

Lives Behind Labor

Trace how slavery began, shaped work, and changed colonial society.

SS.5.A.4.6 "Describe the introduction, impact, and role of slavery in the colonies."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle details about how slavery was introduced, underline three kinds of work enslaved people did, and number two effects slavery had on colonial life.

Slavery in the Colonies

- ① In 1619, a ship brought more than twenty captive Africans to Virginia. This was an early recorded arrival of Africans who were forced into labor in England's mainland colonies. At first, the status of some African workers was not always clear. Over time, colonial laws made slavery hereditary and based on race, meaning enslaved people and their children could be treated as property.
- ② Enslaved Africans did many kinds of work that colonial businesses depended on. In the Chesapeake colonies, many planted and processed tobacco. In South Carolina and Georgia, enslaved workers used knowledge and hard labor to grow rice and indigo. Others built roads, worked in homes, loaded ships, or practiced skilled trades. Their unpaid labor increased the wealth of some planters and merchants.
- ③ Slavery affected every colony, even places with fewer enslaved people. Profits from slave-grown crops and the Atlantic trade connected northern merchants, southern plantations, and British markets. Enslaved people resisted in many ways, including preserving family ties, keeping cultural traditions, slowing work, and sometimes escaping or rebelling. Slavery created a cruel system of power that shaped colonial wealth, laws, and daily life.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What happened in Virginia in 1619, and why was it important to the history of slavery in the English colonies?

2 How did colonial laws change slavery over time?

3 Name two kinds of work enslaved people did, and tell where one of those jobs was done.

4 According to the passage, how did slavery affect colonial wealth and daily life?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a five-sentence museum label explaining slavery in the colonies. Include how it developed, work enslaved people did, and two effects of slavery.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Circle details about how slavery was introduced, underline three kinds of work enslaved people did, and number two effects slavery had on colonial life. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What happened in Virginia in 1619, and why was it important to the history of slavery in the English colonies?	A ship brought more than twenty captive Africans to Virginia. It was an early recorded arrival of Africans forced into labor in England's mainland colonies.
2	How did colonial laws change slavery over time?	The laws made slavery hereditary and based on race, so enslaved people and their children could be treated as property.
3	Name two kinds of work enslaved people did, and tell where one of those jobs was done.	Answers may name any two: planting or processing tobacco, growing rice or indigo, building roads, working in homes, loading ships, or skilled trades. Tobacco work was done in the Chesapeake colonies, and rice and indigo were grown in South Carolina and Georgia.
4	According to the passage, how did slavery affect colonial wealth and daily life?	Unpaid labor increased the wealth of some planters and merchants. Slavery also shaped colonial laws, power, and daily life.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

During the colonial period, many Africans were captured and forced across the Atlantic to English colonies. Laws gradually turned forced labor into hereditary racial slavery. Enslaved people farmed cash crops, worked at ports, and did skilled jobs. Their unpaid work made some colonists and merchants richer. This system restricted freedom and shaped colonial laws and daily life.

Accept accurate wording that explains the introduction or development of slavery, at least one role enslaved people performed, and two effects on colonial society. For the open response, accept other accurate examples of labor or impacts that meet the five-sentence requirement.