

**RESOURCE LIBRARY**  
ACTIVITY : 1 HR

## From Benin to Mobile

Students learn how Mobile, Alabama, connects to Benin in Africa through the voyage of the *Clotilda* and how the transatlantic slave trade impacted the culture of both places. Students tour the Schomburg Research Center for Black Culture's virtual museum exhibit and understand the varied perspectives of those impacted by the transatlantic slave trade.

**GRADES**

6 - 8

**SUBJECTS**

*Anthropology, Archaeology, Sociology, Conservation, English Language Arts, Geography, Human Geography, Social Studies, Civics, U.S. History, World History, Storytelling*

**CONTENTS**

2 PDFs, 8 Links

## OVERVIEW

Students learn how Mobile, Alabama, connects to Benin in Africa through the voyage of the *Clotilda* and how the transatlantic slave trade impacted the culture of both places. Students tour the Schomburg Research Center for Black Culture's virtual museum exhibit and understand the varied perspectives of those impacted by the transatlantic slave trade.

For the complete activity with media resources, visit:

<http://www.nationalgeographic.org/activity/benin-mobile/>

## In collaboration with

# DIRECTIONS

**Sunken Slave Ship Unit Driving Question:** *How do artifacts and their preservation impact communities?*

**Uncovering the Past Lesson Driving Question:** *How are artifacts and stories of past lives uncovered?*

## 1. Students analyze the map of the *Clotilda's* journey.

- Display the map from *Last American Slave Ship is Discovered in Alabama* showing the trade route from Mobile Bay to Benin, and have students share their observations.
- Ask:
  - *What is this map showing?*
  - *What do you notice about the dates?*
  - *About how long did each trip take?*
  - *What do you notice about the routes?*
  - *Why do you think the routes were different when coming or going?*
- Explain that the transatlantic slave trade impacted large parts of the world in terms of economy, civil war, quality of life, cultural traditions, and more.
- Explain that it is important to understand the perspectives of all involved to prevent tragedies like these from repeating themselves. The map shows the route that the *Clotilda* took during the 1860 voyage that brought a 19-year-old Cudjo Lewis to Mobile, Alabama, where he was to begin his life as an enslaved man.

## 2. Engage students in building their knowledge about the transatlantic slave trade to better understand the context for the *Clotilda's* dread journey.

- Distribute the *Benin to Mobile: Understanding Perspective* handout to each student.
- Explain to students that they will be reading one of two articles to identify the multiple perspectives of those who were involved in the transport of enslaved peoples. Explain that with any event, different perspectives tell different stories, and it is important to hear the different perspectives around such a significant part of their history.
- Divide students into partner pairs, assigning each student in the pair Article 1 or Article 2.
- Have students read their assigned article.

- Article 1: *How Slavery Helped Build a World Economy*
- Article 2: *Geography in the News: The Transatlantic Slave Trade Remembered*
- Once students have completed their assigned reading, direct the pairs to come back together. Have students collaboratively share their findings, recording the new, shared ideas on their handouts.

### 3. Students tell a photostory of the transatlantic slave trade from Africa to the Americas using carefully selected artifacts.

- Select three images, such as: *Three-Person Ship Shackle* or *Work on a Cotton Plantation* from the *Schomburg Research Center for Black Culture's virtual museum exhibit on the transatlantic slave trade*.
- Have students choose one more image from the virtual museum to add to the three teacher-selected images, enabling them to complete the photostory from the bottom portion of *Benin to Mobile: Understanding Perspective*.
  - Guide students' search by suggesting they browse the sections *The Suppression of the Slave Trade* and *Legacies in America* for their selection.

## Modification

**Step 2:** Article 2 is written at a higher Lexile level than Article 1, so it may be beneficial to assign reading based on student reading abilities or readiness.

## Informal Assessment

***Benin to Mobile: Understanding Perspective:*** Review students' work during the assignment to monitor peer collaboration, and to look for opportunities to clear up any misunderstandings about the impact the slave trade had on Benin or on Mobile, Alabama.

## Extending the Learning

Have students view *The Transatlantic Slave Trade in Two Minutes* to better understand the magnitude of the slave trade in comparison to the one trip on which the unit focuses.

## OBJECTIVES

# Subjects & Disciplines

## Anthropology

- Archaeology
- Sociology
- Conservation
- English Language Arts

## **Geography**

- Human Geography

## **Social Studies**

- Civics
- U.S. History
- World History

## **Storytelling**

# Teaching Approach

- Project-based learning

# Teaching Methods

- Cooperative learning
- Multimedia instruction
- Reading

# Skills Summary

This activity targets the following skills:

- 21st Century Student Outcomes
  - Information, Media, and Technology Skills
    - Information Literacy
    - Information, Communications, and Technology Literacy
    - Media Literacy
  - Learning and Innovation Skills

- Communication and Collaboration
- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Life and Career Skills
  - Initiative and Self-Direction
  - Productivity and Accountability
  - Social and Cross-Cultural Skills
- 21st Century Themes
  - Civic Literacy
  - Global Awareness
- Critical Thinking Skills
  - Analyzing
  - Applying
  - Evaluating
  - Remembering
  - Understanding
- Geographic Skills
  - Acquiring Geographic Information
  - Analyzing Geographic Information
  - Answering Geographic Questions
  - Asking Geographic Questions
  - Organizing Geographic Information

# National Standards, Principles, and Practices

## COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS & LITERACY

### • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1:

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on Grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

### • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.2:

Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

### • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.9:

Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

### • WHST.6-8.4:

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

## THE COLLEGE, CAREER & CIVIC LIFE (C3) FRAMEWORK FOR SOCIAL STUDIES STATE STANDARDS

- **D2.His.13.6-8:**

Evaluate the relevance and utility of a historical source based on information such as maker, date, place of origin, intended audience, and purpose.

- **D2.His.6.6-8:**

Analyze how people’s perspectives influenced what information is available in the historical sources they created.

- **D3.1.6-8:**

Gather relevant information from multiple sources while using the origin, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the sources to guide the selection.

### **Preparation**

### **What You’ll Need**

### **REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY**

- Internet Access: Required
- Tech Setup: 1 computer per classroom, 1 computer per learner, Mobile data device (smartphone or tablet), Monitor/screen, Projector, Speakers

### **PHYSICAL SPACE**

- Classroom
- Computer lab

### **GROUPING**

- Heterogeneous grouping
- Large-group instruction
- Small-group learning
- Small-group work

## BACKGROUND & VOCABULARY

# Background Information

Benin is a West African nation that was known as the Kingdom of Dahomey between 1600 and 1900. It was the location of Ouidah, the port and last stop for many kidnapped Africans before they were put on ships headed for Europe and the Americas. The profits from the trade with the Europeans gave the rulers and merchants of Benin an incentive and also, in the form of firearms, the means to extend their rule. However, the continual civil warfare slowly destroyed Benin, leaving it deserted and ruined. The Republic of Benin was founded on August 1, 1960, and it adopted the Constitution of Benin in 1990, which guaranteed the rights and freedoms of citizens. The Door Of No Return, a memorial to slavery, is located at the beach of Ouidah. It was a main departure point for those sold into slavery between the 15th and 19th centuries.

Slavery was present in what is now Alabama prior to and at the time of European contact and colonization among the indigenous peoples. The system of enslaving Africans was introduced there in 1721 with the first ship arriving with 120 survivors from an initial group of 240 people. The major change came with the addition of the territory in 1813 and then the quick admission of Alabama as a state in 1819; this was done to take advantage of the region's potential to grow cotton, which required large tracts of land and large labor forces. The transatlantic slave trade continued, but was banned in the United States after the Slave Trade Act in 1807. It led to a variety of responses—including the illegal transport of enslaved people from Africa, which the *Clotilda's* voyage represents, and the large-scale move of enslaved people from other parts of the United States.

## Prior Knowledge

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## Recommended Prior Activities

- [Finding the Clotilda](#)
- [Meet Cudjo Lewis](#)

## Vocabulary

Term	Part of Speech	Definition
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Term	Part of Speech	Definition
<b>abolition</b>	<i>noun</i>	ending or wiping out of something, usually referring to the ending of slavery.
<b>culture</b>	<i>noun</i>	learned behavior of people, including their languages, belief systems, social structures, institutions, and material goods.
<b>disparity</b>	<i>noun</i>	difference or inequality.
<b>exhibit</b>	<i>noun</i>	display, often in a museum.
<b>export</b>	<i>noun</i>	good or service traded to another area.
<b>heritage</b>	<i>noun</i>	cultural or family background.
<b>import</b>	<i>noun</i>	good traded from another area.
<b>mores</b>	<i>noun</i>	moral characteristics and customs of a community.
<b>trade</b>	<i>noun</i>	buying, selling, or exchanging of goods and services.

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## For Further Exploration

### Articles & Profiles

- [Southern Poverty Law Center: Teaching Hard History](#)
- [Revealing Benin: Cudjo Lewis, From Benin to Alabama](#)

### Interactives

- [National Geographic Society: Test Your Knowledge of Slavery in the United States](#)

### Reference

- [Encyclopedia Virginia: Slave Ships and the Middle Passage](#)

### Video

- [UCI: Transatlantic Slave Trade in Two Minutes](#)
- [TedEd: The Atlantic Slave Trade: What Too Few Textbook Told You](#)
- [Slave Voyages: Slave Ship in 3D Video](#)

### Websites



- National Geographic Society: Reform Movements 1800s
- National Geographic Society: Reconstruction (1865-1877)



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