



# A Quick Reference Guide to Teaching **Hard History**

**A K-12 FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING AMERICAN SLAVERY**



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The Southern Poverty Law Center, based in Montgomery, Alabama, is a nonpartisan 501(c)(3) civil rights organization founded in 1971 and dedicated to fighting hate and bigotry, and to seeking justice for the most vulnerable members of society.

## **ABOUT LEARNING FOR JUSTICE**

Learning for Justice seeks to uphold the mission of the Southern Poverty Law Center: to be a catalyst for racial justice in the South and beyond, working in partnership with communities to dismantle white supremacy, strengthen intersectional movements and advance the human rights of all people.

Our free educational resources—articles, guides, lessons, films, webinars, frameworks and more—help foster shared learning and reflection for educators, young people, care-givers and all community members. Our engagement opportunities—conferences, workshops, and school and community partnerships—provide space where people can harness collective power and take action.

Through this continual cycle of education and engagement, we hope that we can build and maintain meaningful relationships with communities and we can all move from learning for justice to creating it.

Find out more at [learningforjustice.org/about](https://learningforjustice.org/about)

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# About the Framework

Welcome to Learning for Justice’s K-12 framework for teaching about American slavery. This framework, with the following components, can be used to help supplement current curriculum or to help guide the creation of new curriculum that more honestly and courageously tells the story of American slavery—one that includes the enslavement of both African and Indigenous peoples.

Our goal is to inspire a widespread commitment to robust, effective and accurate teaching about American slavery in K-12 classrooms. This history is fundamental to understanding our nation’s past and its present. If the topic is taught with inadequate breadth or depth, students are unable to draw connections between historical events and concurrent struggles for racial equality or to contextualize how the world they inhabit today was shaped by the institution of slavery and its ideological progeny, white supremacy.

1. The framework begins with 10 “Key Concepts,” important ideas that students—and educators—need to truly understand if they are to grasp the historical significance of slavery. By utilizing the other components in this framework, educators will be able to guide students to fully understanding the ideas captured in the Key Concepts. Visit [learningforjustice.org/THH](https://learningforjustice.org/THH) to view short videos for each Key Concept that can be used with students and for professional learning.

2. Broad student learning outcomes are defined for grades K-5 with 20 Essential Knowledges and for grades 6-12 with 22 Summary Objectives. It’s through the Essential Knowledges and Summary Objectives that students will gain the deeper understanding as outlined in the

Key Concepts. The Essential Knowledges and Summary Objectives can be viewed as practical guides that can help plan instruction.

3. Beneath each Essential Knowledge and Summary Objective, the framework includes two sections providing additional support for teaching that idea:

## “What Else Should My Students Know?”

provides key content at a more granular level.

## “How Can I Teach This?”

(available online) provides information about critical resources that can help educators plan lessons for each objective. Many of these resources—and scores of other primary and secondary sources—are available for free download on our website.

Visit [learningforjustice.org/THH](https://learningforjustice.org/THH) to download these free accompanying resources:

- Professional learning materials to support your teaching—including a podcast, videos, webinars and articles
- Inquiry Design Models using the framework
- A text library containing primary and secondary sources to use with students

You’ll also find information about the creation of the framework on our website.

## Guiding Principles

We kept the following guiding principles in mind as we created this framework, and you will find them reflected throughout. We hope you will keep them in mind as you approach teaching about slavery as well.

### **BE READY TO TALK ABOUT RACE.**

It is impossible to teach about slavery without addressing race, racism and white supremacy—something that makes many teachers, particularly white teachers, uncomfortable. But discussing race, especially encouraging students to understand it as a social construction rather than a biological fact, can be an opportunity to have productive and thoughtful conversations among students, if properly structured. First, as a teacher, you should take

some time to consider your own identities and the ways those identities influence how you see the world. There are a number of resources available at [learningforjustice.org](https://learningforjustice.org) to help with this process. We also encourage you to consider the makeup of your classroom and develop fluency with culturally sustaining pedagogical strategies that recognize and draw upon students’ identities as assets for learning.

### **TEACH ABOUT COMMONALITIES.**

When teaching about other eras and cultures, it is important to focus on similarities with students’ lives before moving to discuss differences. Learning about “cultural universals”—e.g., art forms, group rules, social

organization, basic needs, language and celebrations—helps students recognize that people are bound together by similarities regardless of group membership.<sup>1</sup> When students appreciate commonalities, they are also less likely to express fear or stereotypes about members of other groups.<sup>2</sup> This approach also helps students to build empathy, an essential skill for social and emotional development. Students might examine stories about children in other communities, children living in slavery or the cultural practices of enslaved people to find similarities with their own experiences.

#### **CENTER THE STORIES OF ENSLAVED PEOPLE.**

One common mistake is to begin by discussing the evils of slavery. Doing so subtly communicates that enslaved people lacked agency and culture. Instead, start by learning about the diversity of African kingdoms and Native nations, including their intellectual and cultural traditions. Focusing on specific nations (for example, the Benin Empire or the Onondaga Nation) will give depth and specificity to these discussions. Students should learn that people were doctors, teachers, artists and community leaders before they were enslaved. This approach begins by focusing on the strengths and humanity of people who were enslaved. Once discussing slavery, students should center the humanity of enslaved people by exploring sources that speak to the diverse experiences of enslaved people from their own perspectives and in the words of their descendants.

#### **EMBED CIVICS EDUCATION.**

When students learn about the history of American slavery, they have ample opportunities to explore the many dimensions of civics. First, it is critical that students consider the nature of power and authority.

They should describe what it means to have power and identify ways that people use power to help, harm and influence situations. Beginning with examples from their classroom, families and communities, students can examine how power is gained, used and justified. Ask students what makes authority legitimate. As they learn more about the history of slavery, students should begin to understand the layers of U.S. government (local, state, tribal and national) and the idea that rules can change from place to place. Finally, the study of American slavery creates opportunities to learn about activism and action civics. Have students study examples and role models from the past and present and ask themselves, “How can I make a difference?”

#### **TEACH ABOUT CONFLICT AND CHANGE.**

The history of American slavery is a story of terrible oppression; at the same time, it is also a story of incredible resistance and resilience. Students should learn that enslaved people wanted to be free and that, while some did escape, it was extraordinarily difficult. Be careful to show students that enslaved people resisted in other ways, such as learning to read colonial languages or by developing ceremonies like “jumping the broom” when legal marriage was forbidden. Students must know that slavery was widespread and not, as commonly thought, restricted to people of African descent or contained in the South. It’s also key they understand that many people did not agree with slavery and wanted to end it. These conversations should lead into discussions about current injustices—particularly those that continue to disenfranchise and oppress the descendants of enslaved people—and possibilities for activism and reform.

1. Jere Brophy and Janet Alleman. “Learning and Teaching about Cultural Universals in Primary-Grade Social Studies.” *The Elementary School Journal* 103, no. 2 (November 2002): 99–114.

2. Patricia G. Ramsey, “Growing up with the contradictions of race and class.” *Young Children* 50, no. 6 (September 1995): 12–22.

# Key Concepts

The Key Concepts are important ideas that students—and educators—must truly understand to grasp the historical significance of slavery. At the end of their K-12 educational experience, students will ideally be able to comprehend and articulate the understandings

captured in these Key Concepts.

The chart below outlines the Key Concepts. The charts following the Key Concepts show how each K-5 Essential Knowledge and 6-12 Summary Objective maps to a Key Concept.

## KEY CONCEPTS

1. Slavery, which Europeans practiced before they invaded the Americas, was important to all colonial powers and existed in all North American colonies.
2. Slavery and the slave trade were central to the development and growth of the colonial economies and what is now the United States.
3. Protections for slavery were embedded in the founding documents; enslavers dominated the federal government, Supreme Court and Senate from 1787 through 1860.
4. “Slavery was an institution of power,” designed to create profit for the enslavers and break the will of the enslaved and was a relentless quest for profit abetted by racism.\*
5. Enslaved people resisted the efforts of their enslavers to reduce them to commodities in both revolutionary and everyday ways.
6. The experience of slavery varied depending on time, location, crop, labor performed, size of slaveholding and gender.
7. Slavery was the central cause of the Civil War.
8. Slavery shaped the fundamental beliefs of Americans about race and whiteness, and white supremacy was both a product and legacy of slavery.
9. Enslaved and freed people worked to maintain cultural traditions while building new ones that sustain communities and impact the larger world.
10. By knowing how to read and interpret the sources that tell the story of American slavery, we gain insight into some of what enslaving and enslaved Americans aspired to, created, thought and desired.

## GRADES K-5

The framework for grades K-5 contains 20 Essential Knowledges—10 for grades K-2 and 10 for grades 3-5—that are age-appropriate understandings for students regarding the historical significance of slavery. Educators can use these Essential Knowledges, as well as the “What

Else Should My Students Know?” sections of this framework, to guide instruction. Guiding students through the Essential Knowledges will help them gain the deeper understanding outlined in the Key Concepts.

Each of these Essential Knowledges maps to at least one Key Concept.

\*Ira Berlin, “Foreword: The Short Course for Bringing Slavery into the Classroom in Ten Not-So-Easy Pieces” in *Understanding and Teaching American Slavery*, ed. Bethany Jay and Cynthia Lyerly (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2016), xviii.

**GRADES K-2 ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGES**

**KEY CONCEPT**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Essential Knowledge 1</b> Students should be encouraged to think and talk about the meaning of freedom</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Essential Knowledge 2</b> Students should know that slavery is when a person owns another person as property.</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Essential Knowledge 3</b> Students should know that enslaved Indigenous people and Africans came from nations with diverse cultures and traditions and that they continued many of these traditions while enslaved.</li> </ul>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Essential Knowledge 4</b> Students should know that enslaved people had families that could be split up at any time.</li> </ul>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Essential Knowledge 5</b> Students should know that enslaved people hated being enslaved, and resisted bondage in many ways.</li> </ul>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Essential Knowledge 6</b> Students should know that enslaved people tried to maintain their cultures while building new traditions that continue to be important.</li> </ul>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Essential Knowledge 7</b> Students should know that enslavers exploited the many types of highly skilled labor of enslaved people for their own profit.</li> </ul>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Essential Knowledge 8</b> Students should understand that slavery and race are intimately connected, that slavery came to be associated with Blackness, and that white people developed racist ideas to justify enslaving people of color.</li> </ul>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Essential Knowledge 9</b> Students will know that many people worked individually and in groups to end slavery.</li> </ul>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Essential Knowledge 10</b> Students will know slavery was the cause of the Civil War.</li> </ul>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**GRADES 3-5 ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGES**

**KEY CONCEPT**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Essential Knowledge 11</b> Students will know that the main purpose of American slavery was to make money for enslavers.</li> </ul>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Essential Knowledge 12</b> Slavery in all the places that are now the United States began with the enslavement of Indigenous people.</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Essential Knowledge 13</b> European colonists expanded slavery by forcing Africans to come to the Americas.</li> </ul>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Essential Knowledge 14</b> Enslavers adopted and spread false beliefs about racial inferiority, including many that still impact us today.</li> </ul>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Essential Knowledge 15</b> In every place and time, enslaved people sought freedom.</li> </ul>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Essential Knowledge 16</b> Enslaved people worked to preserve their home cultures while creating new traditions.</li> </ul>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Essential Knowledge 17</b> Students will know that the United States was founded on protecting the economic interests of white, Christian men who owned property. In the process, it protected the institution of slavery.</li> </ul>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Essential Knowledge 18</b> While some states abolished slavery after independence, it remained legal in most of what is now the United States, expanding into some new states and across the South.</li> </ul>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Essential Knowledge 19</b> Students will know that national disagreements about slavery became so strong that 11 states seceded from the United States to form their own country, leading to the Civil War.</li> </ul>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Essential Knowledge 20</b> Students will know that after the Civil War, formerly enslaved people faced many obstacles, including racism and political, social and economic inequality. Their descendants continue to face similar oppression today, though it may look different now than it did then.</li> </ul>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

**GRADES 6-12**

The framework for grades 6-12 contains 22 Summary Objectives, grouped into 5 time periods. Educators can use these Summary Objectives, as well as the “What Else Should My Students Know?” sections of this framework to guide instruction. Guiding students through

the Summary Objectives will help them gain the deeper understanding outlined in the Key Concepts.

Each of these Summary Objectives maps to at least one Key Concept.

**SUMMARY OBJECTIVES**

**KEY CONCEPT**

**PRE-COLONIAL AND COLONIAL ERA | TO 1763**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Students will recognize that slavery existed around the world prior to the European invasion of North America, changing forms depending on time and place. The enslaved often were perceived as outsiders: captives in war, the vanquished or colonized, or ethnic or religious others.	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
2. Students will describe the nature and extent of colonial enslavement of Indigenous people.	●	●	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○
3. Students will describe the slave trade from Africa to the Americas.	●	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●
4. Students will demonstrate the impact of slavery on the development of the French, British and Spanish colonies in North America.	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	●	●

**THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION AND THE CONSTITUTION | 1763-1787**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5. Students will describe the roles that slavery, Native nations and African Americans played in the Revolutionary War.	○	●	●	○	●	○	○	○	●	●
6. Students will demonstrate the ways that the Constitution provided direct and indirect protection to slavery and imbued enslavers and slave states with increased political power.	○	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	●

**SLAVERY IN THE EARLY REPUBLIC | 1787-1808**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7. Students will examine how the Revolutionary War affected the institution of slavery in the new nation and the ways that slavery shaped domestic and foreign policy in the early Republic.	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

**THE CHANGING FACE OF SLAVERY | 1808-1848**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8. Students will examine how the expanding cotton economy spurred Indian Removal and the domestic slave trade.	○	●	●	●	○	●	○	●	○	●
9. Students will describe the principal ways the labor of enslaved people was organized and controlled in what is now the United States.	○	●	○	●	●	○	○	○	○	●
10. Students will analyze the growth of the abolitionist movement in the 1830s and the slaveholding states' view of the movement as a physical, economic and political threat.	○	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	●
11. Students will recognize that enslaved people resisted slavery in ways that ranged from violence to smaller, everyday means of asserting their humanity and opposing their enslavers.	○	○	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	●
12. Students will discuss the nature, persistence and impact of the spiritual beliefs and cultures of enslaved people.	○	○	○	○	●	●	○	○	○	●

**THE SECTIONAL CRISIS AND CIVIL WAR | 1848-1877**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
13. Students will examine the expansion of slavery as a key factor in the domestic and foreign policy decisions of the United States in the 19th century.	○	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	●
14. Students will analyze the 1860 election of Abraham Lincoln and the subsequent decision that several slave states made to secede from the Union to ensure the preservation and expansion of slavery.	○	○	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	●
15. Students will examine how Union policies concerning slavery and African American military service affected the Civil War, and they will describe how free Black and enslaved communities affected the Civil War.	○	●	●	○	●	○	○	○	○	●
16. Students will examine how Indigenous people participated in and were affected by the Civil War.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●
17. Students will recognize that slavery continued in many forms through most of the 19th century in what is now the United States.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●
18. Students will examine the ways that people who were enslaved tried to claim their freedom after the Civil War.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●
19. Students will examine the ways that the federal government's policies affected the lives of formerly enslaved people.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●
20. Students will examine the ways that white Southerners attempted to define freedom for freed African Americans.	○	●	○	●	●	○	○	○	○	●
21. Students will examine the impact of the Compromise of 1877 and the removal of federal troops from the former Confederacy.	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●
22. Students will examine the ways that the legacies of slavery, white supremacy and settler colonialism continue to affect life in what is now the United States.	○	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	●

# Grades K-5

Young students often think about and discuss freedom, equality and power. They are aware of differences in national origin, culture, ethnicity, race and gender. They want to create a more just and fair society. Teaching about slavery in elementary school, done properly, can build on children's instincts and help students apply them to their classrooms, communities and study of the United States.

Sugarcoating or ignoring slavery until later grades makes students more upset by or even resistant to true stories about American history. To be clear: We are not suggesting that kindergarten teachers enumerate the grim details of the Middle Passage or the minutiae of the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Instead, we encourage teachers in the early grades to intentionally build instruction that prepares students to understand the long, multidimensional history of slavery and its enduring consequences. Long before we teach algebra, we teach its component parts. We should structure history instruction in the same way.

As students learn about the history of slavery using this framework, they engage in conversations about the meaning and value of freedom. They analyze how power organizes our past and present. When we prepare young students to understand the larger arc of American history, they learn about identity, diversity, culture, time, change, citizenship, conflict, imperialism and capitalism.

This section contains the 20 Essential Knowledge—10 for grades K-2 and 10 for grades 3-5—that can help guide instruction. Under each Essential Knowledge, you will also see a section—"What Else Should My Students Know?"—that provides more key content.

Visit [learningforjustice.org/THH](https://learningforjustice.org/THH) for "How Can I Teach This?" resources for each Essential Knowledge.

## GRADES K-2

### ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE 1

**Students should be encouraged to think and talk about the meaning of freedom.**

#### What Else Should My Students Know?

- 1.A. Being free means being able to choose what your life looks like without interference from others.
- 1.B. People and institutions have the ability to restrict freedom by using power to make rules and punishment to make people obey them. People also restrict freedom by intimidating people into acting in certain ways or into not doing certain things.
- 1.C. Everybody wants to be free, but some people have more freedom and privileges than other people.
- 1.D. Equality means that the same freedoms are held by

all people, regardless of their individual or group identities.

- 1.E. Equity is when people have what they need to be successful regardless of their identities.
- 1.F. People often make rules to serve their own interests. This means that sometimes rules are unfair, but people can work to change them.

### ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE 2

**Students should know that slavery is when a person owns another person as property.**

#### What Else Should My Students Know?

- 2.A. "Enslaved person" is preferable to "slave" because a person is not a thing.
- 2.B. Slavery has been allowed in many societies throughout human history and was legal in what is now the United States for hundreds of years.
- 2.C. The main purpose of enslaving people is to make money. Enslaved people rarely earn money for their work.
- 2.D. Many kinds of people can be enslaved, including children.
- 2.E. When people are enslaved, they do not have freedom. Their enslavers control their actions and can say where they move, what job they do, what food they will eat, what clothes they will wear, whom they will live with, whether they can go to school and many other parts of their lives.

### ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE 3

**Students should know that enslaved Indigenous people and Africans came from nations with diverse cultures and traditions and that they continued many of these traditions while enslaved.**

#### What Else Should My Students Know?

- 3.A. Indigenous peoples have always governed their own nations in the lands that are now the United States.
- 3.B. Europeans enslaved millions of Indigenous people when they invaded the Americas. Other Indigenous communities were attacked through warfare, diseases, land dispossession and forced assimilation.
- 3.C. The rich cultures of Indigenous people persisted despite the colonial invasion. Many people are working to support the resurgence of Indigenous languages and ways of seeing the world.



**3.D.** Africa is a continent that has always been home to many people, nations and cultures.

**3.E.** Millions of people were brought against their will from Africa and enslaved in the Americas.

**3.F.** Enslaved Africans brought skills, food, music, clothing, language and religious practices with them to the Americas, a cultural heritage that is still with us in our daily lives.

#### **ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE 4**

**Students should know that enslaved people had families that could be split up at any time.**

#### **What Else Should My Students Know?**

**4.A.** Enslaved people loved their families, just like other people.

**4.B.** Enslavers often separated families to make more money or as punishment. Once separated, families were rarely able to communicate or reunite. After the end of slavery, many formerly enslaved people searched long and hard, often in vain, to find their missing family members.

**4.C.** When children were not allowed to live with their families, other enslaved people took care of them.

**4.D.** About half of all enslaved people lived under the same roof as the families they worked for. Sometimes they ate the same food and wore the same clothes.

#### **ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE 5**

**Students should know that enslaved people hated being enslaved, and resisted bondage in many ways.**

#### **What Else Should My Students Know?**

**5.A.** Enslaved people wanted to escape to freedom. Although it was very difficult and largely impossible, some did manage to escape.

**5.B.** Laws, including the U.S. Constitution, made slavery legal and escaping illegal. Enslaved people were often hunted and returned to slavery.

**5.C.** Many people who escaped slavery went on to fight for freedom for all enslaved people.

**5.D.** Enslaved people resisted slavery to try and obtain some freedom in the midst of their enslavement. Resistance took many forms, ranging from everyday actions like slowing down work to armed rebellion.

#### **ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE 6**

**Students should know that enslaved people tried to maintain their cultures while building new traditions that continue to be important.**

#### **What Else Should My Students Know?**

**6.A.** Music was very important in the lives of enslaved people, and the music they created shapes popular music today.

**6.B.** Enslaved people drew from oral traditions in Indigenous and African cultures to pass on stories, history, culture and teachings.

**6.C.** Cultural practices, including crafts and food, that developed in Indigenous and African cultures continue to this day.

#### **ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE 7**

**Students should know that enslavers exploited the many types of highly skilled labor of enslaved people for their own profit.**

#### **What Else Should My Students Know?**

**7.A.** Enslaved people did many different kinds of work depending on place, time and gender.

**7.B.** Although most enslaved people could not make money from their work, their enslavers did.

**7.C.** The forced labor of enslaved people built many important buildings and institutions. European colonization itself depended on the work of Indigenous people and, later, Africans.

#### **ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE 8**

**Students should understand that slavery and race are intimately connected, that slavery came to be associated with Blackness, and that white people developed racist ideas to justify enslaving people of color.**

#### **What Else Should My Students Know?**

**8.A.** Differences, whether real or perceived, can make some people feel that it is OK to treat others badly, to exploit other people and to believe that some people are better than others.

**8.B.** The power of ownership and enslavement made people feel that their perceived superiority was real.

**8.C.** Enslavers punished and tortured people because they felt superior and wanted to make money.

**8.D.** Perceptions of racial differences remain in the United States today. These perceptions continue to impact whether all people are truly free.

#### **ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE 9**

**Students will know that many people worked individually and in groups to end slavery.**

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### What Else Should My Students Know?

9.A. Once they escaped, many people who had been enslaved worked to change the laws that allowed slavery.

9.B. Not every white person agreed with slavery. Some joined groups that tried to convince people in power to end slavery.

9.C. Although it was difficult, slavery eventually became illegal. However, even though slavery became illegal, labor exploitation and the oppression of Black and Indigenous people have never gone away.

#### ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE 10

**Students will know slavery was the cause of the Civil War.**

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### What Else Should My Students Know?

10.A. People in the United States didn't agree about slavery. Some believed it was wrong and should be ended; some didn't mind it, but didn't want more people to be enslaved in new places; and others wanted to spread slavery to new states. People in the last group decided to secede from, or leave, the United States so that they could continue enslaving people.

10.B. The United States, or the Union, went to war to stop some states from leaving. This is called the Civil War.

10.C. As the Union Army won victories, many enslaved people freed themselves by escaping to the free side; many also helped the Union Army, including by fighting.

10.D. Indigenous people fought on both sides of the war. For many Native nations, the Civil War was a war fought in a country not their own about issues that had little to do with them.

10.E. When the Union finally won the war, its leaders decided to end slavery.

#### GRADES 3-5

#### ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE 11

**Students will know that the main purpose of American slavery was to make money for enslavers.**

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### What Else Should My Students Know?

11.A. Labor produces goods and services that can be exchanged for money or other goods and services.

11.B. Because enslavers were trying to make money, regardless of their impact on other people, they did not pay the people they enslaved and provided them with only the minimum food, housing and clothing needed to keep them working.

11.C. Even free people who did not enslave others benefited from slavery because it kept the prices of goods and

services low while building infrastructure and industries.

11.D. People were enslaved in different ways depending on place and time. Most enslaved people were in bondage for their entire lives, and many, including all enslaved Africans, inherited the condition from their parents.

11.E. Enslaved people performed many different kinds of work, depending on age, gender and location, and many were highly skilled. Most did not work on plantations. About half of all enslaved people in what is now the United States lived under the same roof as their enslavers and performed hard household work.

#### ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE 12

**Slavery in all the places that are now the United States began with the enslavement of Indigenous people.**

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### What Else Should My Students Know?

12.A. Before the European invasion, many Native nations practiced slavery, mostly as captivity after warfare.

12.B. Europeans dramatically increased the scope and nature of Indigenous slavery.

12.C. Europeans enslaved between 2.5 million and 5 million Indigenous people throughout the Americas. Many were sold globally for enslavement elsewhere. Most enslaved Indigenous people were women and children.

12.D. White people's enslavement of Indigenous people—part of the exploitation of Indigenous labor and the theft of Indigenous land—adversely affected every community that it touched.

#### ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE 13

**European colonists expanded slavery by forcing Africans to come to the Americas.**

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### What Else Should My Students Know?

13.A. The African continent has always been full of diverse and thriving societies with rich histories and traditions, but slavery adversely affected every community that it touched.

13.B. At least 12.5 million Africans were captured and forced into ships going to the Americas, most arriving in the Caribbean, South America and Central America, where they were sold. One in four of these enslaved people were children.

13.C. Enslaved Africans came from many places, including the continental interior. They then endured the Middle Passage, the voyage of enslaved people from the west coast of Africa to the Americas. Nearly half of captured Africans died in the journey from their home countries to the Americas.

**ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE 14**

**Enslavers adopted and spread false beliefs about racial inferiority, including many that still impact us today.**

**What Else Should My Students Know?**

14.A. At first, enslavers justified slavery by saying that Africans and Indigenous people were inferior to Europeans because of religious and cultural differences.

14.B. Colonists believed that Europeans were a superior civilization and that Christianity was a superior religion.

14.C. Ideas about race and skin color developed over time to justify the system of slavery.

14.D. False stories about white supremacy that were developed to justify colonialism and enslavement continue to impact people throughout what is now the United States.

**ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE 15**

**In every place and time, enslaved people sought freedom.**

**What Else Should My Students Know?**

15.A. Everyday acts of resistance—such as working slowly, breaking tools, feigning illness, feigning ignorance to avoid work and running away for short periods—were common.

15.B. Some enslaved people tried to rebel, but these actions were difficult and mostly unsuccessful because people in power wanted slavery to continue and had many more resources (including weapons) to put down rebellions.

15.C. Learning how to read and write European languages were acts of rebellion and resistance.

15.D. Enslaved people resisted attempts to strip away their humanity. They found ways to form families and maintain cultural traditions.

15.E. Escape was difficult and rare, but some people managed to flee. Enslaved people who escaped were known as “fugitive slaves,” and people chased after them, since there was often a cash reward for returning enslaved people who ran away.

15.F. Enslaved people pursued freedom in many ways other than escape, including saving money to buy their freedom and their relatives’ freedom, and turning to the courts to seek freedom.

**ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE 16**

**Enslaved people worked to preserve their home cultures while creating new traditions.**

**What Else Should My Students Know?**

16.A. Native nations continue to develop and thrive, and

Indigenous people have had a profound and enduring impact across what is now the United States.

16.B. The combination of African and Indigenous foods and ways of cooking with Indigenous foods continue to greatly influence cuisine in what is now the United States.

16.C. Enslaved Africans created two of America’s most enduring musical forms: spirituals and blues music.

**ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE 17**

**Students will know that the United States was founded on protecting the economic interests of white, Christian men who owned property. In the process, it protected the institution of slavery.**

**What Else Should My Students Know?**

17.A. Twelve presidents, including the author of the Declaration of Independence, and the “Father of the Constitution,” enslaved people.

17.B. Slavery was politically, socially and economically central to the founding of the United States of America.

17.C. The Constitution provided many protections for slavery.

17.D. Many enslaved people were inspired by the idea of freedom and fought on both sides of the Revolutionary War. Some were forced to fight. Others chose to fight, hoping that they would be freed afterward.

**ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE 18**

**While some states abolished slavery after independence, it remained legal in most of what is now the United States, expanding into some new states and across the South.**

**What Else Should My Students Know?**

18.A. Indigenous slavery was mostly eliminated in the East after the Yamasee War. In the West, slavery continued in Spanish colonies and in many newly acquired western territories even after Spain abolished slavery in its colonies.

18.B. Abolitionists, including many who were formerly enslaved, were successful in making slavery illegal in the Northeastern states.

18.C. Congress abolished the international slave trade in 1808, but enslavers then moved to trade people inside of the United States in large numbers.

18.D. The cotton gin transformed the United States economy. White people developed the “Cotton Kingdom” in the Southeast with the forced labor of millions of enslaved Africans.

**18.E.** As white people expanded plantation-based slavery throughout the Southeast, they increasingly demanded Indigenous land. The desire for cotton-rich lands led many white people to support the Indian Removal Act of 1830. The federal government used this act to forcibly remove Indigenous people from the Southeast.

**18.F.** Cotton plantations were tied to the entire country. They produced cotton for Northern industry and bought food, clothing, tools and other goods from the entire country.

**ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE 19**

**Students will know that national disagreements about slavery became so strong that 11 states seceded from the United States to form their own country, leading to the Civil War.**

**What Else Should My Students Know?**

**19.A.** As the United States continued to dispossess Native nations of their lands throughout the West, the states where slavery was legal pressed for expanding slavery in new U.S. territories so that they would have the same decision-making power in the Senate.

**19.B.** Abraham Lincoln and the Republican party thought that slavery should not expand into the new U.S. territories, but many states disagreed.

**19.C.** Just as states had the option to join the United States of America, they believed that they could leave through secession. Others believed that the Union was indivisible.

**19.D.** After Lincoln was elected president, 11 states seceded from the United States because they feared that the federal government would end the expansion of slavery. They formed a new government called the Confederate States of America, and the two sides went to war.

**19.E.** Many African Americans fought for the Union Army. Native nations fought on both sides of the war or did not participate.

**19.F.** After the Union won the Civil War, the 13th Amendment to the Constitution abolished slavery. This abolition often did not reach Indigenous people who were enslaved.

**ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE 20**

**Students will know that after the Civil War, formerly enslaved people faced many obstacles, including racism and political, social and economic inequality. Their descendants continue to face similar oppression today, though it looks different now than it did then.**

**What Else Should My Students Know?**

**20.A.** After the war, formerly enslaved Africans responded to freedom in different ways. Most tried to reunite with their families. Some set up new institutions, including schools, while participating in politics by voting and serving in government if they were able.

**20.B.** Although formerly enslaved Africans were promised land and resources to set up their own farms, most did not receive these from the federal government. Some who did receive land and resources later had them taken away. Newly freed people had to figure out how to make a living and support their families.

**20.C.** For about 10 years after the Civil War, the federal government provided services to the formerly enslaved and took steps designed to protect their political and civil rights, but these advances were later overturned.

**20.D.** Provisions that granted rights to formerly enslaved Africans, such as the 13th Amendment, the Civil Rights Act of 1866 and the 14th Amendment, did not protect Indigenous people from enslavement. After the Civil War, the United States continued to war against Native nations to steal their land. The federal government also developed a series of schools to forcibly assimilate Indigenous children into white culture.

# Grades 6-12

This section outlines the 22 Summary Objectives for grades 6-12. The Summary Objectives are grouped into five eras to provide a blueprint for integrating instruction about American slavery across the entire span of pre-1877 American history. Each era is designated with a section title and with dates, so you can skip to a particular time period or consult the framework continuously as you move through your courses.

Below, you will also find “What Else Should My Students Know?” for each Summary Objective. This section provides more key content to help guide instruction.

Visit [learningforjustice.org/THH](https://learningforjustice.org/THH) for “How Can I Teach This?” resources for each Summary Objective.

## PRE-COLONIAL AND COLONIAL ERA (TO 1763)

### SUMMARY OBJECTIVE 1

**Students will recognize that slavery existed around the world prior to the European invasion of North America, changing forms depending on time and place. The enslaved often were perceived as outsiders: captives in war, the vanquished or colonized, or ethnic or religious others.**

#### What Else Should My Students Know?

**1.A.** Slavery is the holding of people through force, fraud or coercion for purposes of sexual exploitation or forced labor so that the enslaver can extract profit. (Definition adapted from the organization Free the Slaves:

[freetheslaves.net/faqs-glossary](https://freetheslaves.net/faqs-glossary))

**1.B.** While people have enslaved others in many ways in different times and places, unfree labor is not always slavery. For example, chattel slavery is an intergenerational system of slavery where individuals are held as property and traded as commodities. Indentured servants are not enslaved. They sell their labor for a certain number of years to pay a debt.

**1.C.** Europeans enslaved people long before colonization. Slavery was widespread in the Roman Empire and later justified on the basis of religion during the Crusades. Until the 1450s, European sugar planters in the Mediterranean imported enslaved laborers from parts of Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

**1.D.** Slavery was common in Africa and the Americas before European invasion. Arab traders enslaved and sold millions of Africans beginning in the eighth century. Enslavement was common in the Mayan empire. When Europeans arrived, most enslaved people in Africa and the Americas were war captives. Once taken, their lives differed. In some societies, slavery could be socially alienating, with enslaved people considered as labor, prestige goods or expendable. In other societies, enslaved people could integrate into kinship networks and even become people of power and influence.

In North America, as in Africa, European intervention greatly expanded slavery in scale, scope and consequence.

### SUMMARY OBJECTIVE 2

**Students will describe the nature and extent of colonial enslavement of Indigenous people.**

#### What Else Should My Students Know?

**2.A.** Throughout the Americas, Europeans enslaved between 2.5 million and 5 million Indigenous people. In much of what is now North America, Indigenous people were bought and sold until the late 19th century.

**2.B.** All European colonies enslaved Indigenous people for profit, justifying the practice because of perceived racial and cultural inferiority. Many enslaved Indigenous people were forced to labor far from home, as evidenced by the mass export of women and children to Europe and the Caribbean, often called the “Reverse Middle Passage.” Sometimes the profit from these sales was used to purchase enslaved Africans to work in the American colonies.

**2.C.** European pursuit of enslaved Indigenous labor caused widespread warfare. Often, colonists financed or otherwise coerced their Indigenous allies to engage in wars with other Indigenous peoples for the purpose of acquiring people to enslave. Some Native nations initiated conflicts and capture to profit from selling captives to Europeans.

**2.D.** The violence of slavery further devastated Native nations already weakened by European-introduced diseases. Because of the combined effects of disease, slavery and war, the Indigenous population in the Americas declined from 60 million people to as few as 4 million by the 1600s. These populations later rebounded significantly, and today there are about 5.2 million Indigenous people living in the United States alone.

### SUMMARY OBJECTIVE 3

**Students will describe the slave trade from Africa to the Americas.**

#### What Else Should My Students Know?

**3.A.** Western Hemispheric destinations of captive Africans included South America, the Caribbean and North America.

**3.B.** European slave traders participated in and fundamentally changed the existing slave trade in Africa. The demand for enslaved people in the European colonies of the Western Hemisphere greatly expanded the African slave trade beyond taking people captive in war.

**3.C.** Europeans argued that dark skin color (which they hyperbolically described as “Black”), lack of Christianity and different styles of dress were evidence that Africans were less civilized. These were rationales for enslavement. Many believed that it was generally acceptable to enslave non-Christians.

**3.D.** The Middle Passage was the voyage of enslaved people from the west coast of Africa to the Americas, usually via the Caribbean. Enslaved people endured traumatic conditions on slavers’ ships, including cramped quarters, meager rations and physical and sexual assault.

**3.E.** Enslavers assigned monetary value to the people they traded. These prices varied over time and place. For much of the trade in enslaved Native people, women and children were the most highly valued because they were thought to be less rebellious and more suited to household labor. Enslavers assigned different values to enslaved Africans and African Americans, particularly in the 19th century. Men in their mid-20s were the most expensive because of their physical strength; young enslaved African women were most valuable before puberty because of the assumption that they would have children who would be the property of their enslaver.

**SUMMARY OBJECTIVE 4**

**Students will demonstrate the impact of slavery on the development of the French, British and Spanish colonies in North America.**

**What Else Should My Students Know?**

**4.A.** Enslaved labor was essential to the economy of all colonies in North America. Enslaved people produced the major agricultural and mineral exports of the colonial era, including tobacco, rice, sugar, indigo, silver and gold.

**4.B.** Indigenous people were enslaved throughout all British colonies. The trade in enslaved Indigenous people contributed to transformative conflicts such as the Pequot War and King Philip’s War. After the Yamasee War, several Southern Native nations rose up against British trade practices and nearly destroyed South Carolina. Thereafter, British colonies increasingly turned toward enslaving Africans in much larger numbers. The English in the Middle Colonies and New England were involved in slavery and its related trade, shipping foodstuffs, lumber and other necessities in exchange for rice, sugar and molasses produced by enslaved people.

**4.C.** Enslavement varied in French colonies. In New France, most enslaved people were Indigenous. In the Caribbean and Louisiana, French colonists developed vast plantations powered by enslaved African and Indigenous laborers. Intense work, poor diet and unrelenting

heat made sugar plantations especially deadly. In the 1600s and 1700s, many enslaved people were Indigenous captives whom the French acquired through warfare or trade. But plummeting Indigenous population levels led the French to rely increasingly on the African slave trade.

**4.D.** Enslavement was widespread under Spanish rule in the Americas. Colonists relied upon labor by enslaved Indigenous and African people forced to mine for gold and silver, grow crops and perform domestic labor. The monarchy’s repeated attempts to constrain or outlaw the enslavement of Indigenous people did not end it. Colonists defied the crown outright or exploited exceptions, including the establishment of the repartimiento system, whereby Indigenous people were legally free but wealthy colonizers still forced them to work. As Europeans sought to profit from enslaved labor, Indigenous peoples increasingly sold people captured during war instead of integrating captives into their communities. Some Native nations exploited colonial loopholes by taking control of the initial capture and sale of newly enslaved Indigenous people.

**THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION AND THE CONSTITUTION (1763-1787)**

**SUMMARY OBJECTIVE 5**

**Students will describe the roles that slavery, Native nations and African Americans played in the Revolutionary War.**

**What Else Should My Students Know?**

**5.A.** The Declaration of Independence addressed slavery in several ways, including author Thomas Jefferson’s indictment of the crown’s initiation of the slave trade (deleted from the final draft) and the charge that the king had “excited domestic insurrection among us.” The document also describes Indigenous people as “merciless Indian Savages.”

**5.B.** Free and enslaved people used the language of the Revolution to argue for their own rights. African American and Indigenous participation in the war was largely in pursuit of freedom rather than loyalty to a particular side.

**5.C.** Many Native nations fought in the Revolutionary War on both sides, while others tried to remain neutral. Disagreements about the Revolution split the Iroquois Confederacy. Most nations allied with the British because they hoped to end further colonial encroachment. After the war, even nations that had sided with the colonists lost land and liberties.

**5.D.** Black soldiers participated in the early Revolutionary battles of Lexington, Concord and Bunker Hill, but General George Washington opposed including them in the Continental Army. After the British offered freedom to Black men, Washington relented. He raised a Black regiment to reinforce the Continental Army, and thousands of Black men fought in the Continental Army or at sea.

**5.E.** The British actively recruited free and enslaved Black men. Though the British promised freedom in return for service, Black Loyalists faced an uncertain future as the British retreated at the end of the war. Many fled and others were captured and re-enslaved.

#### **SUMMARY OBJECTIVE 6**

**Students will demonstrate the ways that the Constitution provided direct and indirect protection to slavery and imbued enslavers and slave states with increased political power.**

#### **What Else Should My Students Know?**

**6.A.** Articles 1, 4 and 5 of the Constitution offer direct protection of slavery.

- Article 1, Section 2, Paragraph 3—The “three-fifths” clause counted three-fifths of the enslaved population to determine a state’s representation in Congress. The clause also stated that three-fifths of the enslaved population would be counted if a direct tax were levied on the states according to population, though most delegates assumed this would never happen.
- Article 1, Section 9, Paragraph 4—This section repeated the tax section of the three-fifths clause. It reiterated that if a head tax were ever levied, enslaved persons would be taxed at three-fifths the rate of white people.
- Article 1, Section 9, Paragraph 9—The slave trade clause prohibited Congress from banning the international slave trade before 1808. It did not require Congress to ban the trade at that time. This clause exempted the slave trade from the Congressional power to regulate interstate commerce.
- Article 4, Section 2, Paragraph 3—The “fugitive slave” clause required that people who escaped enslavement be returned to their enslavers even if they had fled to another state.
- Article 5—This article prohibited any amendment of the slave trade or head tax clauses before 1808.

**6.B.** Articles 1, 2, 4 and 5 also offer indirect protection of slavery.

- Article 1, Section 8, Paragraph 15—This section empowered the use of the militia to suppress rebellions, including rebellions by enslaved people.
- Article 1, Section 9, Paragraph 5—This section prohibited taxes on exports. This prevented Congress from indirectly taxing slavery by taxing products produced by enslaved laborers.
- Article 2, Section 1, Paragraph 2—This section included the three-fifths clause as part of the Electoral College, giving white people in slave states a disproportionate influence in the election of the president.
- Article 4, Section 3, Paragraph 1—This section established a process to admit new states—both slave and free—to the Union.
- Article 4, Section 4—This section guaranteed that the U.S. government would protect states from “domestic Violence,” including rebellions by enslaved people.

- Article 5—This section required three-fourths of the states to ratify any amendment to the Constitution. This gave slave states a veto over any constitutional changes so long as they were not greatly outnumbered by free states.

**6.C.** The Constitution created a federal government without the power to interfere in the domestic institutions of the states. This ensured that the federal government could not emancipate enslaved people in particular states.

#### **SLAVERY IN THE EARLY REPUBLIC (1787-1808)**

##### **SUMMARY OBJECTIVE 7**

**Students will examine how the Revolutionary War affected the institution of slavery in the new nation and the ways that slavery shaped domestic and foreign policy in the early Republic.**

#### **What Else Should My Students Know?**

**7.A.** In most Northern states, a combination of gradual emancipation laws, court decisions and other laws prohibiting slavery began the process of eliminating slavery after the Revolution. Racism delayed and drew out plans for emancipation so that formerly enslaved people were denied legal equality and economic opportunities.

**7.B.** In the Chesapeake (British colonies that later became Virginia and Maryland), the egalitarian rhetoric of the Revolution had a mixed impact. For white Virginians, the law had a fairly limited impact on slavery despite the decline of the tobacco industry. Portions of the free Black and enslaved populations used the ideas of the American and Haitian Revolutions as inspiration for Gabriel’s Rebellion, a planned uprising by enslaved people that was to take place in Richmond in 1800.

**7.C.** The Haitian Revolution (1791–1804) inspired enslaved Americans and frightened their enslavers. The United States, where enslavers were disproportionately represented in all branches of government, refused to recognize Haiti’s independence from France until 1862.

#### **THE CHANGING FACE OF SLAVERY (1808-1848)**

##### **SUMMARY OBJECTIVE 8**

**Students will examine how the expanding cotton economy spurred Indian Removal and the domestic slave trade.**

#### **What Else Should My Students Know?**

**8.A.** The invention of the cotton gin in 1793 had a dramatic effect on the profitability of short-staple cotton. The cotton gin allowed two enslaved laborers to remove the seeds from 50 pounds of cotton in a single day. Before its invention, a single enslaved laborer could clean an average of only one pound of cotton each day.

**8.B.** Motivated by a desire for cotton-rich lands, many

white people supported the Indian Removal Act of 1830. Others, including many clergy and members of the Whig Party, opposed it. And many disenfranchised people publicly spoke out against it even though they lacked political power. Andrew Jackson made Indian Removal the cornerstone of his presidency and enforced it in defiance of a Supreme Court ruling (*Worcester v. Georgia*, 1832). The federal government, joined by states and troops, used this act to force about 100,000 Indigenous people to move west of the Mississippi River. More than 4,000 African Americans, who were held in slavery among Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws and Creeks, were also forced west. Thousands of people died in these migrations, which many remember as the “Trail of Tears” or the “Trail of Death.”

**8.C.** Although Congress banned participation in the international slave trade in 1808, geographic and economic expansion allowed by Removal dramatically increased the domestic trade in enslaved people of African descent. Enslavers wanted to use the labor of enslaved African Americans to maximize profits and expand the plantation system. During the first half of the 19th century, more than a million African Americans were forced to move to parts of the Deep South. This separated and traumatized many families. So many enslaved people were forced to make this journey that it came to be known as “The Second Middle Passage.”

**8.D.** Indigenous land dispossession and the domestic slave trade led to large profits for land speculators, removal agents and enslavers. Complex economic structures emerged to support the domestic slave trade, including insurance companies that insured enslaved people as property, traders and auction houses that served as middlemen and clearing-houses, and banks that provided credit for the purchase of enslaved laborers or allowed the capital represented in the bodies of enslaved people to be used as collateral for loans.

#### **SUMMARY OBJECTIVE 9**

**Students will describe the principal ways the labor of enslaved people was organized and controlled in what is now the United States.**

#### **What Else Should My Students Know?**

**9.A.** While the work of enslaved people varied widely across North America, most enslaved people lived in small households in close proximity to their enslavers. They labored to maintain their enslavers’ families, houses and farms. This included tasks such as cooking, child care and cleaning.

**9.B.** Enslaved people were often highly skilled, using training and knowledge from their home cultures while acquiring new abilities.

**9.C.** The labor that enslaved people were forced to do was often very dangerous and physically taxing, regard-

less of the type of work or geographic location. Most enslaved people performed heavy labor growing crops such as cotton, rice and tobacco. About five percent of enslaved people labored in coal mines and industrial mills in the United States. Many enslaved people worked under the supervision of an overseer or a driver. In the southern United States, overseers were often white Southerners. Drivers were usually enslaved men who were entrusted (at least temporarily) with supervisory powers.

#### **SUMMARY OBJECTIVE 10**

**Students will analyze the growth of the abolitionist movement in the 1830s and the slaveholding states’ view of the movement as a physical, economic and political threat.**

#### **What Else Should My Students Know?**

**10.A.** Opposition to slavery in North America dates to slavery’s beginnings there. Enslaved men and women were constantly seeking ways to use the religious and civil values espoused by enslavers to argue for their own freedom. Indigenous people in the early British and Spanish colonies tried to use the courts to gain freedom, but few succeeded.

**10.B.** Some colonists argued for abolition very early, including Bartolomé de las Casas in the 16th-century Spanish colonies and some white Quakers in 18th-century British colonies.

**10.C.** During the Revolution, many enslaved people actively sought their freedom by escaping to the British or by adopting the language of inalienable rights and challenging white American colonists to live up to their liberty-loving rhetoric.

**10.D.** Many prominent white people, including Thomas Jefferson and James Madison (both enslavers), thought slavery would eventually end but did not support abolition. In the early 19th century, they joined a majority of white Americans supporting the removal of African Americans to Africa. The American Colonization Society raised money to facilitate this removal, which they said would include both free and enslaved African Americans. African American opposition to the American Colonization Society was part of a new, centralized movement to promote abolition and work toward citizenship rights.

**10.E.** William Lloyd Garrison and Black allies launched the radical abolitionist movement in 1831 using the ideas of all of these predecessors. Garrison began promoting immediate abolition as an alternative to gradual emancipation or colonization. He started publishing the anti-slavery newspaper *The Liberator* in 1831 and founded the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1833.

**10.F.** White women and free Black Northerners, many of whom also opposed the Indian Removal Act, were among the largest groups represented in Northern abolitionist



societies. Influential advocates included Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, and many others who had escaped enslavement and the publishers of many Black newspapers. Even so, scholars estimate that abolitionists never accounted for more than one percent of the population, meaning that support for enslavement continued to be widespread among the white settler population.

**10.G.** Southern lawmakers and cultural leaders reacted to the growth of Northern abolition with an increased commitment to defending slavery as a positive good and with political actions to prevent the spread of the abolitionist message in the South.

#### **SUMMARY OBJECTIVE 11**

**Students will recognize that enslaved people resisted slavery in ways that ranged from violence to smaller, everyday means of asserting their humanity and opposing their enslavers.**

#### **What Else Should My Students Know?**

**11.A.** Violent rebellions by enslaved people were rare in continental North America. Unlike in the British Caribbean, where violent uprisings were more common, enslaved people in British North America and the United States were outnumbered by white people. Moreover, substantial militias in the United States were ready to put down armed rebellions.

**11.B.** Despite the rarity of violent rebellion, evidence suggests that enslavers were often anxious that enslaved people would find ways to harm them. Enslaved women, for example, who were frequently the cooks in their enslavers' households, were often feared to use poison.

**11.C.** Anger at slavery contributed to the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. In a coordinated uprising, the Pueblo people liberated themselves from Spanish oppression by killing hundreds of colonists and successfully driving the Spanish from New Mexico for more than a decade.

**11.D.** In 1739, a group of enslaved people in South Carolina participated in the Stono Rebellion, the largest rebellion against slavery in the British mainland colonies.

**11.E.** In 1831, Nat Turner, an enslaved man from Southampton County, Virginia, orchestrated a rebellion. Seeking freedom, enslaved people killed at least 50 white people. Many died in the attempt. Afterward, enslaved and free black people in the East were prohibited from holding or attending religious assemblies without white supervision. Many Southern states also tightened laws against teaching enslaved people to read and write and further restricted the movements and liberties of free African Americans.

**11.F.** Sometimes Indigenous people and African Americans joined together. During the 1700s and early 1800s, many

people of African descent (later called Black Seminoles) came to Seminole territory in what is now Florida. Some were forced there as captives, and others joined voluntarily, having escaped slavery elsewhere in the South. Black Seminoles became tributaries of Seminole chiefs; they lived in independent villages and enjoyed a great deal of liberty, but owed Seminoles a percentage of their crops as well as military allegiance. During the Second Seminole War (1835–1842), Seminoles and Black Seminoles joined together to protect themselves against Indian Removal and the spread of slavery.

**11.G.** Everyday acts of resistance were common. These included working slowly, breaking tools, feigning illness, feigning ignorance to avoid work and running away for short periods. Religion—which stressed the self-esteem, dignity and humanity of enslaved people—also proved a means of resistance. Working to build and maintaining kinship networks was another “everyday” form of resistance. Many enslaved people resisted by learning to read and write European languages.

**11.H.** Enslaved people who successfully escaped were known as “fugitive slaves.” Escape was common enough that:

- There was an elaborate system of patrols to catch people escaping from slavery.
- Enslavers depended on newspapers to advertise their “fugitive slaves.”
- Some white men made a living catching fugitives.
- Residents of free states and of many Native nations were bound by fugitive slave laws and treaty provisions, respectively, to return escapees.

#### **SUMMARY OBJECTIVE 12**

**Students will discuss the nature, persistence and impact of the spiritual beliefs and cultures of enslaved people.**

#### **What Else Should My Students Know?**

**12.A.** Across all European colonies and what is now the United States, white settlers forbade enslaved people from practicing their own spiritual practices and forced them to convert to Christianity. While religion was often a critical tool of oppression and cultural extinction, it could also be a form of resistance. Many enslaved people used the Christian message of God's love and the promise of a spiritual paradise to express their own desire for freedom in this world and the next. They also called on this idea to resist enslavers' use of religion as a justification for slavery.

**12.B.** Many enslaved African and Indigenous people used Christian rituals as tools of resistance so they could continue their cultural beliefs and practices. Others developed hybrid traditions that blended their cultural forms of spirituality and religion with Protestant and Catholic rituals and beliefs. These new forms of religious expression

continue to thrive across what is now the United States.

**12.C.** Enslaved people drew on longstanding traditions of communicating oral history to pass along knowledge and stories when reading and writing were strictly controlled.

**12.D.** More than 573 sovereign Native nations exist today in what is now the United States. Many of the Indigenous people who belong to these nations continue to engage with their lands, languages, art forms, food traditions, political systems, economies and spiritual belief systems.

**12.E.** Enslaved Africans created two of America's most enduring musical forms: spirituals and blues music.

**12.F.** Indigenous and African foodways persisted and developed during enslavement, continuing to the present day and influencing diets across what is now North America with foods like corn and barbecue.

## THE SECTIONAL CRISIS AND CIVIL WAR (1848-1877)

### SUMMARY OBJECTIVE 13

**Students will examine the expansion of slavery as a key factor in the domestic and foreign policy decisions of the United States in the 19th century.**

#### What Else Should My Students Know?

**13.A.** Slavery was key in the debates about entering the Mexican War and admitting Missouri, Texas, Kansas and California to the Union.

**13.B.** The desire to maintain a balance of slave states and free states in the Senate was central to Southern lawmakers' domestic policy.

**13.C.** The Kansas-Nebraska Act and its potential effect on the expansion of slavery was a key event in the sectional crisis. After the Kansas-Nebraska Act was passed, both Northerners and Southerners rushed to populate Kansas. The violence of "Bleeding Kansas" resulted.

**13.D.** In 1857, Chief Justice Taney wrote the majority decision for the Supreme Court in the Dred Scott case. Southern enslavers applauded the decision, which they saw as recognizing enslaved people as their property. Northerners were outraged. Taney's decision established several key precedents related to slavery. The three most important were:

- There was nowhere in the United States enslaved people could go to be free. Taney ruled that the status of enslaved people was determined by the laws in their home state; traveling to a free state did not render an enslaved person free (this was the key issue at hand).
- Black people were not citizens of the United States. Because Scott was Black, Taney's argument said, he was not a citizen. Because he was not a citizen, he had no right to sue.

- The Missouri Compromise of 1820 was unconstitutional. According to Taney, the Missouri Compromise restricted slavery in the territories, which Congress did not have the power to do.

### SUMMARY OBJECTIVE 14

**Students will analyze the 1860 election of Abraham Lincoln and the subsequent decision that several slave states made to secede from the Union to ensure the preservation and expansion of slavery.**

#### What Else Should My Students Know?

**14.A.** Lincoln disliked slavery but believed that the Constitution protected the institution where it existed. He ran on the Republican platform of non-expansion of slavery into the territories.

**14.B.** The first seven states to secede from the Union were South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas. In their declarations to the world explaining why they seceded, slavery and the political conflict over slavery were the central factors.

**14.C.** The Confederate States of America was established in February 1861 (but never recognized by any other government or nation). Its constitution legalized and protected slavery.

**14.D.** It is estimated that 20,000 Indigenous people participated in the Civil War on the Union and Confederate sides. Their reasons varied. The Confederacy, seeking to ally with enslaving peoples of the Southern nations, promised to protect slavery as well as Indigenous land. The Union, meanwhile, declared that, to uphold existing treaties, Native nations had to side with them. Many Native nations initially tried to remain neutral but were drawn in once the war touched their territories.

### SUMMARY OBJECTIVE 15

**Students will examine how Union policies concerning slavery and African American military service affected the Civil War, and they will describe how free Black and enslaved communities affected the Civil War.**

#### What Else Should My Students Know?

**15.A.** Union political leaders initially rejected emancipation and Black military service to appease border states, where slavery was legal.

**15.B.** Enslaved African Americans fled to Union lines in such numbers that the military accepted them as contraband property, a classification that negated any legal claims of ownership by enslavers and set important precedents for more general emancipation.

**15.C.** It was largely through the persistence of the Af-

frican American community that Union policy on black military service changed. Eventually, the 180,000 Black soldiers who served, including the 98,500 formerly enslaved men, provided a crucial service to the Union Army.

**15.D** Many enslaved African Americans who remained on Southern plantations and farms risked their lives to help Union forces and hinder the Confederate military, including by providing valuable information on troop numbers and positions.

**15.E** In the South, enslaved men, women and children left plantations in large numbers or refused to work. Their actions affected the Confederacy's ability to supply its army and feed its civilians.

**15.F** The Emancipation Proclamation was the culmination of evolving Union policy. Lincoln's proclamation freed enslaved people in areas of seceded states not under Union control, though it did not necessarily include Indigenous enslavement. The Emancipation Proclamation was the result of several factors: Lincoln's developing opposition to slavery, the changing sentiment in the North about the necessity of ending slavery as a way to end the war, the valor of the African American soldiers who fought for freedom, and the self-emancipation of hundreds of thousands of enslaved Southerners who had already fled to Union lines.

#### **SUMMARY OBJECTIVE 16**

**Students will examine how Indigenous people participated in and were affected by the Civil War.**

#### **What Else Should My Students Know?**

**16.A** Indigenous people fought on both sides of the Civil War, depending on which side they believed would better protect the interests of their own nation.

**16.B** During the Civil War, the United States failed to meet many treaty obligations with Native nations. In Minnesota, the Dakota Nation stopped receiving payments and food that had been promised for ceded land. They were starving and sought to reclaim their land. This led to the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862. When the Dakota nation surrendered, it suffered mass internment. Lincoln authorized the hanging of 38 Dakota soldiers, the largest mass execution in the history of the United States.

**16.C** In the Southwest, the Union army drove Texans out of New Mexico and killed 150 Cheyenne and Arapaho civilians in the Sand Creek Massacre. Next, Union forces led by "Kit" Carson attacked Navajo people when they would not surrender and cede their land. Slavers from Mexico and some Native nations took thousands of Navajo captives during the war and its aftermath. The United States forced thousands of Navajo civilians to walk hundreds of miles, interning and ultimately displacing them.

**16.D** After the Civil War, the United States redeployed many federal troops west to continue national expansion by taking Indigenous land. Indigenous people resisted. The ensuing campaigns, which some call the "Indian Wars," lasted through 1877.

#### **SUMMARY OBJECTIVE 17**

**Students will recognize that slavery continued in many forms through most of the 19th century in what is now the United States.**

#### **What Else Should My Students Know?**

**17.A** In the Southwest, most bound laborers were Indigenous or Latinx. They were forced into labor through various means, including capture in warfare and debt peonage. Indigenous enslavement in the Southwest was so widespread in the 1800s that by the mid-1860s, almost all property owners in New Mexico enslaved Indigenous people.

**17.B** Debt peonage was widely used in the West throughout the 1800s. Enslavers claimed that their laborers were working off debts, though these debts could be transferred from one landowner to another and could also be passed from parent to child.

**17.C** Some Native nations raided Mexico repeatedly, bringing Mexican captives north for sale or for incorporation into their nations. Native nations engaged in the slave trade changed tactics and even purposes over time, as social changes led to different economic needs. For example, while Comanche raiders once conducted raids for the purposes of acquiring captives to sell into slavery, a shifting economy (a rise in the hide trade, for example) led to more incorporation of captives into their own labor force.

**17.D** Slavery took many forms in California, technically a free state, and expanded after the population boom associated with the California Gold Rush. Some enslaved African Americans were forced to migrate west alongside their enslavers. Many thousands of Indigenous people were held in bondage in households and on ranches and mines. As slavery evolved, mandatory employment laws, forced apprenticeship, vagrancy laws and convict leasing came to control the labor and lives of Indigenous people.

**17.E** In Utah, Mormons enslaved Indigenous people, holding at least 400 children between 1847 and 1900. The territorial legislature authorized Utah residents to purchase Indigenous children and hold them in bondage. The practice was justified as an attempt to "civilize" or "save" these children; Brigham Young said that Mormons were called to make Indigenous people into "a white and delightful people."

#### **SUMMARY OBJECTIVE 18**

**Students will examine the ways that people who were enslaved tried to claim their freedom after the Civil War.**

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### What Else Should My Students Know?

**18.A.** Provisions that guaranteed rights to formerly enslaved Africans, such as the 13th Amendment, the Civil Rights Act of 1866 and the 14th Amendment, did not protect Indigenous people from enslavement. African Americans enslaved by Indigenous people were also not clearly protected by these provisions or by the Reconstruction Treaties signed after the Civil War. The tribal status of these freedmen remains controversial today.

**18.B.** Indigenous people were not protected from involuntary servitude in large part because they were excluded from citizenship rights in the Constitution as “Indians not taxed.” The Supreme Court upheld the exclusion of Indigenous people from 14th Amendment protection in *Elk v. Wilkins* (1884).

**18.C.** Freed African Americans sought to exercise their freedom in several ways, including relocating (leaving the plantations where they had been enslaved); pursuing education (in the numerous schools established after the war); living as families; and participating in politics.

**18.D.** Black voters became influential in Southern elections during Congressional Reconstruction. Between 1865 and 1877, Black men served in the U.S. Senate, the U.S. House of Representatives and in state capitols. More than 600 black men also served in state legislatures.

**18.E.** The Indian Citizenship Act of 1924 formally extended citizenship to all Indigenous people. Though some Indigenous people were already citizens by this time, many Indigenous people did not desire citizenship in the United States (they were already citizens of their own nations). One byproduct of the law may have been that Indigenous people, as U.S. citizens, were now protected from enslavement.

#### SUMMARY OBJECTIVE 19

**Students will examine the ways that the federal government’s policies affected the lives of formerly enslaved people.**

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### What Else Should My Students Know?

**19.A.** The U.S. Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands (the Freedmen’s Bureau) was a large bureaucracy created after the Civil War to help African Americans who had been enslaved. It provided services including legal aid, food, housing and education. The Freedmen’s Bureau also tried to reunite separated families and oversaw the attempts to settle formerly enslaved people on confiscated or abandoned Confederate lands.

**19.B.** Access to land was one of the main issues to affect the lives of formerly enslaved African Americans. During the war, the Union Army relocated formerly enslaved people onto confiscated Confederate land. However, most of those resettled were kicked off their farms in

1866 when President Andrew Johnson ordered the land returned to the former enslavers.

**19.C.** By passing the 14th and 15th Amendments during Congressional (Radical) Reconstruction, the federal government made a commitment to protect the legal and political rights of African Americans. Federal troops enforced the civil and political rights of African Americans in the South during Congressional Reconstruction.

**19.D.** None of these Reconstruction efforts applied to formerly enslaved Indigenous people, whose lands and rights continued to be taken away after the end of the Civil War.

**19.E.** The 1877 Dawes Severalty Act divided tribal lands into allotments meant for private ownership. The act, which was an attempt to assimilate Indigenous people and undermine tribal governance, offered citizenship to Indigenous people who accepted and held allotments for 25 years. Other land was sold to non-Indigenous people. Although Indigenous people successfully challenged the Act in court, it took 90 million acres of Indigenous land by 1934.

#### SUMMARY OBJECTIVE 20

**Students will examine the ways that white Southerners attempted to define freedom for freed African Americans.**

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### What Else Should My Students Know?

**20.A.** White Southerners largely wanted to return to the pre-war plantation economy. Sharecropping and tenant farming, which offered some independence to formerly enslaved people, emerged as the dominant labor forms in the post-war South. Unfair labor contracts between farmers and landowners left sharecroppers and tenant farmers in an endless cycle of debt and poverty.

**20.B.** The Ku Klux Klan emerged as a terrorist organization committed to violent repercussions for African Americans or their white allies who sought education, political power or economic success for the Black population.

**20.C.** Black Codes were sets of laws passed by former Confederates who regained power under Johnson’s Presidential Reconstruction. These laws codified certain rights, such as owning property or legally marrying, but they also guaranteed harsher punishments for people of color accused of the same crimes as white people.

#### SUMMARY OBJECTIVE 21

**Students will examine the impact of the Compromise of 1877 and the removal of federal troops from the former Confederacy.**

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### What Else Should My Students Know?

**21.A.** The Compromise of 1877 emerged from the contested presidential election of 1876. Republican Ruther-

ford B. Hayes was given the presidency in exchange for the formal end of Reconstruction, including the removal of the last federal troops from the South.

**21.B.** After the end of Reconstruction, the Ku Klux Klan and local and state governments attacked African American political participation, leading to the return of white Democratic rule in the former Confederacy.

**21.C.** White Democratic governments across the South used Jim Crow legal codes to enforce new ways of controlling black labor and black bodies.

**21.D.** A sustained campaign of racial terrorism, including public lynchings of thousands of African Americans, enforced white supremacy after slavery itself was ended.

#### **SUMMARY OBJECTIVE 22**

**Students will examine the ways that the legacies of slavery, white supremacy and settler colonialism continue to affect life in what is now the United States.**

#### **What Else Should My Students Know?**

**22.A.** Long traditions of African American and Indigenous resistance have shaped the United States and continue in the present, as shown by actions by the American Indian Movement, the Black Panther Party, the Black Lives Matter movement and at Standing Rock.

**22.B.** Segregation and inequality persist in the United States. This is most evident in employment, housing and education but can also be seen in health care, workplaces, sports settings and churches.

**22.C.** Profound economic inequalities stratify American society. African Americans and Indigenous people face

many obstacles to advancement, including unequal educational opportunities, unemployment, wage disparities, barriers to home ownership and persistent wealth inequality. Well into the 20th century, elite white landowners in the West and South continued to hold Indigenous and African American people as captive laborers through systems of debt peonage and carceral labor.

**22.D.** Mass incarceration has devastated many Native nations and communities of color. Police officers, district attorneys and judges arrest, charge and imprison African Americans at rates far exceeding white people, with lasting consequences for political and economic participation. The school-to-prison pipeline leads many Indigenous and African American students to come into contact with law enforcement at a young age after being suspended and expelled from school at rates much higher than those for white students.

**22.E.** The legacies of settler colonialism continue in the many ways that Indigenous people are disenfranchised and disadvantaged. Many Latinx people who come to the United States are Indigenous, and they also face many of the legacies of slavery that manifest as contemporary oppression and inequity.

**22.F.** Although race has no scientific basis, as a social construct, it has the power to profoundly affect the lived experiences of fairness, equality and opportunity for people perceived to be non-white.

**22.G.** Legacies of seeing Indigenous women as sexual objects to be bought, used and traded echo today in the extreme numbers of Indigenous women who go missing and are murdered each year.

# Acknowledgements

*Teaching Hard History: A K-5 Framework for Teaching American Slavery* was written by Kate Shuster, Hasan K. Jeffries, Meredith L. McCoy, Margaret Newell, Sarah B. Shear, Christina Snyder and Ebony Elizabeth Thomas. The framework was designed by Russell Estes and Shannon Anderson. Maureen Costello advised the content development process. Monita Bell and Julia Delacroix provided editorial support. Special thanks to all the members of the Teaching Hard History advisory board for contributing their time and talents to this project.

*Teaching Hard History: A 6-12 Framework for Teaching American Slavery* was written by Kate Shuster, Renée Gokey, Bethany Jay, Hasan K. Jeffries, Cynthia Lynn Lyerly, Meredith L. McCoy, Sarah B. Shear and Christina

Snyder. The framework was designed by Russell Estes. Maureen Costello advised the content development process. Monita Bell and Julia Delacroix provided editorial support. Special thanks to all the members of the Teaching Hard History advisory board for contributing their time and talents to this project.

*A Quick Reference Guide to Teaching Hard History: A Framework for Teaching American Slavery* was organized and edited by Crystal Keels, Anya Malley, Sarah-SoonLing Blackburn, Jaci Jones, Hoyt J. Phillips III and Monita Bell.

Special thanks to the University of Wisconsin Press and to all the scholars who contributed to the book *Understanding and Teaching American Slavery*. Your work provided the foundation upon which this project was built.