Across the Atlantic

Trace the regions, labor demands, and trade routes behind forced migration.

6.C.3.6.E "Identify the major regions of the Western Hemisphere that received enslaved Africans and explain how European imperial expansion, colonial labor demands, and Atlantic trade networks produced the trans-Atlantic slave trade."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the regions in the Americas that received enslaved Africans. Circle the kinds of work named in the passage, then number the steps that show how goods and people moved across the Atlantic.

Colonies and the Atlantic Crossing

1. Imagine standing near a busy port in the Caribbean. Between the 1500s and 1800s, European empires claimed land across the Americas and built colonies there. Millions of Africans were forced onto ships and carried across the Atlantic Ocean. The largest numbers arrived in Brazil and the Caribbean islands. Many others reached mainland Spanish America, including ports in what is now Colombia, and mainland British North America, including today's United States. These places were all part of the Western Hemisphere, the half of Earth that includes the Americas.

2. Why did colonists demand so much labor? European rulers and settlers wanted wealth from the lands they claimed. In Brazil and the Caribbean, large plantations grew sugarcane, a crop that took many workers to cut and process. On the North American mainland, some plantations grew tobacco. In parts of mainland Spanish America, enslaved Africans worked on farms, in mines, and at ports. European colonists often seized Indigenous land and forced Indigenous people to work, too. They also relied on the labor of enslaved Africans, who were denied freedom and treated as property.

3. Atlantic trade networks connected these colonies to Europe and Africa. European ships carried cloth and metal tools to African coastal trading centers. Some African traders sold people who had been captured or kidnapped; European traders then forced those people onto ships bound for the Americas. The ocean crossing, called the Middle Passage, was deadly and cruel. In colonial ports, enslavers sold survivors to people seeking workers for plantations and other jobs. Ships carried colonial goods to Europe. Expansion, labor demands, and trade networks sustained this system for centuries.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which two regions received the largest numbers of enslaved Africans? What crop created a demand for labor in both?

2. How did European empires' actions in the Americas help create a demand for enslaved labor?

3. Name two other mainland regions that received enslaved Africans. Give one kind of work named for each region.

4. How did the Atlantic trade network move goods and people among Europe, Africa, and the Americas?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence museum label about the trade in enslaved Africans. Name two receiving regions, connect European empire-building to colonial labor needs, trace the movement of goods and people, and describe one human cost.

ANSWER KEY

Across the Atlantic

GRADE 6 · 6.C.3.6.E

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the regions in the Americas that received enslaved Africans. Circle the kinds of work named in the passage, then number the steps that show how goods and people moved across the Atlantic. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which two regions received the largest numbers of enslaved Africans? What crop created a demand for labor in both?	**Brazil and the Caribbean received the largest numbers. Sugarcane plantations in both regions demanded many workers.**
2	How did European empires' actions in the Americas help create a demand for enslaved labor?	**European empires claimed land and built colonies. Colonists wanted workers to produce wealth from that land.**
3	Name two other mainland regions that received enslaved Africans. Give one kind of work named for each region.	**Mainland Spanish America received enslaved Africans who worked on farms, in mines, or at ports. Mainland British North America received enslaved Africans, including workers on tobacco plantations.**
4	How did the Atlantic trade network move goods and people among Europe, Africa, and the Americas?	**European ships carried goods to African coastal trading centers. Traders forced enslaved Africans across the Atlantic to the Americas, and ships carried colonial goods to Europe.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A ship's log might list ports and goods, but it could not show every life changed by the voyage. European empires claimed colonies in Brazil and the Caribbean, where sugar plantations demanded many workers. Ships carried goods from Europe to African coastal trading centers, then carried enslaved Africans across the Atlantic to the Americas. The crossing was deadly, and survivors were denied freedom.

Accept either mainland region's listed jobs in question 3. For the museum label, look for an accurate connection among colonial expansion, labor demand, and Atlantic routes, as well as a human cost.