

UNIT 1 UNITED STATES HISTORY LESSON 2

Summary

- In this lesson, students will read pages 11–23 of Chapter 1, "Settling America: A New World From Many Old Worlds," in their Readers. They will learn how intense demands for labor led to the institution of slavery in colonial America.

Social Studies Background

In 1607, Jamestown, Virginia, became the first permanent English colony in the New World. The colony struggled at first. Almost all of the original settlers died. Then the colonists began growing tobacco.

Tobacco was a huge hit in Europe. But growing it required a large labor force. Initially, wealthy planters hired indentured servants, who they released after several years of service. But following a rebellion, led by a former indentured servant named Nathaniel Bacon, this labor force was no longer deemed safe. So, growers turned to the African slave trade.

The first slaves were brought to Virginia in 1619. As demand for tobacco grew, so did the demand for slaves.

Slavery was a brutal institution. Africans were kidnapped from their homelands, often by fellow Africans, and sold to Europeans. The Europeans packed the Africans onto ships and carried them to the New World against their will. The captives were chained together underneath the ship's deck as they crossed the Atlantic via a route called the Middle Passage.

Slaves had no rights. They were separated from their families. They were forced to work without pay, and masters often treated them cruelly. Congress outlawed the importation of slaves in 1808. But slavery continued as an American institution for several more decades.

ENGAGE

Encourage students to flip through the assigned pages and turn and talk with a partner to discuss what they see. Invite students to ask questions or share what they already know about the slave trade.

EXPLORE

Instruct students to examine the photo and read the caption on page 13 of their Readers. **Ask:** *How could growing tobacco lead to massive slavery?* (It took a lot of workers to grow tobacco. Slaves were permanent, captive laborers whom owners did not pay.) Invite students to share what they know about the lives of slaves in early America.

EXPLAIN

Point out to students that plantation owners in colonial America became rich growing tobacco. And as the demand for tobacco increased, so did their need for workers. **Ask:** *Who were the first people to work in the tobacco fields?* (indentured servants, or poor Europeans who agreed to work for a master for a given time in exchange for the trip to the New World.) *Why did growers start using African slaves instead?* (They needed a large work force, and indentured servants who had won their freedom rebelled. Using them became too dangerous.) Have students turn and talk as they review the chapter for details about how the slave trade started and evolved in colonial America. Encourage them to discuss what it was like for slaves on the Middle Passage and after they arrived in the New World.

ELABORATE

Invite students to view "A History of Slavery in the United States" (www.nationalgeographic.org/interactive/slavery-united-states/), an interactive timeline that identifies key incidents that influenced the development of, resistance to, and escape from slavery—America's "peculiar institution."

EVALUATE

Have students complete the **Content Assessment** for this lesson. Encourage them to share and compare their results in small groups.

CONTENT ASSESSMENT: The Origins of Slavery in America

Make a checkmark to show if you think each sentence is true or false.
Use information from Chapter 1 to explain each of your answers.

Sentence	True	False	Explanation
1. Slaves built Jamestown, the first permanent English colony in America.			
2. Indentured servants and slaves are the same thing.			
3. Bacon's Rebellion was one reason colonial Americans started buying slaves from Africa.			
4. Africans helped develop the slave trade to America.			
5. Slaves from Africa came to America via the Middle Passage.			