

Resistance and Punishment

A historical photograph showing a group of African American men. In the foreground, a man with a determined and shouting expression wears a dark vest over a light shirt with a bloodstain. Behind him, other men are visible, some holding rifles. The background shows a building and a person holding a flag.

Describe the ways that slaves fought back against their owners

Describe how owners might punish slaves



Given the difficult lives they led, it is no surprise that many slaves tried to fight back against their owners, violently and otherwise. Many owners had extreme punishments to try to stop this



Atlantic Slave Trade 1770-1807



Slave resistance took many different forms.

Passive resistance included being late for work, working slowly or pretending to not understand owners.

Active resistance included attacking owners, damaging crops or running away.





The success of slave resistance was generally based on two issues:

- Reduced profits for the owner
- Better treatment for the slaves

Many slaves tried to use passive (non-violent) resistance, to make it harder to punish them.

This included being late for work, claiming to be ill, not working hard and pretending not to understand instructions.





Another form of non-violent resistance was escape.

Slaves would run away, sometimes for a short time, to inconvenience their owners.

Most runaways were

In The USA, a secret network called the **Underground Railroad** helped slaves to escape.

This included whites people as well as freed and escaped blacks. It offered help such as money, transport and places





Some slaves used more **violent actions** as revenge against their owners.

This included attacking them, poisoning them and, in some cases, killing them.

It also could be

There were many famous slave rebellions.

In **1831** in Virginia, **Nat Turner** led a slave group which killed c. 60 whites.

The **1861** **Jamaica Baptist War** involved a slave strike which turned violent.





Owners had many ways of punishing slaves that rebelled against them.

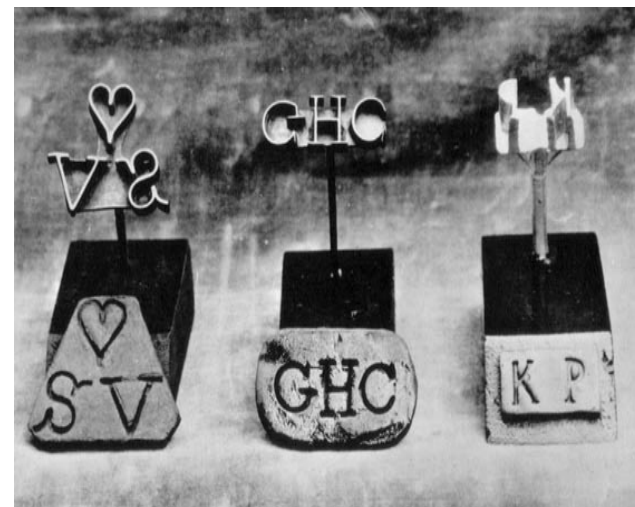
The most common of these was whipping.

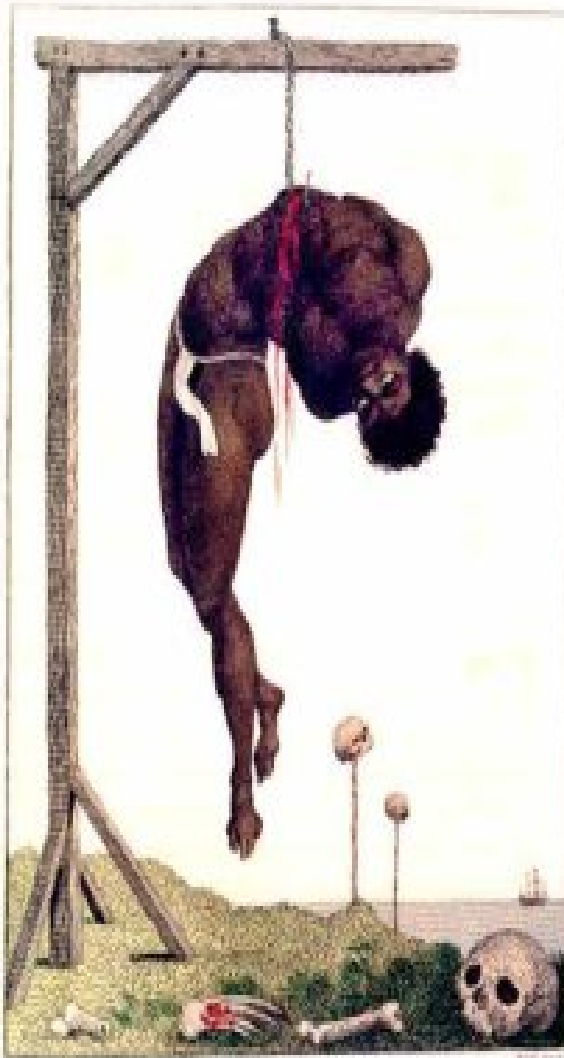
Other slaves were made to watch, and sometimes another

Other punishments included not being given food or being forced to work longer hours.

Sometimes slaves would be chained up, including to other slaves.

Slaves who tried to escape might be





There were also more extreme punishments.

These included being half-hanged, burned, smoked and tortured.

Ultimately a slave could be killed, but this obviously cost the owner money.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=02AmGV>

Mind Map

Make a mind map of forms of resistance.
Discuss in groups the successes and failures of each form of resistance and draw these as branches.

- Being late for work or pretending to be sick
 - Running away
 - Tool breaking
 - Fighting back
- Organising a revolt

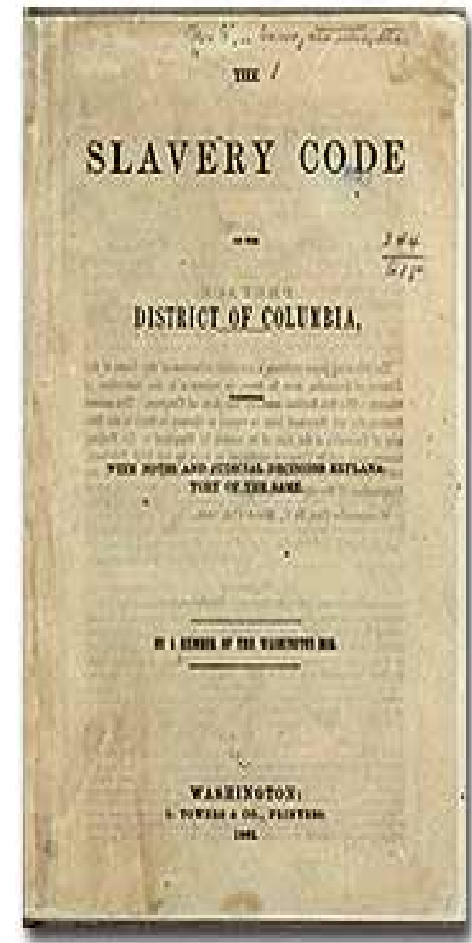
What do you think is the most effective form of resistance?

How to be a good Slave owner

Create your own slavery code instructing Slave owners on the cheapest way to keep a slave and the best way to avoid resistance.

Provide instructions on where slaves should live, what they should eat and what type of work they could be made to do.

Provide information on what types of resistance – active and passive to look out for- and how best to punish this.



Thomas Thistlewood



- Slave-owner in Jamaica in late 1700s
- Owned a sugar plantation
- At time of death owned 34 slaves.

Real people- real

- Write a tribute to one of Thistlewoods slaves
- It **MUST** include –
name, date of sale,
age when sold
(approx)
- It **SHOULD** include a
brief biography of the
slave and **at least 2**



8 mark – To what extent

To what extent was the failure of resistance on the middle passage due to the poor physical health of the enslaved people? (8 marks)