

**Breaking the Chains Trail: The story of the enslaved peoples**

This trail is designed to help you learn about the people enslaved by the British during the era of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. The trail starts by looking at the cultures and civilizations of West Africa before tracing the route of some of the enslaved people from this region to the Caribbean. Once in the Caribbean it explores the experience of enslaved peoples and how they started a new culture of their own which they consolidated after the abolition of slavery in 1834.

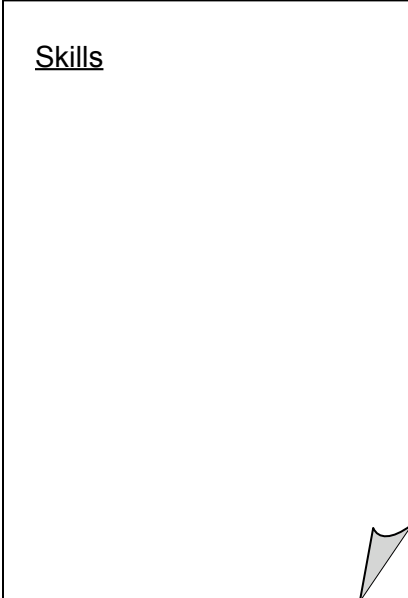
This trail will focus on galleries 2 (gold), 3 (green) and 5 (bright green), although all of the exhibition can be used.

**West Africa, Gallery 2 (gold)**

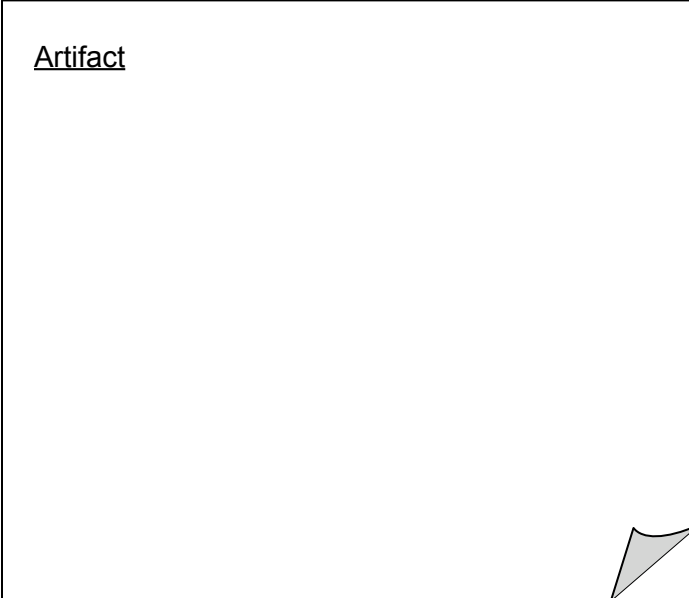
African civilizations were highly developed, with fine examples of art and technology. Find examples of some of the artifacts from the West African civilizations of Asante, Yoruba and Benin.

What skills do these artifacts reveal? Draw a picture of one that shows a high level of skill.

Skills



Artifact



What else can you tell about the people that created these artifacts? Use the interactive display entitled 'African Symbolism' next to the display to help you.

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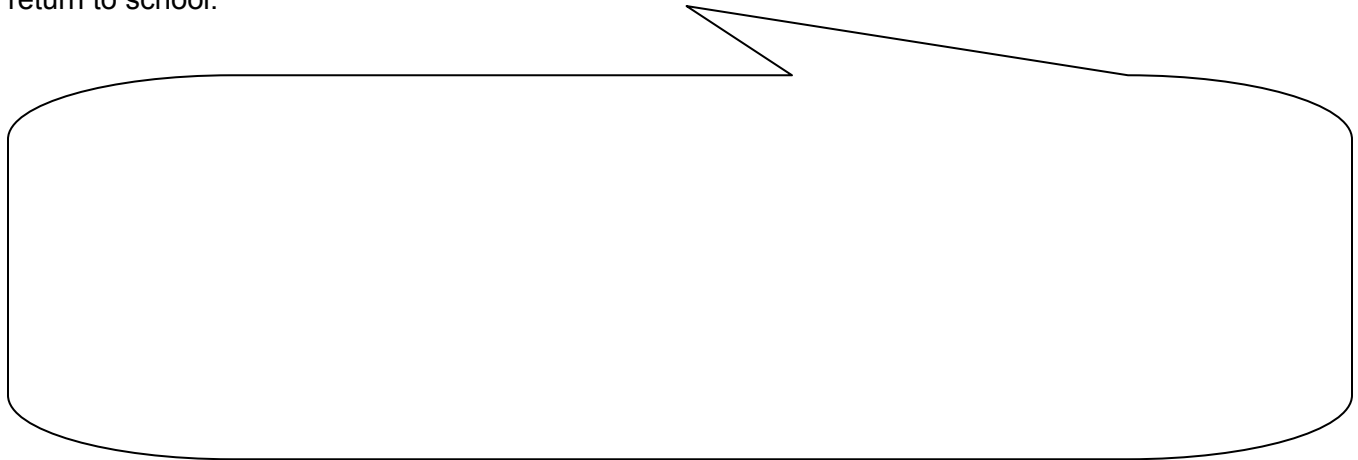
**Middle Passage (corridor)**

In small groups or individually experience the ‘middle passage’. Look at how the enslaved people were packed closely onto shelves like a commodity or object. See how their feet were chained together. Look at the chains used to bind them.

Can you hear anything? Imagine what it would have been like. How would it feel to have been separated from your family? Do you know the person next to you? Do you even speak the same language? How does it feel to be so confined, with no fresh air? Do you understand what has happened? Do you know where you are going? Do you know how long it will take? Will you ever see your family again? Is there anyone you can ask these questions to?

Close your eyes and think about these questions and try to imagine how it might feel to be enslaved and transported in this way.

Discuss how you are feeling in pairs and write down some points to feed back to the class when you return to school.



**The Caribbean and Plantations, Gallery 3 (green)**

When the slave ships arrived in the Caribbean enslaved Africans would be auctioned like commodities or possessions.

Find the Audio station in Gallery 3 and listen to the audio track by Mary Prince. Reflect on her experience of a slave auction. Discuss the following questions in pairs and write down the main points to feed back to the class when you return to school.

How did you think it felt to be sold at an auction as a commodity?

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What do you think it would be like to be separated from your mother and sisters?

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How would it feel to be inspected and prodded by potential buyers/owners?

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In front of the listening station booth is a register. The register records the enslaved people in Antigua.

What year is the registry for? \_\_\_\_\_

When was the transatlantic slave trade abolished in UK parliament? \_\_\_\_\_

What does the discrepancy (difference) between the dates tell you about the difference between the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade and emancipation? (If you're not sure what emancipation means look at the red notice board entitled 'The Road to Emancipation' for clues)

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Watch the film on sugar cultivation .

The enslaved Africans were used primarily as agricultural labourers, which provided for the large profits made from sugar, tobacco, rum and cotton. Discuss the following questions in pairs and write down the main points to feed back to the class when you return to school.

What would be the worst part of this work?

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How could the work be made more bearable?

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What else could a machete be used for other than to harvest sugar cane?

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Look at the artefacts which belonged to the enslaved Africans living in the Caribbean, displayed in the glass cabinet on the right as you exit the middle passage corridor. List three different types of items.

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What does this tell you about what they bought with them from West Africa?

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What would you take with you if you were going on a journey and couldn't take any physical belongings, and why would it be important to you?

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**Voices of the Caribbean, Gallery 5 (bright green)**

Emancipation of enslaved peoples did not reach the Caribbean until 1834, some 27 years after abolition of the trade in UK parliament.

The abolition of slavery in the British Caribbean in 1834 resulted in a labour shortage. The solution was to import cheap indentured labourers from India, China and Africa. Read the exhibition panels about indentured labour.

What was/is indentured labour?

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At the listening station press button 2 on indentured labour and listen to track 1, the account of an indentured labourer in the British Caribbean. Discuss the following questions in pairs and write down the main points to feed back to the class when you return to school.

Describe the indentured labourer. Who was he, what skills did he have, what was his motivation for moving? What was he promised/information was he given?

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What was the reality? What were his conditions? How do you think he felt?

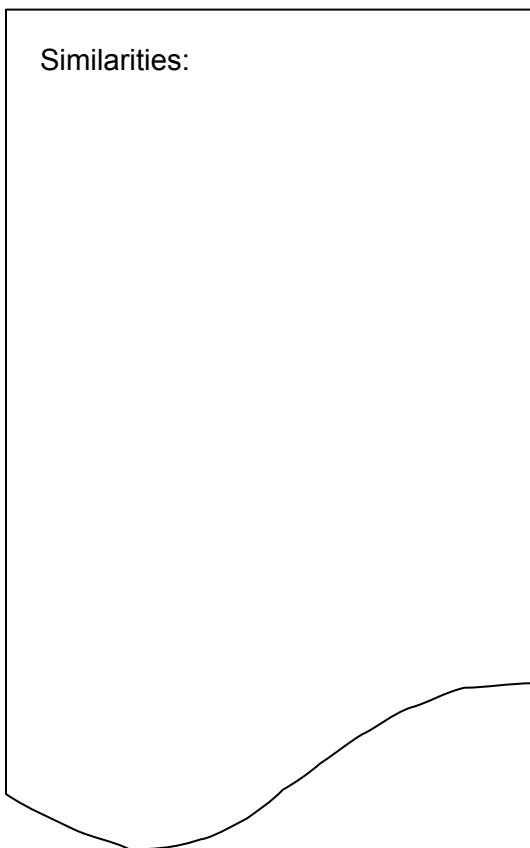
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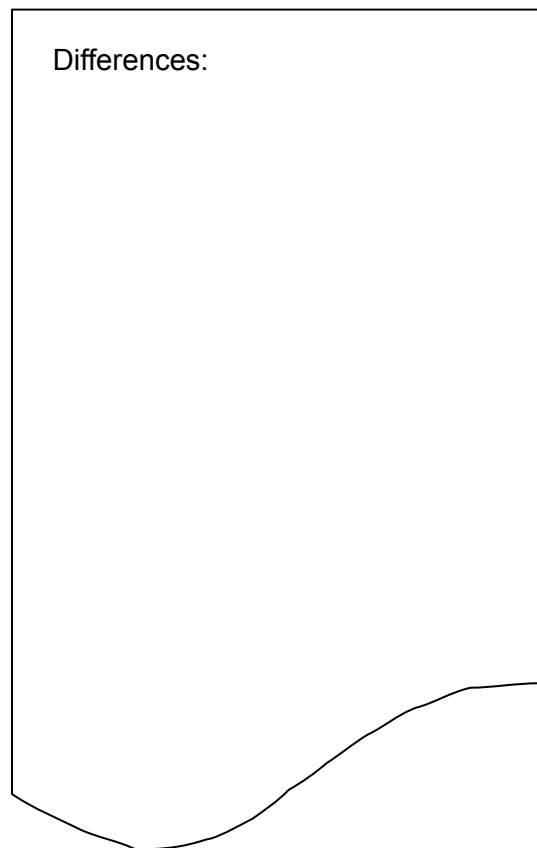
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Compare indentured labour to slavery. What are the similarities and differences?

Similarities:



Differences:



Find the following quote on the exhibition panels:

**"We want freedom, in this the hundredth year of our emancipation"**

Where is the quote from?

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Discuss the following questions in pairs and write down the main points to feed back to the class when you return to school.

What does the quote tell you about society 100 years after the abolition of slavery in the British Caribbean?

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If the legacy of the transatlantic slave trade affected Caribbean society 100 years after abolition, how long do you think it took to resolve? Or do you think that it remains unresolved? Do you think it is possible to resolve?? If so how long will it take, and how can it be resolved?

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Enslaved Africans were not able to bring physical objects with them to the Caribbean, but they did bring their culture, religious beliefs and traditions with them. Retaining a sense of identity and hope was a big part of survival, and culture building was an important means of rebellion and opposition. Building on their African roots, their experiences in the Caribbean, and the fusion of cultures in the Caribbean emancipated Africans created a new and dynamic culture.

Look in the glass cabinets at artifacts from African-Caribbean culture. There is a record by Bob Marley and the Wailers entitled SURVIVAL. What does the title of this album suggest?

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African-Caribbean culture is rich in poetry, music and art. Watch some local African-Caribbean artists on the film viewing station called Me Deya. Under Atlantic family watch 'Me Deya' (about Creole) and

'The Messenger – Bandele' (about music and art), and under Identity and Culture watch 'How our love survives – Dr Edison Burton.

**empire**  
**and us**

In pairs discuss the video footage. What are your first impressions? What are the influences? What is the message? What evidence supports your opinions?

Write down the main points from your discussion to feed back to the class when you return to school.

