

Labor Beyond Fields

Examine the skilled, domestic, and agricultural work forced on enslaved people.

SS.68.AA.2.3 "Examine the various duties and trades performed by slaves (e.g., agricultural work, painting, carpentry, tailoring, domestic service, blacksmithing, transportation)."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each word or phrase that names a duty or trade. Circle the task words connected to it, so you can see what workers actually did.

Many Kinds of Forced Labor

- ① Enslaved people performed many kinds of labor in the United States, but their work was controlled by enslavers, who claimed the products and profits. On plantations, many people planted, tended, and harvested crops such as tobacco, rice, sugar, or cotton. Field work changed with the season and often lasted from daylight until dark. Some workers also cared for animals, repaired fences, or carried water. Enslaved people used agricultural knowledge and physical skill, even though they had little control over their time or work.
- ② Not every enslaved person worked in a field. In towns, workshops, and large households, enslaved artisans practiced trades. A carpenter could build doors, furniture, or parts of a house. A blacksmith heated and shaped iron for tools, hardware, and wagon parts. Tailors cut, stitched, and repaired clothing. Some people painted buildings or signs. Skilled workers sometimes earned money for an enslaver or were hired out to other employers, but the enslaver usually took the payment and controlled where they worked.
- ③ Domestic service was another form of forced labor. Enslaved cooks prepared meals, while laundresses washed clothing and nurses cared for children. Drivers transported people or goods by wagon, carriage, or boat. These assignments could place enslaved people near an enslaver's home or on roads and waterways, yet they did not mean freedom or safety. People faced punishment, separation from family, and constant supervision in many jobs. Examining the specific tasks in each job shows that slavery depended on a wide range of labor, not only crop production.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What evidence shows that agricultural work involved more than harvesting crops? Name two other tasks from the passage.

2 How did a carpenter's work differ from a blacksmith's work? Use details from the passage.

3 What transportation duty did drivers perform? Name two ways they transported people or goods.

4 Give one example of domestic service and one example of transportation work. What do these examples show about the labor slavery required?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose one duty or trade from the passage. Write a four-sentence work profile that names the duty, describes two tasks, states a work setting, and explains why skill or location did not give the enslaved worker control over the job.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each word or phrase that names a duty or trade. Circle the task words connected to it, so you can see what workers actually did. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What evidence shows that agricultural work involved more than harvesting crops? Name two other tasks from the passage.	Workers planted or tended crops, cared for animals, repaired fences, or carried water.
2	How did a carpenter's work differ from a blacksmith's work? Use details from the passage.	A carpenter built doors, furniture, or house parts. A blacksmith heated and shaped iron for tools, hardware, and wagon parts.
3	What transportation duty did drivers perform? Name two ways they transported people or goods.	Drivers transported people or goods by wagon, carriage, or boat.
4	Give one example of domestic service and one example of transportation work. What do these examples show about the labor slavery required?	Domestic examples include cooking, washing clothing, or caring for children. Transportation work included driving people or goods by wagon, carriage, or boat. These examples show that slavery depended on many kinds of labor beyond crop production.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

An enslaved blacksmith performed a skilled trade. One task was heating iron, and another was shaping it into tools and wagon parts. Skilled trades were practiced in towns, workshops, and large households. Skill did not bring control because an enslaver usually took the payment and controlled where the worker labored.

Accept any accurate duty, task, setting, and explanation supported by the passage. Students should show that enslaved people performed varied work while enslavers controlled their labor, movement, or earnings.