Slavery Across Colonies

Read to compare work, laws, and daily life in three colonial regions.

SS24.6.6a "Compare and contrast the institution of slavery in different colonial regions."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one way slavery was alike across the three regions, and circle one kind of work described in each region.

Three Regions, Different Work

1 Imagine walking through a New England port in the 1700s. Ships brought goods, and some merchants made money from the trade in enslaved Africans. Enslaved people worked in homes, small farms, workshops, and along the docks. They were usually fewer in number than in plantation regions farther south. Colonial laws treated them as property and limited their freedom. Yet they built family ties and found ways to resist, such as leaving without permission. This region's varied jobs did not make slavery fair or safe.

2 Now travel to Virginia in the Chesapeake region. Large tobacco farms required many workers, and enslaved Africans and their descendants did much of the field labor. Some also worked as carpenters or cooks. Like New England, Virginia had laws that treated enslaved people as property. A Virginia law said that a child's enslaved or free status followed the mother's status, making slavery last across generations. Enslaved people formed families and communities, but enslavers could separate them by sale. Unlike many New England workplaces, tobacco plantations often held large groups of enslaved workers.

3 Farther south, South Carolina plantations grew rice and indigo for sale. Enslaved people, many from West Africa, brought knowledge that helped shape rice growing. Rice work often meant long hours in wet fields, where illness was a danger. On some rice plantations, workers received daily tasks rather than working under constant supervision, but they were still enslaved and faced punishment. As in Virginia and New England, laws denied their freedom, and people protected family and cultural traditions when they could. South Carolina's rice fields differed from Virginia's tobacco fields, but both relied on forced labor.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the kinds of work and the size of enslaved groups in New England differ from those on Virginia tobacco plantations?

2. How did plantation crops differ in Virginia and South Carolina, and what did both regions rely on?

3. How were New England and Virginia laws about slavery alike? What additional rule did Virginia have?

4. How did enslaved people in both New England and South Carolina try to maintain ties or resist, despite limits on their freedom?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence museum label comparing slavery in all three regions. Include one condition shared by all, two differences in work or group size, and why different jobs did not mean freedom.

ANSWER KEY

Slavery Across Colonies

GRADE 6 · SS24.6.6a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one way slavery was alike across the three regions, and circle one kind of work described in each region. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the kinds of work and the size of enslaved groups in New England differ from those on Virginia tobacco plantations?	**In New England, enslaved people worked in homes, farms, workshops, and ports and were usually fewer in number. Virginia tobacco plantations often held large groups of enslaved field workers.**
2	How did plantation crops differ in Virginia and South Carolina, and what did both regions rely on?	**Virginia plantations grew tobacco, while South Carolina plantations grew rice and indigo. Both relied on forced labor.**
3	How were New England and Virginia laws about slavery alike? What additional rule did Virginia have?	**Both regions had laws that treated enslaved people as property. In Virginia, a child's enslaved or free status followed the mother's status.**
4	How did enslaved people in both New England and South Carolina try to maintain ties or resist, despite limits on their freedom?	**In New England, enslaved people built family ties and some resisted by leaving without permission. In South Carolina, they protected family and cultural traditions when they could.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In New England, enslaved people worked in homes, workshops, and ports, often in smaller numbers than on southern plantations. In Virginia, large groups of enslaved workers grew tobacco, while in South Carolina, enslaved workers grew rice and indigo. In all three regions, laws denied enslaved people freedom. Different jobs did not mean freedom because enslaved people in every region lived under laws that limited their lives.

Accept other passage-supported comparisons, including differences in daily tasks or the danger of rice-field work. Responses should not suggest that slavery in any region was fair or safe.