

DBQ – Document Based Question - Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade

Name: _____

A Document Based Question (DBQ) is a question that is answered in writing after the analysis of primary documents. The question is designed to test your ability to work with and understand historical documents. After analyzing the sources provided at your table by using the boxes below, answer the main Document Based Question provided in the black box.

Historical Context: As all the kings, explorers, and financiers had hope, the Americas were full of opportunities to make money. Gold, silver, and other minerals could be mined, and tobacco, sugar, and other crops could be grown on plantations. In order to make use of these resources there would have to be a reliable supply of workers. The Native American population has shrunk due to disease and war and did not provide enough labor. However, the Europeans had access to another cheap labor market that already existed, the African Slave Trade. While the use of slaves has existed in societies for thousands of years, it was not until the 1400s that Europeans began trading and capturing slaves from Africa – just in time for the establishment of colonies in America... Between 1450-1870 over 10 million humans were taken from Africa.

How does the lack of concern for slaves as humans with feelings influence their treatment during the slave trade?

Answer this question in no more than a one page typed reflection when you are finished analyzing the provided documents. Specifically refer to as many of the documents as you can to support your answer.

Document 1

Why do the Spanish colonies believe that getting Africans is necessary?

Document 2

Describe Cugoano's experience as he discusses his capture into slavery.

Document 3

According to this image, how are the slaves treated by their African captors?

Document 4

It is said that Africa and the Americas are 'bridged' from the bones of the Atlantic slave trade. (There is a 'bridge' made of bones between Africa and the Americas.) How does this image support that idea?

Document 5

Give your thoughts on the conditions aboard the slave ships.

Document 6

Why would captive Africans become disoriented and mentally unstable during the Middle Passage?

Document 7

How are physical harm and terror (fear) used to control Africans?

Document 8

How is rebellion or resistance dealt with on plantations?

Document 9

What specific act marks how an African's freedom is ultimately symbolically lost?