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Primary

Learning about the history of transatlantic slavery is important to understand Britain's past and present

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Teaching transatlantic slavery – the ‘Building Blocks’ approach

Although not a requirement of the curriculum, many primary school teachers feel that learning about the history of transatlantic slavery is important for children to help them understand Britain, both past and present. The Understanding Slavery Initiative supports this aim and has undertaken consultation and research to recommend approaches to teaching this history to younger children.

There are four units:

Breakfast

Exploring where your breakfast comes from...

- [EYFS](#)
- [KS1](#)
- [KS2](#)

My Name

Where does your name come from?

- [EYFS](#)
- [KS1](#)
- [KS2](#)

Treasure

What does Treasure mean to you?

- [EYFS](#)
- [KS1](#)
- [KS2](#)

Carnival

Learn about, plan and stage your own carnival...

- [EYFS](#)
- [KS1](#)
- [KS2](#)

These units are provided for teachers that explore some of the key areas of knowledge and understanding that young children need to

have in order to make sense of transatlantic slavery. The units are designed to be easily adaptable by any teacher and can be applied across a whole school if desirable. Each unit follows a 'Learning Cycle' and is supported by objects and video clips from this site, as well as recommended books to use in class.

The units are designed to provide 'building blocks' of knowledge and understanding to prepare children to learn about transatlantic slavery – exploring themes such as Africa pre-slavery; human rights, identity, trade and modern Africa, Caribbean and British culture and heritage. The units do not engage children directly with the brutal history of transatlantic slavery itself as children at primary school are often not yet emotionally equipped to make sense of this history.

Teachers who feel their pupils have achieved the 'building blocks' learning objectives and are ready to engage with the history in more depth should consider the [Teaching Slavery FAQs](#) section of this site before introducing this complex and sensitive history to their class.

The Building Blocks 'learning Cycle' has been adapted from a model developed by Nick Garrick, Director of Lighting up Learning <http://www.lightinguplearning.com/>. Each unit has been designed to be delivered through four distinct stages, allowing the class to move through a process of entry, immersion, having a go and then closing with a challenge. If a visit to a museum is planned for your topic, please speak to them when you book about which stage of the learning cycle your class will be at when they visit, so they can plan



activities accordingly.

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