

# IMAGINED VOICES



**A creative education pack  
designed for exploration of Maafa  
(the transatlantic slave trade)**

**Created and developed by  
Rommi Smith, Parliamentary Writer in Residence to the exhibition:  
*The British Slave Trade: Abolition, Parliament and People***

  
PARLIAMENTARY  
EDUCATION SERVICE

**The British  
Slave Trade:  
Abolition,  
Parliament  
and People**

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Education Service, Houses of Parliament

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# FOREWORD

To mark the 2007 bicentenary of the abolition of the British slave trade, the Houses of Parliament hosted a public exhibition *The British Slave Trade: Abolition, Parliament and People*. As part of this project, the Parliamentary Education Service appointed poet and writer Rommi Smith as Parliamentary Writer in Residence to the exhibition.

The appointment of a writer in residence was a first for the Houses of Parliament, making a profound statement about Parliament's commitment to an artistic exploration of the importance of the bicentenary of the Act of the abolition of the slave trade. Working together with Year 9 and Year 12 students from Burntwood School, and a group of Year 8 students at St Thomas More School, Rommi explored the historical, social and emotional issues around the transatlantic slave trade in a series of workshops held in school and at Parliament. The ability of Rommi as writer in residence to bring past and present together, and her role in inspiring the students to see that they too have powerful voices, led to an extremely successful residency project.

This pack is a result of the work developed during the residency, and contains many of the educational resources developed, and used, as part of these sessions. Aimed at teachers of English, Drama and Citizenship, the pack is a creative exploration of the wider issues surrounding the transatlantic slave trade, for use with secondary age students. Lessons, discussion points, activities and drama exercises combine to help both students and teachers develop their own ideas and find imaginative ways of expressing their views and opinions.

The Parliamentary Education Service would like to thank Rommi for her enthusiasm, her commitment to the residency, and for her ability to engage and inspire the students in such a variety of ways. We would also like to thank the teachers and students at both schools for taking part in this project.

**Education Service  
Houses of Parliament**

# INTRODUCTION

Rommi Smith, Parliamentary Writer in Residence to the exhibition:  
*The British Slave Trade: Abolition, Parliament and People*

These creative educational exercises and activities were developed for use within outreach workshops attached to *The British Slave Trade: Abolition, Parliament and People* exhibition. The core purpose of this pack is to facilitate students' creative, personal and political connection with the transatlantic slave trade, or Maafa, (the Kiswahilli term meaning disaster, or terrible occurrence). Key to each activity is the development of emotional literacy: empathy and understanding.

As educationalists and facilitators, we cannot, and should not, hide from the fact that in exploring Maafa with our students, we are dealing with an emotional and political subject riddled with connotations and legacies, both subliminal and blatant. The teaching of Maafa is challenging. You may face questions and opinions which will test you as an educator. You may confront stereotypes and prejudices that seem outmoded, even shocking. Conversely, you will, I am sure, like I did, find exploring Maafa some of the most rewarding work. To see young minds light up, fired by a passionate response to injustice; to witness students becoming activists, creative and determined about what should be done to overturn inhumanity, is truly an electric experience.

When we are dealing with Maafa, we are dealing with Africa and the history of the African continent and its relationship to the West. We are teaching in a context where popular images of Africa and Africans focus largely on poverty, disease and despotism. Therefore, you will meet with young people who cannot believe that:

- Africa is a continent and not a country;
- Egypt, given its illustrious history of wealth, complex and organised dynasties and technological advances, is in Africa;
- the African continent is vast, and the UK tiny in size by comparison;
- the natural riches of the African continent are numerous and were/are sought after by the West;
- the African continent has, and still continues to produce, some of the finest thinkers and intellectuals on the planet including Booker Prize winners and Nobel Laureates.

There are a number of assumptions I would, based on experience, tentatively make about your sessions. You may meet with young people who are:

- passionate and vocal about discovering more about Maafa and its Parliamentary abolition;
- those who feel ashamed, expressing guilt and emotional discomfort when the subject is mentioned;
- those who are, or appear to be nonchalant, even dismissive and unengaged about the entire subject.



The final group may well be those that are genuinely unengaged and disregarding, rationalising that Maafa happened a long time ago and that African people had slaves too. (To support counter arguments to these, it would be worth looking at the book to accompany the Parliamentary Exhibition, the extensive work of Professor James Walvin and Richard S. Reddie's book, *Abolition!* Both historians are clear about how the scale and longevity of Maafa was unprecedented. Details of these books can be found in the resources section of this pack).

In addition, I would suggest that there is a complexity of other reasons for apparent disregard. Students may be internally angry and defensive, looking for ways to emotionally 'opt out'. There are those who are frightened about their emotional responses to the material you're presenting to them and so self abdicate from involvement in order to 'protect' themselves. For this reason the first section of the pack gives advice concerning trust games and exercises you can use with groups to establish group cohesion and solidarity. It's crucial that the classroom is a safe space in which a level playing field of mutual respect and support is established from the start.

If there's one piece of advice I would offer you, it is this: don't start with Maafa. It's critical that young people working with you do not begin this experience believing that African history begins with slavery. As educationalists we are not working in a vacuum. If you start with Maafa, you risk endorsing every contemporary stereotype of Africa as downtrodden; African people as always 'suffering'. You leave no room to understand the cultural context and background for African resistance and the uprisings that sent shockwaves throughout the British Empire. Exploring something of the richness of the natural resources of, particularly, West Africa – cultures, family, intellectual/physical wealth – is fundamental to an understanding of what fuelled the European drive to 'scramble' for a piece of Africa and how Maafa devastated, and still continues to have negative impact on, African family life, cultures and resources.

The focus for this pack then, is the creative development of young people in response to Maafa. Here, you will find a selection of activities which invite young people to write poems, lyrics, dialogue, and monologues, personal and political manifestos. I can't emphasise enough that these exercises are a guide only; feel free to adapt them and add elements to suit your context and group. There are also many other packs that focus mainly on reading and comprehension exercises and activities, which will compliment the activities in this pack. A selection of these resources are listed in the resources section of this pack.

# **PART 1**

# **TRUST GAMES**



The development of trust and group solidarity within your group are definite requirements before work on Maafa starts.

Even if you feel the group members know each other well, opinions will surface during discussion about Maafa. Debate may become heated. Those strong connections you may have assumed existed between class members will be tested. Group cohesion needs to be reaffirmed and this can only be achieved if group members feel safe from the start.

## **AIMS OF THESE EXERCISES:**

- ▶ **TO REAFFIRM GROUP COHESION**
- ▶ **TO ENCOURAGE PARTICIPANTS TO FEEL SAFE AND RELAXED WITHIN A CLASS CONTEXT**

As with all the exercises in this pack, feel free to adapt them to suit your specific context and the needs of your group. You may also wish to supplement the trust games included here, with your own tried and tested trust games.

## **1: Bean Bag Game 1**

Ask the group members to stand in a circle, ensuring there is a good gap either side of each person. Before you begin, ask the group to throw the bean bag around the circle, making sure that everyone in the circle has the bean bag once. Ask group members to remember two things: who they threw the bag to and who they received it from. Start passing the bean bag around the circle. Once the bean bag has been passed around the circle once, ask group members to throw it again, in exactly the same order as the first time. Do this again and again, faster and faster until the group has firmly established the rhythm of the order for throwing the bag. It doesn't matter if anyone drops the bean bag...just encourage everyone to pick it up and start again.

## 2: Bean Bag Game 2

Ask the group to throw the bean bag around again, following the pattern of last time but in reverse order.

## 3: Bean Bag Game 3

Ask group members to say the name of the person to whom they're throwing the bean bag. An alternative is to ask group members to say their own name before throwing the bean bag to another member of the group.

## 4: Bean Bag Game 4

Word association: ask students to imagine that the bean bag represents a word that they catch. As they throw the bean bag, they will say the first word they associate with the one before e.g. free, butterfly, sun, heat, red, glow, moon, tide, ship, night.

## 5: Name Game

Ask everyone to walk around the room, finding their own space, not walking the same route as anyone else. Tell them that when you shout stop they will find a partner, introduce themselves, telling their partner their full name and one fact about themselves. This could be something they've achieved, a hobby, a favourite pop star, subject etc. Alternatively, give the group 5 minutes in which they need to meet and greet and exchange facts with as many people in the group as they can.

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE IDEA

You can develop this exercise, making it directly relevant to Maafa. Through this exercise you can raise an understanding of the gaps between facts and recorded 'official' versions of the truth, which, historically, have contained gross misrepresentations of African people and cultures.

Ask students to feedback the facts learnt about each other. Write down these facts, altering the details as you write. For example, if someone says they've learned that a group member has three brothers and one sister, write down that a group member has two brothers and two sisters. Students will begin to notice what you're doing and will try to correct you; this exercise will only work if you ignore these requests!. Once you have a good list of 'distorted truths' ask the students what they have noticed. They will tell you that you haven't written down what they've said. Insist that this is what you heard them say, so you must be right and they must be wrong. A great deal of debate and discussion will ensue. Keep momentum by telling the group they are wrong and you are right.

## DEBRIEF

Debrief is everything with this exercise. Explain to the group that what you've done, to distort and misrepresent their facts, histories and lives, was something routinely done to Africans during Maafa; its impact can still be felt today. A good illustration of this is Columbus' mistake in thinking he was in Asia via the western route and had met 'Indians', when in actual fact he was in the Bahamas. He referred to his 'discovery' as The West Indies. The legacy of this mistake is still with us. Many young people in your groups may have parents and grandparents who still define themselves as West Indian. More recently and commonly, communities have started to claim the word Caribbean in preference to West Indian. (A good book to look at, for more information written in a clear and accessible way, is Richard S. Reddie's *Abolition!* Details are in the resources section of this pack).

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*"Inspirational. Thank you for helping me understand the issues regarding the slave trade"* **Student Feedback**

## PART 2

# FACTS AND MYTHS

*“Miss, I didn’t realise that Africa was such a civilised country (sic)”.*

STUDENT FEEDBACK FROM OUTREACH WORKSHOPS

As discussed in the outline to this pack, we are teaching in contexts where popular knowledge and ‘facts’ about African cultures and heritage may be based on a limited number of stereotypical images.

Here is an exercise which will help unpack those stereotypes and provide a good platform on which to begin exploring Maafa with your group.

### 1: Brainstorming facts

Split your group into small teams. Ask your group to use a large piece of flipchart paper to make a mind map of all the facts they know about Africa. There may well be lots of focus on poverty, disease and despotism. Once each group has finished talking about the facts they know about Africa, discuss with the group the origin of their knowledge of these facts.

### 2: Alternative ways of seeing

In preparation for this activity, it would be useful to look at texts exploring African history prior to the 1500’s. Details are contained within the resource list at the back of this pack.

In advance of the session, research facts about African history in the following headings: culture; family; literature; natural resources; origin of the human species; learning and knowledge; technology. Cut and paste these facts, individually, onto cards. These facts could include:

- a) Ancient African art was a key inspiration for artists such as Pablo Picasso and Paul Klee.
- b) Mali reached the height of its power and wealth during the 14th century, extending over almost all of West Africa and controlling virtually all of the rich trans-Saharan gold trade. It was during this period that Mali’s great city, Timbuktu, became a much celebrated centre of wealth, learning, and culture.
- c) Africa is a physically rich continent: gold, diamonds, pearls, sugar, tea, coffee and oil have been its major items of export and the root cause of foreign exploitation.
- d) Egypt is in Africa. The Egyptians developed technology in the arts and sciences which are still in use today: e.g. optometry.
- e) One of the old English coins was called a Guinea. This name signifies Britain’s colonial past. Gold taken from the coast of Guinea (also known as the Gold Coast) was used to make the coins.
- f) We are all African: Africa, especially central eastern Africa, is widely regarded amongst scientists to be the place of origin of human beings.
- g) The Black history of Yorkshire stretches back further than is thought. From AD 208 to his death in AD 211, the Libyan-born Emperor, Septimius Severus, ruled the Roman Empire from York. While digging in Yorkshire, archaeologists have found the skeletons of numerous people of African descent who were in York at this time.

Present students with the following quote from the eighteenth century Scottish philosopher, David Hume:

*“I am apt to suspect the Negroes to be naturally inferior to the Whites. There scarcely ever was a civilised nation of that complexion, nor even any individual, eminent either in action or in speculation. No ingenious manufacture among them, no arts, no sciences”.*

Present the students with an envelope of the alternative facts you have researched. Ask students if they can match Hume’s statement to any of these facts. Can any of these facts be argued to be a justification of Hume’s statement?

Students may see a bias and prejudice within Hume’s comment. On a wider level, discussion during this exercise may encourage students to see the importance of questioning primary and secondary sources. Students should be able to notice that they can’t find a fact that matches Hume’s statement.

### 3: Shopping bag

Place the following items inside a shopping bag: spices, salt, sugar, tea, coffee beans, chocolate, cocoa and cocoa butter. Use these items to illustrate how ordinary every day items which we take for granted, in UK households, have an African origin.

Alternatively, you can ask students to demonstrate, step by step, how to make a cup of tea. In doing this you can illustrate that many of the ingredients used to make the ‘quintessentially English’ cup of tea were obtained via trading with and exploitation of Africa.

This exercise can be used to lead into a discussion of the Triangular Trade: Europeans took goods with them to Africa, which included guns. These goods were used to force, trick, or bribe Africans into enslavement. The Europeans then returned from Africa with enslaved Africans and riches from the continent, which included sugar, tea, gold and pearls.

An alternative exercise would be to place a Christmas pudding into a shopping bag, along with its recipe. Ask students to empty the contents and read the ingredients list. The ingredients list for an English Christmas pudding includes rum, sugar, molasses and spices, all ingredients obtained via trading and exploitation. Discussion of this will illuminate how much British culture depends upon goods obtained from Africa and other countries once considered to be part of the British Empire.

### 4: ‘African chest’

Collect items of African origin into a box, making the link between this and Thomas Clarkson’s chest. For some background information on Thomas Clarkson, visit the website [www.parliament.uk/slavetrade](http://www.parliament.uk/slavetrade). Clarkson, a committed Quaker and abolitionist, toured the UK, promoting the abolitionist cause through a series of talks. He used a chest containing goods and handicrafts traded with African countries to illustrate the point that slavery was wrong and that there were ethical ways in which to develop a relationship with the African continent. Clarkson befriended William Wilberforce, and this friendship raised Wilberforce’s awareness of the horrors of Maafa.

The items you collect for your box can be used to raise awareness of the richness of African cultures and knowledge; items can include cloth, a sankofa bird, clothes, handicrafts, carved ornaments, and cowrie shells. These objects can be used to illustrate the richness of African culture. For instance, the cowrie shell was used as currency. It is still worn as jewellery, often by people of African heritage. African handicrafts and artwork can be used to make the point that African art was a key inspiration for the work of European artists such as Paul Klee and Pablo Picasso.

The sankofa is a mythical bird of West African origin. The bird walks forwards into the future, whilst looking backwards to the past, and has an egg in its mouth which symbolises truth and history. The concept of the sankofa is that we must look to the past to understand the future. The sankofa has inspired many thinkers and activists of African heritage.

Students should arrive at an understanding that, far from being barren, impoverished or any of the other negative stereotypes popular in the West, Africa was rich in resources and therefore was the envy of Europeans.

## **PART 3**

# **DEVELOPING EMPATHY** **Name Game Exercise**



### **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:**

- ▶ **TO RAISE AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF NAMING AND ASSOCIATED RITUALS IN THE AFRICAN CONTINENT AND DIASPORA;**
- ▶ **TO ILLUSTRATE TO GROUP PARTICIPANTS THE IMPACT OF TAKING AWAY ENSLAVED AFRICANS' NAMES AND REPLACING THEM WITH EUROPEAN ONES;**
- ▶ **TO ENCOURAGE PARTICIPANTS TO EXPLORE THE VALUE, IMPORTANCE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THEIR OWN NAMES, AS INDICATORS OF CULTURE AND FAMILY HISTORY;**
- ▶ **TO PREPARE GROUP MEMBERS FOR DISCUSSION/EXPLORATION AND CREATIVE RESPONSES TO ONE OF SLAVERY'S IDEOLOGICAL FORMS OF CRUELTY: THE TAKING OF AFRICANS' NAMES AND THE REPLACEMENT OF THEM WITH EUROPEAN ONES.**

Names can tell you about the tribe a person comes from, the day of the week they were born, their position in the family line, as well as the circumstances of their birth.

Names are literally your compass indicating country and people. The act of naming is considered so precious a task that often, it is a role not solely left to parents; rather elders of a village may be involved in choosing the child's name. For more information on naming rituals and ceremonies, please see the resources section at the back of this pack.

## 1: The game

Ask people to walk around the room, finding their own space and without following others. Tell them to stop and to find a partner (preferably someone they don't know). Ask the pairs to tell the stories of their names. Set a time limit of, say, two minutes. Give an example to the group, to illustrate what you're looking for:

*"My name is my grandmother's name and it was given to me so I could remember who she was and how important she was to my Mum..."*

*"My name is Ada and it is a name given to all first born daughters who are from the Igbo tribe in Nigeria, West Africa"*

*"I have a different name from my birth name as I was adopted and my name was changed..."*

Encourage each person to feel they can share detail. Encourage the person listening to the story to ask questions and to remember 3 things from what their partner tells them.

## 2: Feedback and discussion

When each pair feeds back, ask each person to feedback as if they are their partner i.e. they tell the story of their partner's name in the first person. After everyone has fed back to the group, ask the whole group what they have learnt. Emphasise themes of family, identity, ethnicity, and the religious and cultural significances of names.

## 3: Relating discussion to Maafa

Discuss the way in which enslaved Africans were stripped of their names, which were replaced with European ones. Discuss the slave traders' ideological justifications for this, which included: a belief that African cultures, and therefore people, were primitive and inferior; stripping enslaved Africans of their names was symbolic of the attempt to break their spiritual connections with their mother cultures; the attempt to replace them with European ones was, in a paternalistic sense, considered 'refining'. There are websites referenced in the resources section of the pack where you can find out more about barbaric brainwashing rituals where the removal of names was a key part of attempting to break down African resistance and spirit. This includes a brutal ritual called Zomai; meaning literally 'there, where the light is not allowed'.

Ask the group to imagine their names were taken away and replaced with other names. How do they think this would affect them?

## 4: Removal of Names

This drama game works to stimulate personal reaction and response to the importance of names and the cruelty of removing them. This game works as a 'game within game' i.e. students can be 'playing' this game whilst working on any other task, or exercise, in this pack.

### IN ADVANCE OF THE GAME, YOU'LL NEED TO PREPARE

- a series of random numbers and judgmental 'names' (typical of those Europeans would give to enslaved Africans: 'Slow Mabel' 'Quick Jack' 'Lazy Susan') typed out onto A4 card. Each piece of card needs to have a piece of string attached to each side, to enable the card to be hung around the neck.
- a list of punishments, each one printed onto a piece of paper. The following punishments sound harsh, but are crucial for group participants to engage with the horrors of Maafa. These punishments can include: **foot chopped off; ten lashes; being sold on; going without food; fifty lashes; hand chopped off** etc. Reserve these 'punishments' for use later.
- a bag of rewards. Rewards can include: small bars of Fairtrade chocolate, or 'written' gifts such as: **more food than everyone else; an overseer position.**

The position of the 'overseer' is a complex one. Europeans used 'divide and rule' tactics to break down African resistance to colonial rule. These included granting special privileges to small numbers of enslaved Africans who took the role of 'overseeing' that other enslaved Africans were keeping to task and that they weren't planning to uprising against European rule. Thus, the overseer role was particularly used on plantations where larger groups of enslaved Africans would be gathered. Overseers were expected to report signs of insurrection or rebellion to the European 'masters'.

## BEFORE THE GAME STARTS

Ask group members to write down all their names onto pieces of paper. Ask them to ensure all names, including middle names, are written on the piece of paper. Collect all the pieces of paper and put them in an envelope. Seal the envelope. Tell the group their names no longer belong to them, that you will keep their names and they are not allowed to have them back. Encourage students to give verbal responses to this new rule.

## THE GAME

Hand out the numbers/new names on card. Establish your ground rules for wearing new numbers or names: tell each group member that they must wear their card at all times; any removal, defacing of the card, continuation of calling other group members by their birth names, will be punishable. Tell them there are rewards for group members who tell on others who break the rules. Ask group members to report to you anyone who breaks the rules. Keep a log of those who break the rules and those who tell on them. As mentioned before, you can set the group working on a different task, during which they must abide by these rules.

## 5: Debriefing

It is important to make links between what the group has just experienced and the experience of enslaved Africans. Ask the group to tell you what they think about having their names taken away. What do they feel about wearing a new name or number? How did it feel to be given a number and made to wear it around their necks?

- a) Ask them to write a series of statements down on pieces of paper in response to their feelings of having their birth names taken away. Ask the group to start each sentence with the words: 'I feel'.  
Ask the group to be as descriptive as possible, to use colours, textures and all the senses as they write.
- b) Ask the entire group to stand up. Ask them to all read out their words at the same time and to fill the space with the sound of their voices; this encourages everyone, even those who are shy, to feel confident about reading aloud. Ask a few members of the group to read their whole pieces out to the rest of the group.

## PUNISHMENTS

Hand out the punishments. Read out the list of those who broke the rules. One at a time, call each recipient of a punishment out to the front of the group. Explain how and why they've broken 'the rules'. Give each 'rule breaker' a 'punishment' on a piece of paper. Ask them to read the punishment aloud and say how they feel about being 'punished' in this way.

If students are resistant to the idea of the magnitude of these punishments there are ways to introduce students to the idea of the suffering inflicted on enslaved Africans. You could ask people about the worst pain they've experienced; if anyone has broken their arm or leg, accidentally burnt themselves, or had a tooth taken out. Ask the group members what this pain felt like. Then ask them to magnify this pain by 50, 100, 200, 300. Ask them what it now feels like.

There are numerous photographs of the punishments inflicted on enslaved Africans in the USA, where slavery was legal until 1865. One of the images most affecting to use in sessions, and which has a direct impact on teachers and students is the image entitled: *Scarred back of an American Slave c. 1855* (© Peter Newark American Pictures/Private Collection/The Bridgeman Art Library). The image is graphic, and in a celluloid, plasma-screen driven era where photographic, or filmic 'proof' is everything, the starkness of this image says it all.

## REWARDS

Call out the list of those who reported others. Call each person out to the front. Hand them a reward. If you're handing out written rewards, ask each person to read it out loud to the whole group. Ask those receiving rewards to comment on how they feel receiving them. Watch and note the conflicts in group dynamics.

Tell the group what you noticed about how it operated in terms of the rewards and punishments element of the exercise. For instance, there is likely to have been an abandonment of group solidarity in pursuit of personal reward; resistance in the form of a desire to secretly usurp the 'rules' by continuing the use of birth names out of your ear-shot. Discuss with the group how tactics of divide and rule (e.g. the creation of overseers), reward and punishment were used by Europeans in an attempt to socially control enslaved people.

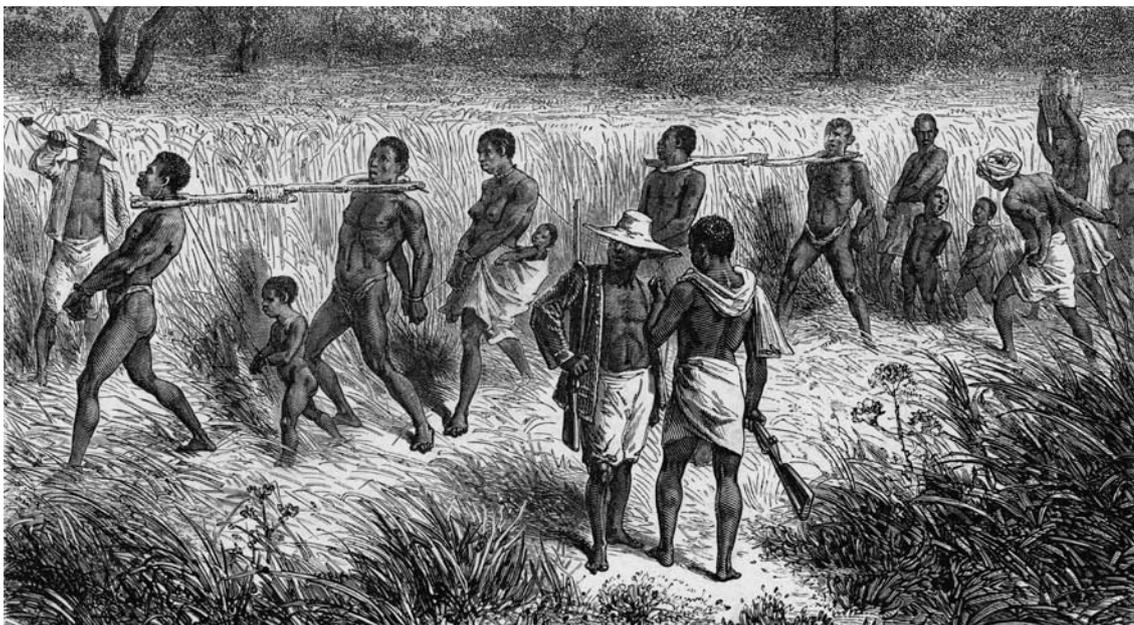
## 6: Writing exercise: critical reflection

Ask group members to think about what a name means now they've experienced the exercise. Split the class into groups of four and ask each group to write a ten - twenty line poem. Ask each member of the group to take turns in writing a line each, explaining what their name means to them. Ask them to start each sentence with the words: 'my name is:'

### For example:

My Name

My name is a gift.  
My name is my past and my future.  
My name is all my parents' love spelt out in letters.  
My names aren't just words.  
My name is a precious stone that no one else can take.  
My name is my greatness in words.  
My name is meaning.  
My name is a statement to the world that I exist.  
My name is a precious star in the night sky.  
My name is the pearl of the moon on night's throat.  
My name is a comet across a world of sky.



**Image of enslaved Africans wearing yokes**

© Mary Evans Picture Library

## 7: Resistance

Present the class with examples of ways in which enslaved Africans resisted European control. These examples can range in scale from working slowly, to uprisings and mass revolts in places such as Haiti. Explore ways in which other groups protested against slavery. This can include the sugar boycott and anti-slavery poems written by, amongst others, Quaker women and former enslaved Africans such as Phyllis Wheatley. Show students the online images of the petition against the slave trade, signed by over 2500 Manchester residents (this is available at [www.parliament.uk/slavetrade](http://www.parliament.uk/slavetrade)). Work with students so that they can see that resistance and protest took many forms. Show them examples of anti-slavery banners, brooches, letters and petitions.

### **Break students into the following groups:**

- a) Quakers
- b) Women's groups
- c) Enslaved Africans
- d) Revolutionaries (such as Toussaint L'Overture and Nanny of the Maroons)

Ask students to prepare a plan to overthrow your decision to take away their names. As part of this plan of action, they need to prepare the following for their group:

- a) a short two minute protest speech, announcing the intentions
- b) a song, poem or rap conveying their message
- c) a poster or image
- d) a slogan
- e) a strategy to make you acknowledge/give back their birth names

Give each group a short amount of time to work on each task. Once each task is completed, ask each group to present their campaign to the rest of the class.

At the end of the presentations, all students should have their birth names returned to them. Debrief on this exercise by exploring what it felt like to take control of the quest to have their birth names acknowledged.

## PART 3

# VOICES OF MAAFA

These teacher – led exercises are intended for adaptation and use with all age ranges, especially English, Drama Studies, Visual Arts, History, Citizenship and Politics.

The aim of all the exercises in this pack is to deepen students' sense of emotional connection with, and political response to, Maafa. When working on this section of the pack, it is useful to have internet access for yourself and students for some or all of your sessions.

A good place to start an exploration of Maafa is to think about voices. Politically and metaphorically, this is important. This area raises some important points regarding the documented and therefore those voices deemed 'real', or official, and by contrast the countless millions of 'voices' of those who as a result of resistance to slave traders, hunger and disease died during the 'middle passage'. This phrase is used to describe the journey across the Atlantic Ocean from Africa to the Americas undertaken by slave ships – which formed the middle leg of the trade triangle.

Where references are made to audio and image resources, unless otherwise specified, you can find these on the *Parliament and The British Slave Trade 1600-1807* website: [www.parliament.uk/slavetrade](http://www.parliament.uk/slavetrade).

### 1: Remembering voices

Present students with the following quote on A5 cards:

*“They will remember that we were sold but they won't remember that we were strong. They will remember that we were bought, but not that we were brave”.* **William Prescott, former enslaved African man 1937**

### DISCUSSION

Ask students to reflect on the connotations of this statement in relation to what they already know of Maafa. It is likely that students will be aware of historical figures such as William Wilberforce and Granville Sharp, Olaudah Equiano and perhaps Ignatius Sancho, but what of Nanny of the Maroons and Toussaint L'Overture? It is likely they will know less about African resistance in general.

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*“It has been really great working on this, I have learnt a lot”*

**Student Feedback**

## 2: Other voices of resistance

Present students with the following names on A5 cards:

**Tackey and Tomboy of Antigua**  
**Pompey of Exuma Island, The Bahamas**  
**Ben and Cufee of Barbados**  
**Black Tom, Sarah Bassett and Cabilecto of Bermuda**  
**Cuffee of Guyana**  
**Boukman and Toussaint L'Overture of Haiti**  
**Nanny of the Maroons**  
**Takyi and Blackwall of Jamaica**  
**Chatoyer of St Vincent**  
**Sandy of Tobago**

Ask students to discuss and jot down notes about what they know – if anything – about these heroes and heroines of resistance. Through discussion, students should note the ironies in this list: the names are often just first names, clearly nicknames, names 'given' by slave owners e.g. 'Black Tom' rather than African names. Discussion should be related back to the quote from William Prescott, so as to illuminate his point.

### RESEARCH

Students should be invited to select one of the historical figures from the list and find out as much as they can about them. Students should begin to understand how difficult it can be to research someone with an 'incomplete name'. Students will be able to find much about Nanny of the Maroons and Toussaint L'Overture. Students will find it illuminating to relate all they discover to William Prescott's statement.

Please see the resources section of the pack for details of books which contain information about African voices of resistance including those mentioned above.

## 3. Portraits of 'abolitionists'

Ask students to research portraits of abolitionists online in the Explore section of [www.parliament.uk/slavetrade](http://www.parliament.uk/slavetrade). Point students towards the portraits of Ignatius Sancho and William Wilberforce, and the sketches of Olaudah Equiano and Granville Sharpe. Ask them to discuss what they notice about the images.

If you are working without access to the internet, in advance of the session find images of the following abolitionists, or images used by the abolitionists online. Cut and paste the following images onto cards:

**Olaudah Equiano**

**William Wilberforce**

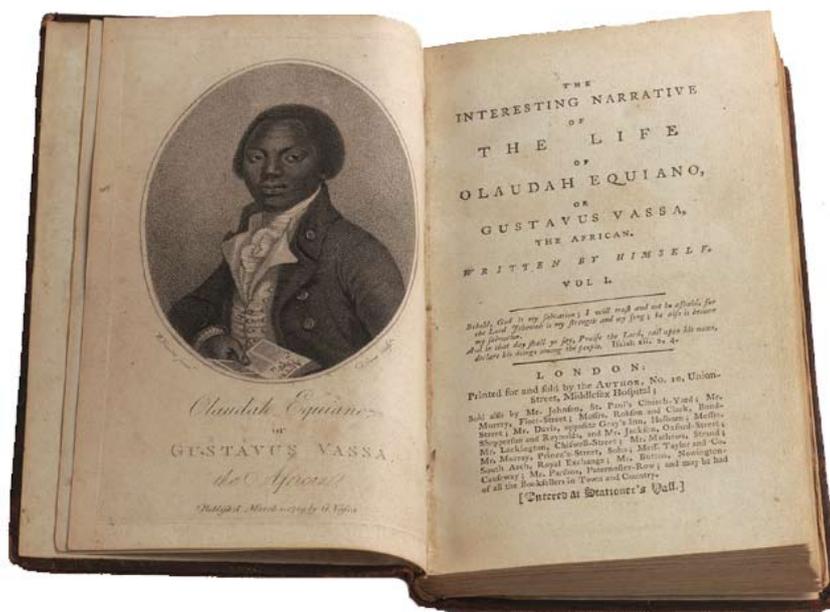
**Ignatius Sancho**

**Granville Sharp**

**Thomas Clarkson**

**Image from the mass produced print entitled 'The Abolition of the Slave Trade: or the inhumanity of dealers in human flesh exemplified in the cruel treatment of a young Negro girl of 15 for her virgin modesty' (Isaac Cruikshank 1792)**

**'Kneeling Slave' images, for example Josiah Wedgwood's 'Am I not a Man and A Brother'**



Olaudah Equiano's book

© Palace of Westminster Works of Art

Spend ten minutes discussing with students what they noticed about the portraits. Pull out the following themes in the discussion:

- size of the portrait; size of the subject in the portrait; whether it is a painting, or sketch; the composition of the subject; the facial expression of the subject and how this might suggest, or indicate something about their role in the various abolitionist movements.
- Are there any symbols, images, or objects within the paintings or etchings? Why do they appear? What do they suggest about the subject's relationship to abolition?

Through this exercise students should be able to make the connection between race and gender, power and money: who, for instance, would have had the power to commission large paintings, or who would have been deemed worthy enough to be the subject of a large and expensive oil painting. For example: the image of Wilberforce is large and is a luxurious painting in contrast to the etching of Equiano.

Students may also be interested to know that the painting *Portrait of an African* by Joshua Reynolds, was once thought to be an oil portrait of Equiano but is now contested and refuted as an image of him. What does this say about power and history? Who, in a context of Maafa, has traditionally had the power to write down their version of history and recognise its heroes?

#### 4: History is written by the winners

In light of the discussion about the portraits, invite students to consider Roots' author, Alex Haley's comment, that the act of writing the book was a challenge to the fact that *'history is written by the winners'*. What did Haley mean?

Students might also like to consider the African proverb:

*"until lions have their own historians, the tales of victory will always be told by the hunter".*

What does this mean in the context of Maafa?

#### 5: Citizenship and rights

In terms of citizenship, ask students to think about, or go away and research, the 'rights' that enslaved Africans had in the UK and in the colonies. This task should lead students to an understanding that pro-slavery campaigners considered Africans sub-human, or animals; not capable of humanity or independent thought. Students should be presented with the facts that enslaved Africans had no citizenship rights and they could not vote.

In terms of abolitionists, it is illuminating to contrast the groups' discoveries with the differing position of Ignatius Sancho. Sancho was arguably middle class (having been left a sum of money, he purchased a grocer's shop and his own home) and as the owner of property, he was thus allowed to vote. In his acclaimed collection of letters, he does, however, describe the racism he routinely faced. For more information on Sancho, look at the Explore section of [www.parliament.uk/slavetrade](http://www.parliament.uk/slavetrade) and visit the National Archives website at [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk).

## 6: The Oral Tradition

It is important to discuss the oral tradition. Orature is, traditionally, the means by which African societies record and keep their histories alive. The position of the 'griot' within a tribe is one of great esteem and reverence. Griots are part of a tribal lineage of individuals born into the role of maintaining, or holding, a certain role. For example a griot in a tribe born into the role of learning a tribe's history, passes it on from one generation to the next, through song and spoken poetry. How does this traditional means of recording history, in Africa, conflict with the idea of writing down history? How and why did Maafa devastate the oral tradition amongst enslaved Africans?

## 7: Revolutionaries

Abolitionist revolutionary figures such as Toussaint L'Overture and Nanny of the Maroons, and movements such as the Sons of Africa (a collective of formerly enslaved African male abolitionists that included Olaudah Equiano and Ottobah Cugoano) challenge the idea that Africans were passive recipients of their own freedom.

Use sections from speeches, letters and testimonies such as:

- a) Equiano's book *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano (including letters to Parliament)*
- b) Cugoano's narrative of his experience of Maafa
- c) Letters from Sancho to other distinguished and high profile people, who were friends and acquaintances
- d) The Sons of Africa letters of petition

You can find details of these resources in the resources section of this pack, or visit [www.parliament.uk/slavetrade](http://www.parliament.uk/slavetrade) for transcripts of some of these speeches and letters. Use the documents as talking points for small groups of students.

Look at the image of the 'kneeling African slave' which you can find online, or in the book which accompanies the *British Slave Trade: Abolition, Parliament and People* exhibition. This image became popular as a result of the Wedgwood abolitionist brooch. How does this image conflict with the words and spirit of the letters and narratives written by Africans? Discuss with the group why this image of the 'kneeling slave' was popular. How did this image challenge pro-slavery stereotypes of enslaved Africans as un-human and akin to chattel? Conversely, why was this image, for white European abolitionists, a 'safe' image to front their campaigns? It is important to draw out the fact that there was fear of Africans forming cohesive groups and uprising and overthrowing both British rule in the colonies, and resisting enslavement within the UK.

## 8: The sugar boycott: women, history, power and protest

In advance of the session, use the internet to research the movement to boycott sugar and its influence on the abolition of the slave trade. In the session, split the students into groups and ask them to look at the *Anti-Saccharites – or John Bull and his Family leaving off the use of Sugar* by James Gillray (1792), which you can find on the next page or in the Explore section of [www.parliament.uk/slavetrade](http://www.parliament.uk/slavetrade). You will find further information on the website.

Discuss the movement to boycott sugar and how this small, but powerful statement had a major impact. Ask each group to go away and research female led abolitionist movements in the UK. This will include the Quaker Movement and associated historical figures such as Hannah More, Mary Prince and Hannah Birkett.

- a) Discuss the idea of history and the power to write it. Discuss the legacy of Roots' author, Alex Haley's statement: '... *History is written by the winners*'. How might this explain the lack of 'visibility' of African, working class and female abolitionists?



© Palace of Westminster Works of Art

- b) Look at the image entitled *'The Abolition of the Slave Trade: or the inhumanity of dealers in human flesh exemplified in the cruel treatment of a young Negro girl of 15 for her virgin modesty'*. Invite students to investigate her story of resistance and rebellion. What is ironic, concerning her name and the concept of writing down history in order to remember it?
- c) Listen online at [www.parliament.uk/slavetrade](http://www.parliament.uk/slavetrade) to the audio of poems written by, amongst others, women abolitionists. Use these as a positive tool to explain the contribution of the abolitionist movement.
- d) Look at the sister image to the Wedgwood brooch *'Am I Not a Man and a Brother'*, entitled *'Am I Not a Woman and a Sister'*. Research the origin of this image and discuss it with reference to the role women played in resistance against Maafa.

## 9: Writing exercises: a gallery of words

- a) Use the images of abolitionists from Section 3 of this activity. Ask each group member to select an image. Ask them to imagine their abolitionist hero has come back to life. What do they feel the abolitionist thinks as s/he stares into the face of the future? What does the abolitionist think about 21st century society? Where is freedom? Ask each group member to write in the imagined voice of that abolitionist figure. Ask them to write one side of A4. Encourage each writer to use the senses as they write to ensure a richer and more sensory piece of writing.
- b) Ask students to research, and then consider the portraits of Olaudah Equiano, William Wilberforce, Thomas Clarkson and Ignatius Sancho. Ask each writer to imagine they can create the voice of the abolitionist as their picture was painted, drawn, or taken. Ask each writer to write about the scene as the image is being created. What is the relationship between painter, photographer or illustrator and their abolitionist subject? What was happening as the image was being created? What stories are outside the frame of the picture? Ask each writer to create them.
- c) Ask individuals to read their pieces out to the rest of the group. Ask them why they felt a connection with their chosen abolitionist. Ask them if, how and why writing in the imagined voice of a chosen abolitionist has changed their thoughts towards that abolitionist.

### TASK: CREATE YOUR OWN EXHIBITION

As part of a school art or history project, work with students to create their own exhibition of portraits and poems of the named and unnamed of Maafa. Imagine the faces and stories of those voices lost at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean. Celebrate them in your own class gallery. Don't forget to give every portrait a name and a poetic exhibition label explaining the story behind the creation of the image.

## 10: Redemption Songs

In small groups, ask students to look at the lyrics of, and listen to, 'Redemption Songs' by Bob Marley.

**Knowledge and power:** ask each group to discuss the meaning of the lyrics and what points Marley posed concerning knowledge, power and resistance, with reference to:

*"..Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery; none but ourselves can free our minds..."*

In the Kingdom of Benin, one of the Forest Kingdoms of ancient Africa, enslaved Africans underwent a barbaric ritual to 'prepare' them for the journey of the Middle Passage and their lives in Europe and European colonies. Zomai is a process which literally means 'place where the light is not allowed'. During this process enslaved people were kept in darkened pits for weeks at a time, and made to walk around the 'tree of forgetting' after which it was said they would forget their names and all traces of their former lives.

Ask each group to discuss this information with reference to Marley's lyric:

*"Old pirates, yes, they rob I, sold I to the merchant ships. Minutes after they took I from the bottomless pit..."*

**Songs of Freedom:** students should discuss what songs or lyrics they can think of where the singer, or MC, speaks out about something they feel sad or angry about. In their groups, discuss protest songs/lyrics they know and the way they make them feel when they listen to them.

Ask students to find out as many facts as they can about the roots of the music forms known as Blues and Spirituals. How do the call and response elements of both music forms illustrate Marley's words?

*"Won't you help to sing these songs of freedom? 'Cause all I ever have, Redemption Songs...."*

**Lyrics and Liberty:** students can examine the meanings of following images/ideas borrowed from Marley's lyrics:

- a) *"..how long shall they kill our prophets...?"*
- b) *"..won't you help to sing these songs of freedom...?"*
- c) *"..from the bottomless pit..."*
- d) *"..none of them can stop the time..."*
- e) *"..have no fear of atomic energy..."*

Working in groups, ask the class to write one verse for a freedom song or poem.

Read Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech to your class. Ask them to think about and discuss where the power comes from in King's famous speech. How does the speech work to move listeners? What skills does King use to ensure audiences connect with what he is saying?

Ask each student to write their own version of Martin Luther King's speech. What do they dream of? What would make the world a better place?

In addition, or alternatively, you can lead the exercise listening to Billie Holiday's version of 'Strange Fruit'. You can also look at Lewis Allan's (born Abel Meeropol) lyrics for the song.

## PART 4

# A GUIDE TO THE EXHIBITION



This section of the pack contains teacher - led ideas and activities centred on the inaugural poem for the *British Slave Trade: Abolition Parliament and People* exhibition.

This activity can be used in conjunction with the written version of the poem, contained in this pack, and the audio version which is available via the exhibition website: [www.parliament.uk/slavetrade](http://www.parliament.uk/slavetrade).

## Poem

By Rommi Smith, Parliamentary Writer in Residence to the exhibition: *The British Slave Trade: Abolition, Parliament and People*. Written and performed to mark the opening of the exhibition in Westminster Hall.

Choose your route: don't look for the map, or  
guide to show you. Find your own path; the way  
that instinct doesn't carve: a straight line  
for a lifetime to follow. Take

each glass case as revelation;  
the fact you see your own reflection in each  
one is no accident. All the future is the past.

Remember,  
these are not objects, things that rent  
a glass room in the house of history:  
yoke and whip and shackle and chain,  
were never just words -- they are always

intentions. Look up. Those floating  
angels stay wooden lipped, yet they could sing  
of nine centuries of change they've witnessed;  
the cold eye of envy rolling across Africa,  
to the hymn of cotton and indigo and rum and sugar,  
and gold and diamonds and salt fish and coffee  
and dealing in our suffering;  
yet the Somerset son rose up, and  
the sugar moon went down, as  
women stirred spoons of suffrage  
into their gold-rimmed teacups.

Lift every painted name to see behind it  
millions more unknown. And as the soul of the  
water rises,  
place your outstretched palms on its surface;  
underneath,

the woman who wouldn't dance,  
laughs with 'enslaved woman number 47' and they  
dance to the tune of their greatness  
and spread their skirts made from ocean.

There is no need for tissues when tears come,  
for when they do their salt weight is to testify  
that there is something of that ocean in all of us;  
for we all wear a dark wreath in the centre of  
each eye,  
woven from this loss.

So, when we sleep tonight, we will dream of the  
African Atlantis,  
(where our ancestors rise from the book of the  
deep blue soul,  
each wave, page after indigo page, the roll call  
of their names); if we listen, we will hear the salt-  
soaked spirituals  
on their tongues, see they wear their afros like  
majestic shoals  
of thought and a sankofa bird in each of their  
right hands.

Spirits,  
coming back  
to claim the pages  
in the book, in which their names

do not

exist.

© Rommi Smith. This poem was written as part of Rommi Smith's commission as Parliamentary Writer in Residence to the exhibition: *The British Slave Trade: Abolition, Parliament and People*. It was written and performed to mark the opening of the exhibition: *The British Slave Trade, Abolition, Parliament and People*, at Westminster Hall. See [www.parliament.uk/slavetrade](http://www.parliament.uk/slavetrade) for further information. The poem is for use only for educational purposes and within a classroom context. If you wish to reproduce this poem in any form, please contact Rommi Smith ([rommi@rommi-smith.co.uk](mailto:rommi@rommi-smith.co.uk)) or the Houses of Parliament via [curator@parliament.uk](mailto:curator@parliament.uk)

## EXERCISES

These activities are intended to be adapted for all age ranges studying English, but also cover important aspects of History, Citizenship, Politics and the Visual Arts.

Before work on this subject commences, ask students to write about the person in history they most admire. When students have studied Maafa it would be interesting to return to the person in history whom they most admired, to see if their figure has changed. This can encourage students to think about this issue and continue to research the wealth of unrecorded black history. How many students wrote about Florence Nightingale, for example, because they haven't heard of Mary Seacole?

Another prompt for discussion is for students to look at the historical figures printed on the back of bank notes:

- a) Charles Darwin
- b) Elizabeth Fry
- c) Edward Elgar
- d) Charles Houlton
- e) Adam Smith

Students can discuss what implications these images have regarding our perceptions about who are the important figures in British history. This will help to elucidate the serious questions concerning recorded history posed by Smith's poem.

### 1: Painting Empathy

Examine the painting *Bird in Hand* by Ellen Gallagher (2006), a key inspiration for Rommi Smith's poem, *A Guide to the Exhibition*. You can find further information about Gallagher's work by doing an internet search.

Ask students to concentrate on the meaning of 'salt' (and its relevance to this topic) which elucidates a powerful line in Smith's poem: "...their salt weight is to testify".

Additionally ask students to reflect on lines, such as:

*"...there is something of that ocean in all of us; for we all wear a dark wreath in the centre of each eye, woven from this loss."*

What points does Smith pose regarding to whom the history of Maafa belongs?

Students should be able to relate to this discussion to everything they may already know about the transatlantic slave trade, or Maafa, and how it affects us today.

Activities in Section 3 of this pack, especially those entitled *Voices of Maafa*, will facilitate students' creative writing responses to Maafa related artwork.

Ask students to compare the themes and images in the painting with those suggested by the poem.

### 2: Research

Organise students into small groups to carry out library group work. Their task is to prepare presentations that tackle challenging issues within the poem. Suggested topics for the groups to research include:

- a) the significance of salt, or gold, or indigo, or cotton, or sugar, or coffee, or chocolate in the transatlantic slave trade.
- b) the symbolism of the sankofa bird in West African history and its relevance to Maafa.

Further research can involve analysis of the following lines:

- a) "...the woman who wouldn't dance laughs with Enslaved Woman Number 47..." What images of resistance and rebellion do these figures present? How do the stories of both women challenge predominant Eurocentric definitions of emancipation and abolition?
- b) "...their salt weight is to testify"
- c) "...the cold eye of envy rolling across Africa". How are contemporary images of the African continent as downtrodden and destitute challenged via an exploration of this line?
- c) "...women stirred spoons of suffrage into their gold-rimmed teacups." What was the Sugar Boycott and what role did women play in this protest? How did this protest impact upon trading during Maafa?
- d) "...the hymn of indigo and cotton". What role did/does religion play in the spread of colonialism?
- e) "...those floating angels stay wooden lipped, yet they could sing of nine centuries of change they've witnessed.." What histories have the wooden angels hanging from the ceiling of Westminster Hall witnessed? To find out more about Westminster Hall and its history, look at: [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk)
- g) "...the Somerset son rose up.." Who was James Somerset and what role did the Somerset case play in the road to the Parliamentary abolition act of 1807? The National Archives website, [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk), is a good place to research Somerset's role.

Near the end of their research, groups can be supplied with examples of the following images:

- a) Nelson Mandela being inaugurated as President of South Africa.
- b) Halle Berry accepting her Oscar for Best Actress; the first Black woman to win the award.
- c) Dame Kelly Holmes with her two gold medals, both won during the Athens Olympics in 2004.
- d) Venus Williams holding the gold plate after winning Wimbledon.

Students should be encouraged through these images to reflect on the considerable achievements of black people; some students will note the irony visible in these pictures when they use them to consider the lines they have been given.

### 3: Form

The form of the poem deserves great discussion. Would you expect a 'guide' to be a poem? What would you normally expect from a guide? Why, then is this poem a strange, or unusual guide? The discussion can be steered towards interesting ideas about traditional western genres as inapt for the subject matter; the individual's emotional, rather than clinical, or prescribed route through the exhibition, or any exhibition dealing with Maafa.

### 4: English Etymology

Similarly, students can begin to consider the etymological issues raised by this topic. Why, for example is Maafa (a Kiswahili word meaning terrible occurrence or holocaust) seldom used amongst the general public? Students can begin to consider that the voices of slavery are difficult to emote; what kinds of words can describe such horror? Moreover, what are the implications of this and other 'lost languages'?

How and why were enslaved Africans punished for speaking their mother tongues? What are the political implications of using English as a language in which to express an emotional response to Maafa? Students should arrive at the fact that enslaved Africans were stripped of their mother-tongue languages and their names. They were 'taught' that their languages and their cultures were inferior and primitive. Voices of enslaved Africans and African abolitionists have often been sidelined, lost, or unrecorded in western history. At a deeper level, students should be able to reflect on the fact that English was one of the languages of the European colonialists and 'slave owners'. Therefore, there are political contradictions and complexities for groups and individuals wanting to express their anger towards slavery and colonialism within the English language.

Discussion can lead students to explore the work of great African writers such as Nigerian writer, Niyi Osundare and Kenyan writer, Nguigi Wa' Thiongo. Osundare and Wa' Thiongo are keen advocates of 'orature' (the study of the Oral Tradition). Wa Thiongo refuses to write any further work in English, citing it as a language of the colonialists, which cannot describe the African experience.

These difficult concepts would be useful for students to understand before studying Toni Morrison's *'Beloved'* considering Morrison's difficulties with 'speaking the unspoken'. See the resources section of the pack for further details.

Activities to support explorations of language and colonialism are entitled *Re-writing the English Dictionary* and are contained in Part 5 of this pack.

## 5: Enjambment

Discuss the connotation of the enjambment of the poem, with particular reference to the final stanza.

## 6: 'Claim the pages'

*"Our duty to history is to re-write it"* OSCAR WILDE.

In this exercise students are encouraged to 'claim the pages' as directed by Smith's poem. Would they like the history books to be re-written? Using empathetic writing students can work on the stories of enslaved Africans that haven't been recorded and collect these into a book that re-writes history.

## 7: 'See your own reflection'

Using research and empathetic writing, ask students to reflect on their relationship with the slave trade. Do we see our reflection in the glass cases?

## 8: 'The African Atlantis'

Students can study a series of pictures by Ellen Gallagher entitled *Watery Ecstatic*, and discuss the idea of an underwater world inhabited by the spirits of those enslaved Africans who jumped in resistance, or died on the journey through the middle passage. Students can be encouraged to write a poem about the African underwater world and discuss problems they experienced in finding the relevant English words for this topic. Ellen Gallagher's images can be found by doing an internet search.

## 9: Slavery and Citizenship

Ask students to concentrate on the third stanza of the poem and consider modern day slavery. This could include sex trafficking and illegal migrant workers. What parallels are there between Maafa and modern day forms of slavery? Students should be encouraged to research countries still ravaged by slavery and indentured labour; what would the words of the poem be replaced with if, for example, we replaced the word 'Africa' with 'China'?

## 10: Sankofa and history

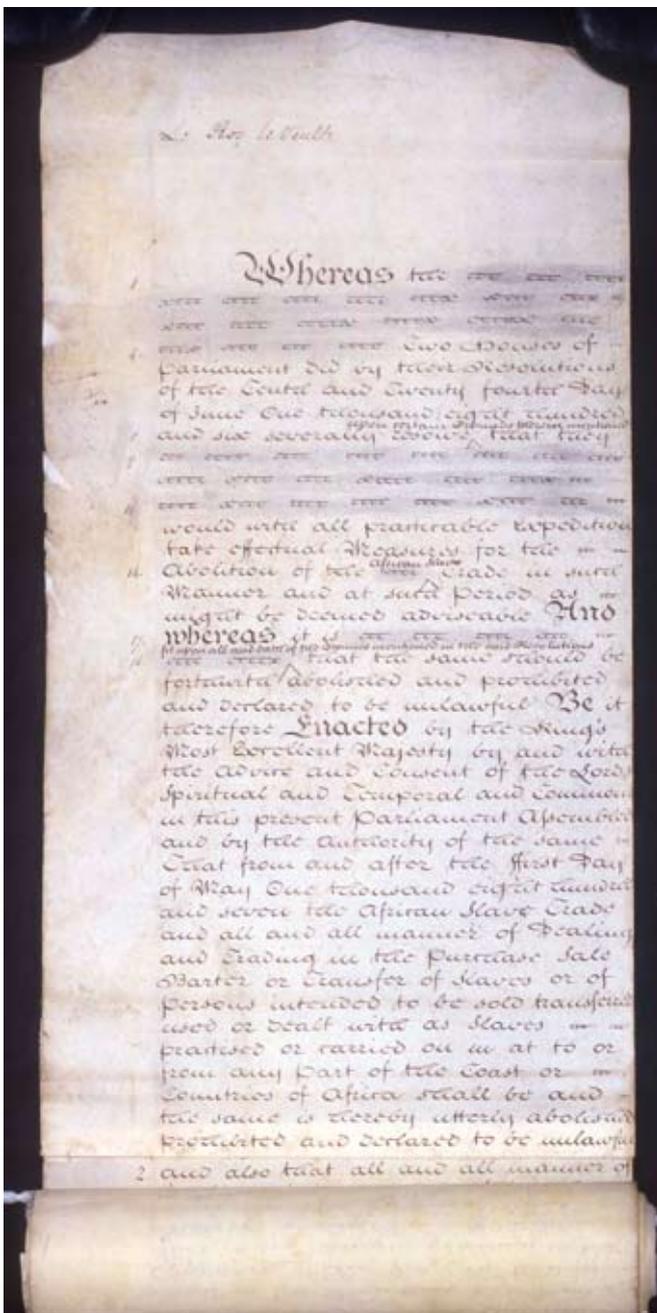
In the poem, Smith states *'all the future is the past'*. Students can investigate the symbolism of the sankofa bird in West African mythology. As a bird that looks backwards whilst walking forwards, the central tenet of this image is that in order to understand the future we must understand the past.

US Black Civil Rights leader, Malcolm X, was famous for his phrase *'you don't know your past until you know your future'*, inspired by the sankofa image. Working in small groups, students can be presented with images of the sankofa, Malcolm X and copies of the aforementioned statement. Given their knowledge of Maafa, ask students to discuss Malcolm X's statement, drawing out what it means both with reference to Maafa and also to contemporary forms of slavery. Students should arrive at the idea of history repeating itself. What lessons can and must be learned? Ask students to think about what laws they would create to counter injustice.

## 11: 'Dealing in our suffering...'

Students can explore the literal and metaphorical meanings of this line with reference to the European economic justifications for Maafa. Maafa was widely deemed, at the time, to be a 'respectable trade' amongst slave traders; Europeans saw themselves to be expanding the size of their respective empires and 'civilising' those they saw as inferior to themselves. Students should arrive at the conclusion that European perspectives justifying Maafa could not and would not consider the suffering inflicted upon enslaved Africans; that enslaved Africans were classified as goods, or chattel, rather than human beings, therefore their experiences were not considered in emotional terms.

Invite students to look at designs for English currency at the time of Maafa. Images of guineas can be found online. What are the images on bank notes? Whose faces are on the bank notes? Set the group the task of redesigning a bank note of the time to convey the painful realities of Maafa and how money was obtained.



**An Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade.**  
For more information on the Act and its impact,  
go to [www.parliament.uk/slavetrade](http://www.parliament.uk/slavetrade).

## PART 5

# IMAGINED VOICES



At the back of this pack, you will find a selection of ready made, loose leaf A4 creative writing activities for use with students in your classes.

These sheets represent student led work. You can photocopy them and distribute them directly to class members, who can work in pairs, or in small groups, on the activity. As with all the exercises in the pack, please feel free to adapt them for use within your specific context.

In each case resources needed are specified, but students will need paper, pens, flipchart paper, marker pens and access to the internet and school library for all these activities.

After some of the activities you will notice additional teachers' notes. These sections, where they occur, give extra ideas regarding how the activities can be extended.

For examples of what can be produced by students in response to these exercises, please see the selection of poems written by students from Burntwood School, Tooting, London. This document is downloadable from the [www.parliament.uk/slavetrade](http://www.parliament.uk/slavetrade) website.

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*"I see the sessions as a journey: only this journey wasn't like the others. On this expedition, you could go wherever you chose. This journey has opened my mind"* **Student Feedback**

# RESOURCES

This is a list of recommended resources to help support your use and development of these activities for the classroom. This list is by no means exhaustive, and local websites are well worth investigating. As websites change frequently and without warning, you'll find here only websites which are likely to be permanent for the life of this education pack.

## **The British Slave Trade or Maafa**

**[www.parliament.uk/slavetrade](http://www.parliament.uk/slavetrade)**

The extensive Parliamentary site with archival documents and images drawn from Parliament's own archives, including images of the 1807 Act.

**[www.blackhistory4schools.com/slavetrade](http://www.blackhistory4schools.com/slavetrade)**

**[www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk)**

National Archives' website exploring black presence and literature in Britain from 1500 to 1850, and containing copies of documents relating to Maafa and abolition

**[www.bbc.co.uk/news](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news)** (search for 'zomai')

Audio file, containing information about the brutal practice of brainwashing called 'zomai'.

**[www.direct.gov.uk/slavery/](http://www.direct.gov.uk/slavery/)**

Government website listing of British slave trade and abolition resources.

**[www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk](http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk)**

International Slavery Museum, Liverpool

**[www.understandingslavery.com](http://www.understandingslavery.com)**

Understanding Slavery

**[www.brycchancarey.com/equiano](http://www.brycchancarey.com/equiano)**

The Equiano Society

**[www.rendezvousofvictory.org](http://www.rendezvousofvictory.org)**

Rendezvous of Victory

**[www.wilberforce2007.com](http://www.wilberforce2007.com)**

William Wilberforce

**[www.setallfree.com](http://www.setallfree.com)**

Set All Free - churches together in England campaigning against current day slavery and historical information.

**[www.100greatblackbritons.com](http://www.100greatblackbritons.com)**

Contains biographical information on a number of African abolitionists.

**[www.recoveredhistories.org](http://www.recoveredhistories.org)**

Resource of original historic documents, including Wilberforce's published speeches. Excellent timeline and contextual information.

**[www.mlalondon.org.uk](http://www.mlalondon.org.uk)**

Information about Ignatius Sancho from the Museums, Libraries and Archives.

**[www.humancargo.co.uk](http://www.humancargo.co.uk)**

Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery

**[www.equiano.org](http://www.equiano.org)**

Information about, and images of, Olaudah Equiano from the Equiano Project/Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery.

**[www.bbc.co.uk/abolition](http://www.bbc.co.uk/abolition)**

Extensive information and links, including an interactive map.

**[www.bl.uk](http://www.bl.uk)**

The British Library site, providing a good source of images.

**[www.brycchancarey.com](http://www.brycchancarey.com)**

An immensely rich source of information, especially about the key abolitionists, researched by academic Brycchan Carey. Lots of information and links to further resources and texts and extracts from historic publications.

**[www.westminster.gov.uk/libraries/archives](http://www.westminster.gov.uk/libraries/archives)**

The City of Westminster Archives providing an excellent small online exhibition of images.

**[www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ism](http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ism)**

International Slavery Museum

**[www.museumindocklands.org.uk](http://www.museumindocklands.org.uk)**

Museum in Docklands

**[www.museumoflondon.org.uk](http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk)**

Museum of London

**[www.nmm.ac.uk/freedom](http://www.nmm.ac.uk/freedom)**

Education resources and images from the National Maritime Museum.

**[www.portcities.org.uk](http://www.portcities.org.uk)**

The Portcities website, with information and images in connection with the slave trade.

**[www.npg.org.uk](http://www.npg.org.uk)**

National Portrait Gallery

**[www.tate.org.uk](http://www.tate.org.uk)**

The Tate website, useful for historic and modern images, including the artist Ellen Gallagher's work.

**[www.vam.ac.uk](http://www.vam.ac.uk)**

Useful images of objects and pictures related to the slave trade with background information from the Victoria and Albert Museum.

**[www.hullcc.gov.uk](http://www.hullcc.gov.uk)**

Hull is home to the Wilberforce House Museum; see the image gallery for useful images relating to Wilberforce and the slave trade.

**[www.bbc.co.uk/wales/history](http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/history)**

Investigates Welsh involvement with the slave trade.

**[www.wisbechmuseum.org.uk](http://www.wisbechmuseum.org.uk)**

Wisbech and Fenland Museum website, useful for information and images about Thomas and John Clarkson.

**[www.antislavery.org](http://www.antislavery.org)**

Information and images about the transatlantic slave trade from Anti-Slavery International, including a huge resource of original documents from the abolition campaign.

## Africa and the Caribbean, and the history of black communities in Britain

There are many web resources available, listed here are just a few starting points. Following the 2007 bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade nearly every major town in Britain and many of the smaller ones, have investigated their own histories and found clear connections to the slave trade. They also have found black members of their community documented in archives, often unconnected with the slave trade. The results of these projects are often published on websites.

Many local museums hold African artefacts which predate the arrival of Europeans in Africa. Increasingly museums are making their collections available via the web so it is worth investigating local sources as well as national collections such as the British Museum.

### **www.bl.uk**

The British Library website featuring an exhibition about the lives of celebrated Black Europeans.

### **www.blackhistorymap.com**

Channel 4 site providing links to web based resources around the country.

### **www.tes.co.uk**

The Times Educational Supplement website. Use this site to find out more about Black presence in Tudor times.

### **www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk**

The British Museum

### **www.museumoflondon.org.uk**

Museum of London

### **www.westminster.gov.uk/libraries/archives**

City of Westminster Archives

### **www.royalarmouries.org**

The Royal Armouries site, for information on early Black residents of the Tower of London.

### **www.manchester.gov.uk**

Manchester City Council archives with an excellent section on early Black and Asian presence in Manchester.

### **www.birmingham.gov.uk**

Birmingham City Council site with a good section on early Black presence in Birmingham.

### **www.bbc.co.uk/wales/history**

BBC site giving details of Black presence in Welsh towns.

## Modern day slavery and fair trade

### **www.antislavery.org**

Anti-Slavery International

### **www.black-history-month.co.uk**

Black History Month. This site provides historical information as well as useful links and news about current issues and events.

### **www.fairtrade.org.uk**

Fairtrade

### **www.wilberforce2007.com**

Modern anti slavery campaign as well as historical information.

### **www.rendezvousofvictory.org**

Rendezvous of Victory

### **www.setallfree.net**

Set All Free - churches together in England campaigning against current day slavery and historical information.

# SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

2007 has seen a huge number of books published on Maafa. This is a very small selection, some of which are mentioned in the teaching pack, as a starting point. Librarians should be able to help select books which meet your needs.

*The British Slave Trade* ed Fassell, Unwin and Walvin (Edinburgh University Press 2007)

*The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* by Olaudah Equiano (1789: reprints produced by Penguin Books)

*Unheard Voices: An Anthology of Stories and Poems to Commemorate the Bicentenary Anniversary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade* by Malorie Blackman (Corgi Childrens 2007)

*The Trader, the Owner, the Slave* by James Walvin (Jonathan Cape 2007)

*Abolition!: The Struggle to Abolish Slavery in the British Empire* by Richard S. Reddie (Lion 2007)

*Black Ivory* by James Walvin (Blackwell Publishing 2001)

*Welcome Dede! An African Naming Ceremony* by Ifeoma Onyfulu (Frances Lincoln 2004)

*The Slavery Reader* ed. Gad Heuman and James Walvin (Routledge 2003)

*William Wilberforce: The Life of the Great Anti-slave Trade Campaigner* by William Hague (Harper Press 2007)

*The Grand Slave Emporium: Cape Coast Castle and the British Slave Trade* by William St.Clair (Profile Books Ltd; New edition 2007)

*After Abolition: Britain and the Slave Trade Since 1807* by Marika Sherwood (I B Tauris & Co Ltd 2007)

*Roots* by Alex Haley (Arena Books 1976)

*Black Settlers in Britain 1555-1958* by File, N., and Powers, C. (London 1981)

*The History of the African and Caribbean Communities in Britain* by Hakim Adi (Hodder Wayland 2007)

*Beloved* by Toni Morrison (Knopf 1987)

## Slave on Deck in Chains



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