

Builders and Changemakers

Trace economic, cultural, and political change caused by slavery.

SS6H1.a "Describe the influence of African slavery on the development of the Americas."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one detail in each paragraph that shows how African slavery influenced the Americas. In the margin, label the detail Economy, Culture, or Change.

African Slavery and the Americas

- ① Across the Americas, European colonizers forced millions of Africans into slavery from the 1500s through the 1800s. Captive people crossed the Atlantic in brutal conditions and were sold in colonies and nations from Brazil and the Caribbean to what became the United States. Enslaved Africans were denied freedom, yet their labor became central to plantation economies. They cleared land and grew crops such as sugar, coffee, tobacco, cotton, and rice. These crops earned huge profits for owners and helped ports, trade networks, and colonial towns grow.
- ② Enslaved people also shaped American cultures with knowledge, traditions, and creativity brought from many African societies. In Brazil, Cuba, Haiti, and other places, African languages, beliefs, music, storytelling, farming knowledge, and foodways blended with Indigenous and European influences. New customs formed even under slavery and later influenced national identities. For example, people used African crops and cooking methods, while musicians developed rhythms and instruments that shaped new musical styles. Enslaved communities also preserved family ties and religious practices despite laws meant to control them.
- ③ Slavery also created conflict and resistance. Enslaved people resisted by preserving culture, slowing work, escaping when possible, and organizing rebellions. The Haitian Revolution began in 1791, when enslaved people in the French colony of Saint-Domingue fought for freedom. Haiti became independent in 1804, the first nation founded after a successful revolt by enslaved people. This revolution challenged slavery across the Americas and worried slaveholders. It also showed that enslaved people were active leaders in history, not only workers controlled by others.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How did forced labor on plantations help ports and colonial towns grow?

2 Name two ways enslaved Africans influenced cultures in the Americas.

3 What happened during the Haitian Revolution, and what was one result?

4 Why does the passage describe enslaved people as active leaders in history?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a four-sentence museum label about the influence of African slavery on the Americas. Explain one economic influence, one cultural influence, and how resistance changed the Americas.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline one detail in each paragraph that shows how African slavery influenced the Americas. In the margin, label the detail Economy, Culture, or Change. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did forced labor on plantations help ports and colonial towns grow?	Enslaved people grew valuable crops that earned profits, expanded trade networks, and helped ports and towns grow.
2	Name two ways enslaved Africans influenced cultures in the Americas.	Answers may name any two: languages, beliefs, music, storytelling, farming knowledge, foodways, cooking methods, rhythms, instruments, family ties, or religious practices.
3	What happened during the Haitian Revolution, and what was one result?	Enslaved people in Saint-Domingue fought for freedom beginning in 1791. Haiti became independent in 1804, challenging slavery across the Americas.
4	Why does the passage describe enslaved people as active leaders in history?	They resisted slavery by preserving culture, slowing work, escaping, and organizing rebellions. The Haitian Revolution showed that enslaved people could lead a successful fight for freedom.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Enslaved Africans helped build the Americas through their forced labor on plantations. Their work growing sugar and coffee brought profits and expanded trade. They also shaped cultures through foodways, music, beliefs, and farming knowledge. The Haitian Revolution showed that enslaved people resisted slavery and acted as leaders who changed history.

Accept equivalent passage-based explanations of economic growth, cultural influence, and resistance. For the open response, look for all three required ideas and four complete sentences.