Beyond One Leader

Tracing the people and ideas behind British abolition

MWH.C.5.2.A "Examine how the abolition of slavery within the British Empire was influenced by Christian humanitarianism and examine the role of various antislavery societies, including the work of William Wilberforce."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the Christian moral argument, circle actions taken by antislavery groups, and number the two laws in the order they passed to trace how the campaign changed.

A Campaign That Changed Course

1 In 1787, British campaigners formed the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade. Quakers worked alongside Anglicans, including William Wilberforce, who was shaped by evangelical Christianity. They argued that enslaving people violated the Christian duty to treat others as human beings with moral worth. Formerly enslaved writers such as Olaudah Equiano described the violence of the trade in their own words. Society members collected testimony from sailors and published evidence of crowded ships. Their moral argument became harder for lawmakers to dismiss when it came with firsthand accounts and organized public pressure.

2 In Parliament, Wilberforce repeatedly introduced bills to end the British slave trade, while the society sent petitions and evidence to lawmakers. Outside Parliament, campaigners circulated pamphlets and urged shoppers to avoid sugar grown by enslaved laborers. Women played major roles in these boycotts and petition drives, even though they could not vote in parliamentary elections. These efforts linked Christian appeals to a practical strategy: make the trade a public and political issue. In 1807, Parliament banned British participation in the transatlantic slave trade. That law did not free people already enslaved in British colonies.

3 The campaign then shifted from ending the trade to ending slavery itself. Founded in 1823, the Anti-Slavery Society pressed Parliament for emancipation in British colonies. Local women's antislavery groups called for faster action and gathered signatures. Enslaved people also resisted, including in the 1831 to 1832 rebellion in Jamaica, exposing the violence needed to maintain slavery. In 1833, Parliament passed the Slavery Abolition Act, which took effect in 1834 in most British colonies. It compensated enslavers, not those they had enslaved, and imposed a system called apprenticeship on many formerly enslaved people until 1838. Christian humanitarianism helped mobilize reform, but abolition was neither the work of one person nor immediate freedom for all.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Christian humanitarian beliefs shape the early campaign, and why did firsthand accounts strengthen its argument?

2. How did Wilberforce's work and the first society's work support each other in the campaign that led to the 1807 law?

3. Why could women's boycotts and petition drives influence the campaign even though women could not vote in parliamentary elections?

4. Why did the campaign continue after 1807, and what roles did the Anti-Slavery Society and enslaved people's resistance play?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write an 85 to 105 word museum label making a claim about why abolition required more than one leader. Explain the contributions of Christian humanitarianism, Wilberforce, two antislavery societies or groups, and enslaved people's resistance; end with a limitation of the 1833 law.

Beyond One Leader

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the Christian moral argument, circle actions taken by antislavery groups, and number the two laws in the order they passed to trace how the campaign changed. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Christian humanitarian beliefs shape the early campaign, and why did firsthand accounts strengthen its argument?	**Campaigners argued that slavery violated a Christian duty to recognize people's moral worth. Accounts from formerly enslaved people and sailors supplied evidence of the trade's violence.**
2	How did Wilberforce's work and the first society's work support each other in the campaign that led to the 1807 law?	**Wilberforce introduced bills in Parliament, while the society supplied lawmakers with petitions and evidence. Together, they brought public pressure and a proposal for legal change.**
3	Why could women's boycotts and petition drives influence the campaign even though women could not vote in parliamentary elections?	**Boycotts made slavery a public issue, and petitions showed lawmakers that people wanted change.**
4	Why did the campaign continue after 1807, and what roles did the Anti-Slavery Society and enslaved people's resistance play?	**The 1807 law ended British participation in the slave trade but did not free people already enslaved. The Anti-Slavery Society pressed for emancipation, while resistance exposed the violence used to maintain slavery.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Abolition was built by many hands, not delivered by one famous politician. Christian humanitarianism gave campaigners a moral argument against treating people as property. The Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade gathered evidence and petitions, while William Wilberforce carried the fight into Parliament. After Britain banned its slave trade in 1807, the Anti-Slavery Society pushed to end slavery itself. Enslaved people's resistance, including the Jamaica rebellion, exposed the violence behind plantation slavery and added urgency. Parliament's 1833 act was limited: enslavers received compensation, and many formerly enslaved people faced forced apprenticeship until 1838.

Accept other accurate explanations of how moral arguments, organized pressure, parliamentary action, and resistance interacted. Do not treat the 1807 trade ban as emancipation or the 1833 act as immediate full freedom.