

Slavery on Trial



Mission: to hold a mock trial and put the south on trial.

By the mid 19th century the USA was on the brink of civil war as tensions between the northern and southern states grew. The northern states were much more industrial and urbanised and they did not need slave workers. On the other hand, the southern states said they needed slaves to harvest crops such as cotton and that they were key to a profitable economy. The southerners also feared that as America was expanding westward, they were losing power and their right to own slaves was under threat. We are going to turn the classroom into a courtroom and put slavery on trial. We will listen to arguments both for and against the existence of slavery. We will hear from those who wanted to keep slavery and those who wanted to abolish it.

The south is charged with a crime against humanity.



Judge

The Jury



Pro Slavery Team	Trial Outline	Anti Slavery Team
Defence Lawyer	1: Opening statements	Prosecution Lawyer
House Slave	2: What's the work like?	Planation Slave
Overseer	3: Punishments and rewards?	Harriet Tubman
Plantation Owner	4: Are negroes inferior to whites?	Fredrick Douglass
Mississippi Governor	5: What is the economic importance?	William Garrison
Plantation Owner 2	6: What will the slaves do if freed?	Harriet Beecher Stowe
Thomas Jefferson	7: All men are created equal?	John Adams
Whole Team	8: Would emancipation mean war?	Whole Team
Defence Lawyer	9: Closing statements	Prosecution lawyer

The Roles Explained



The Judge (Your Teacher?)

Your role is to organise the courtroom, control the debate, introduce people and make sure that each team listens to the other. Also check the lawyers don't use any dirty tricks!

The Jury

Your role is to listen, especially for any lies that may be told! You will make the decision as to which team gave the most persuasive argument.



The Lawyers + Legal Assistants

Your role is to question your own witnesses and those from the opposing team. You can prepare your own witnesses before the trial and raise **OBJECTIONS** if the opposing lawyer is asking unfair questions or going off topic. Don't forget your brief cases!



The Witnesses or Speakers

Learn about your character and be prepared to answer questions truthfully (and dramatically) from both your own and the opposing team's lawyer. Bring evidence for the jury, extra points for props or costumes!



Team Pro Slavery



The House Slave

You need to do research and find the name of a real house slave as well as accurate information about her life.



Your lawyer will question you about:

How many hours do you work in a day?

What type of jobs do you do?

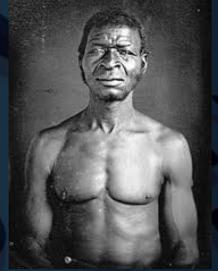
How you are treated by your master?

Your lawyer may also prepare a 'wildcard' question.

You can bring 1 piece of evidence for the jury if you like. This may be a photo or something else. Beware, the opposing lawyer may also challenge your answers and the jury will be looking to see if you are telling lies. If you do tell lies you will be charged with perjury.

The Overseer

You need to do research and find the name of a real overseer as well as accurate information about his life and role on a plantation.



Your lawyer will questions such as:

Why you took the job as an overseer?

What would happen if you didn't punish slaves?

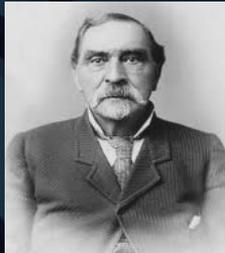
Are slaves lazy or dangerous?

Your lawyer may also prepare a 'wildcard' question.

You can bring 1 piece of evidence for the jury if you like. This could be a photo, part of a speech or something else. Beware, the opposing lawyer may also challenge your answers and the jury will be looking to see if you are telling lies. If you do tell lies you will be charged with perjury.

The Planation Owner

You need to do research and find the name of a real plantation owner as well as accurate information about his life and ideas about the slaves you own.



Your lawyer will question you about:

Are slaves chattel or people?

Is it possible for a negro to learn to read and write or be educated?

Do you have relationships with any of your slaves?

Your lawyer may also prepare a 'wildcard' question for you

You can bring 1 piece of evidence for the jury if you like. This could be a photo, part of a speech or something else. Beware, the opposing lawyer may also challenge your answers and the jury will be looking to see if you are telling lies. If you do tell lies you will be charged with perjury.

Governor of Mississippi

You should find the name of a real Mississippi Governor who was in power during the slave era. Find out about his life and his ideas about slavery and it's importance to the southern economy.



Your lawyer will question you about:

How many slaves work in Mississippi c1850?

Why are negro slaves so important to the southern economy?

Are there other options for harvesting crops other than slave labour?

Your lawyer may also prepare a 'wildcard' question.

You can bring 1 piece of evidence for the jury if you like. This could be a photo, present part of a speech or something else. Beware, the opposing lawyer may also challenge your answers and the jury will be looking to see if you are telling lies. If you do tell lies you will be charged with perjury.

Planation Owner 2

You need to do research and find the name of a real plantation owner as well as accurate information about his life and ideas about the what he would do if the slaves were emancipated.



Your lawyer will question you about:

Are you like a father to your slaves?

How do you take care of your slaves, what do you give them?

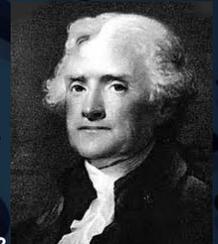
What would happen if they were set free, would they be welcomed north?

Your lawyer may also prepare a 'wildcard' question.

You can bring 1 piece of evidence for the jury if you like. This could be a photo, present part of a speech or something else. Beware, the opposing lawyer may also challenge your answers and the jury will be looking to see if you are telling lies. If you do tell lies you will be charged with perjury.

Thomas Jefferson

Your role is to find out about your character, why you are such an important person in US History. What was your input into the phrase, 'All men are created equal'. Do you own slaves yourself?



Your lawyer will question you about:

Who coined the phrase 'all men are created equal'?

Does 'all men are created equal' mean negroes should be treated equally?

Do you treat your own slaves well?

Your lawyer may also prepare a 'wildcard' question.

You can bring 1 piece of evidence for the jury if you like. This could be a photo, present part of a speech or something else. Beware, the opposing lawyer may also challenge your answers and the jury will be looking to see if you are telling lies. If you do tell lies you will be charged with perjury.

Team Anti Slavery



The Plantation Slave

You need to do research and find the name of a real plantation slave as well as accurate information about her life.



Your lawyer will question you about:

How much work you do?
What type of jobs do you do?
What rights you have?

Your lawyer may also prepare a 'wildcard' question.

You can bring 1 piece of evidence for the jury if you like. This may be a photo or something else. Beware, the opposing lawyer may also challenge your answers and the jury will be looking to see if you are telling lies. If you do tell lies you will be charged with perjury.

Harriet Tubman

You should conduct research to find out about her life as a slave.



Your lawyer will question you about:

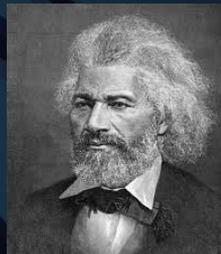
Have you seen other slaves being punished?
What is the worst thing you have ever witnessed?
How did you receive your head injury, did you ever fully recover?

Your lawyer may also prepare a 'wildcard' question.

You can bring 1 piece of evidence for the jury if you like. This could be a photo, part of a speech or something else. Beware, the opposing lawyer may also challenge your answers and the jury will be looking to see if you are telling lies. If you do tell lies you will be charged with perjury.

Frederick Douglass

You should conduct research to find out about his life as a slave and his opinion on the idea that black people were inferior to white people.



Your lawyer will question you about:

Do you prefer the term negro, coloured or black?
Is it possible for a negro to learn to read, write or be educated?

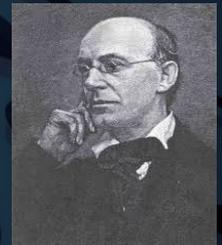
Are white people superior to black people?

Your lawyer may also prepare a 'wildcard' question for you

You can bring 1 piece of evidence for the jury if you like. This could be a photo, present part of a Douglass speech or something else. Beware, the opposing lawyer may also challenge your answers and the jury will be looking to see if you are telling lies.

William Garrison

You should conduct research to find out about his work as an abolitionist.



Your lawyer will question you about:

If slavery is abolished, who will work in the fields?
If slavery is abolished, what could be done to persuade ex slaves to stay and work in the south?
Are there other options for harvesting crops other than slave labour?

Your lawyer may also prepare a 'wildcard' question.

You can bring 1 piece of evidence for the jury if you like. This could be a photo, present part of a speech or something else. Beware, the opposing lawyer may also challenge your answers and the jury will be looking to see if you are telling lies. If you do then you will be charged with perjury.

Harriet Beecher Stowe

You should conduct research to find out about her work as an abolitionist and her ideas on what to do with all the slaves if they were freed.



Your lawyer will question you about:

Are some slaves well treated and taken care of?
What have you done to try and get slavery abolished?
What will the slaves do if freed, where would they go?

Your lawyer may also prepare a 'wildcard' question.

You can bring 1 piece of evidence for the jury if you like. This could be a photo, present part of a speech or something else. Beware, the opposing lawyer may also challenge your answers and the jury will be looking to see if you are telling lies. If you do tell lies you will be charged with perjury.

John Adams

Your role is to find out about your character, why you are such an important person in US History.



Your lawyer will question you about:

Who are the founding fathers?
Do you own slaves yourself?
Which lines from the US national anthem are the most important to you?
What do you think of Thomas Jefferson owning slaves?

Your lawyer may also prepare a 'wildcard' question.

You can bring 1 piece of evidence for the jury if you like. This could be a photo, present part of a speech or something else. Beware, the opposing lawyer may also challenge your answers and the jury will be looking to see if you are telling lies. If you do tell lies you will be charged with perjury.

Team Jury

- 1: Select a jury spokesperson to deliver the verdict.
- 2: Find out the meanings of the words posted to the right.
- 3: Create a plan to turn the classroom into a courtroom.
- 4: Find out the answers to trial questions below.



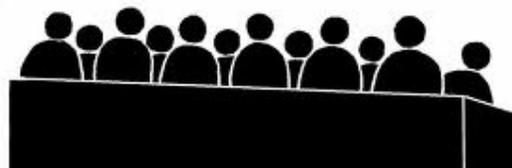
During the trial you must listen to the information carefully. You should put any ideas you have about the rights and wrongs of slavery to one side and judge only on what you hear during the trial. You should be looking out for people who may be telling lies. If they are, then you should give them a lower score or even a zero if the lie is a whopper! You should find out the answers to the questions below so you can check if witnesses answer accurately and are credible.

Also, you should award 'dramatic' bonus points for teams that play their parts well and / or bring props to or wear costumes in the trial.

You must be comfortable that witnesses are not committing perjury. Find out the answers questions below before the trial starts.

	1-Opening Statements	2-What's the work like?	3-Punishment or rewards	4-Negros inferior to whites?	5-Slavery and the economy	6-What if the slaves were free?	7-All men are created equal?	8-Free Round	9-Closing statements	10- Bonus points
Pro Slavery Questions	✗	Average hours house slaves worked a day?	What rewards did black overseers receive?	Legally, in the south were slaves property or people?	How many slaves were used in Mississippi c1850?	Did most northerners want freed slaves living in the north?	Did Thomas Jefferson own slaves?	✗	✗	✗
Anti slavery Questions	✗	Average hours plantation slaves worked n a day?	How did Harriet Tubman receive her head injury?	Black, negro or coloured person. What word is the most appropriate?	Did the south have other options other than slave workers?	Were some slaves treated well?	Did John Adams own slaves?	✗	✗	✗
Pro Slavery score / 10										
Anti Slavery score / 10										

Pro Slavery Total Anti Slavery Score



The Southern United States is charged with a crime against humanity. How does the jury rule?

Team Lawyers



To do

Work with my witnesses and prepare answers

To do

Prepare evidence to show the jury

To do

Prepare cross examination of opposing witnesses

To do

Write and practise opening and closing statements

Opening statement notes:

My witness notes:

1

2

3

4

5

6

Opposing witness notes:

1

2

3

4

5

6

Closing statement notes:

Don't Forget

I can raise objections during the trial

Don't Forget

The phrase "no further questions"

Don't Forget

To pitch to the jury not to the judge.

Check

Evidence?
Witness Props?
Briefcase?

**Thomas
Jefferson**



Overseer



**Mississippi
Governor**



**House
Slave**



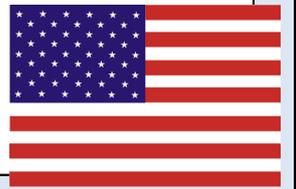
**Plantation
Owner**



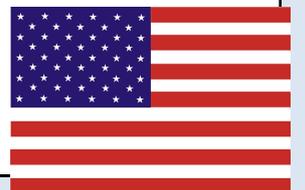
**Plantation
Owner**



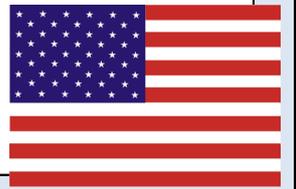
**John
Adams**



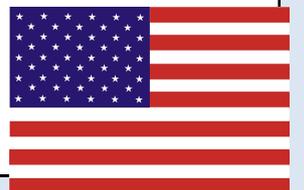
**Harriet
Tubman**



**Plantation
Slave**



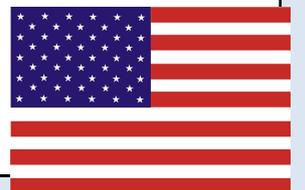
**William
Garrison**



**Harriet Beecher
Stowe**



**Frederick
Douglass**



JURY



**Head
Juror**



JURY



JURY

