**SOCIAL SCIENCES REVISION NOTES**

**GRADE 7**

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| **SOCIAL SCIENCES – HISTORY TERM 2** |
| **Topic : The Transatlantic slave trade** |
| **Content : The impact of the transatlantic slave trade on slaves** |
| **Key concepts:**   * **What was it like to be a plantation slave in the American South?** * **Slave culture in songs and stories** * **Resistance to slavery** * **rebellion against slavery** |

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| **KEY WORDS** | | | |
| **Culture** | **Negro** | **Negro spirituals** | **Armoury** |
| Customs, ideas and a way of life of a group of people in a country | An outdated and a derogatory term for African Americans. | religious songs sung by slaves | A government building where guns are kept |
| **hardships** | **Quarters** | **rebel** | **rebellion** |
| A condition of suffering or difficulty | Places where slaves stayed or were accommodated | To fight against or not to obey the people who are in charge | An act of going against the people who are in charge/government |
| Treason | Branded | Abolished | Inhumane |
| An act or a plan of overthrowing a government by word or action. | Slave owner’s initials are burnt onto the slave’s skin with a red-hot iron | To get rid of or stopped something like slavery. | Very cruel. |
| Obedient | martyr | humiliation | overseer |
| Doing what someone else tells you to do | A person who dies for a worthwhile cause. | embarrasment | A person who supervises others especially workers |
|  |  |  | mutiny |
|  |  |  | An open rebellion against the authorities |

*What it was like to be a plantation slave in the American South*

• There were different kinds of slaves on the plantations.

• The top positions were cooks, house cleaners, babysitters and carriage drivers.The mistress and

master had personal slaves.

• Slaves worked very hard in the fields from sunrise to sunset, six days a week.

• They were looked after by strict overseers with whips in their hands.

• Slaves had no rights and had very few possessions.

• Slave masters gave slaves new names and branded their bodies.

• They could be Christians but not allowed to practise their traditional religions

• Christian missionaries were often invited onto the plantations to preach.

• Slaves were not allowed to beat drums; in case they sent messages to other slaves to

organise rebellions.

• Slave owners abused slave women by encouraging them to have children as many as 15 children,

so they could use them as slaves too.

• If a slave talked back to a master, did not work hard enough they were punished in various ways.

The punishments could include:

* Being whipped.
* Placed in chains.
* Put into a small cage with bread and water for a few days.
* Being forced to wear a metal collar.
* Many other inhumane punishments.

• Slave owners did not kill the slaves for fear of losing the money they had paid for them.

Slave culture in songs and stories

• Many slaves were converted to Christianity. When they preached Slaves sat on hard benches and

listened to European preachers telling them about obedience and hard work

• In resistance to this type of preaching, they organised secret services and sung Negro spirituals to

pass time

• They also used storytelling to distract them from harsh pressures of slavery.

• In their stories they used animals that reflected their values, hopes and fears.

• Adults used these stories to teach their children the difference between right and wrong.

• They were encouraged by Bible stories like one in which David kills the giant, Goliath

**The impact of the Transatlantic slave trade on slaves**

**Resistance to slavery**

• Although slaves were enslaved, they never gave up the struggle to get their freedom. They

resisted as a group, but individuals also put up day to day resistance. Some ways in which the

slaves resisted were:

o Sluggishness – did everything very slowly.

o Passivity – just accepted pain and humiliation.

o Indifference – did not care about anything.

o Shirking – avoided their duties.

o Alcoholism – drank too much alcohol to escape from their troubles.

o Flight – ran away because they could not bear the pain of slavery.

o Suicide – slaves took their own lives when their lives became *unbearable.*

o Arson – set fire to their owners’ buildings.

o Murder – some cases, slaves killed their owners out of anger.

• Slavery was a cruel experience which left very deep mental and physical pain as slaves were

Exposed to abuse, torture, violence and racism. This made African children to grow up feeling inferior to

Europeans.

**Rebellion against slavery**

**Nat Turner’s revolt - 1831**

• Nat Turner was a slave who was literate as he could read or write

* He had had religious visions and preached against

slavery from the Bible.

• In 1831 he led a rebellion against slavery in Virginia with ± 70 followers, some of whom were on

horseback.

o They went from house to house, killed ± 60 white men, women and children and freed their

slaves.

o To hide their actions and avoid making any noise, they used axes, knives and blunt

instruments instead of guns.

o They were captured by an army of ±3 000 heavily armed soldiers after a few days.

o Nat Turner fled and went into hiding for two months, before being captured and hanged

with 56 of his followers.

• After the first major slave uprising in the south, rumours spread that other slaves were

marching on the capital, Washington DC.

• Mobs of armed men wanting revenge went around and killed 100 to 200 innocent slaves.

o Laws were passed stating that it was illegal for slaves to meet without a white minister present.

o That it was Illegal to teach slaves to read and write. (this resulted to widespread illiteracy

among the slaves for many years afterwards.