

Compare/Contrast Slavery

Name: _____

Objective: Compare and contrast the features of slavery down through the centuries

Slavery in the Ancient World

Slavery began around 11,000 years ago when people started to settle and farm instead of wandering as hunters and gatherers. Slavery was part of nearly every society and existed in Egypt as early as 4,000 BC. Slavery was part of life in both the Greek and Roman Empires. Slaves were almost always of a different ethnic group, race, religion, or political unit than their owners. The earliest slaves were probably war captives, although people who worked as slaves in order to repay debts (debt bondage) also existed in ancient Egypt. A person could sell himself or his wife and children into bondage to pay off debts. As societies developed they depended on slave labor for building projects, agriculture, and mining, as well as for farm and housework. Owning slaves was legal and was an acceptable fact of society. The slave was the property of his or her owner. In general, slaves were not understood to be full human beings, and did not have the same rights as citizens. Male and female slaves often had shaved heads and bare feet.

Slavery in the Ancient World	Yes/No	Evidence from the text (briefly quote from the passage)
Ownership of slaves is legal		
Slaves are often captured during war		
Slaves are used mostly for economic purposes to make profits		
Slavery is an acceptable part of society		
Slavery is not acceptable to society and exists in secret in many places		
Slaves are expensive and not easily replaced		

The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade

The Portuguese were the first to trade in slaves, bringing slaves from the West coast of Africa to their colonies in South America, such as present day Brazil, in the 16th century. The demand for slaves from Africa in the Southern states of America increased as the demand for sugar, coffee, cotton and tobacco grew. Slaves were needed to work on the plantations. By 1641, African slaves could be legally bought and sold in America. There was a great demand for slaves and so they became expensive. Traders would leave Liverpool and other European cities with goods to exchange for slaves – beads, whiskey, and guns. They would barter these for slaves in Africa. Some slaves were captured in wars between African tribes. Other slaves were kidnapped by white and black hunters. The slaves would be sold in America and the slave traders would use the profits to buy sugar, coffee, cotton, and tobacco, which they brought back to Europe. This was called the ‘triangular trade’ and traders made a profit on every leg of the journey.

Slavery in the Transatlantic Slave Trade	Yes/No	Evidence from text (briefly quote from the passage)
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Slaves are often captured during war		
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Slavery is not acceptable to society and exists in secret in many places		
Slaves are expensive and not easily replaced		

Slavery in the United States

When Europeans came to America, they brought with them the practice of slavery. Africans were captured and shipped to America to work the farmland. Slaves were expensive to replace, so owners would try to keep them alive and working for a long time. Many of the founding fathers were slave owners, including George Washington, who owned a large plantation. Slaves did most of the work on plantations, and were important to the new country's economy. By 1804, the northern states had abolished slavery. An abolitionist movement began, made up of former slaves and sympathetic northerners who fought to outlaw slavery in the South. Slave owners, however, were unwilling to give up without a fight. The American Civil War between the North and the South was fought in part over the question of slavery. The North won the war, and in 1865 Congress passed the 13th amendment, which legally abolished slavery in the US.

Slavery in the US	Yes/No	Evidence from the text (briefly quote from the passage)
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Modern Slavery

Although slavery is now illegal in every part of the world, there are about 27 million people held in slavery today. Today's slaves are not usually bought and sold in public and they are rarely held in chains. The most common form of modern slavery is bonded labor or 'debt-bondage.' People become bonded laborers when they take or are tricked into taking a loan for as little as \$36 – the cost of medicine for a sick child. The repay the debt, they are forced to work long hours, seven days a week, 365 days a year, usually in secret locations. They are trapped and continue to be held in slavery long after the original debt has been repaid. Slaves are cheap and can be replaced easily. Out of nearly 7 billion people in the world today, 1.5 billion live on less than \$1 per day. People who are poor and desperate can be tricked into debt bondage or may be captured and forced to work in houses, on farms, as soldiers, or even as prostitutes. Slaves can be replaced easily when they are too ill or old to work as there are many more people who can be tricked into working for nothing. Huge profits are made by today's slave holders, as slaves are paid little or nothing. The total yearly profit created by slaves is around \$14 billion.

Slavery in Modern Slavery	Yes/No	Evidence from the text (briefly quote from the passage)
Ownership of slaves is legal		
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Slaves are used mostly for economic purposes to make profits		
Slavery is an acceptable part of society		
Slavery is not acceptable to society and exists in secret in many places		
Slaves are expensive and not easily replaced		

After you are finished with all 4 periods of slavery please answer the following question. Try to stay within the box. I want you to write enough to get your point across, but not too much so that you aren't specific.

1. How is slavery during these time period DIFFERENT?

2. How is slavery during these time periods SIMILAR?