

Benin to Mobile: Understanding Perspective

Answer Key

Directions: As you read the article(s) provided, take notes to identify the multiple perspectives of those communities involved in the transport of enslaved people.

- [Article 1: *How Slavery Helped Build a World Economy*](#)
- [Article 2: *Geography in the News: Transatlantic Slave Trade Remembered*](#)

(Suggested answers are color coded to reflect in which article they were found.)

	Who Benefited and How?	Who Suffered and How?
Benin and other countries that exported enslaved people	<p>The small commercial elites who dominated trade routes and ports made personal gains.</p> <p>All merchants involved in slavery found it profitable. These included black Africans who participated in the initial stages of enslavement, slave traders who profited from the transport and sale of slaves in the New World, plantation owners who bought and worked the slaves, and American and European merchants who bought, transported, and sold the items produced by the slaves.</p>	<p>The slaves suffered.</p> <p>It can be seen on the personal, family, communal, and continental levels. In addition to the millions of able-bodied individuals captured and transported, the death toll and the economic and environmental destruction resulting from wars and slave raids were startlingly high. In the famines that followed military actions, the old and very young were often killed or left to starve</p> <p>The African governments: At a higher level, the political fragmentation made it virtually impossible to develop methods of government that could effectively resist the impact of the slave trade.</p> <p>War, slave raiding, kidnapping, and politico-religious struggle accounted for the vast majority of Africans deported to the Americas. Several important wars resulted in massive enslavement, including the export of prisoners across the Atlantic, the ransoming of others, and the use of enslavement within Africa itself.</p>

<p>Mobile, Alabama, and other places that imported enslaved people</p>	<p>Language, religion, music, dance, art, and cuisine. Most importantly, an enduring sense of African-American community developed in the face of white racism.</p> <p>Local and federal government: "When calculating the value of estates, the estimated value of each slave was included. This became the source of tax revenue for local and state governments. Taxes were also levied on slave transactions."</p> <p>The United States economy: "By the 1830s, 'cotton was king' indeed in the South. It was also king in the United States, which was competing for economic leadership in the global political economy. Plantation-grown cotton was the foundation of the antebellum southern economy."</p> <p>Southern cotton plantation owners: By 1850, 1.8 million of the 2.5 million enslaved Africans employed in agriculture in the United States were working on cotton plantations.</p> <p>Brazilian sugar plantation owners: More than half of the enslaved African captives in the Americas were employed on sugar plantations. Sugar developed into the leading slave-produced commodity in the Americas.</p> <p>Colonial Americans: European colonial economies in the Americas from the 16th through the 19th centuries were dependent on enslaved African labor for their survival.</p>	<p>The slaves and their descendants suffered.</p> <p>North America, any person of identifiable African descent, no matter the degree of "white" ancestry, was classified as colored, Negro, or black. A racial caste system was established, and as a result, racialized attitudes and racism became an inherent and lasting part of North American culture.</p> <p>The land suffered. According to European colonial officials, the abundant land they had "discovered" in the Americas was useless without sufficient labor to exploit it.</p> <p>The nation suffered because of growing sectionalism resulting from divisions over slavery.</p>
---	---	--

Explore the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture's In Motion Exhibit on the transatlantic slave trade, and find at least three exhibits that support the ideas above. Describe the exhibits below.