all enslaved people at once.	Exit says everyone was free in 1807.	Restate it banned trading only, and nearly 750,000 people remained enslaved in British colonies [6].
Thinking only ship owners got rich in Britain.	Profit chain shows merchant alone.	Add factories and trades refining sugar, tobacco and chocolate [3] and factory jobs for ordinary people [5].
Thinking enslaved Africans accepted slavery.	No mention of resistance in answers.	Recall resistance from everyday acts to large-scale rebellions was permanent [3] and helped end trade and slavery [6].

Support

- Pre-highlighted role cards and triangle outlines with pictures
- Sentence starters for effects and fairness judgement
- Numbers on board as clues for 1807, 750,000 and £20 million

Stretch

- Explain why full holds made the triangle so profitable for merchants
- Decide who knew most or least about the source of profits and why it matters
- Write an extra fairness question about compensation only for owners

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For the LSE or teaching assistant

Sit with target groups in main activity to read highlighted bullets aloud, check triangle arrows, and support respectful language and time-out if upset.

Safety

- Sensitive subject – keep focus on the system, use respectful terms such as enslaved people, allow time-out if discussion feels upsetting.
- Agree ground rules for respectful language, do not ask students to role-play as enslaved people, allow anyone to pause or pass.

Check for understanding

Question	Answer
Name in order what a British ship carried on each of the three legs.	Goods like guns, cloth, iron to West Africa; enslaved people across Atlantic; sugar, tobacco, cotton to Europe [5][8].
Give one effect on Africa and one on Britain.	Africa lost millions with devastating social and economic effect [5]; Britain's merchants, shipbuilders and factory workers profited and got jobs [3][5].
What did the 1807 Act do and not do?	Banned British slave trading as unlawful [6]; did not end slavery, nearly 750,000 remained enslaved [6].

Homework

Write 6 lines: was abolition in 1807 a success? Use 750,000 and £20 million.

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