

# Working principles for the Historical Association Teacher Fellowship on Britain and transatlantic slavery

The following set of fourteen principles has been drawn up by the team leading the HA Teacher Fellowship on Britain and transatlantic slavery. They would like the programme to be the opportunity for further thinking and considered application of these principles. By the end of the fellowship, they hope to present the revised set for wider use.

## *Curricular working principles*

### **1. Race**

The emergence of racial language and thought, in terms of the construction of both whiteness and blackness, should be considered in relation to both transatlantic slavery and more broadly the development of empire and colonialism. You should consider the place of race in the functional operations of transatlantic slavery, as well as its role in debates over its dismantling.

### **2. Africa and Africans**

African culture and civilisation existed before and after transatlantic slavery and colonialism. You should consider the existence of complex cultural, social and economic systems within the continent prior to European contact.

### **3. Mass commercialisation**

Forms of enslavement existed in Africa prior to European contact; transatlantic slavery industrialised the trade, transforming it into a trans-continental system. You should consider the wider slave economy including the slave trade, plantation ownership, finance, insurance, and the trade in slave-produced commodities in order to understand the centrality of slave-based wealth to the prosperity of Britain.

### **4. Terror and violence**

Violence was central to the system of transatlantic slavery. It was a fundamental form of control and punishment that was built on existing notions of frightfulness, such as torture and capital punishments. You should consider the ways in which violence and terror was a gendered experience, paying careful attention to the double oppression experienced by women.

### **5. Resistance**

Enslaved people resisted their enslavement in both revolutionary and everyday ways. Resistance began from the moment of capture and continued on the slave ships, as well as within the Caribbean. You should consider different forms of resistance from individual to collective action.

### **6. Abolition**

The abolition of transatlantic slavery must be placed in the context of economic and social change in Britain. You should consider the role of mass mobilisation of the public, women, and African abolitionists in Britain, as well as the parliamentary campaign. The impact of resistance of the enslaved in the Caribbean should form an equal part of the discussion of antislavery.

### **7. Legacies.**

The history of transatlantic slavery links Africa, the Caribbean, North America, and Britain. Its impacts were felt at a local, national, and global level and they continue to shape the world today. You should consider the legacies of transatlantic slavery in terms of culture, society, politics and the economy in order to understand their role in the development of modern Britain.

## *Pedagogical working principles*

### **8. Gender**

Schemes of learning and sources should reflect the gendered experience of enslavement, resistance and emancipation.

### **9. Representation and memory**

The commemoration and representation of transatlantic slavery should be examined and debated in relation to the ways in which it has shaped ideas about race both at the time and in the present.

### **10. Enslaved and descendant voices**

The sources selected for schemes of learning must include the voices of those impacted by the oppression of transatlantic slavery.

### **11. Historiography**

The range of historical interpretations must include the work of African and Caribbean historians.

### **12. Respect**

Schemes of learning must recognise the sensitivities of teaching traumatic histories and avoid activities and approaches that risk trivialising or demeaning the experiences of enslaved people and their descendants.

### **13. Dialogue**

Children must be given time in the classroom to discuss the sensitive and challenging aspects of the topic, including contemporary race relations and the use of racial language.

### **14. Time**

Whilst recognising the pressure of time, all seven curricular principles should feature in any scheme of learning that engages with this topic.