PORTUGAL and Spain took an early lead in exploration among European countries in the 15th century. Europeans desperately needed labor in their “New World” colonies, but only focused on Africans after the Native American population succumbed to disease. Europeans discovered a thriving slave trade in Africa, and began to expand and develop it to meet their needs. Africans traded slaves to the Europeans for a variety of reasons, including rivalries among other tribes. The trade remained relatively small, however, until Columbus’s discovery and the subsequent development of plantation agriculture demanded labor.

Slavery in the Americas differed significantly from slavery in Africa. Most slaves in the Americas were men used for agricultural labor. The slaves also became personal property, losing some of their basic rights. Various nations competed for control of the slave trade. Initiated by the Spanish and Portuguese, the Dutch captured control in the early 1600s, and later the British became dominant, altering world trade patterns and providing markets for their manufactured goods. Captured Africans endured a series of long, arduous and psychologically demanding stages on their route to the Americas. Often captured in warfare, slavers forced them to trading posts on the coast, and then stuffed them as tightly as possible onto slave ships for the long journey across the Atlantic. Slave ship conditions were often revolting, and slavers had to take many precautions to prevent open rebellion by their cargo. Slaves also resisted the process by throwing themselves overboard to drown. Chances for a slave even reaching the Americas were not favorable. Poor sanitation, insufficient food and widespread disease contributed to a high mortality rate.

Many of the slaves who survived the journey to the Americas were first sold in the West Indies. There, they endured a seasoning process which instructed them in their new jobs, environments, language and rules. This seasoning process could be just a middle step for some slaves, as British, and later American, plantation owners purchased them for work in North America. Because of the moral outrage over the horrors of the slave trade, and a lessening dependence on plantation agriculture, Britain outlawed the Atlantic slave trade in 1807. Other nations followed suit, including the United States in 1808, although violations of the ban continued for some time.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Understand the links between early European exploration and the development of the slave trade.

Understand the development of the slave trade in Africa prior to European arrival.

Understand the differences between European and African slavery.

Understand the route to slavery in the Americas for an African.

Understand the outlines of slavery in the West Indies, and why that place is important to African Americans.

Understand the decline, and eventual prohibition, of the Atlantic slave trade.
CHAPTER OUTLINE

I. Introduction

II. The European Age of Exploration and Colonization
   A. Portugal
   B. Spain

III. The Slave Trade in Africa
   A. Racial Factors
   B. Gender Factors
   C. Demand for Slaves

IV. The Origins of the Atlantic Slave Trade
   A. Early Portuguese Efforts
   B. Purchase From Africans
   C. Role of Inter-ethnic Rivalries
   D. Effect of Columbus’ Voyages

V. Growth of the Atlantic Slave Trade
   A. Importance of Sugar
   B. Differences in African and European Slavery
   C. European Trade Monopolies
   D. English Trade Dominance
   E. Triangular Trade Systems

VI. The African American Ordeal From Capture to Destination
   A. Capture
      1. Sources of Slaves
      2. Journey to Factories
      3. Treatment
   B. The Crossing
      1. Voyage
      2. Causes for Delays
   C. The Slavers
      1. Ships/Cargo
      2. Slave “Quarters”
      3. Mortality Rates (Slaves and Crews)
   D. Olaudah Equiano (slave)
   E. John Newton (slave ship captain)
   F. Provisions for the Middle Passage
   G. Sanitation, Disease and Death
      1. Diseases
      2. Sanitation
      3. Ship’s Surgeons
      4. Cultural Differences
   H. Resistance and Revolt at Sea
      1. Timing
      2. Justification for Harsh Treatment
      3. Punishments
Chapter 2 \ Middle Passage

4. Suicides
   I. Cruelty/Treatment Relative to Others of Time Period
   J. African Women on Slave Ships

VII. Landing and Sale in the West Indies
   A. Preparations for Sale
   B. Sale/Inspection

VIII. Seasoning
   A. Preparation for Resale
   B. Disciplining Process
   C. Language
   D. Work/Instruction

IX. The End of the Journey: Masters and Slaves in the Americas
   A. Criteria for Successful Seasoning
      1. Survival
      2. Adaptation
      3. Language
      4. Psychology
   B. Continuation of African Culture

X. The Ending of the Atlantic Slave Trade
   A. English Abolitionism
   B. Effects of Abolition of Slave Trade

XI. Conclusion

TEST MATERIALS

MAP QUESTIONS
(Locate the following regions, geographical features or political entities on a map)
Atlantic Ocean
India
Cape of Good Hope
Portugal
Spain
Caribbean Islands
Guinea
Benin
Kongo
Dahomey