

# the Middle Passage

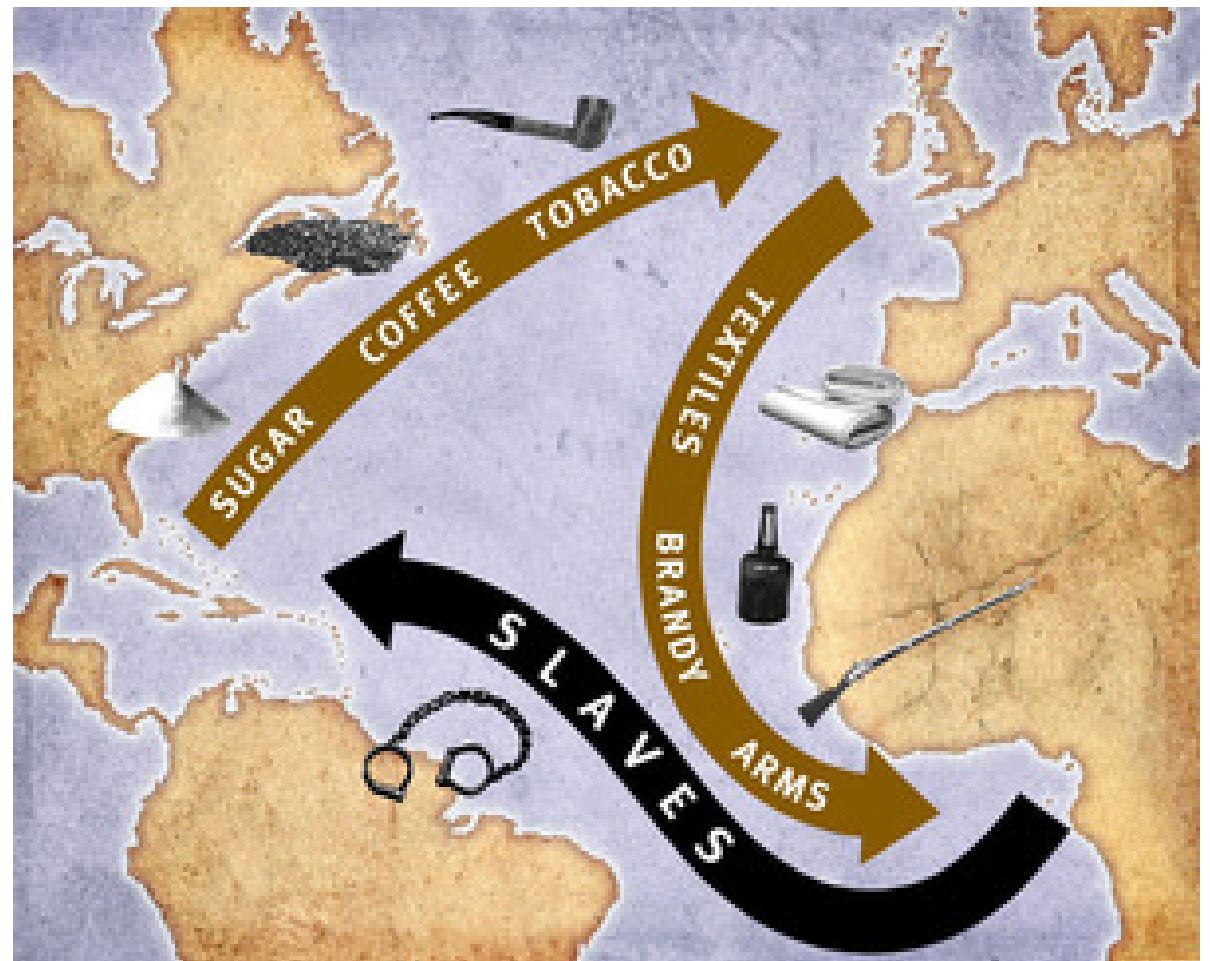


- Describe living conditions on-board slave ships during the Middle Passage
- Describe slave resistance on-board the slave ships

**Sum up what you have learned so far  
about using three random words**

- moment
- Refuse
- Provide

The Slave Trade is also known as the Triangular Trade because of the three journeys. The second part of the journey – when slaves are taken to the Americas – is sometimes called the **Middle Passage**.



# Museum

Around the room there are pictures relating to the Middle Passage

Draw a line down the middle of your page. On one side write “I think this picture means”

Individually or in pairs examine each picture and write your first impressions next to the number - what do you think the picture is telling you about the conditions on the middle passage



We are investigating what life was like on the journey from the West Coast of Africa to the Americas.



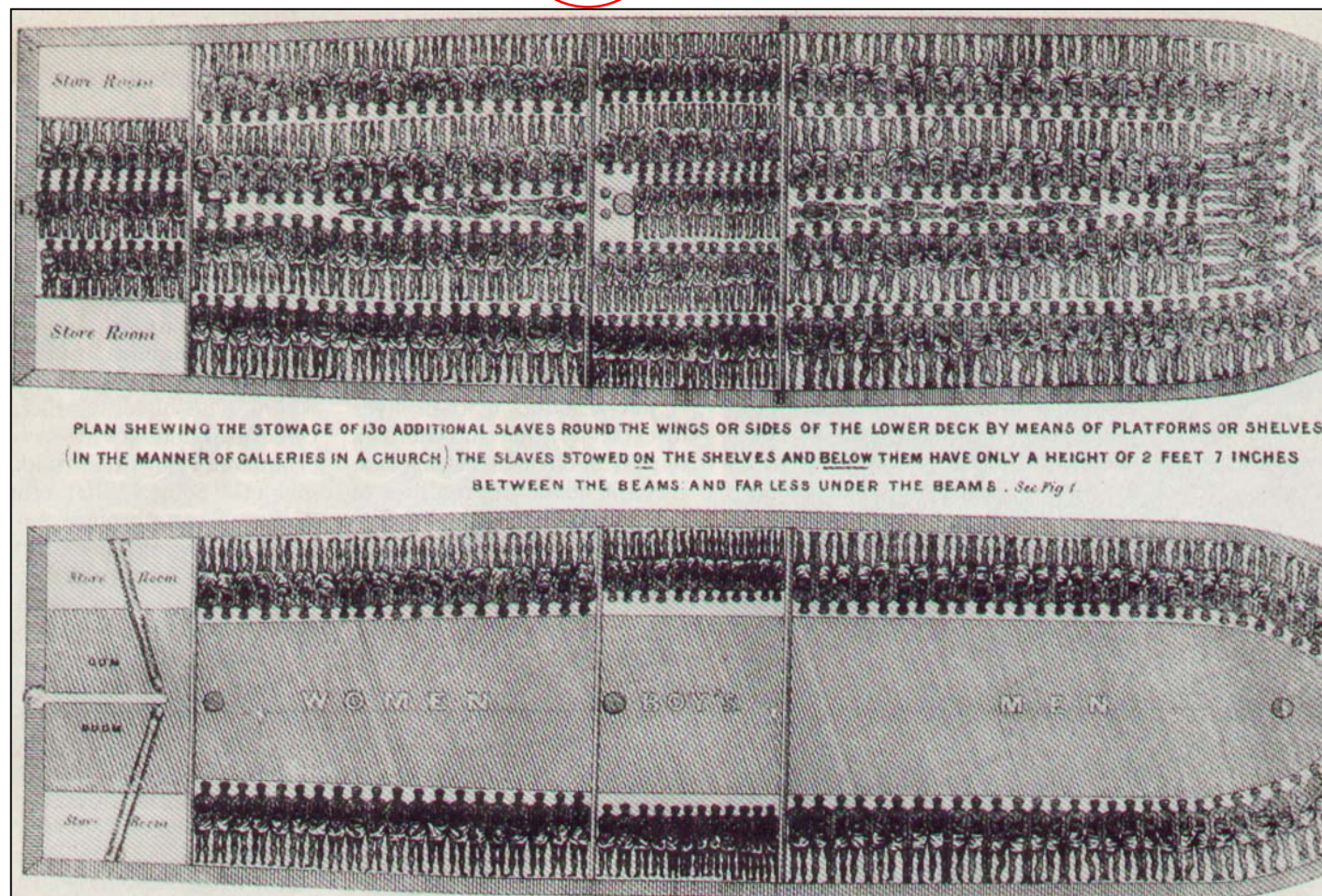
- Now as we go through the power point correct any information that was incorrect and add new information you didn't guess on the other side of the table

1

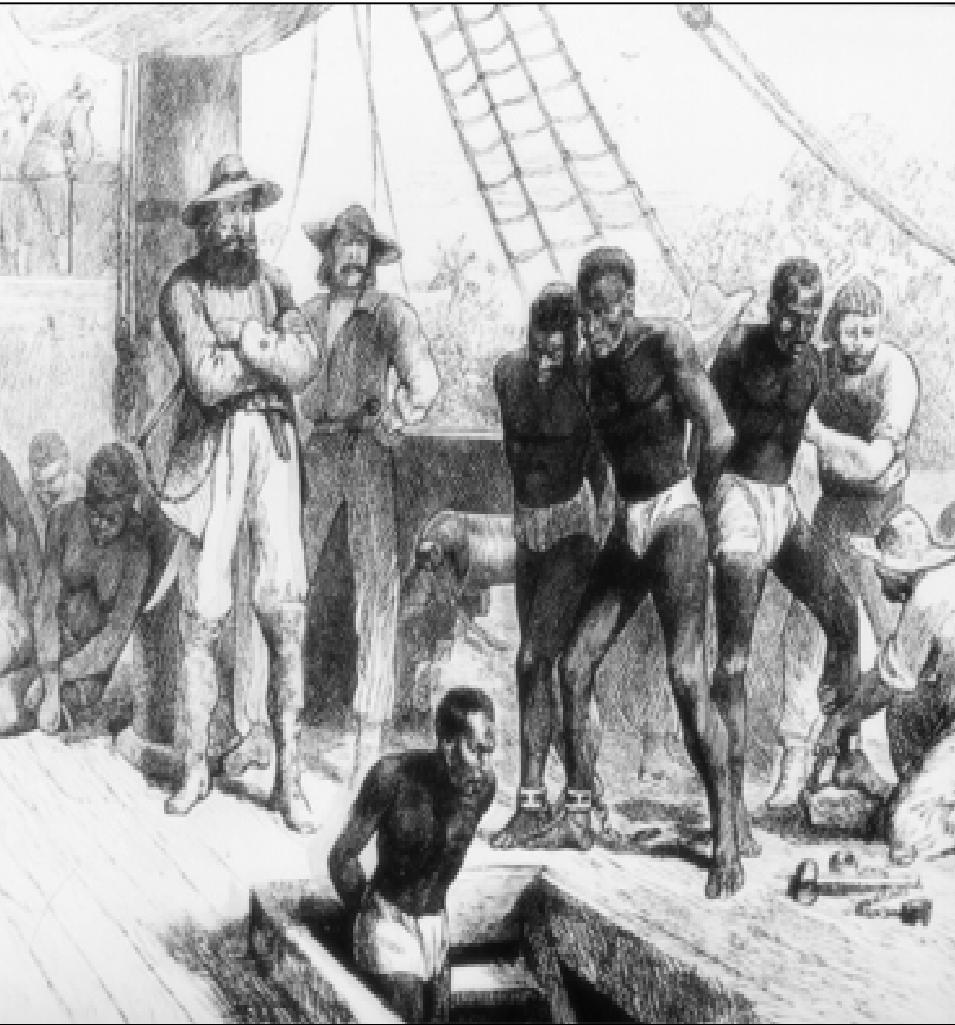
It is obvious that life on the Middle Passage was very difficult.

Slaves were kept in cramped conditions, their diet was poor and disease was common.

Slave ship crews lived in fear of revolt.



2



Slaves were normally kept chained to each other, to make revolt or suicide harder.

They were usually kept below decks but were allowed out for fresh air and exercise.

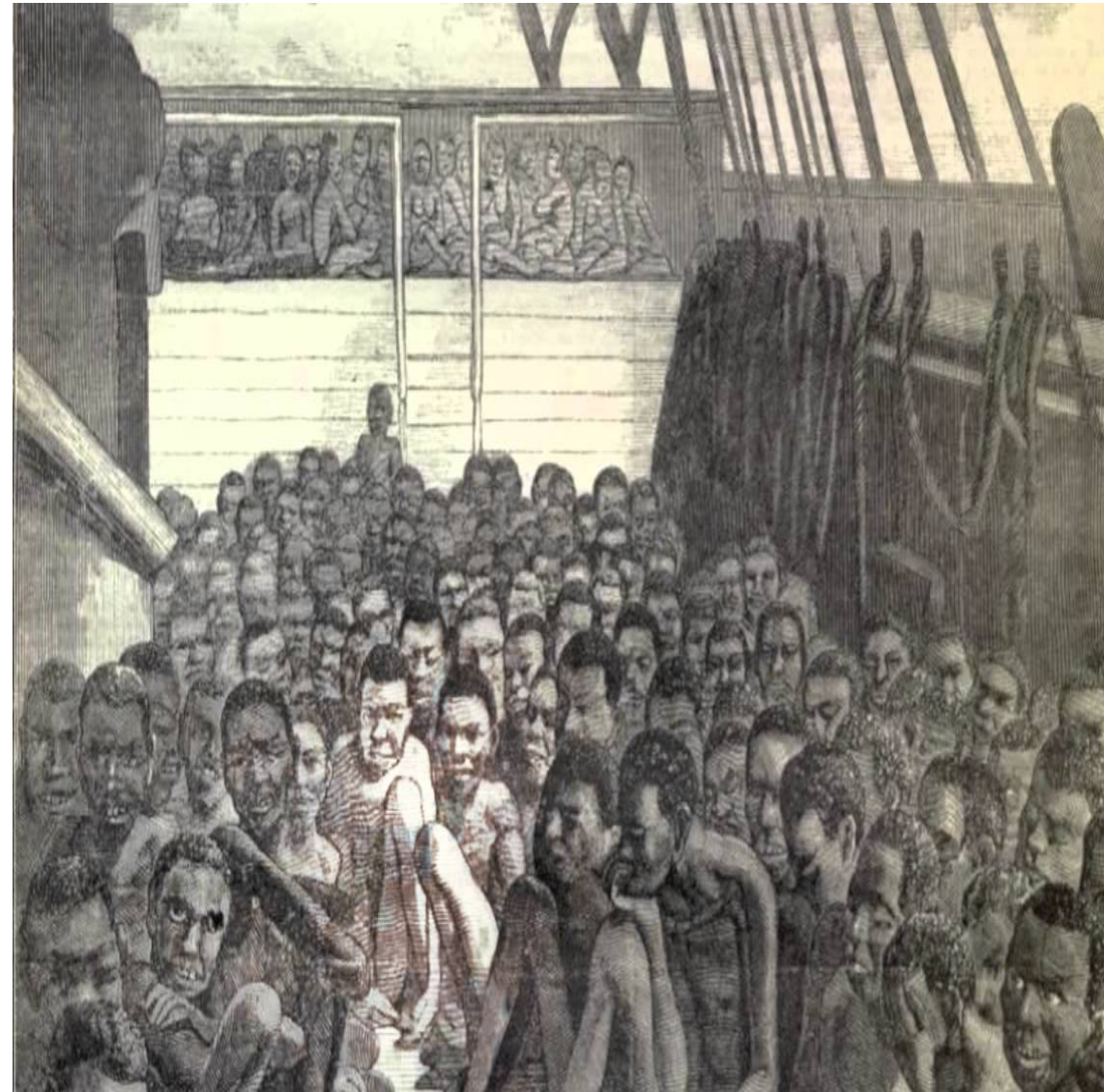
Sexual and physical abuse was not uncommon on ships.

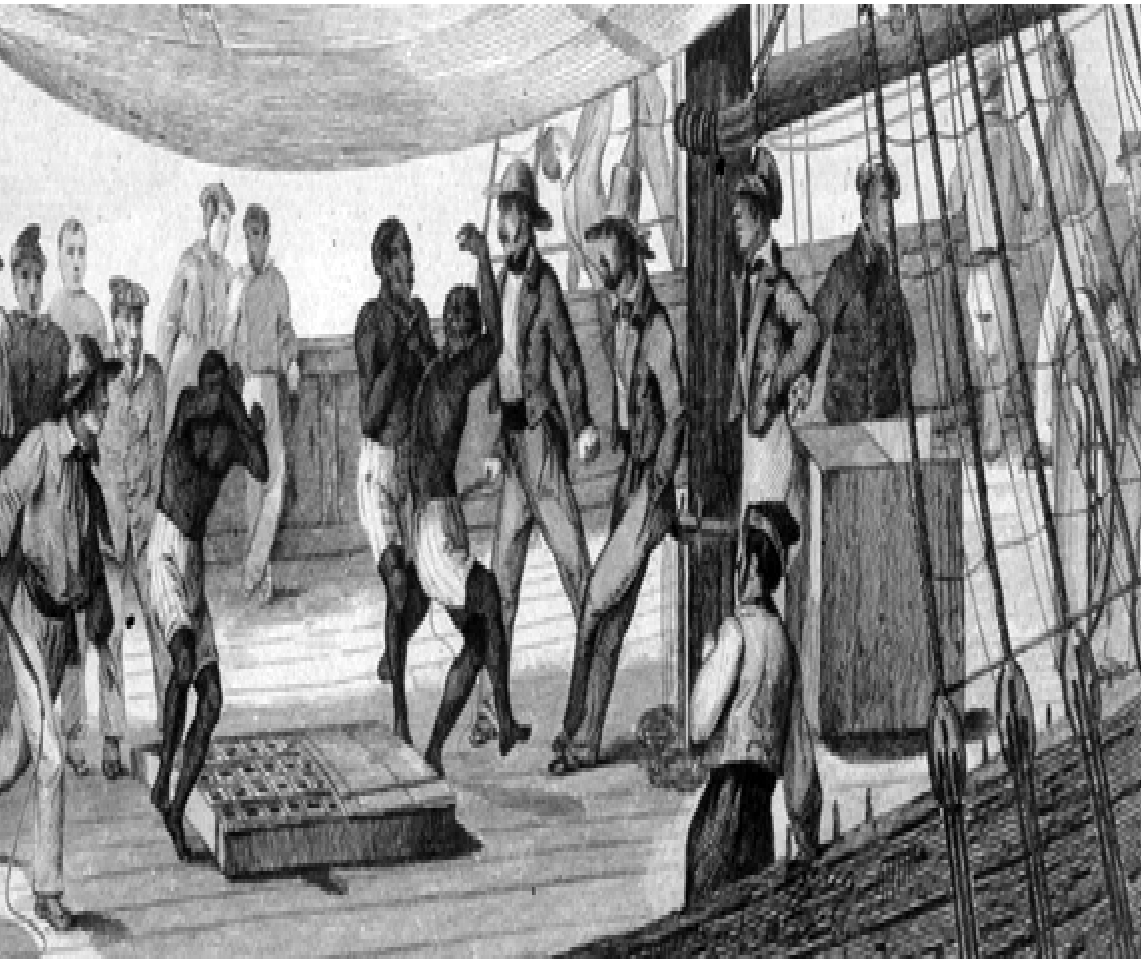


3

Conditions varied on each ship; some believed in squeezing in as many slaves as possible; others thought space made slaves more likely to live.

Some slaves had no room in which to lie down or sleep.





4

On many ships, slaves cleaned the decks and performed other tasks. Sometimes they had to dance or sing.

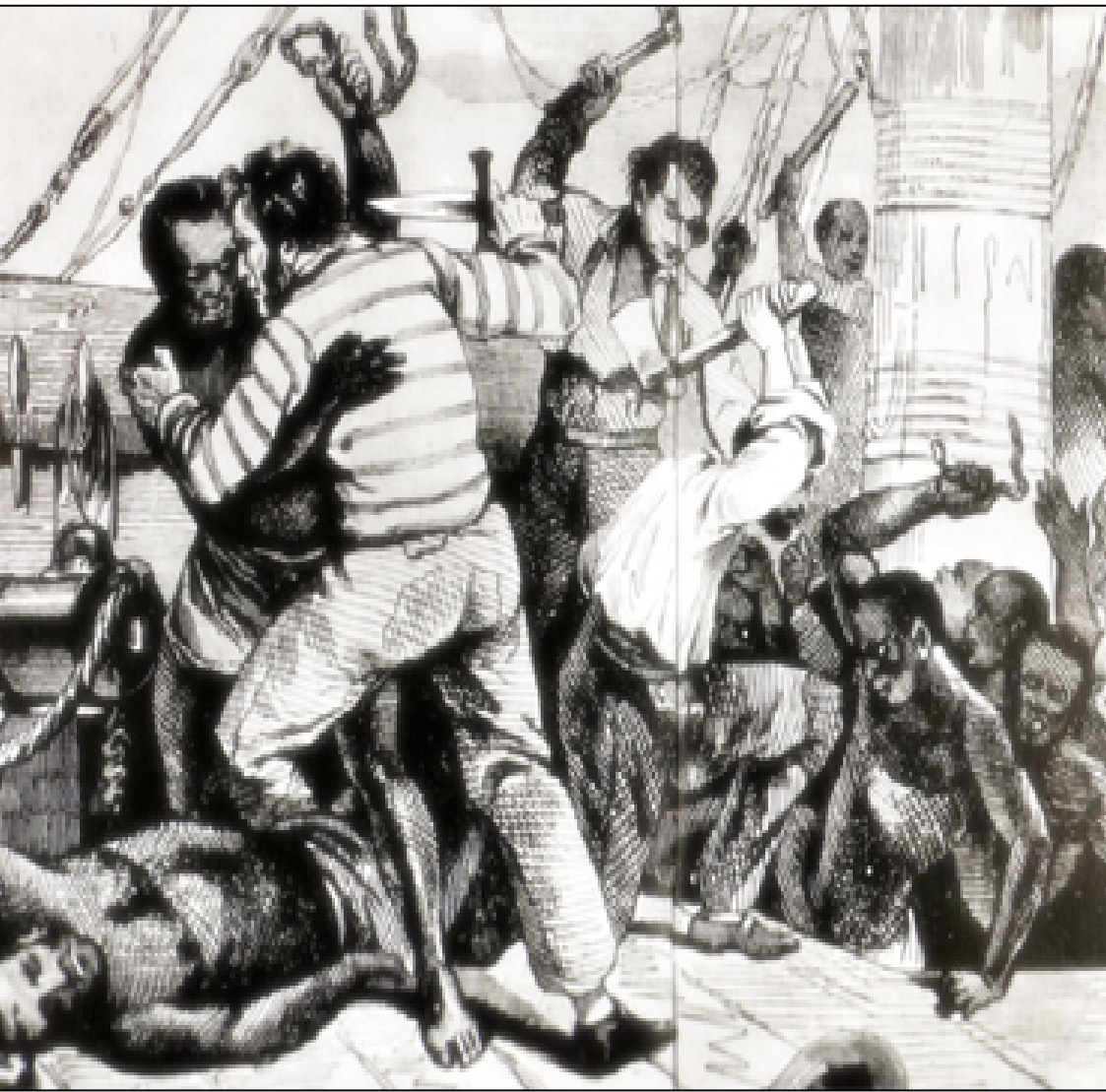
Their diet was very poor, often consisting of little food which itself was a low quality. Food was often rice or a type of porridge.



Due to their poor diet and tight  
living conditions, disease was  
very common.

Cholera and yellow fever  
were common conditions. A  
real problem was that the  
cramped space meant that  
bodies were often covered in  
bodily fluids such as urine,  
vomit and faeces.





Slave revolts sometimes happened. Slaves might try to attack their captors and take control of the ship.

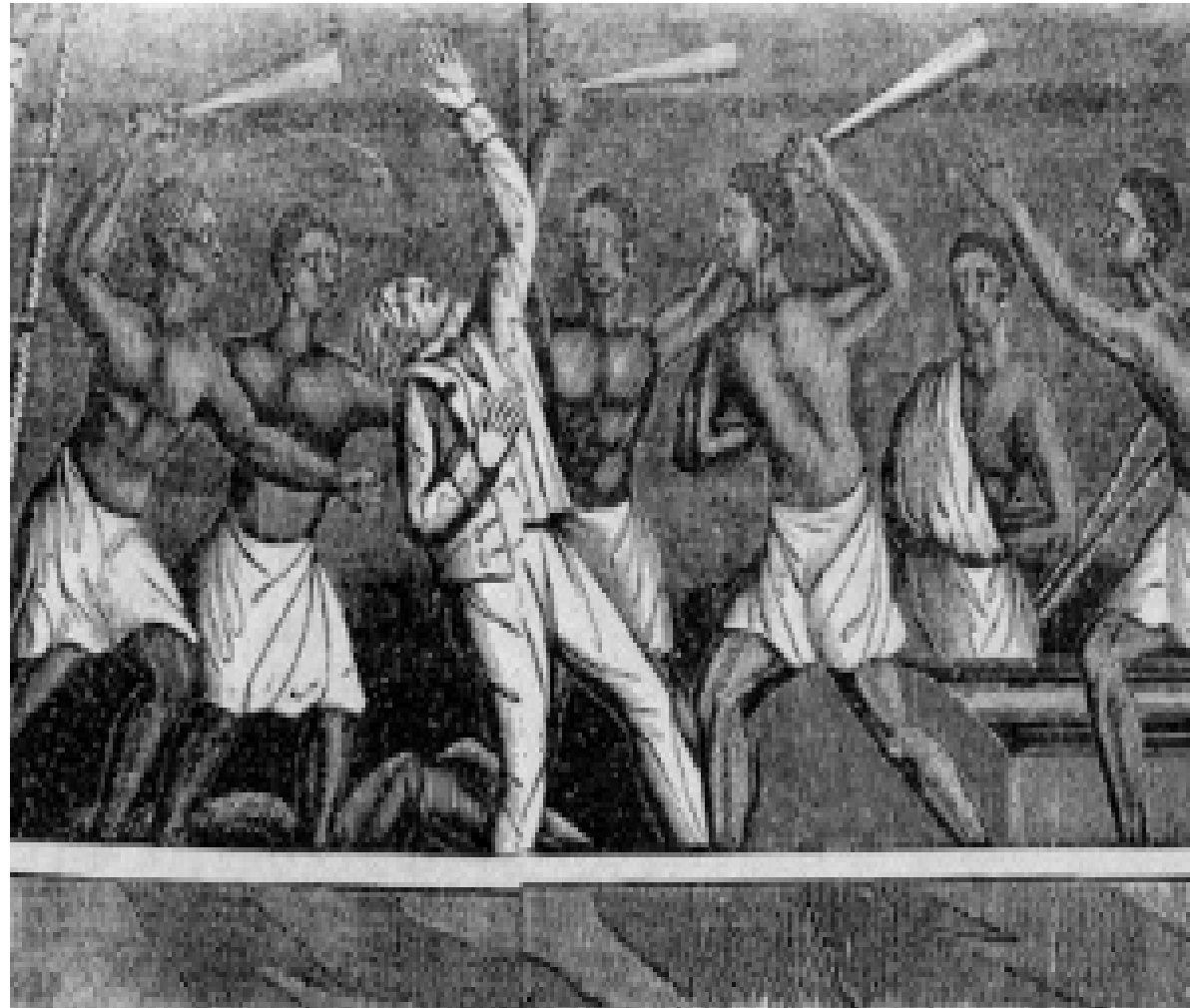
These usually ended unsuccessfully, especially because the slaves did not know how to sail the ship.



There are many examples of slave rebellions.

The most famous is the **Amistad** rebellion in 1839. The slaves took control of the ship, killing most of the crew.

The slaves eventually went on trial but were released as they had been kidnapped.





Not all slave resistance involved violence against the ship's crew.

Sometimes slaves would **jump overboard** to prevent themselves being sold. Other times they would **refuse food** and starve themselves.

Slave ship crews used various forms of **punishment** to stop slave rebellions.

Like on land, the most common punishment was **whipping**.

Other punishments included withholding food or **torture** such as thumbscrews.

7





There were more extreme punishments too. This included throwing rebellious slaves overboard.

Sharks terrified the crew and slaves and were known to follow slave ships due to the dead bodies which were thrown overboard.

# Post It

- Would you have resisted/rebelled?  
If Yes- How  
If No- why not?

# Describe the conditions of the middle passage

- Cramped conditions together

Shackled

- Disease  
dance

Made to

- poor quality food  
punishments

Harsh

# Olaudah Equiano remembers the middle passage

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9\\_O3TW\\_FmoM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_O3TW_FmoM)

What was the first thing Olaudah Equiano saw when he got to the coast?

Who did he think the white traders were?

Why did he think this?

Who had brought him aboard the ship?  
(captured and sold him)

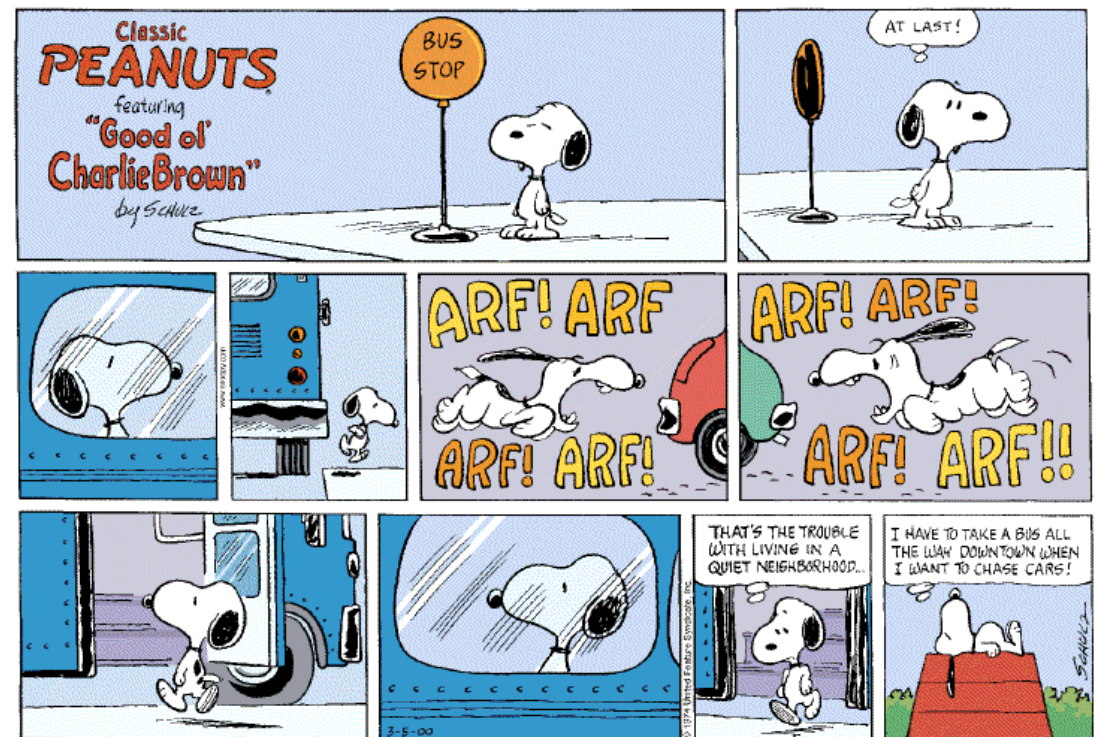
What do you think Olaudah means by  
salutation in my nostrils?





# Cartoon strip

- Draw pictures and a short caption to describe each part of a slave's journey from capture to arrival in the West Indies



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How useful is Source A as evidence of the conditions for slaves on the middle passage?

Image drawn by **Thomas Clarkson** (an abolitionist)  
based on his interviews with those involved in the slave  
trade in 1787

