**Rationale**

These resources were developed as a result of the 2019 Historical Association Teacher Fellowship on the transatlantic slave trade. Like many of the other teachers present, I realised that there were many elements missing from the way in which I had been teaching the topic. After the intensive discussions with academics, course leaders and my fellow teachers, I realised that the three main points I wanted my new enquiry to include were:

1. The link between the development of slavery in the Caribbean and racial thinking – described by Saidiya Hartman (2007) as the ‘prison house of race’ (p. 48). I could see that students’ understanding of this would be crucial for them to understand any subsequent history, not to mention the modern British society in which they live.
2. The effects of the transatlantic trade on West Africa – Toby Green’s lecture during the residential, and his book *A Fistful of Shells*, illustrated the complexity of this.
3. The link between the transatlantic slave trade and British wealth and prosperity. Nick Draper and Katie Donington’s work with the Legacies of British Slave-ownership project formed a big part of the Fellowship and it was fascinating to trace the financial effects of the trade on the heart of the British economy.

The immediately obvious problem was that these three points all referred to effects that, although linked, are related to events on different continents. Creating an enquiry that brought the three together in a coherent way would be difficult, but I wanted to try. In the recent Historical Association publication on teaching twentieth-century history, when asked what he thought that history teachers should be teaching, Orlando Figes answered that the connections between places and topics are crucial for understanding: ‘all these things are connected… I think it is more important to teach how and why they were connected, rather than separating these subjects into discrete packages.’ (2019) I wanted this enquiry to be about students understanding the links between the development of racialised societies in the Caribbean, the destabilisation of West Africa and the flourishing of Britain’s economy, as much as being about each of those things individually.

The idea of towns as case studies developed first of all to make the scope of the enquiry feel more manageable – Bridgetown, Oguaa and Bath are all unique but tell a wider story. As I work at a school in Bath, this element was of course designed to give students an insight into their own community. Although Bath is known as a Georgian city, and most of its buildings date from the time at which transatlantic slavery was at its peak, the topic is rarely mentioned at museums or heritage sites. I had experimented with using cities as case studies when teaching enquiries on twentieth-century history to Year 9, who had looked at Chicago and Magnitogorsk to understand the USA in the 1920s and the USSR in the 1930s. In both cases this seemed to have the effect of making a huge subject manageable and also giving students a crucial sense of place as they got to know an area in more detail.

The lesson on Bath could easily be adapted to reflect developments in another British town. I made use of the Legacies of British Slave-ownership website ([www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs)), as well as the Runaway Slaves in Britain website ([www.runaways.gla.ac.uk](http://www.runaways.gla.ac.uk)). There is a document called ‘Adapting the enquiry to include another British town’ within the folder to give some suggestions on this.

The final task, with its ‘split screen’ shape, is designed to get students thinking about the concurrent events in each location and then to write about how they were linked together.

In terms of the principles drawn up by the course leaders of the Fellowship, this enquiry is designed to address the first four in detail: race, Africa and Africans, mass commercialisation, and violence. Resistance, abolition and legacies are mentioned, but obliquely; the enquiry would be well served by being followed by another enquiry that addresses these three issues in more depth. There is quite a lot of scholarship built into the enquiry, and the historiography has been chosen carefully to include as many historians of African and Caribbean descent as possible, and to make them a visible and vocal part of the work that the students complete.

**References and further reading**

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