

**Year:** 5

**Subject:** History

**Unit of Study:** British Empire and Slavery

**Linked Literature:** From Slave Ship to Freedom Road by Julius Lester/ *My Story: Slave Girl* by Patricia McKissack

The Romans  
509BC—476AD

The Anglo-Saxons  
c. 450AD—1066AD

The Maya  
250AD-950AD (1670AD)

The Vikings  
793AD-1066AD

The Tudors  
1485AD-1603AD

British Empire  
1500AD-1960AD

**Vocabulary**

<b>abolitionist</b>	Someone who supports the abolition of a practice eg: slavery
<b>branding</b>	The act of holding hot metal to the skin in order to create a permanent scar
<b>coffles</b>	A line of slaves fastened together
<b>colonies</b>	A country/area under full or partial control of another country
<b>empire</b>	A group of countries ruled over by a single monarch or government
<b>expeditions</b>	A journey with the purpose of exploration
<b>labour</b>	Physical work
<b>rations</b>	A fixed amount (food) allowed to each person
<b>seafaring</b>	Regularly travelling by sea
<b>shackles</b>	Similar to handcuffs on a chain used for wrists and ankles
<b>slave</b>	A person who is the legal property of another and forced to obey them
<b>trade triangle</b>	Trade between 3 regions

**I need to know:**

The **golden age of exploration** began in the 15th century and lasted more than 200 years. In 1497, Henry VII sent Italian-born navigator **John Cabot** on an expedition (under the British flag), with a small crew, on his ship (**the Matthew**) to find a shorter route to Asia. He sailed from Bristol and after a month, Cabot discovered an unknown land—he called it ‘Newfoundland’, which is found in Canada. His voyage was the first of many British expeditions, paid for by the monarchy or rich nobles. During her reign, **Elizabeth I** funded many seafaring expeditions for a number of reasons: **knowledge of the world, trade, money, power and control**. Sailing and trading with other countries across the world was difficult and dangerous, but very **profitable**. **Sir Francis Drake** and **Sir Walter Raleigh** were also famous English explorers during the 14th century. The ‘**first**’ **British Empire** is said to have existed between 1583, when Elizabeth I was queen, to 1783, when George III was king—continuing to grow throughout Queen Victoria’s reign. In order to **secure as much wealth and power as possible**, Britain began to **colonise** (take control of) other countries who had **valuable goods to trade** or because **trade routes** went through them. Many countries in East and North Africa were colonised, making it easier for Britain to ship goods to Europe. **British rule** in the colonies had some **benefits—more jobs, fair laws**—but also some **drawbacks—focus on goods for Britain, poor pay, more involvement in wars**.

**The Trade Triangle (see picture to the right) and slavery**

The **British Empire** was founded, in part, upon a terrible trade: **slavery**. The English established trading posts on the west coast of Africa, where they **shipped goods such as iron, gold and guns in exchange for captured slaves**. After being captured, slaves were usually led to the coast in **shackles and chained lines called coffles**, where they were **imprisoned** in places known by traders as ‘**factories**’, until European traders came to buy them. Once sold, slaves were transported (against their will) on cramped, unhygienic ships that led to diseases spreading and the death of about 15% of slaves during the voyage—**Middle Passage**. The majority of **African slaves** were taken to a part of the Americas called the **West Indies** (discovered by Christopher Columbus in 1492), where they were **branded with their owners initials**, given basic clothing, food rations and a new name! **Forced to do hard work in terrible conditions, growing crops such as sugar, cotton and tobacco, the average slave only lived for 8 years**. Although slaves had **no freedom** and were not allowed to marry, some did and any **children born would automatically become slaves** but unfortunately, many owners would split families up to destroy this happiness. Slaves were **treated like property** and it was believed that they should be afraid of their owner, know their place and remain uneducated in order to work effectively. **Goods made in the West Indies were shipped back to England to be traded**, which was **extremely profitable** so inevitably over time the slave trade grew.

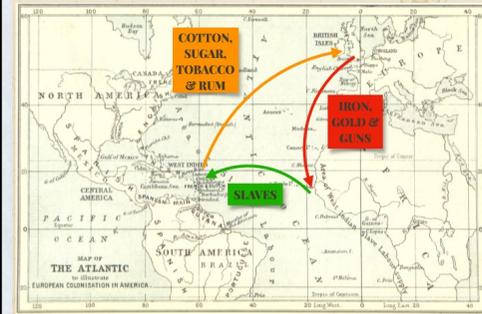
**Towards the end of the 18th century**, some people (**abolitionists**) in Britain were working hard to abolish slavery. **William Wilberforce** and **Thomas Clarkson** campaigned hard and collected evidence against slavery. Unfortunately, Britain benefited greatly from the trade and many people did not want to give up the money and power so the government were not easily convinced. Slave rebellions became more common in the colonies, as enslaved people began to fight back. After about 30 years of campaigning, British parliament voted to **abolish slave trade in 1807**, but despite fines for ships found carrying slaves, it **did not become illegal until 1833!** However, **modern day slavery** is still a worldwide issue, including in Britain and **people are still being forced to work as cheap labour**, often in hidden industries like car washes, factories, nail bars, cleaning companies and care homes.

**I need to do:**

Continue to develop understanding of chronology, placing events and dates on timelines.  
Begin to describe changes and make comparisons across time.  
Ask and answer questions about the past.  
Use a range of sources to find out about the past.  
Identify primary and secondary.  
Begin to identify which sources are reliable.  
Understand that different versions of the past may exist and give reasons for this, beginning to consider bias.  
Begin to develop own historical enquiries.  
Recall facts, notice links and differences.  
A local history study.  
A study of a theme or aspect in British history that extends pupils’ chronological knowledge beyond 1066.

**Prior knowledge:**

Changes in Britain from Stone Age to Iron Age  
Ancient Egypt  
Ancient Greece  
The Roman Empire and its impact on Britain  
Anglo-Saxons and Scots  
The Viking and Anglo-Saxon struggle for the Kingdom of England in the time of Edward the Confessor  
Tudors—a study of a theme or aspect in British history that extends pupils’ chronological knowledge beyond 1066.



**Life as a sailor/explorer:**

Sailors aboard the Matthew (and similar ships) in the 15th and 16th century, worked in groups (a watch) and would crew the ship for about 4 hours at a time whilst the other watches rested or ate. Many sailors valued good food and drink above any other possessions and would trade anything, including their clothes, in exchange for these. Different daily rations were provided which included cheese, meat, fish, dried peas and biscuits (dry, hard bread). Large amounts of salt were used to preserve food which caused a disease called scurvy that many sailors died from. Seafarers were expected to repair/maintain the ship, hoist the sails, bail water, navigate and steer the ships, looking out for rocks. Life at sea was dangerous so if sailors didn’t do their job properly then they were severely punished: docking wages, whipping, being locked below deck or being cast ashore.

**Bristol’s role in the slave trade**  
Bristol played a major part in the transatlantic trade, with Bristol merchants financing over 2000 slaving voyages between 1698 and 1807. These ships carried over 500,000 Africans from Africa to slave labour in the Americas. In the 1730s Bristol was the premier slaving port, bringing great wealth into the city. Bristol was home to a number of slave traders including **Edward Colston** and **John Pinney**. Many statues, streets and buildings are named after these merchants but recently, the ‘pulling down’ of the Colston statue has reignited the debate as to whether this should be the case.



How did Britain conquer the world?

How did the trade triangle affect Bristol?

Why did Britain colonise so many countries?

What was life as a slave like?

Was slavery abolished?

Should statues to commemorate slave traders be removed?