Routes and Work

Trace forced migration and compare labor across regions.

SS24.US1.8a "Analyze the domestic slave trade/forced migration, labor, and variations in the practice of slavery in different areas of the United States."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline evidence of forced movement, circle one specific work task in each setting (Richmond, Mississippi cotton plantations, and Louisiana sugar plantations), and number the settings 1 to 3 in the order they first appear.

Different Places, Shared Control

1. In Richmond, Virginia, enslaved people worked in an Upper South city, not just on nearby farms. Some blacksmiths shaped iron tools; others cooked meals in households. An enslaver could hire a worker to another employer while keeping control over that person's labor and usually collecting the payment. Richmond was also a major market in the domestic slave trade. Traders bought enslaved people, sometimes separated them from their families, and forced them south by road or ship. As cotton and sugar production expanded, demand for labor grew in the Deep South. For those sold, this journey was forced migration, not a choice.

2. On Mississippi cotton plantations, enslaved workers cleared fields, planted cotton, and picked its bolls when they ripened. Cotton demanded many hands, especially at harvest. Overseers often enforced work with threats and violence, while enslavers claimed the crop's profits. People sold from Virginia might face unfamiliar land and the loss of family contact. A plantation could hold far more enslaved workers than a city household, but size alone did not decide how harsh life was. Workers had to find ways to care for one another while living under rules they had no power to choose.

3. In Louisiana's sugar country, enslaved workers cut cane, carried heavy stalks to mills, and boiled cane juice into sugar. The boiling process could cause severe burns. Because cut cane spoiled quickly, the harvest and processing often demanded exhausting hours. These tasks differed from picking cotton in Mississippi and cooking or shaping tools in Richmond. Yet the settings shared a central fact: enslavers controlled people's labor, movement, and family lives. Traders moved people toward both cotton and sugar districts to meet demand for labor. Differences in crop, workplace, and schedule changed daily experiences without changing the injustice of slavery.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did growing demand for labor in the Deep South affect enslaved people sold in Richmond? Use two details from the passage.

2. How did control over labor differ between hiring out a worker in Richmond and using an overseer on a Mississippi plantation? What remained the same?

3. Compare work on Mississippi cotton plantations with work in Louisiana's sugar country. Include a task and a working condition from each place.

4. Why would it be misleading to say slavery was identical in all three settings? Give one difference and one shared feature.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 75 to 100 word museum label about Richmond, Mississippi cotton plantations, and Louisiana sugar plantations. Explain how sales linked Richmond to either southern destination, compare labor in all three places, and end with one sentence explaining why no form of this labor was free.

ANSWER KEY

Routes and Work

GRADE 10 · SS24.US1.8a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline evidence of forced movement, circle one specific work task in each setting (Richmond, Mississippi cotton plantations, and Louisiana sugar plantations), and number the settings 1 to 3 in the order they first appear. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did growing demand for labor in the Deep South affect enslaved people sold in Richmond? Use two details from the passage.	**Traders forced people south by road or ship to meet demand for cotton and sugar labor. Sales sometimes separated people from their families.**
2	How did control over labor differ between hiring out a worker in Richmond and using an overseer on a Mississippi plantation? What remained the same?	**In Richmond, an enslaver could hire a worker to another employer and usually collect the payment. In Mississippi, overseers enforced plantation work; in both places, enslaved people lacked control over their labor.**
3	Compare work on Mississippi cotton plantations with work in Louisiana's sugar country. Include a task and a working condition from each place.	**In Mississippi, workers picked cotton, and overseers often enforced work with threats and violence. In Louisiana, workers boiled cane juice into sugar, which risked severe burns during an exhausting harvest.**
4	Why would it be misleading to say slavery was identical in all three settings? Give one difference and one shared feature.	**Tasks varied, from shaping tools in Richmond to picking cotton or processing sugar. In every setting, enslavers controlled people's labor and movement.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Richmond, Virginia, was a city where enslaved people shaped iron tools or cooked meals. Its slave market also sent people south, sometimes tearing families apart. A person sold from Richmond might be forced to a Mississippi cotton plantation, where workers cleared land and picked cotton under an overseer. Others were sold to Louisiana sugar plantations, where workers cut cane and boiled its juice during an exhausting harvest. These were different workplaces, and not everyone followed the same route. None offered freedom because enslavers controlled people's movement, work, and lives.

Accept other passage-supported tasks and conditions. Student labels should describe possible routes without suggesting that every person went to both Mississippi and Louisiana.