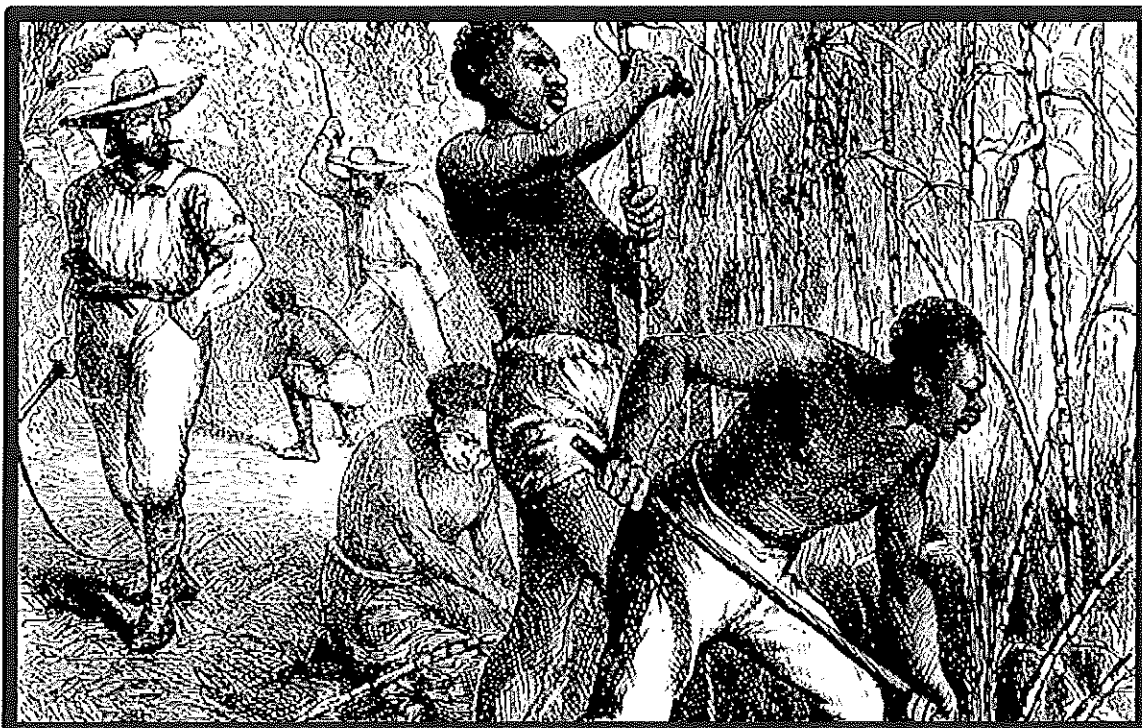


# How Did Sugar Feed Slavery?



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## Supporting Questions

1. What conditions supported sugar production and slavery in the Western Hemisphere?
2. How was sugar cultivated in the Western Hemisphere?
3. What was life like for enslaved Africans on sugar plantations in the Western Hemisphere?

## 5th Grade Slavery in the Western Hemisphere Inquiry

### How Did Sugar Feed Slavery?

<p>New York State Social Studies Framework Key Idea &amp; Practices</p>	<p><b>5.3 EUROPEAN EXPLORATION AND ITS EFFECTS:</b> Various European powers explored and eventually colonized the Western Hemisphere. This had a profound impact on Native Americans and led to the transatlantic slave trade.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gathering, Using, and Interpreting Evidence    <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Geographic Reasoning    <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic Reasoning</p>
<p>Staging the Question</p>	<p><b>UNDERSTAND</b> Complete a think-pair-share activity to determine if any popular consumer products today might be produced through inhumane means.</p>

Supporting Question 1
<p>What conditions drove sugar production and slavery in the Western Hemisphere?</p>
Formative Performance Task
<p>List environmental, social, and economic conditions that drove sugar production and slavery.</p>
Featured Sources
<p><b>Source A:</b> Excerpt from <i>The Sugar Barons</i></p> <p><b>Source B:</b> Excerpt from "Sugar and Slavery"</p> <p><b>Source C:</b> Map of the slave trade</p> <p><b>Source D:</b> Image bank: Economic data on sugar production</p>

Supporting Question 2
<p>How was sugar cultivated in the Western Hemisphere?</p>
Formative Performance Task
<p>Create a diagram that explains how sugar was produced.</p>
Featured Sources
<p><b>Source A:</b> "Sugar Love (A Not So Sweet Story)"</p> <p><b>Source B:</b> Image bank: Collection of historical images of the steps in sugar production</p>

Supporting Question 3
<p>What was life like for enslaved Africans on sugar plantations in the Western Hemisphere?</p>
Formative Performance Task
<p>Write a paragraph describing the conditions that enslaved Africans faced on sugar plantations.</p>
Featured Sources
<p><b>Source A:</b> Excerpt from <i>The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano</i></p> <p><b>Source B:</b> Source bank: Descriptions of work on sugar plantations</p>

<p><b>Summative Performance Task</b></p>	<p><b>ARGUMENT</b> Construct an argument (e.g., detailed outline, poster, or essay) that addresses the compelling question using specific claims and relevant evidence from historical sources while acknowledging competing views.</p> <p><b>EXTENSION</b> Write a persuasive letter to a member of Congress (circa 1800) urging a nationwide boycott of sugar imported from slave plantations.</p>
<p><b>Taking Informed Action</b></p>	<p><b>ASSESS</b> Determine the severity of the potentially inhumane production practices for popular consumer products today.</p> <p><b>ACT</b> Create and act out a television commercial raising awareness of inhumane production practices for popular consumer products today.</p>

## Overview

### Inquiry Description

This inquiry provides students with an opportunity to evaluate the relationship between the dramatic increase in European sugar consumption in the 18th and 19th centuries and the reliance on the labor of enslaved persons to produce sugar in the Western Hemisphere. In examining the compelling question--“How did sugar feed slavery?” students explore the environmental, economic, and social consequences of increased sugar production. Students work with featured sources focused on sugar production and the treatment of enslaved workers on sugar plantations. The goal of this inquiry is to provide students with an opportunity to examine the human costs of consumer behaviors through the historical example of sugar production in the Western Hemisphere. Such knowledge may help students as they make economic decisions of their own.

In addition to the Key Idea listed earlier, this inquiry highlights the following Conceptual Understandings:

- (5.3a) Europeans traveled to the Americas in search of new trade routes, including a northwest passage, and resources. They hoped to gain wealth, power, and glory.
- (5.3c) The transatlantic trade of goods, movement of people, and spread of ideas and diseases resulted in cultural diffusion. This cultural diffusion became known as the Columbian Exchange and reshaped the lives and beliefs of people.
- (5.3d) Africans were captured, brought to the Americas, and sold as slaves. Their transport across the Atlantic was known as the Middle Passage.

**NOTE:** This inquiry is expected to take three to five 40-minute class periods. The inquiry time frame could expand if teachers think their students need additional instructional experiences (i.e., supporting questions, formative performance tasks, and featured sources). Teachers are encouraged to adapt the inquiries in order to meet the needs and interests of their particular students. Resources can also be modified as necessary to meet individualized education programs (IEPs) or Section 504 Plans for students with disabilities.

### Structure of the Inquiry

In addressing the compelling question “How did sugar feed slavery?” students work through a series of supporting questions, formative performance tasks, and featured sources in order to construct an argument supported by evidence and counterevidence from a variety of sources. The inquiry concludes with students Taking Informed Action on a related issue in a classroom setting.

## Staging the Compelling Question

The Staging the Compelling Question exercise provides teachers with an opportunity to begin the Taking Informed Action sequence of tasks. To do so, teachers may have students engage in a think-pair-share activity to develop a list of popular consumer products that are derived from inhumane business practices. Teachers may support students by providing examples of products that are produced with child laborers, as seen in the featured source

“Top 10 Products Produced with Child Labor.” Students come back to this issue through the second and third steps in the Taking Informed Action sequence after completing the formative and summative performance tasks to create and act out a television commercial raising awareness of inhumane production practices for popular consumer products today.

## Supporting Question 1

The first supporting question—“What conditions supported sugar production and slavery in the Western Hemisphere?”—invites students to consider how demand for sugar corresponded to the rise of slavery in the West. The formative performance task asks students to list the conditions that led to the rise of the global sugar industry and use of slave labor on sugar plantations. Featured Source A provides background information about the origins of the global sugar trade. Featured Source B includes background information about the role of slavery in the sugar industry. Featured Source C provides a map depicting the Atlantic slave trade. Featured Source D provides data on sugar prices and sugar consumption in England. Completion of the formative performance task introduces students to the interconnected nature of European demand for and consumption of sugar with the enslavement of African workers on sugar plantations in the Western Hemisphere.

## Supporting Question 2

The second supporting question—“How was sugar cultivated in the Western Hemisphere?”—has students explore the entire process of making sugar in the 19th century. The formative performance task calls for students to make a diagram that explains how sugar was produced. Featured Source A is a brief history of how sugar was cultivated before the discovery of the New World and the rapid rise of sugar plantations. Featured Source B includes various images that depict sugar production on 19th-century sugar plantations.

## Supporting Question 3

The third supporting question—“What was life like for enslaved Africans on sugar plantations in the Western Hemisphere?”—asks how poor working conditions and treatment affected enslaved Africans in the West. In the formative performance task, students make a claim supported by evidence about the conditions for enslaved African Americans on sugar plantations. Students analyze a variety of featured sources, including the personal narrative of a slave on the Middle Passage (Featured Source A) and descriptions of work on plantations (Featured Source B). As students work through these emotional sources, they may benefit from guided discussion. Completion of this task should help students move to the Summative Performance Task, in which they make an argument about how the sugar-plantation system contributed to the cruelty of slavery.

## Summative Performance Task

At this point in the inquiry, students have examined the interconnected relationship between slave plantations and European consumption of sugar. Students should be able to demonstrate their understandings of this relationship and use evidence from multiple sources to support their claims. In this task, students construct an evidence-based argument responding to the compelling question “How did sugar feed slavery?” It is important to note that students’ arguments could take a variety of forms, including a detailed outline, poster, or essay.

Students’ arguments will likely vary but could include any of the following:

- The rise of slavery and a good climate in the Caribbean fueled the global rise of sugar consumption.
- Europeans enjoyed their sugar and were causing the inhumane Atlantic slave system.
- The conditions for slaves on sugar plantations in the Caribbean were even worse than on plantations in the American South.

Students could extend their arguments by writing a persuasive letter to a member of Congress (circa 1800) urging a nationwide boycott of sugar imported from slave plantations.

Students have the opportunity to continue to Take Informed Action using the knowledge they developed about popular products produced through inhumane means in the Staging the Compelling Question task to demonstrate that they *understand* the issue. They can then *assess* the severity of and justifications for the necessity of the potentially inhumane production practice. To *act*, students can create and act out a television commercial raising awareness of the issue. Note that students may end up deciding to support continued use of production practices for the products they explore.

## Staging the Compelling Question

### Featured Source

**Source A:** Child Labor Coalition, chart listing products produced by child labor in 2012, "Top 12 Products Produced with Child Labor"

TOP 12 PRODUCTS PRODUCED WITH CHILD LABOR BASED ON NUMBER OF COUNTRIES PRODUCING THEM		
Product	# of Countries Producing It with Child Labor	Which Countries are Producing It with Child Labor
Gold	18	Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Indonesia, Mali, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Niger, Peru, Philippines, Senegal, Suriname, Tanzania
Bricks	16	Afghanistan, Argentina, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Brazil, Burma, Cambodia, China, Ecuador, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Uganda, Vietnam
Tobacco	16	Argentina, Brazil, Cambodia, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyz Republic, Lebanon, Malawi, Mexico, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Philippines, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia
Cotton	16	Argentina, Azerbaijan, Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, China, Egypt, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mali, Paraguay, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Zambia
Coffee	14	Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Guinea, Honduras, El Salvador, Kenya, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda
Sugarcane	14	Belize, Bolivia, Burma, Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Kenya, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Thailand, Uganda
Cattle	9	Brazil, Chad, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Mauritania, Namibia, South Sudan, Uganda, Zambia
Rice	8	Brazil, Burma, Dominican Republic, India, Kenya, Mali, Philippines, Uganda
Diamonds	7	Angola, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe
Stones	7	Egypt, India, Madagascar, Nepal, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Zambia
Cocoa	6	Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria, Sierra Leone
Fish	6	Cambodia, Ghana, Indonesia, Peru, Philippines, Uganda

Data compiled from U.S. Department of Labor's 2012 *List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor*

Adapted from the Child Labor Coalition: <http://stopchildlabor.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Chart-of-Child-Labor-Products-by-Country-from-DOL-List-20122.png>.

## Supporting Question 1

### Featured Source

**Source A:** Matthew Parker, description of the origins of the sugar industry in the Western Hemisphere, *The Sugar Barons* (excerpt), 2011

Barbados is tiny—21 miles by 14, with an area close to that of the Isle of Wight. It seems bizarre that the island would prove to be the location for an agricultural revolution almost unrivalled in modern times for its ultimate economic, political, and human consequences. Yet Barbados's small size meant that everywhere was within fairly easy reach of the coast, crucial for transports, while its climate and distance from the equator are similar to those of the ancestral home of sugar cane—the islands of New Guinea. Both are hot, around 30°C humid and wet.

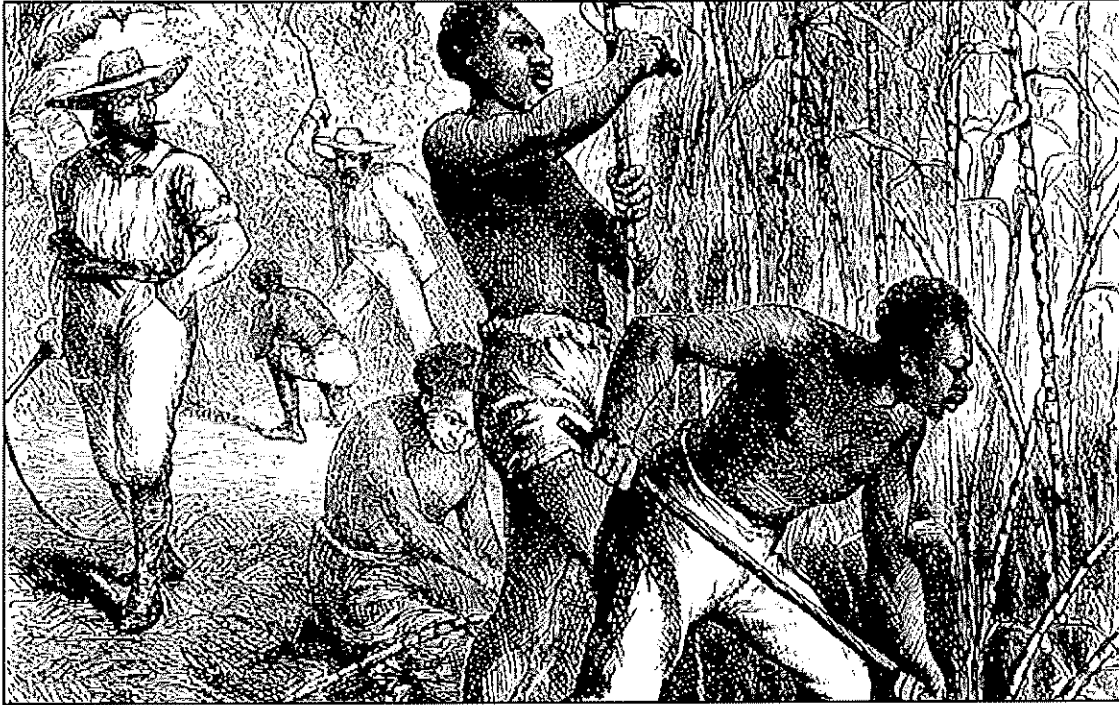
From the tiny island of Gomera in the Canaries, Christopher Columbus carried cane seedlings to the New World on his second voyage in 1493. Columbus knew sugar: he had traded it between Madeira and Genoa, and his first wife's family had thrived in the business. Thus it was an experienced eye that declared Hispaniola [modern Haiti and the Democratic Republic] in the West Indies the finest place in the world to grow the crop.

Copyright © 2011. Walker and Company.

## Supporting Question 1

## Featured Source

Source B: University of Michigan William L. Clements Library, background information about the use of slavery in the sugar industry, "Sugar and Slavery" (excerpt), no date



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It is impossible to think about sugar production in the West Indies without thinking about slavery. The labor of enslaved Africans was integral to the cultivation of the cane and production of sugar. Slaves toiled in the fields and the boiling houses, supplying the huge amounts of labor that sugar required. Overall some four million slaves were brought to the Caribbean, and almost all ended up on the sugar plantations. Conditions were harsh, and mortality rates were extremely high through all stages of slaves' lives. In some sugar colonies the slave population was ten times that of Europeans, and slave uprisings were an ever-present fear for the planters.

Slave trading was part of a highly profitable triangle of trade that spanned the Atlantic. Manufactured goods were traded to the West African coast for slaves, who were shipped to the sugar colonies (the infamous Middle Passage) and sugar, molasses, and rum were shipped from the islands to England.

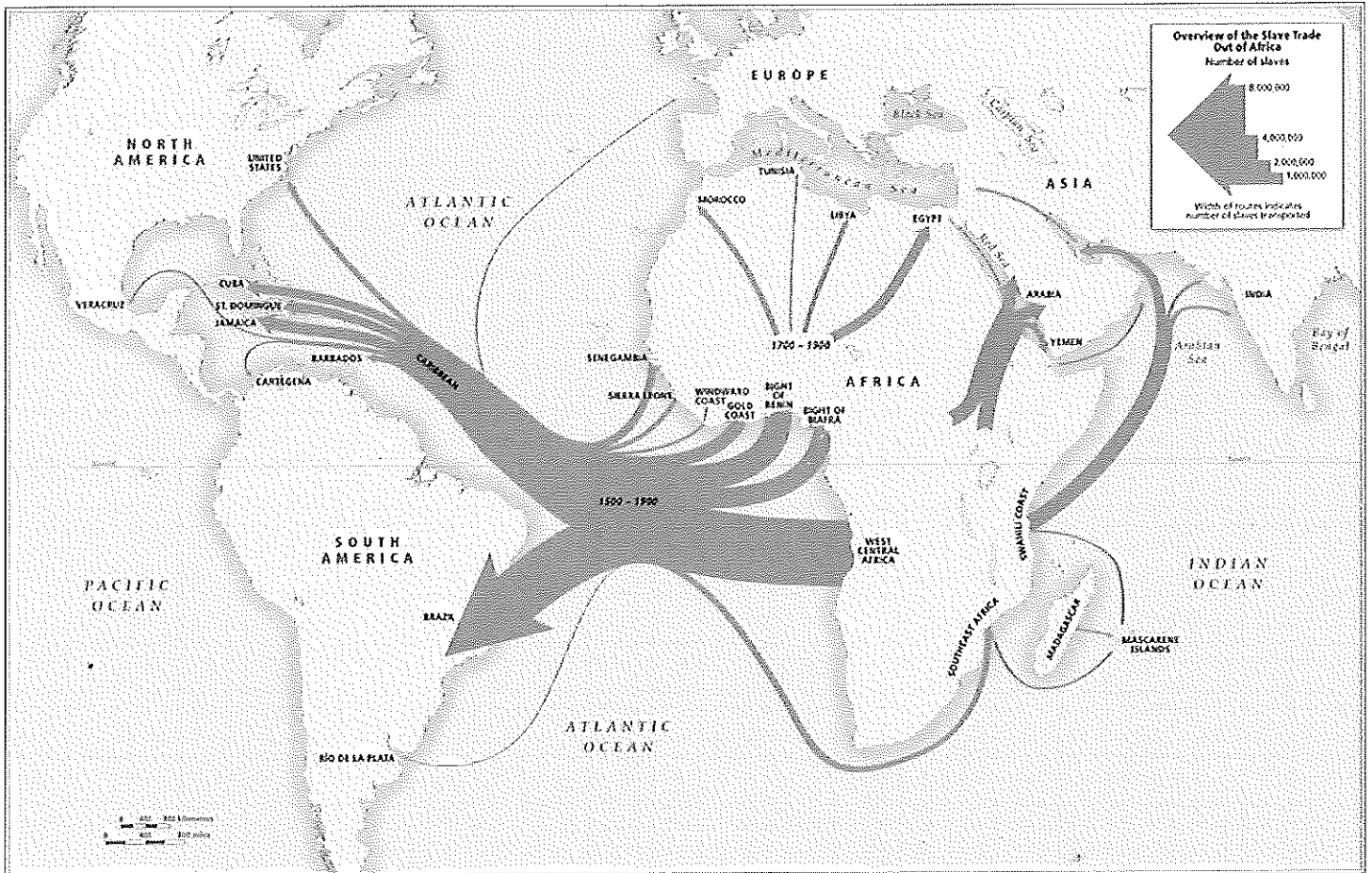
© William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan.



## Supporting Question 1

Featured Source

Source C: David Eltis and David Richardson, map depicting historical movements of the slave trade, "Overview of the Slave Trade Out of Africa, 1500–1900," *Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade*, 2010



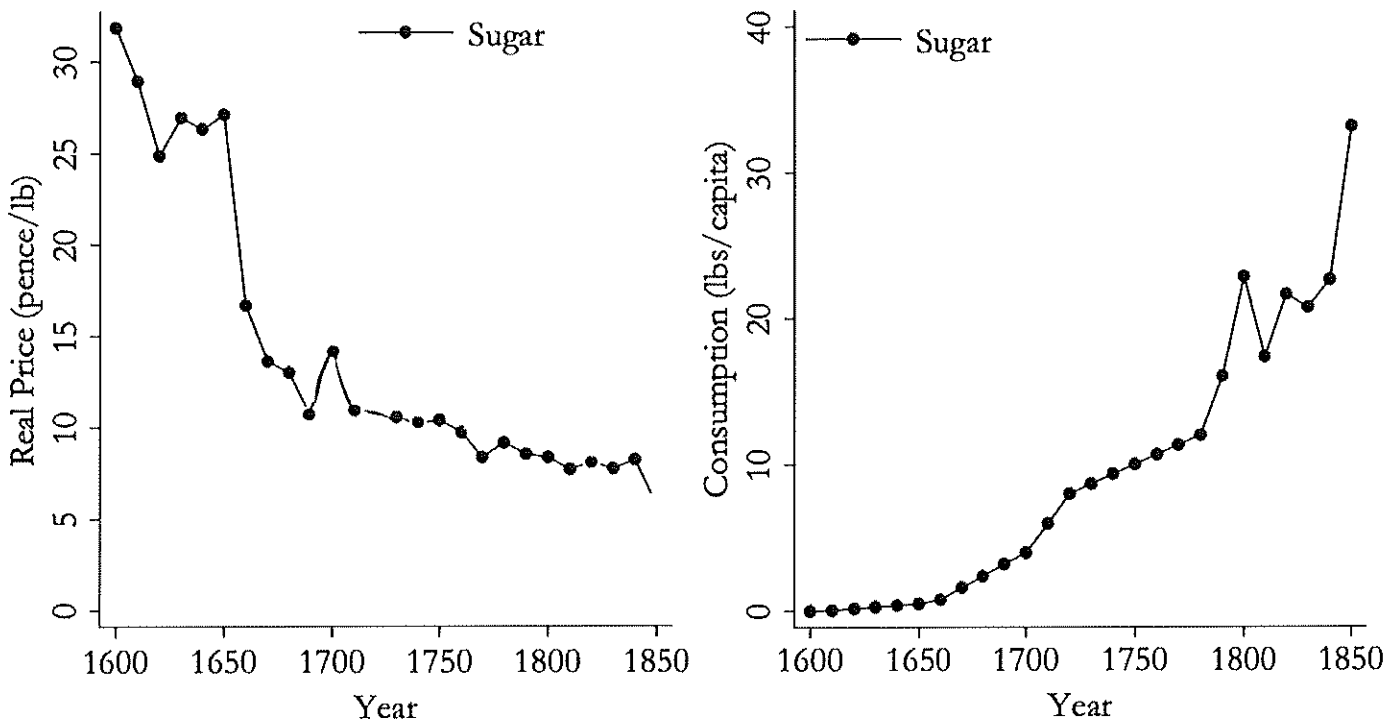
"Overview of the Slave Trade Out of Africa, 1500–1900" from David Eltis and David Richardson, *Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade*, 2010 © Yale University Press. Reproduced with permission of [Yale University Press](https://www.yale.edu/yupress).

## Supporting Question 1

## Featured Source

Source D: Jonathan Hersh and Hans-Joachim Voth, charts depicting sugar prices and sugar consumption in England, "Real Sugar Prices and Sugar Consumption Per Capita in England, 1600–1850," 2009

NOTE: These charts were edited for clarity.



**Figure 2: Real Sugar Prices and Sugar Consumption Per Capita in England, 1600-1850**

Jonathan Hersh and Hans-Joachim Voth. "Sweet Diversity: Colonial Goods and the Rise of European Living Standards after 1492." Used with permission. <http://www.princeton.edu/rpds/seminars/Voth102809.pdf>.

## Supporting Question 2

### Featured Source

**Source A:** Rich Cohen, article about the history of sugar in human culture, "Sugar Love: (A Not So Sweet Story)" (excerpts), 2013

In the beginning, on the island of New Guinea, where sugarcane was domesticated some 10,000 years ago, people picked cane and ate it raw, chewing a stem until the taste hit their tongue like a starburst....

Sugar spread slowly from island to island, finally reaching the Asian mainland around 1000 B.C. By A.D. 500 it was being processed into a powder in India and used as a medicine for headaches, stomach flutters... For years sugar refinement remained a secret science, passed master to apprentice. By 600 the art had spread to Persia, where rulers entertained guests with a plethora of sweets. When Arab armies conquered the region, they carried away the knowledge and love of sugar....

The Arabs perfected sugar refinement and turned it into an industry. The work was brutally difficult. The heat of the fields, the flash of the scythes, the smoke of the boiling rooms, the crush of the mills. By 1500, with the demand for sugar surging, the work was considered suitable only for the lowest of laborers. Many of the field hands were prisoners of war, eastern Europeans captured when Muslim and Christian armies clashed.

Perhaps the first Europeans to fall in love with sugar were British and French crusaders who went east to wrest the Holy Land from the infidel. They came home full of visions and stories and memories of sugar....

Columbus planted the New World's first sugarcane in Hispaniola....Within decades mills marked the heights in Jamaica and Cuba, where rainforest had been cleared and the native population eliminated by disease or war, or enslaved. The Portuguese created the most effective model, making Brazil into an early boom colony, with more than 100,000 slaves churning out tons of sugar....

By the 18th century the marriage of sugar and slavery was complete. Every few years a new island—Puerto Rico, Trinidad—was colonized, cleared, and planted. When the natives died, the planters replaced them with African slaves.

© National Geographic. Used with permission. <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2013/08/sugar/cohen-text>.

## Supporting Question 2

Featured Source

Source B: Image bank: Collection of historical images of the steps in sugar production

*NOTE: The images and text in this image bank are from the collection "The Atlantic Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Americas: A Visual Record" compiled by Jerome S. Handler and Michael L. Tuite Jr. and sponsored by the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and the University of Virginia Library. <http://hitchcock.itc.virginia.edu/Slavery/index.php>.*

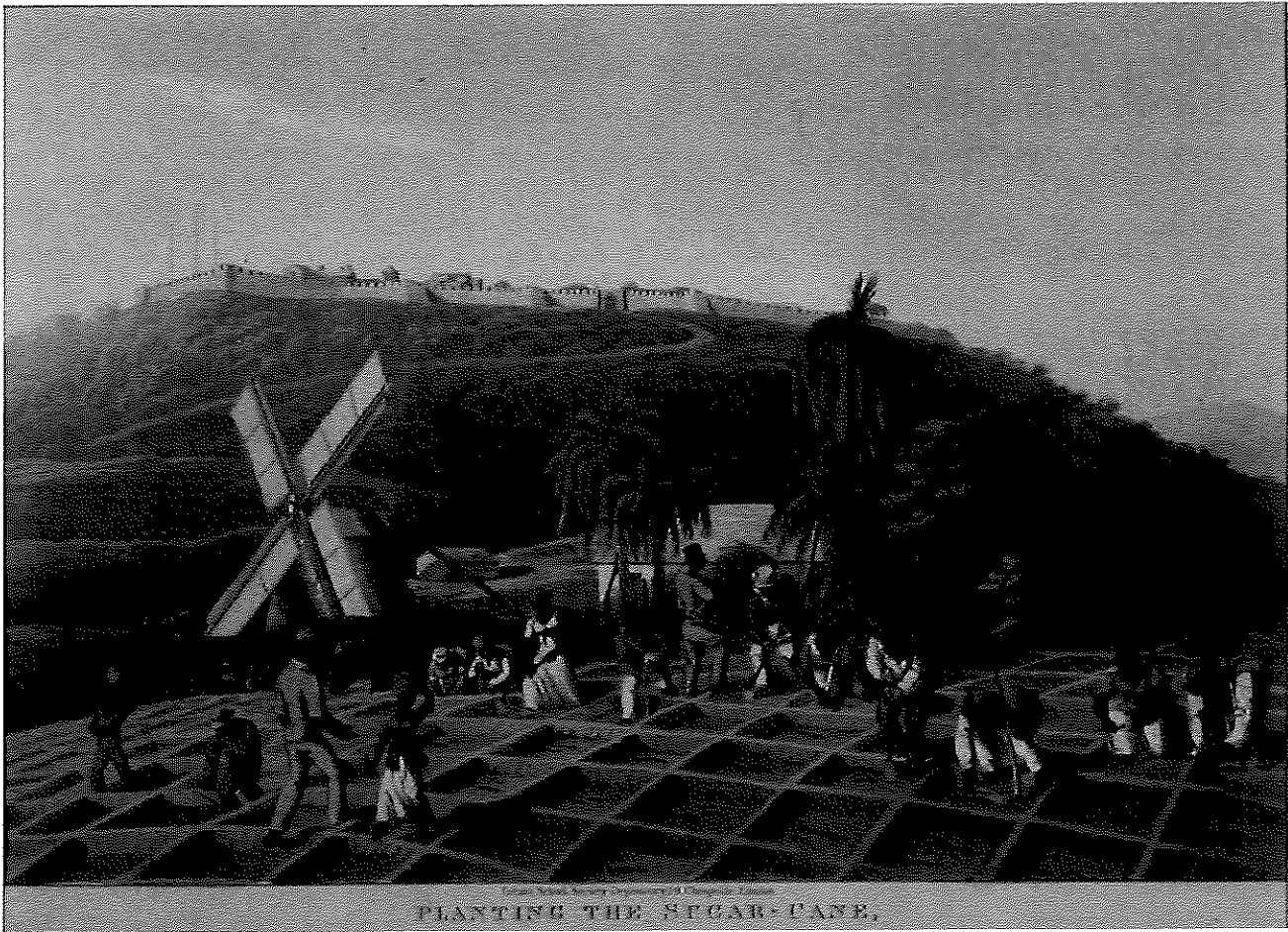


Image 1: William Clark, color drawing of sugar cane planting, "Planting Sugar Cane," Antigua, West Indies, 1823.

*NOTE: The painting "Planting the Sugar Cane" shows men and women planting cane in cane holes, supervised by black overseers.*

Public Domain. William Clark, Ten Views In the Island of Antigua, in Which are Represented the Process of Sugar Making. From Drawings Made by William Clark, During a Residence of Three Years in the West Indies (London, 1823). Image shown here is from the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University. Also published in Ladies' Society for Promoting the Early Education of Negro Children (London, ca. 1833). Image reference NW0052:

<http://hitchcock.itc.virginia.edu/Slavery/details.php?categorynum=7&categoryName=New%20World%20Agriculture%20and%20Plantation%20Labor&theRecord=64&recordCount=114>.

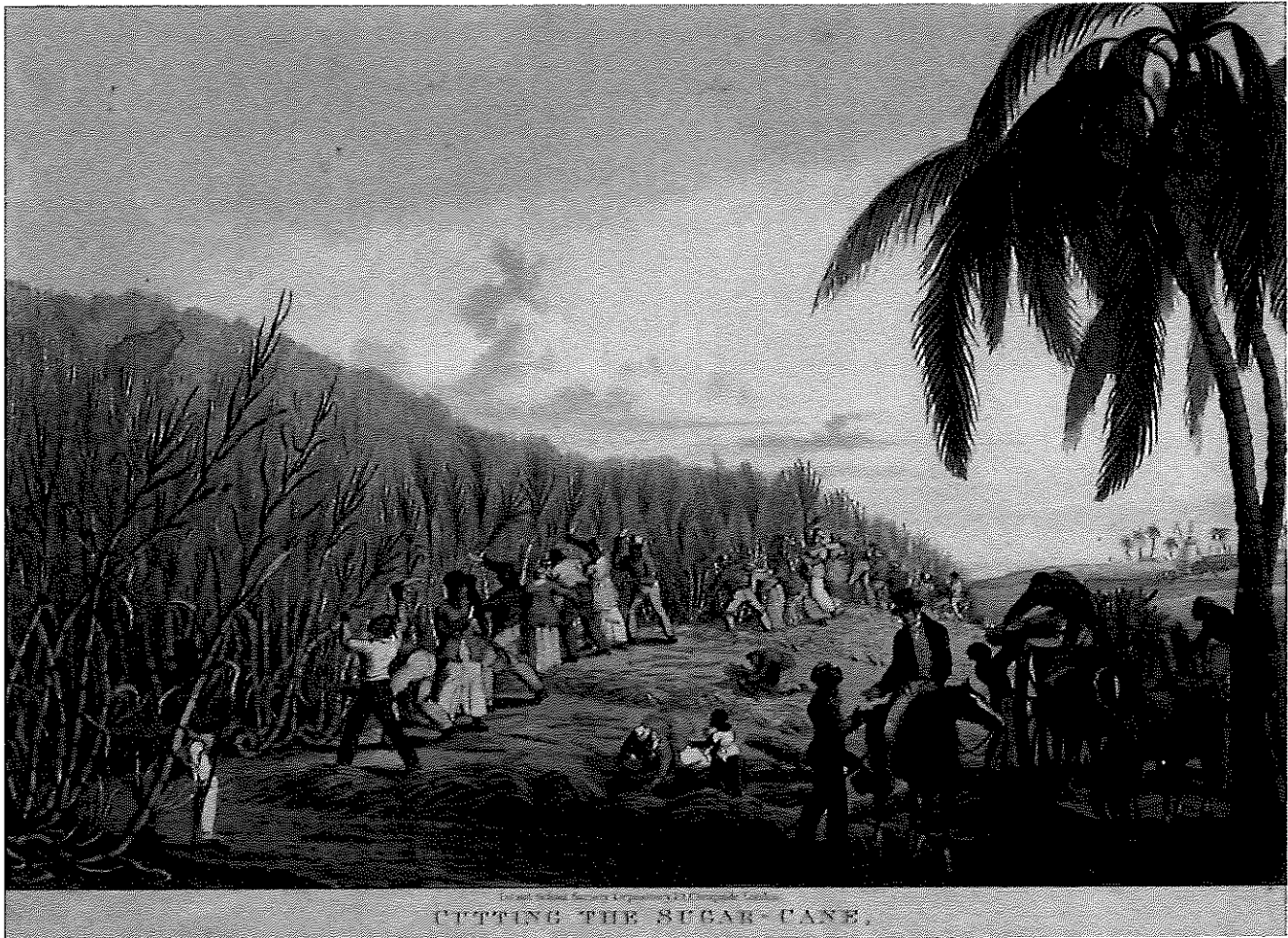


Image 2: William Clark, color drawing of sugar cane harvest, "Cutting the Sugar Cane," Antigua, West Indies, 1823.

*NOTE: In the painting, "Cutting the Sugar Cane," men and women are depicted working in the sugar cane fields with a black driver supervising and a white manager/overseer on horseback.*

Public Domain. William Clark, Ten Views In the Island of Antigua, in Which are Represented the Process of Sugar Making.... From Drawings Made by William Clark, During a Residence of Three Years in the West Indies (London, 1823). Image shown here is from the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University. Also published in Ladies' Society for Promoting the Early Education of Negro Children (London, ca. 1833). Image reference NW0054:

<http://hitchcock.itc.virginia.edu/Slavery/details.php?categorynum=7&categoryName=New%20World%20Agriculture%20and%20Plantation%20Labor&theRecord=66&recordCount=114>.

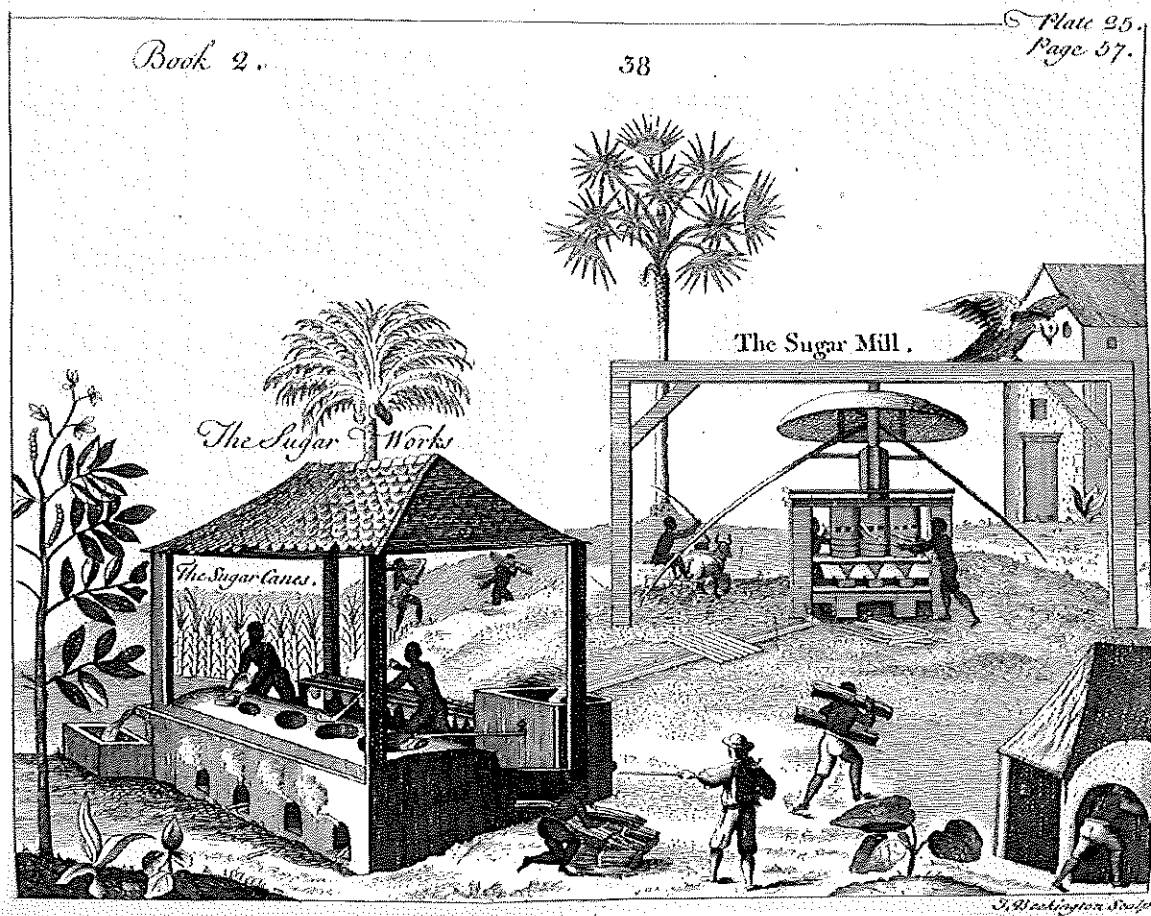


Image 3: Jean-Baptiste Du Tetre, engraving of workers in a sugar cane mill, "Feeding Sugar Cane into a Mill," Greater Antilles, 1667.

*NOTE: In this image, slaves are feeding cane stalks into vertical-roller mill; note the trough through which the cane juice flows to the boiling house.*

Public Domain. Pierre Pommet, A complete history of drugs. Written in French by monsieur Pommet... (London, 1748, 4th ed.), facing p. 57. (Copy in Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library). Image reference Pommet-57:

<http://hitchcock.itc.virginia.edu/Slavery/details.php?categorynum=7&categoryName=New%20World%20Agriculture%20and%20Plantation%20Labor&theRecord=106&recordCount=114>.

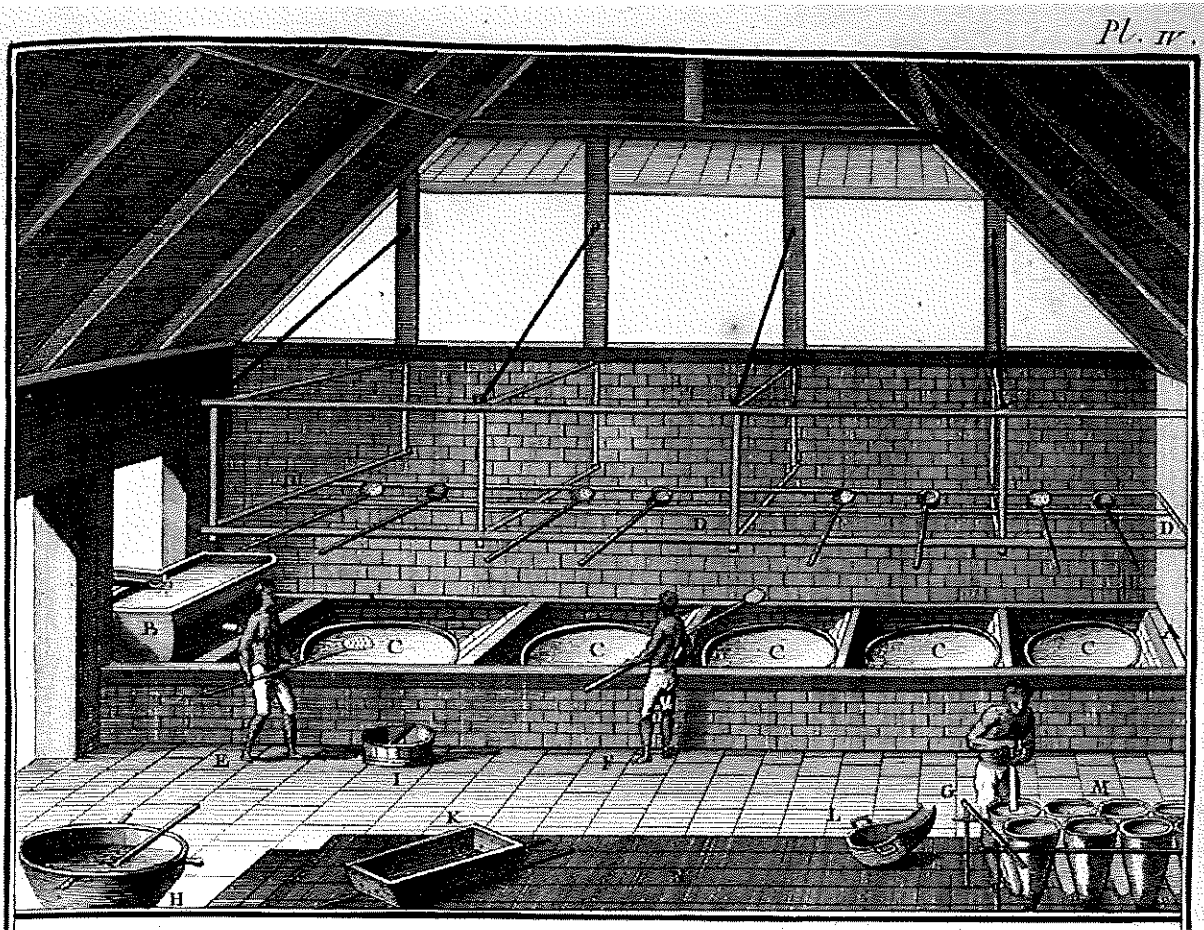
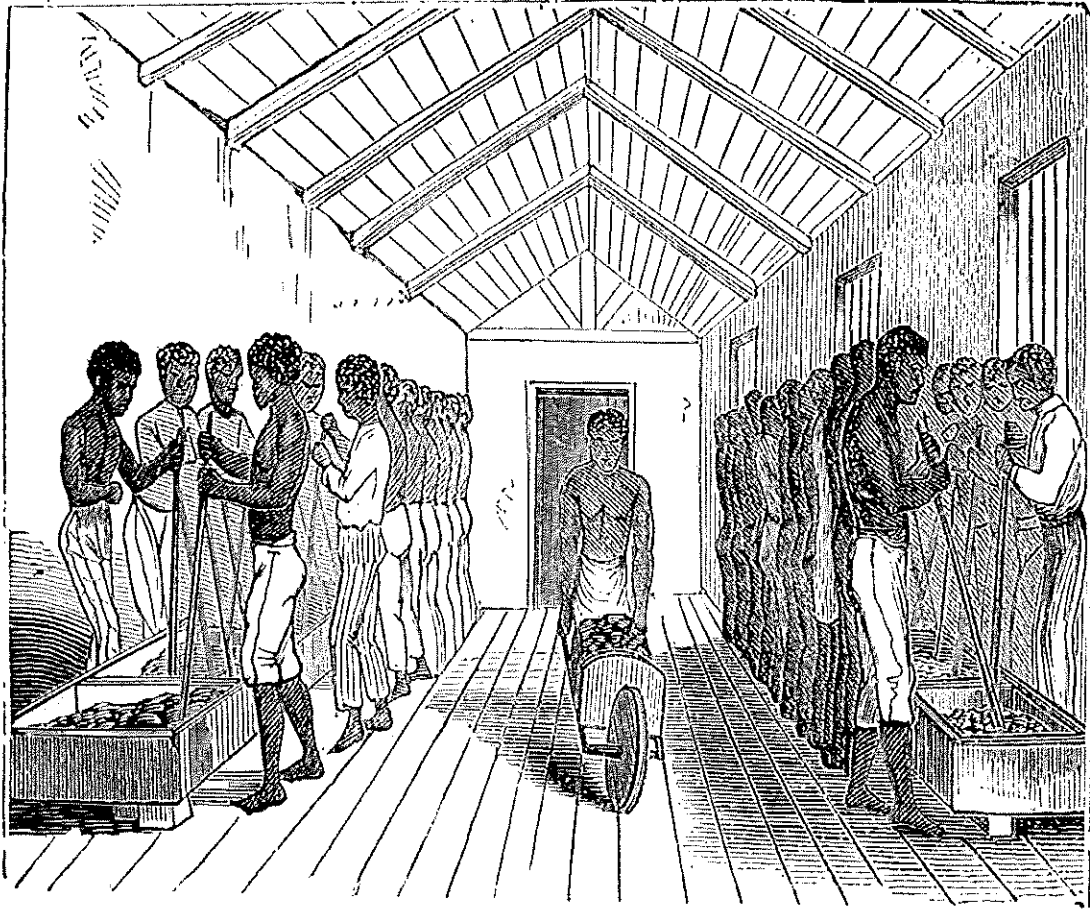


Image 4: Unknown artist, engraving of workers boiling sugar cane, "Boiling Sugar Cane," French West Indies, 1762.

*NOTE: This image shows slaves at work in the processing of sugar. On the left (B) is the tank that receives the cane juice flowing from the mill where the sugar cane has been crushed and the juice extracted. In the center are the coppers (cauldrons) in which the sugar juice is boiled (C) with slaves moving the crystallized sugar from one to the other with giant ladles (D). On the lower right are the conical sugar pots into which the raw sugar will be placed and then taken to the curing house to drain out the molasses.*

Public Domain. Denis Diderot, *Encyclopédie, ou, Dictionnaire Raisonné des Sciences, des Arts et des Metiers . . . Recueil de Planches, sur les Sciences . . .* (Paris, 1762), vol. 1, plate IV. (Copy in Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library). Image reference *sucrierie\_plate4*:

<http://hitchcock.itc.virginia.edu/Slavery/details.php?categorynum=7&categoryName=&theRecord=112&recordCount=114>.



PACKING SUGAR.

Image 5: Samuel Hazard, pencil drawing of workers packaging sugar, "Packing Sugar," Cuba, c1866.

*NOTE: In "Packing Sugar," the artist depicts sugar being thoroughly dried, sorted, and pulverized, and then carried into the packing room. Once packaged, the boxes are closed up and strapped with narrow strips of raw hide for shipping.*

Public Domain. Samuel Hazard, Cuba with pen and pencil (Hartford, Conn., 1871), p. 370. Image reference LCP-03:

<http://hitchcock.itc.virginia.edu/Slavery/details.php?categorynum=7&categoryName=New%20World%20Agriculture%20and%20Plantation%20Labor&theRecord=38&recordCount=114>.



### Supporting Question 3

#### Featured Source

**Source A:** Olaudah Equiano, firsthand description of the Middle Passage, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* (excerpts), 1789

I was soon put down under the decks, and there I received such a salutation in my nostrils as I had never experienced in my life: so that, with the loathsomeness of the stench, and crying together, I became so sick and low that I was not able to eat, nor had I the least desire to taste anything. I now wished for the last friend, death, to relieve me; but soon, to my grief, two of the white men offered me eatables; and, on my refusing to eat, one of them held me fast by the hands, and laid me across, I think, the windlass, and tied my feet, while the other flogged me severely....

The closeness of the place, and the heat of the climate, added to the number in the ship, which was so crowded that each had scarcely room to turn himself, almost suffocated us. This produced copious perspirations, so that the air soon became unfit for respiration, from a variety of loathsome smells, and brought on a sickness among the slaves, of which many died...

One day they had taken a number of fishes; and when they had killed and satisfied themselves with as many as they thought fit, to our astonishment who were on deck, rather than give any of them to us to eat, as we expected, they tossed the remaining fish into the sea again, although we begged and prayed for some as well as we could, but in vain; and some of my countrymen, being pressed by hunger, took an opportunity, when they thought no one saw them, of trying to get a little privately; but they were discovered, and the attempt procured them some very severe floggings.

Public domain. Understanding Slavery Initiative. MP3 audio links to Equiano's account are available at <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6372/>.

## Supporting Question 3

Featured Source

Source B: Source bank: Descriptions of work on sugar plantations

### Renny, firsthand description of work on sugar plantations, Jamaica, 1807

The First Gang...is called just before sunrise. The list is then called over, and the names of absentees noted; after which they commence their labour, and continue till 8 or 9 o'clock, when they breakfast on boiled yams and vegetables seasoned with salt and cayenne pepper. In the meantime, the absentees generally arrive, and are punished by a number of lashes. They then toil till noon. Two hours are allowed for dinner...composed of the same food as at breakfast, with meat or salted fish. At 2 o'clock they are again called to the field, where, refreshed, they show some signs of effort: although it is an undoubted fact that one British worker will perform 3 or 4 times as much work as a Negro. At sunset they return to their huts.

E2BN, the Abolition Project: <http://gallery.nen.gov.uk/audio79027-abolition.html>.

### Description of work on sugar plantations

Working in sugar was especially harsh. Planters organised slaves around a gang system. The toughest work—planting, manuring, and cane-cutting—fell to the strongest and healthiest. Other, less physically demanding tasks were handled by gangs of less robust, younger or older slaves. Even the very young and the old were put to work: driving away birds, cleaning and guarding. From their early years until the onset of old age and infirmity, sugar slaves had to work. Sugar plantations also had factories that converted the harvested sugar cane into raw sugar and then into rum.

Understanding Slavery Initiative:

[http://www.understandingslavery.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=309:plantation-life&Itemid=221](http://www.understandingslavery.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=309:plantation-life&Itemid=221).

### James Wright of Haverhill, description of production of sugar by enslaved persons, 1791

Being impressed with a sense of the unparalleled SUFFERINGS of our FELLOW-CREATURES, the AFRICAN SLAVES in the WEST-INDIA ISLANDS...I take this Method of informing my Customers, that I mean to discontinue selling the Article of SUGAR, (when I have disposed of the Stock I have on Hand) 'till I can procure it through Channels less contaminated, more unconnected with Slavery.

Public domain. Published in the *General Evening Post*, 1791. Available at the Abolition Project:

[http://abolition.e2bn.org/abolition\\_view.php?id=33&expand=1](http://abolition.e2bn.org/abolition_view.php?id=33&expand=1).