

This Accursed Thing: an interactive video drama

Africa and the transatlantic slave trade



African slave trader

This is a chief from the Ibo people (also called Igbo in south eastern Nigeria), who captures other Africans and sells them to European slave traders in exchange for luxury goods.

Click on the following questions and listen to the answers:

- How can you sell your own people?
- Where do the people come from?
- Why do you need all these goods?
- Why do you want British fabric?
- So you made a pretty good deal?

1. Read the information on the Create Connections learning card 'Africa and the transatlantic slave trade'.

Imagine that you are an African chief who has been approached by a European slave trader wanting to buy some Africans to enslave.

In the boxes below, write arguments 'For' and 'Against', taking into consideration the answers you heard in the interactive drama to help you to decide whether or not you are going to do business with the European slave trader in return for luxury goods.

2. Are you going to supply the European slave trader with enslaved Africans or protect your people from being forced into slavery?

Work in pairs and imagine that one of you is the African Chief and one of you is the European slave trader and prepare a short dialogue of what the African chief would say to the European slave trader to inform him of his decision, including reasons why, and the slave trader's response. Perform your dialogue to the rest of the class.

3. Are you going to supply the European slave trader with enslaved Africans or protect your people from being forced into slavery?

Work in pairs and imagine that one of you is the African Chief and one of you is the European slave trader and prepare a short dialogue of what the African chief would say to the European slave trader to inform him of his decision, including reasons why, and the slave trader's response. Perform your dialogue to the rest of the class.

Arguments For

Arguments Against

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British slave trader

This man has travelled from England to Africa to buy Africans to transport to the Americas where he will sell them as enslaved labourers.

Click on the following questions and listen to the answers:

- Aren't people taken against their will?
- Isn't it illegal to trade slaves?
- Don't you make an excessive profit at the expense of human misery?
- Do Africans want the trade?
- Why do you keep slaves in chains?
- Can I see the ship?

4. Imagine that you are a slave trader and that you are going to write a letter to the British government to defend transatlantic slavery against the protests of the abolitionists. Work in pairs and discuss and list reasons why you think slavery should continue, taking into account the answers you heard in the interactive drama and the information supplied on the Create Connections learning card 'Africa and the transatlantic slave trade'.

Reasons to continue slavery:

Use this space to write your letter to the British government defending transatlantic slavery

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5. Imagine that you are an abolitionist in favour of ending slavery. You have read the letter from the slave trader defending slavery. You decide to write a letter to the government to persuade them that the slave trader is wrong in his arguments. In the letter you include the image George Moreland's 'Slave Trade' (see the Create Connections learning card 'Africa and the transatlantic slave trade') to convince the government of the inhumane nature of slavery. Discuss in pairs and brainstorm your arguments for abolishing slavery, highlighting items in the picture that demonstrate the abuses of the human rights suffered by enslaved Africans.

Reasons to end slavery:

Use this space to write your letter to the British government persuading it to abolish slavery

Imagine that you are a member of parliament and that you have read both the letters from the slave trader and the abolitionist. Which side are you going to take – for or against abolition? Why?

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Cotton and transatlantic slavery



This is a chief from the Ibo people (also called Igbo in south eastern Nigeria), who captures other Africans and sells them to European slave traders in exchange for luxury goods.

Click on the following questions and listen to the answers:

- How can you sell your own people?
- Where do the people come from?
- Why do you need all these goods?
- Why do you want British fabric?
- So you made a pretty good deal?



British slave trader

This man has travelled from England to Africa to buy Africans to transport to the Americas where he will sell them as enslaved labourers.

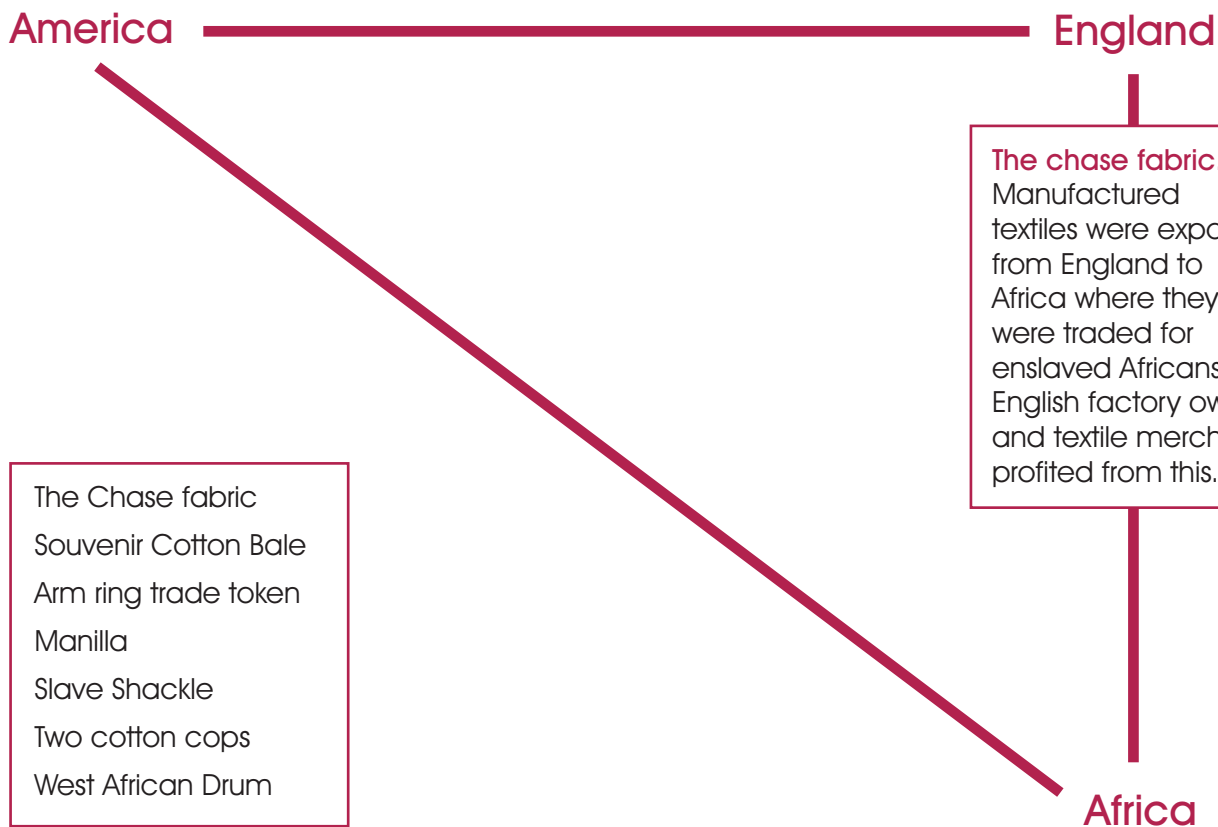
Click on the following questions and listen to the answers:

- Aren't people taken against their will?
- Isn't it illegal to trade slaves?
- Don't you make an excessive profit at the expense of human misery?
- Do Africans want the trade?
- Why do you keep slaves in chains?
- Can I see the ship?

1. Use the answers given in the interactive drama and the Create Connections learning cards or object pages on the Revealing Histories website to place the objects listed in the box below onto the triangle below to explain where you think they fit on the triangular trade route associated with transatlantic slavery.

Next to each object give a brief explanation as to why you have placed it where you have and who you think would profit from this part of the triangle.

The first object has been done for you.



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James Watkins

A former enslaved African who came to the north west of England following his escape from slavery. He preached against slavery around Greater Manchester.

Click on the following questions and listen to the answers:

- What was your first lecture like?
- What is your name nowadays?
- What did you used to be called?
- How did you escape slavery?
- So, are you actually better off now?

2. Imagine you are James Watkins and you are giving a speech at one of Manchester's cotton factories.

How would you describe the triangular trade route?

Work in pairs to discuss the negative aspects of the triangular trade route from the perspective of James Watkins.

Use the object information featured on the Create Connection 'Cotton and transatlantic slavery' learning card to help you. Share your answers with the rest of the class.

3. Listen to the dialogue between the mill worker and James Watkins on the interactive video drama.

Imagine that you are a local Lancashire cotton worker and you are trying to explain to Watkins how you and your family depend on slave-grown cotton imported to England from America for your livelihood.

Discuss with your partner the ways in which you and your fellow cotton workers profit from and depend on the triangular trade route. Share your answers with the rest of the class.

4. Even though your livelihood depends on slave-grown cotton part of you knows that slavery is wrong and so you are unsure if you are in favour of abolition or the continuation of slavery.

You go to a public meeting to hear James Watkins speak about slavery to help you to make up your mind.

During the meeting you inform him that you can sympathise with enslaved Africans but you are worried that if you support abolition you will lose your job.

So what do you decide? Write in the box below whether you have decided to support the abolition movement or the continuation of slavery. Provide reasons for your choice. You can use the Create Connections learning cards and the object pages on the Revealing Histories website to help you.

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Local cotton industries in Greater Manchester



1. Listen to the dialogue between the mill worker and James Watkins. Imagine that you are a local Lancashire cotton worker.

How could you compare your life to the lives of enslaved Africans working on American cotton plantations?

Discuss in pairs and list the similarities and differences between Lancashire cotton workers and enslaved Africans in the table below.

2. You decide to support the abolition of slavery and want to persuade your fellow workers to join you in campaigning against slavery. You know that you are going to have to work hard to convince them to support abolition as they rely on slave-grown cotton for their livelihood.

Work in pairs to construct an argument to persuade your fellow workers to support abolition including points on how your lives are similar too and different from the lives of slaves. Perform your speech to the rest of the class.

Similarities	Differences

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The American Civil War and Lancashire cotton workers

Listen to the dialogue between the mill worker and James Watkins

1. Imagine you are a mill worker in favour of abolition. Discuss in pairs and list reasons why you have chosen to support the Union states in the American Civil War, taking into account the answers that you heard in the interactive video drama.
2. Your cotton factory has stopped receiving shipments of raw cotton due to Abraham Lincoln blockading southern ports in the USA. Discuss in pairs and list the ways that this will affect your factory and the impact it will have on your livelihood. Use the Create Connections learning card 'The American Civil War and Lancashire cotton workers' and the object pages on the Revealing Histories website to help you.



3. Taking into consideration the impact that the American Civil War and the blockading of southern American ports has had on your livelihood do you still support abolition or have you changed your mind? Discuss in pairs and construct a brief dialogue explaining your answer giving reasons for your decision. Perform your dialogue to the rest of the class.

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4. Read the object information supplied on the learning card 'The American Civil War and Lancashire cotton workers'.

Imagine that you are a local news reporter in the year 1863 and you have just witnessed the relief ship George Griswold, docking into Liverpool unloading barrels of food to give to the local starving cotton workers.

You want to write an article for your newspaper informing the rest of the country about the American Civil War, the local cotton famine, the suffering of local cotton workers, their support for abolition and the aid sent to the area from the American Union states.

Use the box below and the headings listed to write your article. You can include illustrations if you wish and you can use the object pages on the Revealing Histories website to help you.

War breaks out in America

Lincoln blocks southern ports

Local cotton workers starve

Cotton workers support the Union

Cotton workers sympathise with enslaved Africans

Aid sent from America

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Freedom and human Rights



African slave trader

This is a chief from the Ibo people (also called Igbo in south eastern Nigeria), who captures other Africans and sells them to European slave traders in exchange for luxury goods.

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- Where do the people come from?
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- Why do you want British fabric?
- So you made a pretty good deal?



British slave trader

This man has travelled from England to Africa to buy Africans to transport to the Americas where he will sell them as enslaved labourers.

Click on the following questions and listen to the answers:

- Aren't people taken against their will?
- Isn't it illegal to trade slaves?
- Don't you make an excessive profit at the expense of human misery?
- Do Africans want the trade?
- Why do you keep slaves in chains?
- Can I see the ship?

1. Imagine that you are an African chief and that you have been approached by a British abolitionist who wants you to supply them with evidence as to why the transatlantic slave trade should end. Discuss in pairs and list the arguments that a slave trader would give to defend slavery and the alternative arguments you would give to demonstrate the abuses of human rights that occur under slavery. You could look at the learning card entitled 'Freedom and human rights' and select objects from this card to help you to explain why slavery is wrong.

Slave traders' reasons why slavery should not end and why slavery is not an abuse of human rights

Your own arguments why slavery should end and why it is an abuse of human rights

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Thomas Clarkson

An abolitionist who campaigned through his life to end slavery. Clarkson founded the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade in 1787 with Granville Sharp.

Click on the following questions and listen to the answers:

- Tell me about the slave trade.
- How can this be justified?
- Were slaves taken against their will?
- Weren't slaves just savages?
- How can we fight the trade?

James Watkins

A former enslaved African who came to the north west of England following his escape from slavery. He preached against slavery around Greater Manchester.

Click on the following questions and listen to the answers:

- What was your first lecture like?
- What is your name nowadays?
- What did you used to be called?
- How did you escape slavery?
- So, are you actually better off now?

2. Imagine that you are either Thomas Clarkson or James Watkins and you are about to give a speech informing cotton workers in a Manchester cotton mill on why slavery is wrong. During your speech you want to use objects to reinforce your arguments. Look at the Create Connections learning card 'Freedom and human rights'.

Work in groups and use the objects featured on this card to discuss how each of these objects could be used in your speech and the arguments they would support.

One of the related items has been done as an example.

Model of a freed female slave – This shows how female enslaved Africans were forced to care for the children of their masters instead of being able to care for their own children who were sometimes separated from their families and sold to other plantations. This was an abuse of human rights as it was denying enslaved Africans the right to have a family.

Narrative of the Life of Henry 'Box' Brown

Slave shackle

The Life of the Late James Johnson

Slave whip

Uncle Tom and Little Eva

3. In your group construct your speech using your objects and explanations and perform it to the rest of the class.

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Campaigning for the abolition of slavery



1. Imagine that you are Thomas Clarkson and you are going to give a speech in parliament to persuade your fellow MPs to support abolition and to pass an act to abolish slavery in Britain and its colonies.

You decide to exhibit some objects during your speech to help you to explain your arguments.

Select some objects from the Create Connections learning cards and the object pages on the Revealing Histories website that you could use in your speech and draw or write the name of each object in the boxes below.

Next to each object write a short paragraph about why you have selected the object, how it is linked to transatlantic slavery and how it could be used in an argument to encourage abolishing transatlantic slavery.

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After abolition



James Watkins

A former enslaved African who came to the north west of England following his escape from slavery. He preached against slavery around Greater Manchester.

Click on the following questions and listen to the answers;

- What was your first lecture like?
- What is your name nowadays?
- What did you used to be called?
- How did you escape slavery?
- So, are you actually better off now?

1. Why didn't the British abolition acts of 1807 and 1833 affect James Watkins? When was slavery abolished in America? Why did Watkins travel to England? What did he do following his arrival?

In the box below use the information supplied in the interactive video drama and on the 'people' pages of the Revealing Histories website to write a brief synopsis of the life of James Watkins. Include key facts about when and where he lived.

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- Imagine you are James Watkins and you want to persuade the people of Manchester that slavery in America has not ended with the British 1807 and 1833 abolition acts and that they should continue to fight for abolition and to support the northern Union states in the American Civil War.

Work in pairs and construct a speech that you could give to the people of Greater Manchester to encourage them to continue to fight against slavery and to support Abraham Lincoln in ending slavery in America. Perform your speech to the rest of the class.

Listen to the dialogue between the mill worker and James Watkins on the interactive video drama.

- Imagine that you are a local cotton worker who supports the abolition of slavery in America.

You want to write a letter to an American newspaper to encourage men from the Union states to continue fighting against slavery and men in the southern states to stop fighting for the continuation of slavery.

In the letter you want to write about how hard your own life is and how you can sympathise with enslaved Africans who continue to work on southern cotton plantations despite the passing of the 1804 and 1807 abolition acts.

In the letter you also want to explain why you think slavery is wrong and why it should be banned throughout the world.

Use the box below to write the letter that you would send to be published in an American newspaper.

You can use the information supplied on the Create Connections learning cards and on the object pages of the Revealing Histories website to help you.

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Legacies of transatlantic slavery: racism in Manchester



British slave trader

This man has travelled from England to Africa to buy Africans to transport to the Americas where he will sell them as enslaved labourers.

Click on the following questions and listen to the answers:

- Aren't people taken against their will?
- Isn't it illegal to trade slaves?
- Don't you make an excessive profit at the expense of human misery?
- Do Africans want the trade?
- Why do you keep slaves in chains?
- Can I see the ship?

1. After listening to this extract can you detect any ideas or arguments that may have led to the development of any racial stereotypes? Discuss in pairs and list these ideas or arguments in the box below, how they led to the development of racial stereotypes and why they were wrong.

It is racist that:

2. Explore the following objects on the Revealing Histories website under the theme of 'Legacies: stereotypes, racism and the civil rights movement' or use the search box and write a brief sentence or two explaining why or how these objects were made, the ideas they represent, why these ideas are wrong and the negative impact that racial stereotyping can have on modern day society.

Money box 1900

Probable Effects of Over Female Emigration, 1851

Robertson's golliwogs 1960s

Punch and Judy puppet, 1950

3. Discuss your ideas in a whole class discussion.