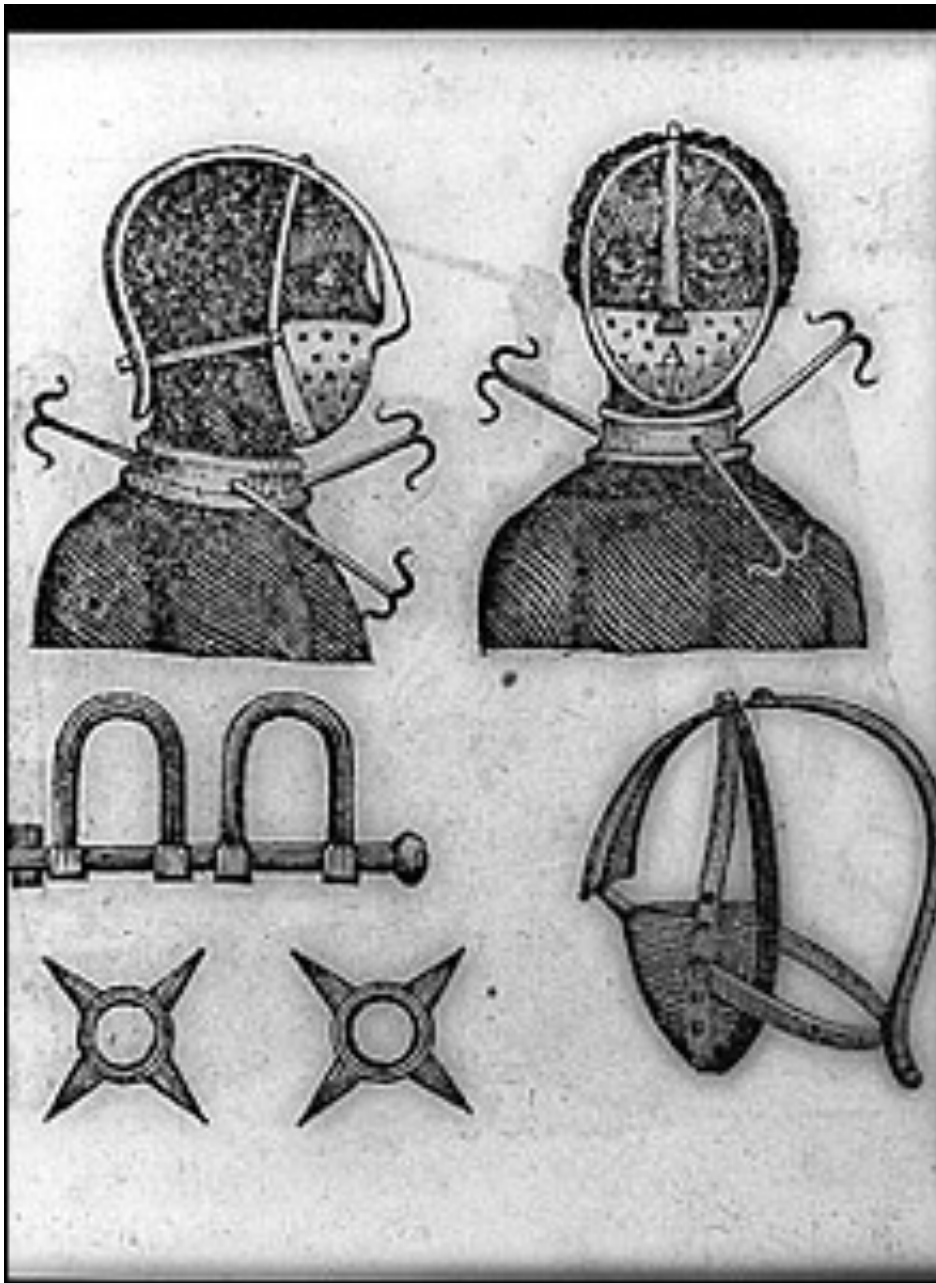


*What is this?*





We're going to do a case study on the impact of the British Empire on Africa and India. These are two areas that are incredibly important parts of our history, but also very controversial. They show Britain in a very bad light, which is one of the reasons some people today argue studying the British Empire is Anti British.

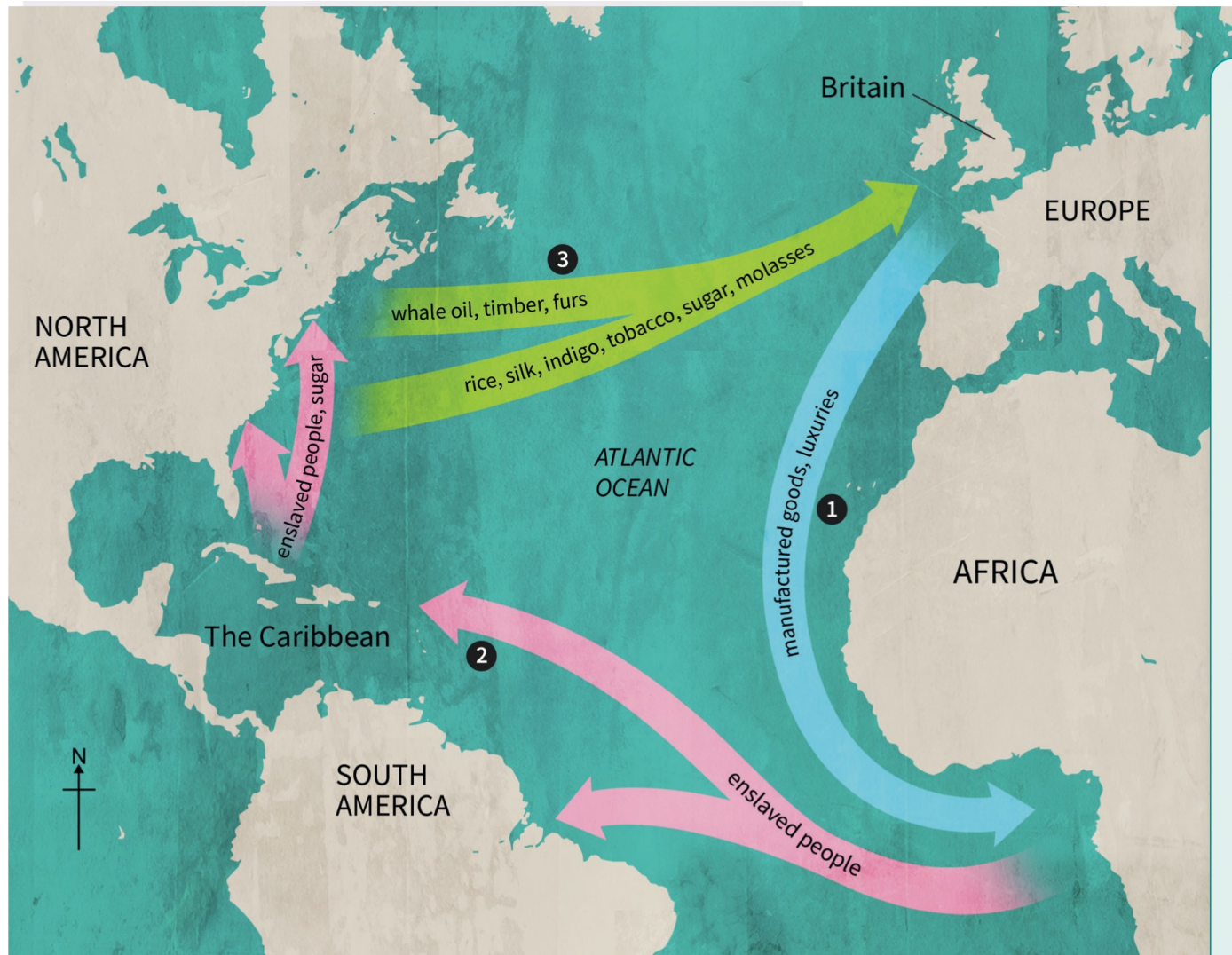
During the 1500s and 1600s, Britain became a powerful trading nation. Goods such as sugar, cotton and tobacco flooded into the country and items made in Britain were shipped abroad. Many British people became rich as a result.

But there was another kind of trade happening – the trade in human beings, mainly from Africa. This is known as the trade in enslaved Africans, or the slave trade. So, how exactly did the trade in enslaved Africans work?

How, and why did it start and how does it relate to the British Empire?...

Many of the European colonists who moved to the Americas and the Caribbean were farmers who grew crops that were very popular in Europe, such as cotton, tobacco, sugar and coffee – and they sold them for high prices. To begin with, some farmers forced local Indigenous people to do the farming for them, but some ran away, and others died from disease or cruel treatment. When there were not enough local enslaved people, the European colonists went to find people elsewhere: Africa.





- 1 Traders leave Britain and other European ports, heading for Africa, with goods such as alcohol, guns and cloth.
- 2 Traders trade these goods with Africans in return for prisoners from other chiefdoms or kingdoms, who have been captured to sell; traders also kidnap Africans. Ships, loaded with enslaved Africans, sail across the Atlantic.
- 3 In the Americas, the enslaved Africans are traded to plantation owners and farmers for goods such as sugar, cotton or tobacco. Some are sold for money. The goods are shipped back to British or European ports to be sold at a large profit.

Explain in your own words why it became known as the ‘**Triangular Trade**’, including examples from each stage...

Traders made money from all parts of the triangle, earning up to **800% profit**. They just needed the initial investment to pay for the ship, a strong crew to control the enslaved people, and goods to trade for enslaved people on the African coast.

Slave owners also profited: they forced enslaved people to work all their lives, without wages, and suffering terrible hardship.

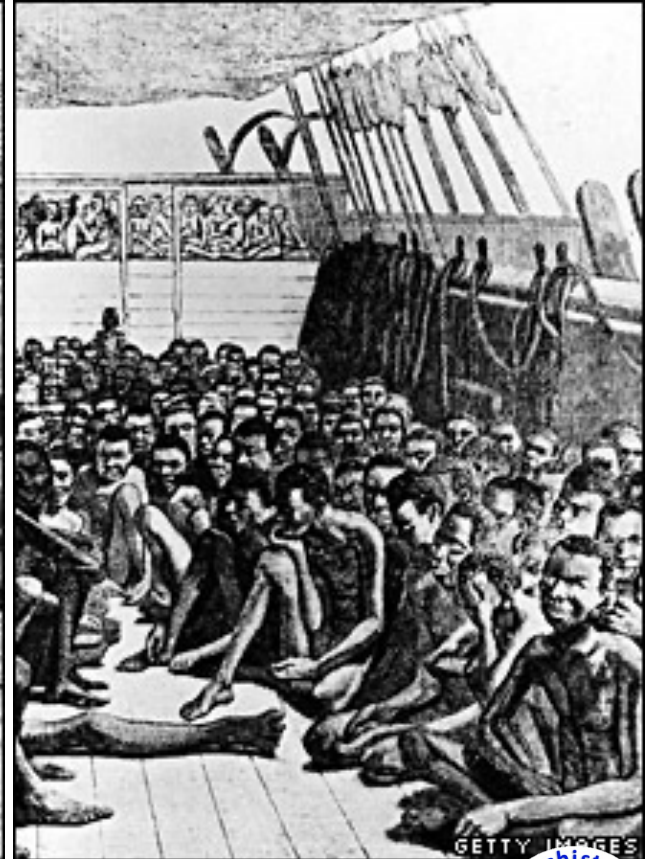
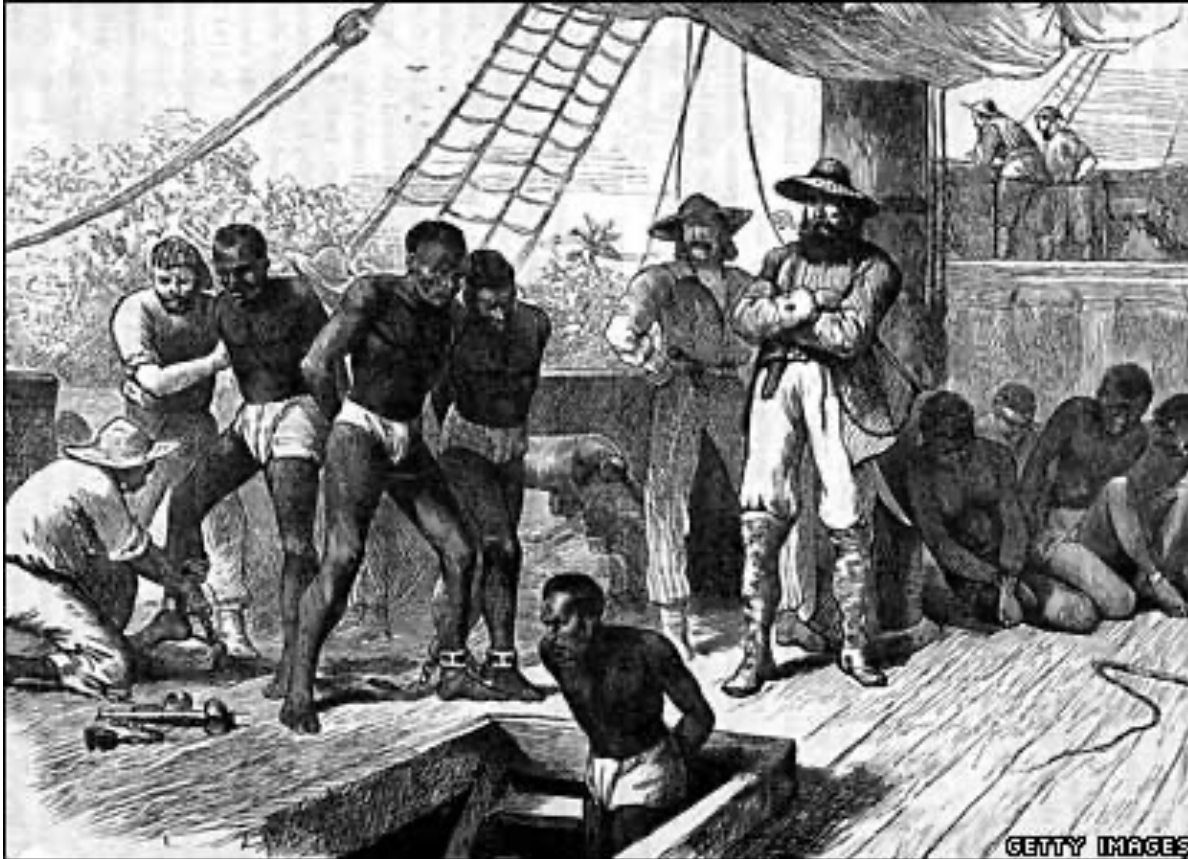


*Flagellation of a Female Samboe Slave.*



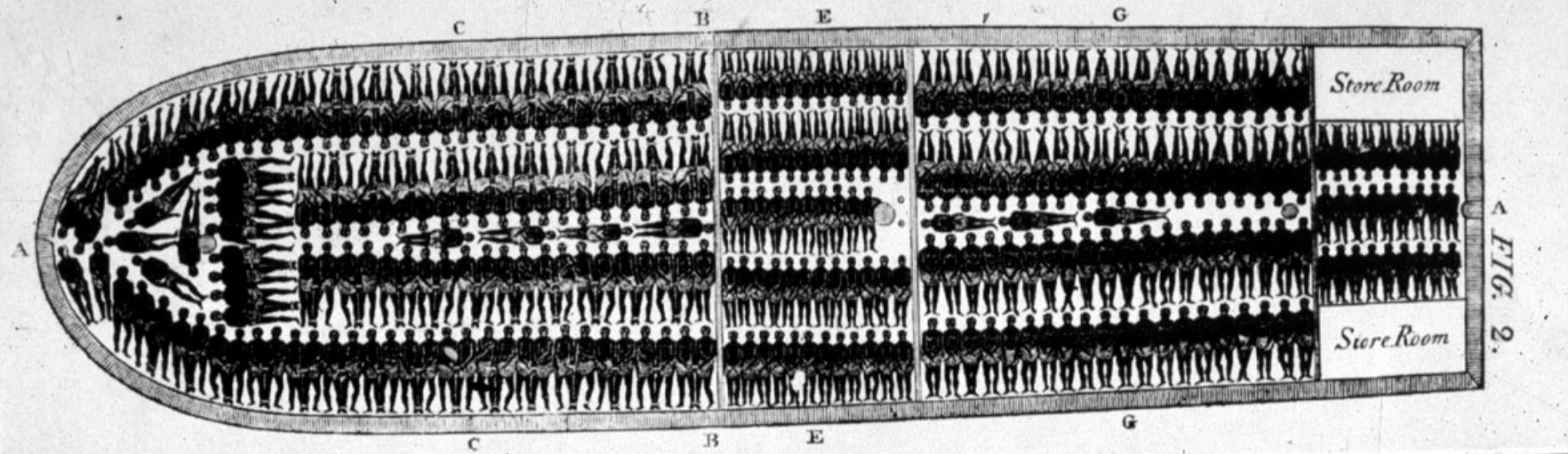
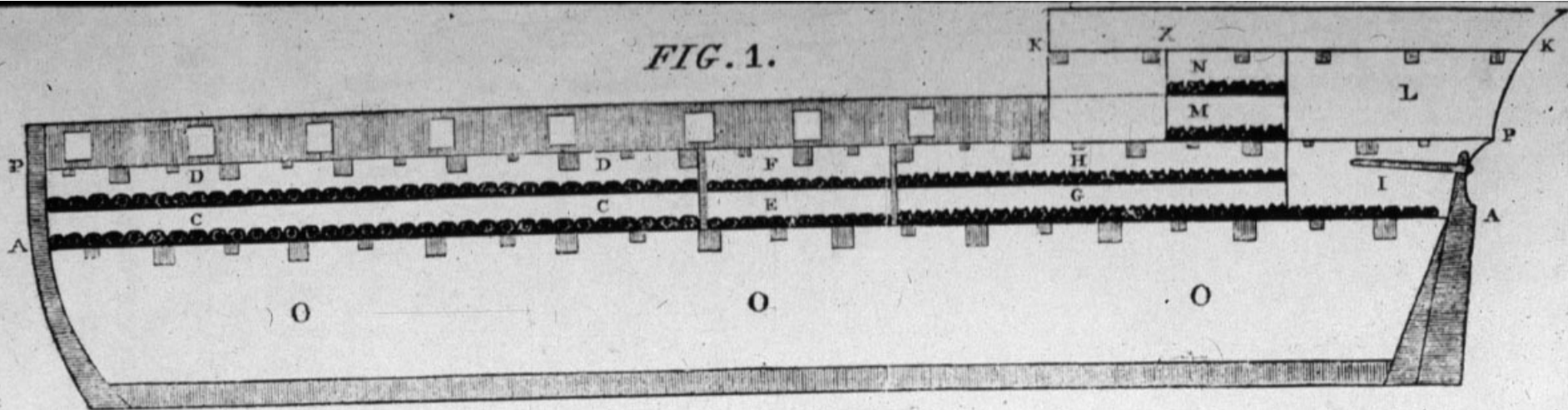
*A Negro hung alive by the Ribs to a Gallows.*

One of the most brutal parts of the 'Triangular Trade' was the Middle Passage. This was the part of the journey from Africa to the Americas. An average journey from Ghana to America would take 2-4 months depending on weather conditions. Most male slaves would never be allowed to be unchained and on deck due to the risk they could rebel against the slave traders.



What can you see happening in these images?

# Plan of the Liverpool slave ship, the *Brookes*





Upon arrival at the Carribean, the enslaved Africans were sold in markets, just as you would buy fruit or vegetables. They had no rights and had to obey whoever bought them. They went to live and work on the Plantations, owned by their new masters.



▼ **SOURCE C** Written by Harriet Ann Jacobs in her autobiography *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861). Jacobs was an African-American writer who escaped from slavery.

‘I saw a mother lead seven children to the auction block. She knew that some of them would be taken from her; but they took all. The children were sold to a slave trader, and the mother was bought by a man in her own town. Before night, her children were all far away. She begged the trader to tell her where he intended to take them; this he refused to do. How could he when he knew he would sell them, one by one, wherever he could command the highest price? I met that mother in the street and her wild, haggard face lives today in my mind. She wrung her hands in anguish and exclaimed, “Gone, all gone! Why don’t God kill me?”’

# What was life like on the Plantations?



*Flagellation of a Female-Samboe Slave.*



*A Negro hung alive by the Ribs to a Gallows.*

**A brutally beaten slave with heavy scarring on his back, (Photograph taken in 1863. From the US National Archives)**

What reasons do we think might lead to this kind of treatment?

- Not following orders
- Trying to escape from the plantation
- Not working hard enough / picking enough
- Particularly nasty owners
- Displeasing their masters in some way



▼ **SOURCE D** Adapted from a 1784 book by James Ramsay, a British doctor working on the British-controlled Caribbean island of St Kitts. He was so shocked by the way enslaved people were treated that he wrote a book that inspired many anti-slavery campaigners.

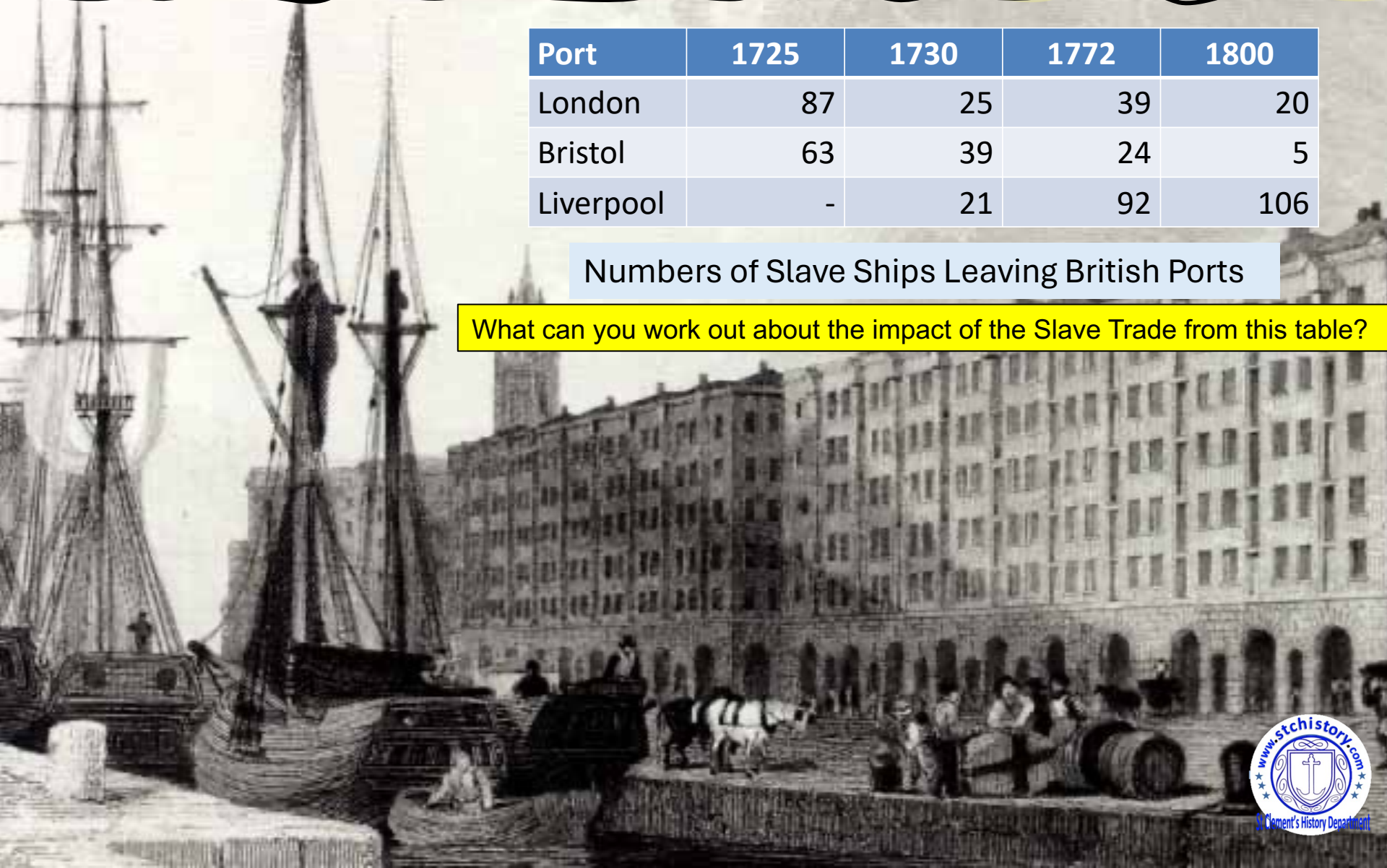
‘The ordinary punishments of slaves are whipping, beating with a stick – sometimes to the breaking of bones – chains, an iron ring around the neck or ankle, or being placed in a dungeon. There have been instances of slitting of ears, breaking of limbs, amputation, and taking out of eyes.’

Goree Warehouses Liverpool. Named after Senegal's Goree Islands off the coast of Africa. Built 1793 to cope with demand for storing goods to be shipped to Africa on first leg of triangular voyage.

Port	1725	1730	1772	1800
London	87	25	39	20
Bristol	63	39	24	5
Liverpool	-	21	92	106

### Numbers of Slave Ships Leaving British Ports

What can you work out about the impact of the Slave Trade from this table?





So, a quick checkpoint linking back to Britain and our Empire?

- The slave trade ‘provided one of the main streams of income in England which financed the Industrial Revolution.’
- Almost 40% of England’s money was from the Slave Trade.
- Sugar **ALONE** from the Caribbean brought in about £3.2 million. Slaves were traded for this sugar! (£600 million in 1750)

How did the factories benefit?

Think about the raw material from America and what it was turned in to

Who bought the final products from the Factories?

The British trade in enslaved Africans, between the early 1600s and 1807, generated profits of about £12 million (over £1 billion today). This money helped to make Britain one of the world's richest and most powerful nations.

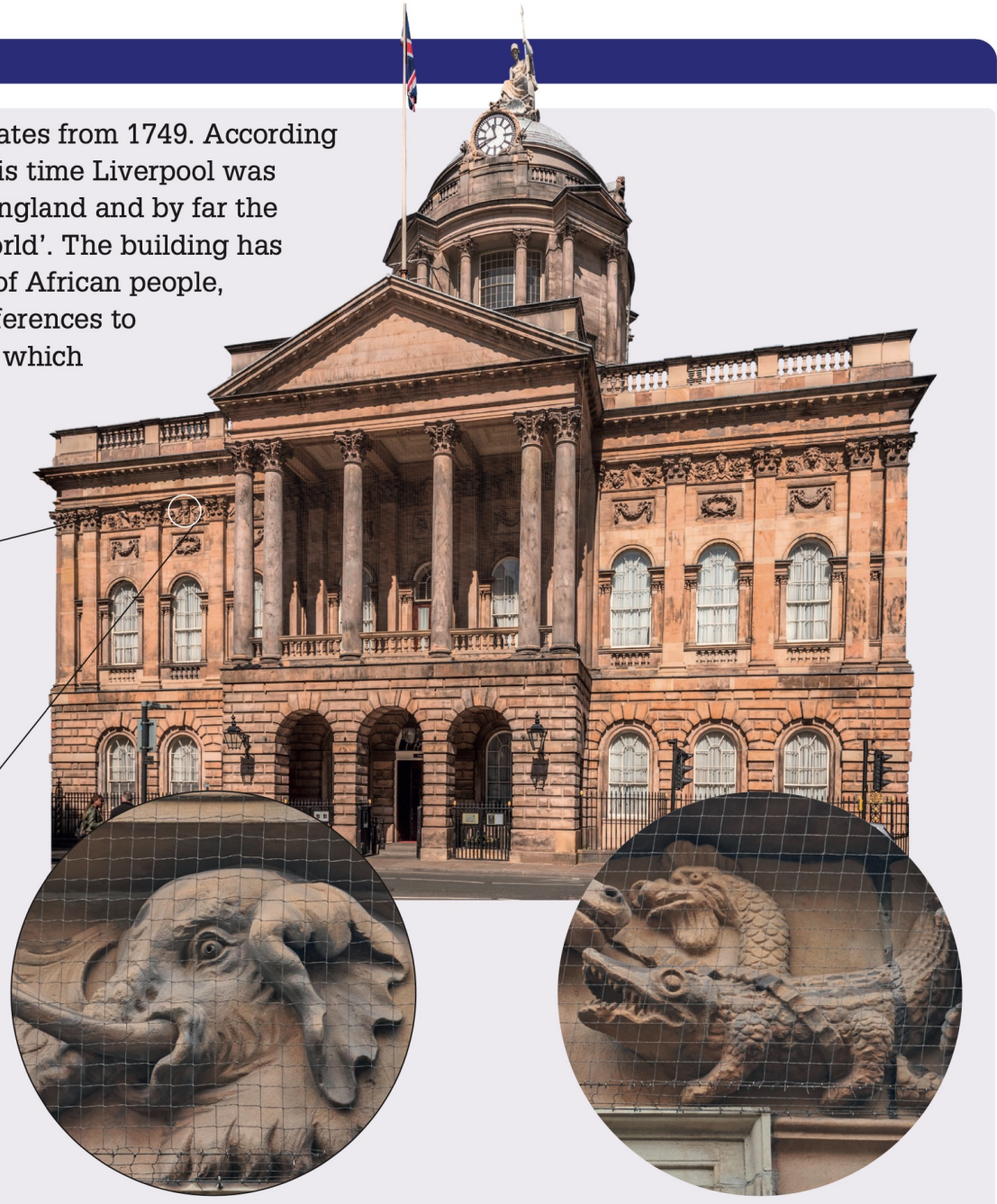
Many of the fine buildings in Liverpool, Bristol and London were built on the profits of slavery. In 1785, a well-known British actor George F. Cooke said, 'Every brick in the city of Liverpool is cemented with the blood of a slave.' In fact, 20 of Liverpool's mayors between 1787 and 1807 are thought to have been slave traders.



Some people believe Liverpool, Bristol and London should feel guilty that the wealth of their cities being built on the Slave Trade!



- **SOURCE F** Liverpool Town Hall dates from 1749. According to historian David Richardson, at this time Liverpool was 'the undisputed slaving capital of England and by far the largest slave port in the Atlantic world'. The building has decorative carvings showing faces of African people, elephants, crocodiles and lions – references to the trade in enslaved Africans from which Liverpool gained lots of its wealth.



Can we see why the study of the British Empire is so important in explaining the world around us?