

Introduction

In Stitches

African Families Foundation

"In Stitches"
To commemorate
The
200th Anniversary
of the
Abolition of Slavery
Act



Introduction



The African Families Foundation (TAFF) was awarded a grant by the Heritage Lottery to make a Quilt entitled 'In Stitches'. It was made by women from English, African and African Caribbean communities in England to mark the bicentenary of the proscription of slavery in Britain.

**From May 1, 1807,
the Slave trade shall**

For nearly 400 years, European traders took people from the western coast of Africa to work as slaves on plantations in North and South America and the Caribbean.

European countries like Britain grew rich on the profits from products such as sugar and cotton grown by the slaves, which they sold in Europe and other markets.

In the 18th Century, African and English people from various backgrounds campaigned to stop the Slave Trade. On 25th March 2007, an Act of Parliament declared the Slave Trade unlawful in Britain and her colonies.

2007 marks the 200th anniversary of the fight to recognise the dignity of all human beings – a fight which continues across the world today.

In the days when women spent a lot of time sewing, making quilts was an important way for them to tell their stories and commemorate events. It is believed that slaves in the southern States of the USA used quilts as coded maps to escape to freedom in the north.

Making the In Stitches Quilt is our own special way of getting women from all the communities in England whose ancestors had been involved in the Slave Trade to reflect on the tragedy of slavery and the struggle for freedom.

You can find out more about quilts at
www.osblackhistory.com/quilts.php
www.news.nationalgeographic.com/kids/2004/02/quilt.html

The Work Pack

Transatlantic Slavery is a very difficult and complex historical subject. The legacy of slavery is such that it continues to affect the lives of communities today and many

people, especially young people find it difficult to express themselves directly about such matters.

The distance of a story, a poem, a play, or artwork provide a safe medium for young people to express their real feelings about the difficult subject of Slavery. This work pack has been designed to support learning about Slavery. It contains ideas that can be used in Citizenship, History, Textiles, Design and Technology lessons.

They are based on the four themes of the Quilt:

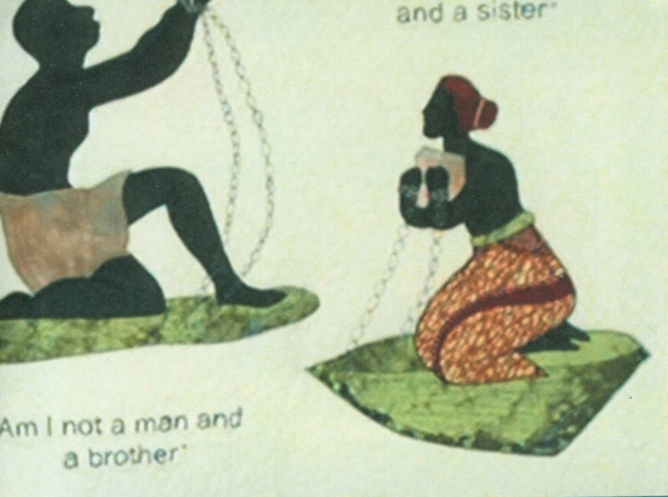
- Capture
- The Middle Passage
- Life in the 'New World'
- Proscription of Slavery

Tasks in each section are based on selected images from the Quilt but teachers may prefer to direct students to other images. We encourage teachers to use the work pack as a guide to inspire drama, artwork or discussions, and where they feel able, to create their own lessons using the Quilt as a starting point.

Each worksheet is written so that students can use it unaided. Alternatively, teachers may wish to set a specific task from a particular card. It is also possible for students to consider only one of the four themes from the Quilt.

Where students undertake research on the Internet, we advise that more than one source is used so that they can ascertain the veracity of information and the validity of opinions.

Nana Ama Amamoo
Hilary Wrack

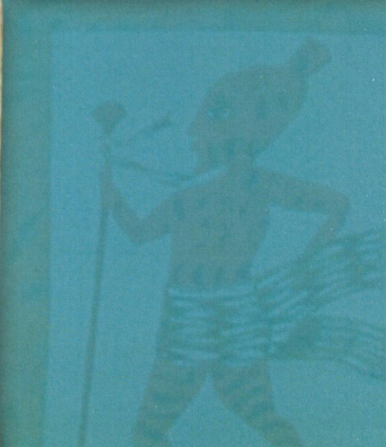
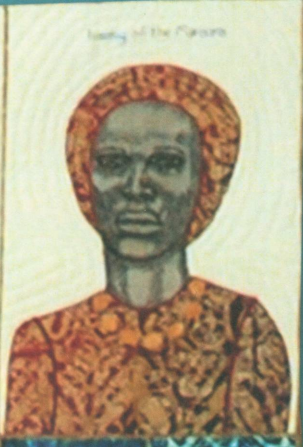


Capture in Africa

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Capture in Africa

The first stage of the Transatlantic Slave Trade was the capture of people from all over West Africa. Captives were taken to the coast to be sold to the European slave ships. The earliest documentary evidence of the purchase of slaves in West Africa, was in 1441. Two Portuguese captains, Antão Goncalves and Nuno Tristão captured 12 Africans from Cabo Branco, (modern day Mauritania) and took them to Portugal as slaves.

People were marched to the coast by African slavers, who sold them to the European captains of slave ships. The slavers went as far as Chad to find people whom they could sell.

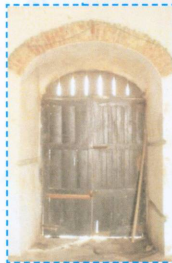
Whilst the captives were waiting to be shipped across the Atlantic they were held in dark dungeons in forts on the West African coast. They were taken out of the forts through the Gate of No Return.

The slave ships could not come right onto the coast because there were no harbours so they sat about 3 – 4 miles out at sea in 'the Roads'. Local men used their canoes to row the slaves to the ships. They also rowed the goods into shore which the slave traders brought with them to buy the slaves.

Nobody involved in the slave trade in Africa was paid with money. Everyone, including the British officers who managed the slave forts, was paid in goods. If they were really lucky they might be paid in gold dust.

You can find more pictures on the Internet of what it was like at the slave forts or for the captured people marched to the coast. Several useful web sites are listed at the back of this pack.

You can find accounts of what it was like to be seized and sold into slavery in the autobiography of Olaudah Equiano which is also available on the Internet.



Tasks

Writing

The hardest stories to write are about those people for whom we have no sympathy but if we do not try to understand how and why people do things it is very difficult to challenge their point of view. It is difficult for people today to imagine selling other people and you will have to use your imagination to write convincingly.

There are accounts written by captains of the slave ships and employees of the British Africa Company about how slaves were treated in Africa, and what it was like in the forts and on board the ships. However, there are lots of stories which have never been told by those who were sold into slavery. You can help give voice to those who were never able to express themselves at the time.

Using pictures from the Quilt and information which you can find on the Internet or from other research:

- Write a diary or story of someone who has been captured and sold into slavery aboard a ship on the way to the Americas or the Caribbean
- Write a poem and focus on the feelings of someone who was captured, taken to the slave forts and then on to the slave ships
- Write a letter home from one of the men working in the slave forts to his family. (There were no European women at the forts).

Art & Design

There are ways of presenting your story other than in words. We have used the Quilt as a means for the makers to express their understanding of the history of slavery.

- Create your own picture(s) using different media. You can draw, paint, use crayons or pastels. Like the quilters you can also use fabric.

Drama

Devise a sequence of short scenes, mostly using the 'tableau' technique, but with very short moments of speech or narration to show the course of events from capture to the coast and forts.

Scenes to consider:

- Negotiations between Europeans and African Chiefs establishing trading agreements
- Slave-raiders taking prisoners
- Any other way in which people have ended up on the slave ships.
- The journey to the coast and in to the forts
- Through the 'Gate of no return'
- To the ships

Use your own or pictures from the Quilt as the starting point for the tableaux.

Discussion

When the Act to end the Slave Trade was passed in 1807, the King of the Asante wrote to the British to reinstate the trade because they and other Africans were worried about losing income.

Set up a debate between the British and the Africans to examine the different points of view. Focus on the impact of ending the trade in Africa, especially as the British Navy began to patrol the western coast of Africa and intercept ships from other European countries who were still trading in slaves.



"Am I not a man and a brother?"

and a sister"



Life in the New World Slavery & Indenture



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History of the Placards



Life in the New World – Slavery & Indenture



When Western Europeans went to the Americas they were trying to find a way to India and the Spice Islands of the East Indies so that they could trade direct, instead of through Arab and Italian merchants.

Christopher Columbus thought he had reached The Spice Islands because he wasn't expecting there to be two big continents in the way. They called the indigenous inhabitants "Indians" because that's what they thought they were.

Going to the Americas changed lots of things about life in Europe. It changed the foods that people ate. It enabled some people to become very rich and it changed what people thought they could do with their lives because many Europeans emigrated to the Americas.

Slavery was an integral part of life in the Americas from 1502, when the first slaves were taken from Africa through Lisbon by

Portuguese captains, until slavery was abolished in Brazil in 1888. It is impossible to consider everything that happened during those 386 years without taking account of slavery.

Many people were taken to the Americas from Europe as indentured servants or as convicts. They were put to work on the first plantations but struggled to work in heat. They often became ill and died or were too weak to do heavy labour in the fields. Native Americans were also not suited for heavy labour as they succumbed to the diseases which the Europeans brought with them. Viruses such as the Common Cold killed many of

the Native People.

With huge amounts of land which allowed large farms or plantations – huge workforces were needed in the days before machinery took over. Taking slaves from Africa was seen as a 'solution' to the labour shortage.

The pictures on this card represent two of the most important crops which were discovered and grown on plantations by European Landowners. Sugar cane and tobacco are both native American crops. (Before sugar cane was grown and refined into sugar Europeans sweetened their food with honey.)

W.D. & H.O. Wills



Tobacco Merchants Bristol



Tasks

Research

- Find out which foods came from America originally. What do you think food must have been like before?
- Find out why it is so hot in the countries which became the main destinations for slaves from Africa.
- What kind of diseases do you think made the Europeans so ill?

There are several web sites which you can look at to find out more about the development of the Americas by Europeans. One website which gives good information about the beginning of the Slave Trade is www.brycchancarey.com.

WD & HO Wills was founded in 1786 it is now called Imperial Tobacco. Wills is a Bristol company and is one example of how Bristol grew very wealthy from the proceeds of the slave trade.

- Find out which American state gave its name to the process applied to tobacco for most cigarettes. (clue: it was named after Queen Elizabeth I).

Life in the New World -how slaves were treated

Research

- Find out about how cotton, sugar-cane, cocoa and tobacco were grown and processed on the plantations of the southern USA, the Caribbean and South America.
- Slave owners owned slaves in the same way that they owned horses

and cattle. They treated the slaves in the same way that they did their animals.

Use the Internet to find out more about how slaves were treated. You might find other pictures which show the kinds of punishments which slaves were subjected to.

Use the information you have found and the pictures from the quilt to help you with one of the following tasks:

Writing

- Write a short extract from the autobiography or the diary of a slave working on a plantation giving a sense of what their life was like.

You could write about

- the kind of work they did
- how they were treated
- what kinds of punishment they experienced or witnessed
- how they felt about their life
- what their hopes were for the future

[Many slaves learned to read and write and some kept diaries or wrote their autobiographies. See if you can find some of them on the Internet. Look at the style of their writing and the way they tell their story. Try to give your readers a sense of the style and the language of the time.]

- Create a newspaper for an area where there are plantations:
 - There might be articles both for and against Slavery
 - Include letters from readers which reflect different points of view
 - Find a suitable picture which illustrates what you want to say

(This is a task you could do as a group. Each person can take responsibility for a different item. Newspapers were important because there was no radio or television and newspapers were a place where people could express their point of view and where important issues were debated.)

Art & Design

- Choose another image of life on the plantations from those on the quilt and create your own version of it.
 - You could use fabric and fabric pens or different sewing techniques like the quilters have done
 - You could use paper and inks, paint, pastels or any other medium.

(Think about what you want your picture to tell the viewer about the climate, the place, and the people.)

Drama

Using the research you have done set up two parallel scenes which show different people's attitudes towards Slavery.

For example you could set up two meals, one for Plantation owners and one in a slave cabin. Try to show how situations are viewed by the different groups.

Or you could create a scene and have two contrasting narratives which show the differences in attitudes.

Create and perform a series of monologues of people caught up in Slavery:

- a slave describing their life
- a plantation owner talking about his livelihood
- an onlooker who may be unsure about which side s/he is on.



and a sister



"Am I not a man and a brother"



The Middle Passage



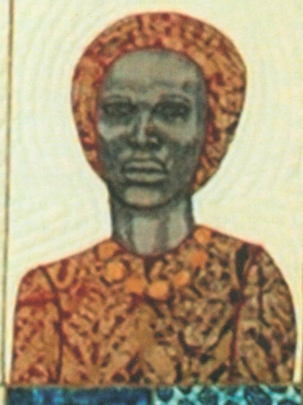
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Legacy of the Placenta





The Middle Passage

The Middle Passage is a phrase used to refer to the captured slaves' long and hazardous journey by ship across the Atlantic to the Americas or the Caribbean.

Captured Africans were rowed out to the slave ships in groups and kept on board until the captain thought he had enough 'cargo' to make it worth his while to sail across the Atlantic to the Americas.

The slaves were chained together and forced to live in extremely cramped conditions.

Use the Internet to find out more about the conditions on board ship.

Find out:

- what slaves ate
- how they were exercised
- what happened if slaves became ill

You could also find out about the lives of the sailors who manned the boats. Many freed Africans worked as sailors on the slave ships and there is information on one of the websites which suggests that sometimes white sailors were initially tricked into signing on to sail on ships which were actually slavers.

There is a lot of information about the slave ships because some of the most important evidence used by the Abolitionists in the fight against the slave trade came from sailors who had served or been masters of slave ships who came to realise that what they were doing was wrong. One of the most famous of these was John Newton who became an Anglican vicar. Newton is best known today as the writer of the hymn 'Amazing Grace' but in the eighteenth century he was an important member of the anti-slavery movement in England.

Tasks

Writing

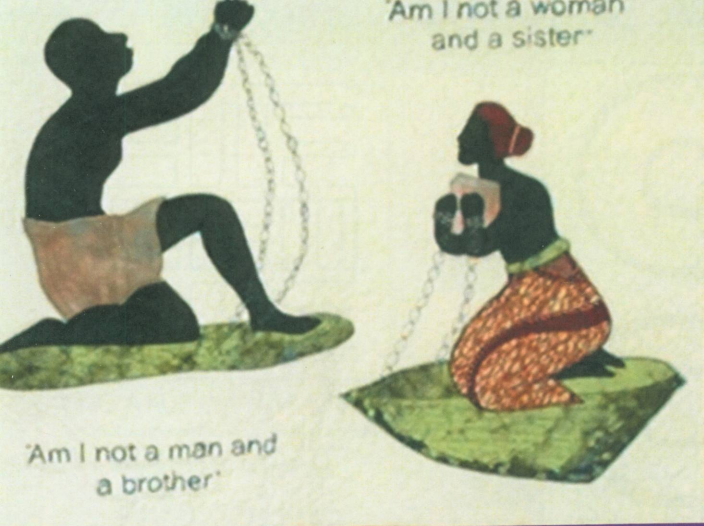
- Imagine you are the captain of a slave ship. Write at least 5 entries from the ship's log, remembering that the log was a legal record of everything that happens on a ship.
- Imagine you are a sailor on a slave ship. Write a few extracts from the sailor's diary of the voyage across the Atlantic from Africa. Describe your life on board, interaction with the rest of the crew and with the slaves. What feelings does he have about the trade in which he is involved? What does he have to say about other crew members or the captain?
- Imagine you are a captured African telling the story of your journey across the Atlantic. Perhaps the slave is telling it to his/her children who will have no knowledge of Africa. Or they could be talking to one of the Abolitionists who is collecting information to help show how terrible the trade was.
- One of the most notorious voyages was that of the Zong (a ship) when the captain threw most of the slaves overboard whilst they were still alive. The owners of the ship then tried to claim the insurance for the loss of cargo – this is how the story came to be known.
- Write a newspaper article which reflects the outrage which was felt about this incident. Then write a letter from one of the owners justifying their behaviour.

Art & Design

- Create a series of charcoal sketches – as if you were on board ship – of figures on the slave ship. You might include sailors engaged in climbing rigging or other activities, slaves in chains on deck or in the hold, bodies being thrown overboard. Try to base your drawings on images you have found or on accounts you have read.

Drama

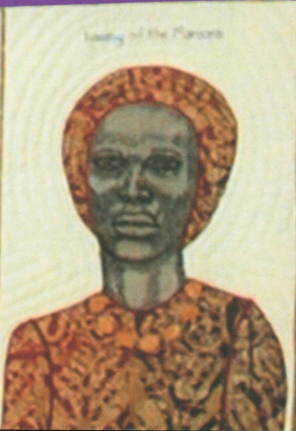
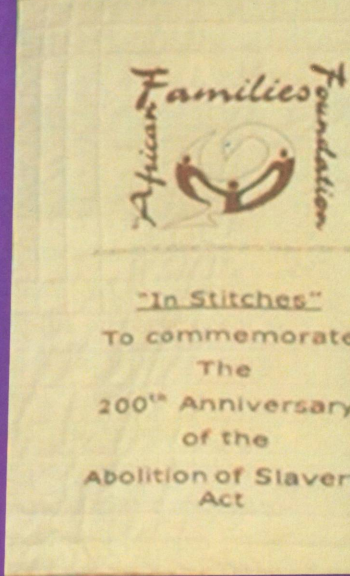
- Create a set of scenes from on board a slave ship. Use extracts from original accounts of the voyage as narration or dialogue. Overlay this with "Voices in the Head" – the unspoken thoughts of those involved – so that we have a clearer view of what is happening. Remember the most significant aspect of the trade was the 'normality' of the awfulness rather than exceptional episodes of terrible events.
- Recreate the court case surrounding the Zong insurance claim. Use both the real evidence and judgements and your own additional dialogue. You might want to include scenes outside the courtroom during recess when people reveal more about themselves and their attitudes.

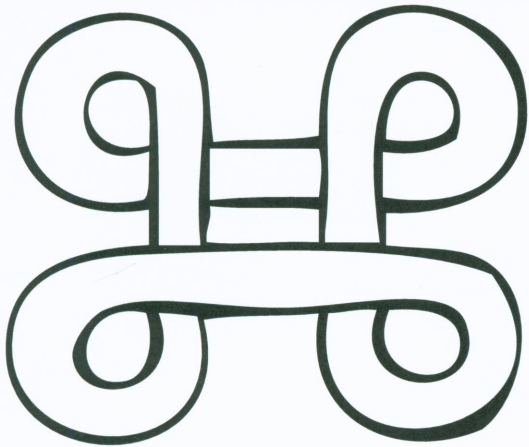


Adinkra Symbols



In Stitches





MPATAPO

"knot of pacification/reconciliation"

Symbol of reconciliation, peacemaking and pacification
Mpatapo represents the bond or knot that binds parties in a dispute to a peaceful, harmonious reconciliation. It is a symbol of peacemaking after strife.

Adinkra Symbols

The quilt has used several of the Adinkra symbols from West Africa as the decoration in between the big pictures which tell the story of Slavery. Adinkra (meaning 'farewell') symbols were originally printed on fabrics worn at funerals, by the Akan peoples of Ghana, one of the countries from where the British Slave Trade operated.

Adinkra symbols allow important ideas to be communicated with people who can understand pictures more than they understand words. 'In Stitches' has chosen the Mpatapo symbol to represent itself because it is the symbol of Reconciliation.

Have a look at one of the websites listed below and find out more about Adinkra symbols:

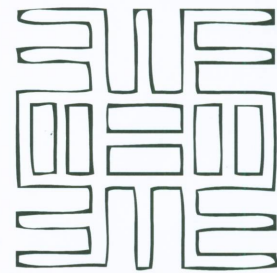
www.welltempered.net/adinkra/

1. The Adinkra dictionary: A Visual Primer on the language of Africa. By W. Bruce Willis
2. African Designs from Traditional Sources. By Geoffrey Williams

3. Traditional African Designs. By Gregory Mirow
4. West African Symbols: Adinkra: 31 Rubber Stamps. By Mimi Robinson

Tasks

1. Look at the different Adinkra symbols used in the quilt. Find out their meanings. Why do you think the designer has chosen these symbols for decorating the quilt? How does using symbols like this enhance the overall meaning of the quilt?
2. Choose another Adinkra symbol for yourself. Choose one which you feel best represents you and use it to create a badge or a small flag or a bookmark. You should make something which you feel really represents the person you want to be.
3. Create a new Adinkra symbol to represent something you think ought to be there but which isn't. Explain what your symbol means and why you think it is a good idea to create this new image.



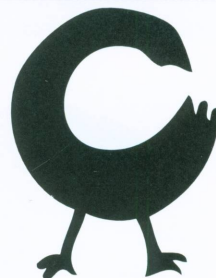
NEA ONNIM NO SUA A, OHU

"He who does not know can know from learning"
symbol of knowledge, life-long education
and continued quest for knowledge



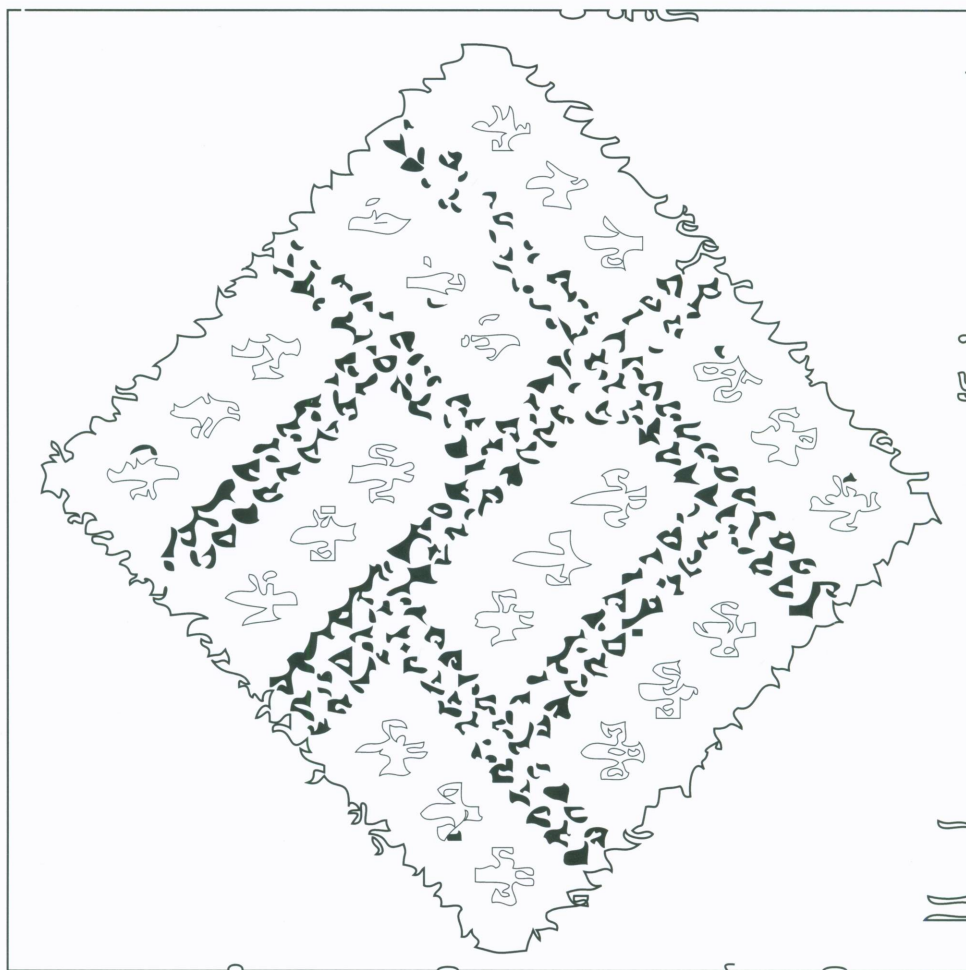
ABLODE

You can buy a slave, but you can't buy his heart



SANKOFA

"return and get it"
symbol of importance of learning from the past



Ator-tor

"Pineapple skin. The pineapple is sometimes given
as a gift to a friend. It is not easy to peel - like
friendship it requires work"

In Stitches Quilt
Activity Sheets

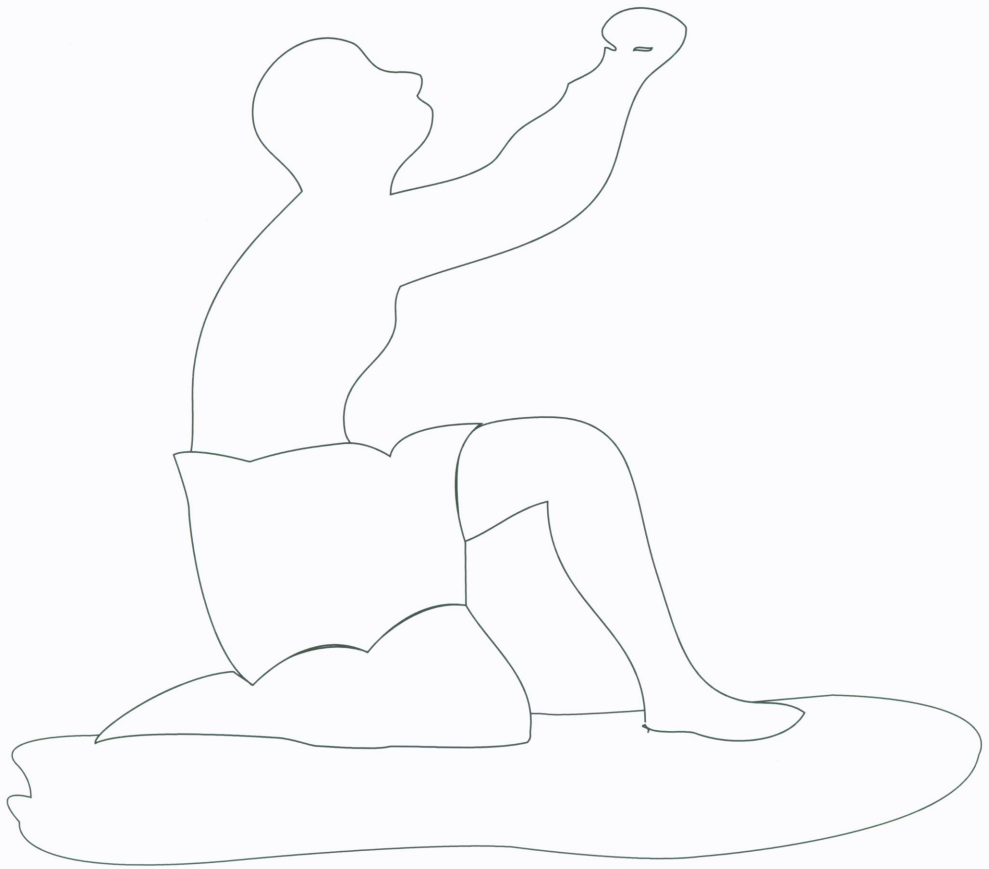


In Stitches Quilt
Activity Sheets

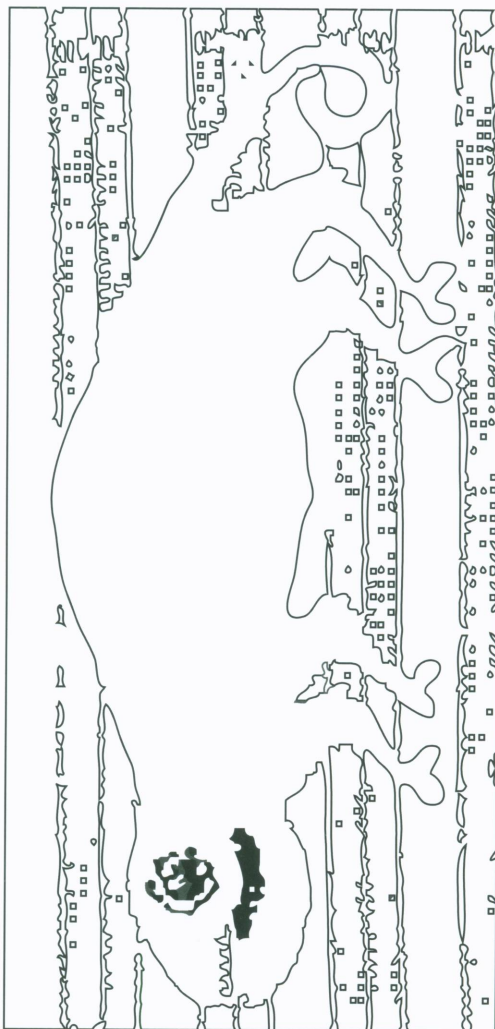


Olaudah Equiano

In Stitches Quilt
Activity Sheets



Am I not a man and a brother?



Agama

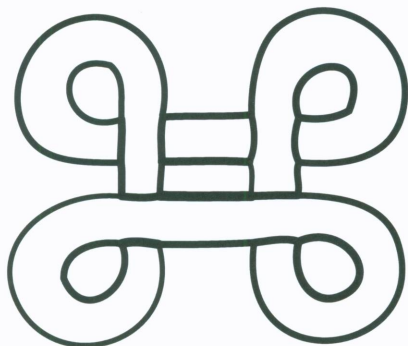
"the chameleon signifies patience
and trickery"

In Stitches Quilt
Activity Sheets



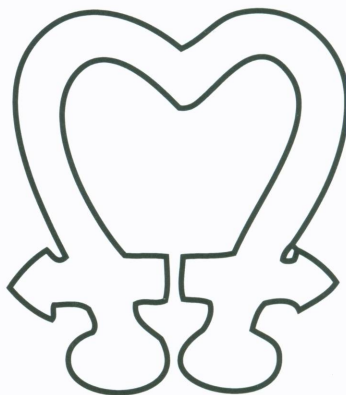
The cocoa poster

Adinkra Symbols



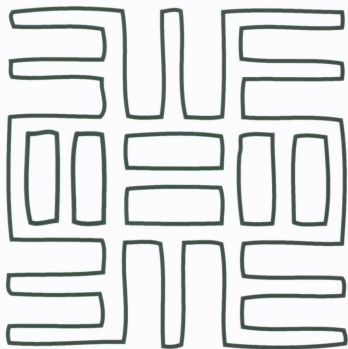
Mpatapo

"Knot of pacification/reconciliation"



Ablode

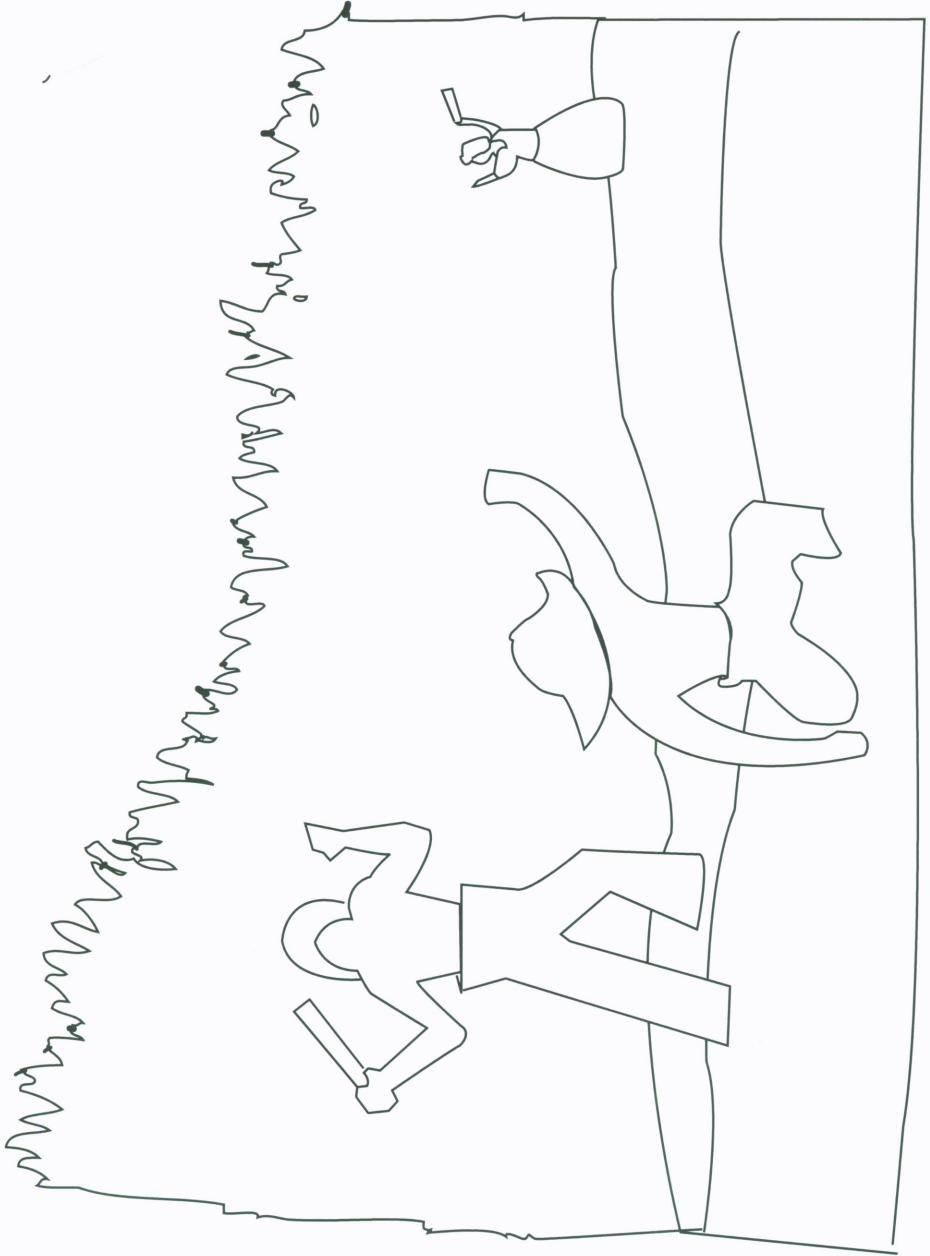
"You can buy a slave but not his heart"



Nea Onnim no sua, ohu

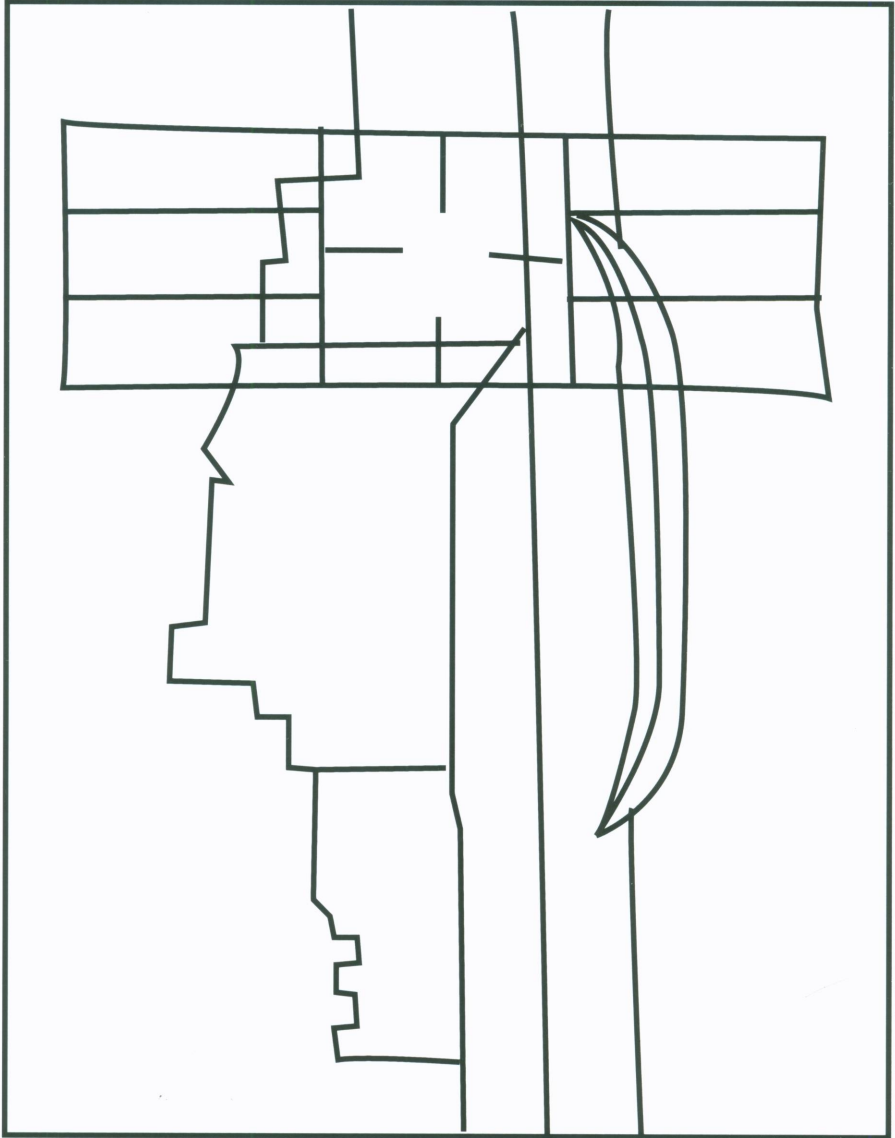
"He who does not know can know through studying"

**In Stitches Quilt
Activity Sheets**



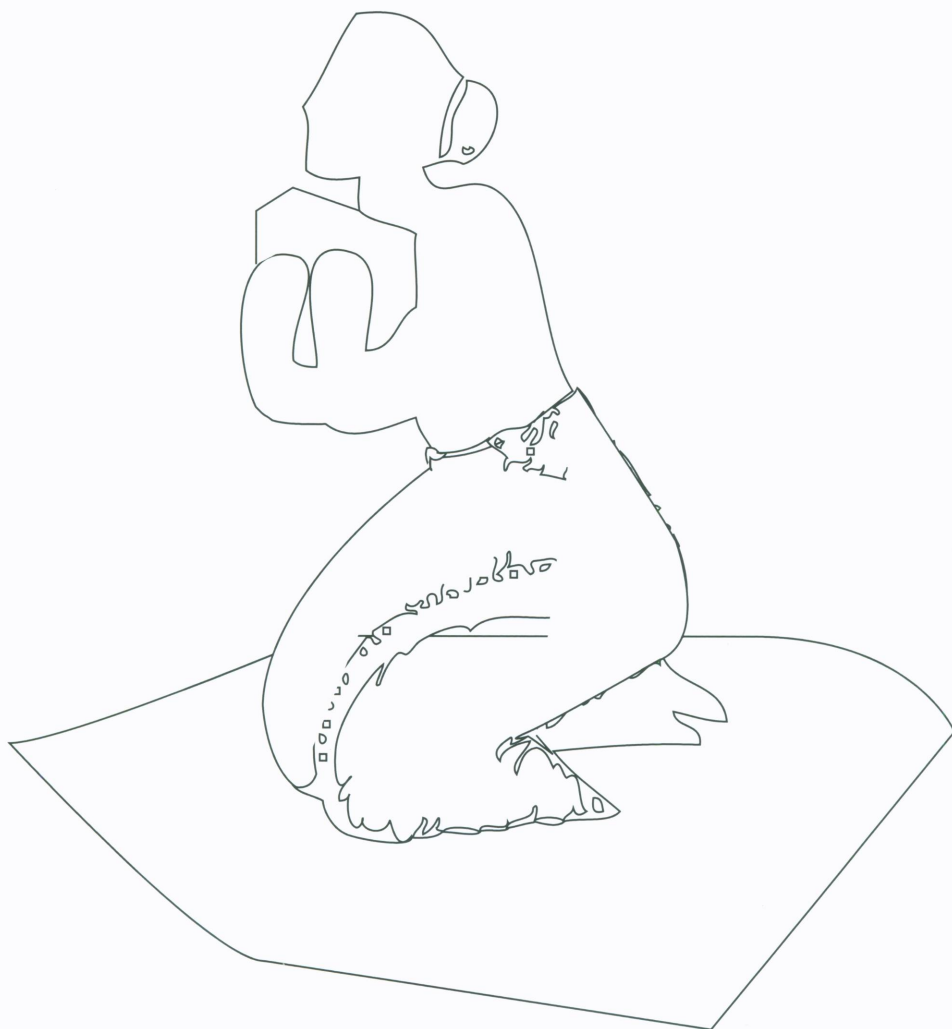
Slaves working on a sugar plantation

In Stitches Quilt Activity Sheets



a slave fort

In Stitches Quilt Activity Sheets



Am I not a woman and a sister?



Toussaint L'Ouverture

