

# Lesson One: The Triangle Trade

## Objective:

Students will investigate West African culture and understand the history of the transatlantic slave trade that brought thousands of slaves to Europe, the Caribbean, and North America.

**Materials:** *The Life of West Africans* worksheets; *The Triangle* worksheets; construction paper or poster board; markers; glue; paper; Internet access; *Teacher's Guide*.

## Procedures:

### Activity One: *The Life of West Africans*

1. Divide class into groups and assign each a West African tribe or location from the provided list. Distribute *The Life of West Africans Worksheet*.
2. Using the Internet or library resources, have students research their assigned tribe and answer the worksheet questions.
3. Allow each group to present their findings to the class and lead a discussion to help students recognize the connections between the tribes and their European colonizers as well as the specific skills held by different tribes and why those skills were desirable by slave traders.

### Activity Two: *Angles of the Triangle*

1. Distribute *Triangle* worksheets to each student.
2. Cut out the map and paste it onto a piece of construction paper.
3. Have the students cut and paste the appropriate goods to the appropriate points of the triangle.
4. Break class into 3 or 6 groups.
5. Assign one of the points of the triangle to each group.
6. Hand out poster board and other supplies to each group.
7. Have the students make a poster about their point of the triangle that persuades traders to come to their ports and trade for their goods.

### Activity Three: *Talk About It*

1. Use the *Teacher's Guide* to lead a discussion with your class about trade today.

### Extension Activity: *West Africans in Colonial Mississippi Traveling Trunk*

- Borrow the *West Africans in Colonial Mississippi* traveling trunk from the Museum Division of the MDAH. The *West Africans in Colonial Mississippi* Traveling Trunk concentrates on that group's history in the area, how they came to be there, and their customs and cultural contributions. Contained in the trunk are objects that illustrate traditional West African ways, such as a woven paper hanging, traditional strip-woven cloth, a glass trade bead necklace, wooden and paper masks, traditional African games, and a balafon — a musical instrument similar to a marimba.

See the following link for more information <http://www.mdah.ms.gov/new/learn/classroom-materials/traveling-trunks/west-africans-in-colonial-mississippi-traveling-trunk/> or contact the Outreach Programs Coordinator at 601-576-6997.

## The Life of West Africans

Divide students into groups and assign each a West African tribe and location from the list below. Using the accompanying worksheets, have students research the different tribes and locations and share their findings with the class.

Teachers may then lead a discussion to help students recognize the connections between the tribes and their European colonizers as well as the specific skills held by different tribes and why those skills were desirable by slave traders. Using the information on Timbuktu, teachers can lead the class discussion on how these tribes had educated leaders, commercial trading routes and businesses. When using the West African Slave Ports grouping you can discuss the countries that were trading slaves, when trade was discouraged and the measures taken by each of those countries in turn to stop the trade (if any).

There are links listed below if the students have trouble finding reliable information on the topics below.

### Tribes

- Anlo-Ewe
- Bambara
- Berber
- Bobo
- Dogon
- Fon
- Fulani
- Ibo (Igbo)
- Mandinka
- Senufo
- Tuareg
- Yoruba

For all tribes go to site [www.africaguide.com/culture/tribes](http://www.africaguide.com/culture/tribes)

### Sites

- Accra
- Elmina
- Fort James
- Island of Gorée
- Island of Saint-Louis
- Timbuktu - [www.unesco.org](http://www.unesco.org) (search “Timbuktu”)
- West African Slave Ports - [www.unesco.org](http://www.unesco.org) (search “World Heritage Centre, Preservation, slave trade”)

[www.slavevoyages.org](http://www.slavevoyages.org)

[www.britanica.com](http://www.britanica.com)

[www.unesco.org/en](http://www.unesco.org/en)

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***The Life of West Africans (TRIBES)***

***Using the Internet or books from your school library, research your West African tribe and answer the following questions.***

1. What is the name of the tribe? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What was/is the geographic location of the tribe? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What language(s) do they speak? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What religion do they practice? \_\_\_\_\_

5. How do the people of this tribe make a living? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Are they known for any special type of music, crafts or artwork? Explain. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Was this tribe ever part of a European colony? If yes, which one? \_\_\_\_\_

8. What would have made this tribe desirable to slave traders? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. What do you think is the most interesting thing about this West African tribe? Explain. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***The Life of West Africans (SITES)***

***Using the Internet or books from your school library, research your West African location and answer the following questions.***

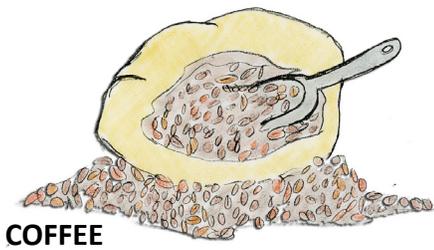
1. What is the name of the site? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What part of Africa is this site located? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What time period was the site founded? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is/are this/these site(s) known for? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What were the main features of this site? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Were there any other countries that ruled this site? Explain. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. In what modern day country is this site located in? \_\_\_\_\_
8. When and why did this site's purpose change? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. What has this site become today? What is its legacy? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***The Triangle***

***Cut out the map and paste onto a piece of construction paper. Then cut and paste the goods on the angle on the map from which they came.***

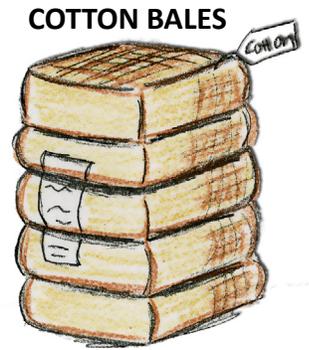




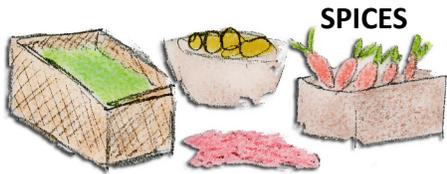
COFFEE



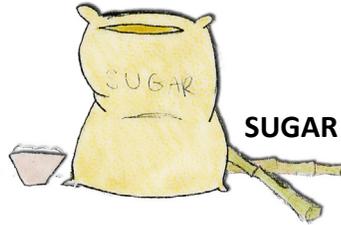
INDIGO



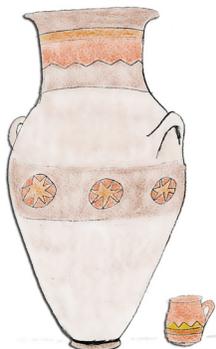
COTTON BALES



SPICES



SUGAR



POTTERY



IVORY



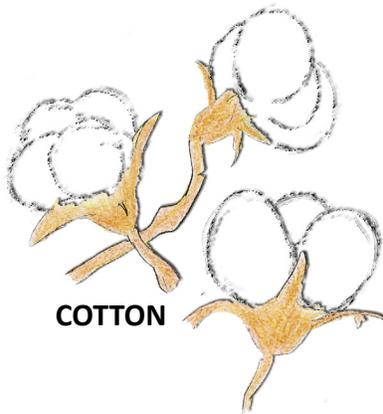
MANILLA BRACELET



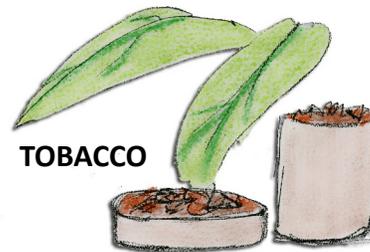
GOLD



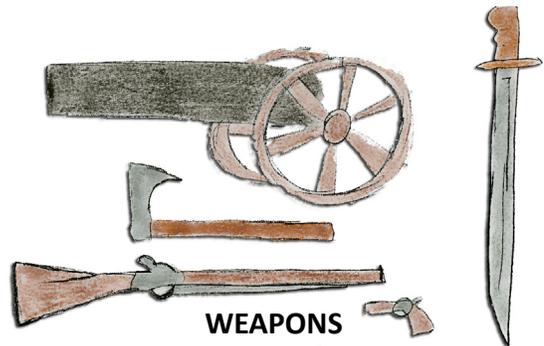
RUM



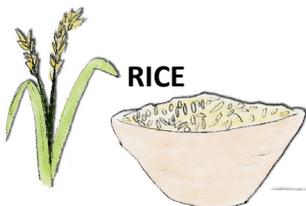
COTTON



TOBACCO



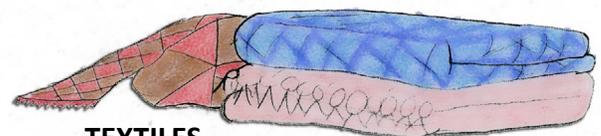
WEAPONS



RICE



SLAVES



TEXTILES

## Teacher's Guide

Use the following prompts to lead a discussion with your class about trade today.

1. The Triangle Trade was based on the traditional concept of supply and demand. It's fault was that human beings suffered to meet those demands. Are there examples of this today?

Sweat shops

Child Labor

40+ hour work week

Unsafe working conditions

Exploitation of foreign and domestic workers

2. As far back as the seventeenth-century, the United States (or American Colonies) imported their work force in order to produce goods on home soil. Today, the U.S. increasingly exports its production of goods to be produced by foreign labor. What are the pros and cons of this system?

Pros:

U.S. manufacturers pay less to get goods made

U.S. citizens pay less for goods

Cons:

U.S. citizens regularly complain about the quality of foreign-made products

Fewer jobs for U.S. citizens

U.S. manufacturers have no control over the working conditions of their labor force

U.S. citizens feel guilty when bad working conditions are exposed

3. Is it possible to have a perfect system, where supply and demand are always in balance, workers are treated fairly, and a good-quality product is produced? Why or why not?