Slavery Across Colonies

Compare ownership and labor in colonial regions

6-12.US1.27 "Compare and contrast the various manifestations of slavery in this time period, for example, ownership patterns, labor divisions, and geographic differences."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one kind of work in each region, circle a phrase about how many people enslavers held there, and number the three regions 1, 2, and 3. Use your marks to compare what differed and what remained the same.

Different Places, Shared Injustice

(1) In the 1700s, slavery shaped life across Britain's North American colonies, but it did not look the same everywhere. In Virginia and Maryland, enslaved people often raised tobacco on farms and plantations. Some enslavers held a few people, while wealthy planters held dozens or more. A person on a small farm might work beside the enslaver's family; on a large plantation, work was often organized in groups under an overseer. Neither setting meant freedom. Enslavers claimed people as property, controlled their labor, and could separate families through sales. Enslaved people built family ties and resisted these controls in both settings.

(2) Farther south, coastal South Carolina and Georgia had rice plantations. Many enslavers there held large numbers of people, and enslaved Africans brought knowledge of growing rice in wet fields. On some rice plantations, enslaved workers had assigned tasks, such as clearing ditches or tending a section of a field. Finishing a task might leave time to tend a personal garden, but enslavers still controlled their lives and claimed the crop's profits. Tobacco and rice both depended on forced field labor. Yet the crops, the size of some holdings, and ways of organizing daily work could differ.

(3) In northern colonies such as New York and Massachusetts, enslaved people were fewer than in the plantation regions, but slavery was still present. An enslaved person might cook in a home, load ships at a port, or work in a craft shop. Some northern enslavers held only one or two people; others held more. In cities across colonial regions, enslavers sometimes hired out enslaved workers to someone else and took payment for their labor. These jobs differed from growing tobacco or rice, but the basic injustice was shared: people could be bought and sold, and they did not control where they worked.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the size of enslavers' holdings in Virginia and Maryland compare with holdings on coastal South Carolina and Georgia rice plantations?

2. What was one similarity and one difference between work on tobacco and rice plantations?

3. How did jobs in northern colonies differ from jobs on southern plantations, and what did enslaved workers in both places have in common?

4. Compare how enslavers benefited from the labor of a worker hired out in a city and a worker growing rice on a plantation.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a six-sentence museum label comparing slavery in a northern port town and on a Lowcountry rice plantation. Include ownership patterns, kinds of work, one shared injustice, and why these examples do not represent every enslaved person's experience.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADES 6-12 · 6-12.US1.27

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one kind of work in each region, circle a phrase about how many people enslavers held there, and number the three regions 1, 2, and 3. Use your marks to compare what differed and what remained the same. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the size of enslavers' holdings in Virginia and Maryland compare with holdings on coastal South Carolina and Georgia rice plantations?	**In Virginia and Maryland, some enslavers held a few people and wealthy planters held dozens or more. Many enslavers on the coastal rice plantations held large numbers of people.**
2	What was one similarity and one difference between work on tobacco and rice plantations?	**Both crops depended on forced field labor. Work on large tobacco plantations was often organized in groups, while workers on some rice plantations had assigned tasks.**
3	How did jobs in northern colonies differ from jobs on southern plantations, and what did enslaved workers in both places have in common?	**Northern jobs could include cooking, loading ships, or working in craft shops, while southern plantation jobs included growing tobacco or rice. In both places, enslavers controlled people's labor.**
4	Compare how enslavers benefited from the labor of a worker hired out in a city and a worker growing rice on a plantation.	**An enslaver took payment when a worker was hired out. On a rice plantation, an enslaver claimed the crop's profits.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

An exhibit about colonial slavery needs more than one setting. In a northern port town, an enslaver might hold one or two people, while many enslavers on Lowcountry rice plantations held large numbers. In the port, an enslaved person might load ships, but on a rice plantation, workers could tend fields or clear ditches. Some rice workers received assigned tasks, while city workers could be hired out to someone else. In both places, enslavers claimed people as property and controlled their labor. These examples cannot describe every enslaved person's life because holdings and jobs varied even within each region.

Accept other passage-supported comparisons, including cooking or craft work in northern colonies. Students should avoid claiming that every enslaver in a region held the same number of people or organized work the same way.