

# Analyzing Evidence... Colonial Slavery

## From the 2015 Revised Framework:

### *Analyzing Evidence: Content and Sourcing for Primary Sources*

Historical thinking involves the ability to describe, select, and evaluate relevant evidence about the past from diverse sources (including written documents, works of art, archaeological artifacts, oral traditions, and other primary sources) and draw conclusions about their relevance to different historical issues. A historical analysis of sources focuses on the interplay between the content of a source and the authorship, point of view, purpose, audience, and format or medium of that source, assessing the usefulness, reliability, and limitations of the source as historical evidence.

*Analyzing Evidence: Interpreting Secondary Sources* Historical thinking involves the ability to describe, analyze, and evaluate the different ways historians interpret the past. This includes understanding the various types of questions historians ask, well as considering as how the particular circumstances and contexts in which individual historians work and write shape their interpretations of past events and historical evidence.

## Note to Teachers:

For a great collection of interpretation activities, I recommend purchasing John P. Irish's book, "Historical Thinking Skills" which includes several activities with two varying viewpoints for practicing this skill. Remember that students will have at least one SAQ with two such sources. On top of that, students may see a pair of documents in a multiple choice set... not to mention the importance of interpretation on the DBQ!

## Note to Students:

One important way to practice this historical thinking skill is to analyze two different sources or viewpoints on one event or era. Just as historians pull information from a plethora of different sources, we must also consider more than one source when analyzing history. In an essay, this skill will enable complex conclusions. On short answer questions, you may be presented with two sources then have to analyze them. Such a task, when analyzing secondary sources, also requires an appreciation of historiography and realizing that history isn't necessarily what happened in the past. It is our perception of what happened in the past. The story changes as perspectives change, but the goal is the same: to better understand the past. As you analyze sources, consider the perspective of the author, but also consider your own viewpoint.

### 1600's Providential History

- Writers wrote about history in terms of man's relationship with God
- History is a chronicle of God's Providence toward his Chosen People
- Success is due to God's blessings, disaster due to His rebukes
- America replaced Britain as God's model of Christian virtue

### 1700's Rationalist History

- Writers began describing history in terms of nature or secularism.
- Natural Law dominated the approach as Divine Providence decreased
- Reason and logic explained things
- Self interest, not piety, became the force of man's actions

### 1800s (mid to late) Nationalist History

- Writers focus on progress, liberty, and Anglo-Saxon destiny in a more romantic way
- Anglos triumph over others as destiny in order to spread freedom

### 1900's (early) Progressive History

- Writers focus on power struggles and the development of democracy.
- History as a series of struggles between the Haves and Have Nots
- The people must fight the elite
- Freedom, democracy, capitalism, are solutions to conflict

### 1940's – 1980's Consent and Consensus History

- Writers focus on shared ideas of the people rather than conflict
- Americans are united in their love of freedom
- History is evolution of ideas, beliefs, motivations
- Politics are in the center and really not as divided as once thought
- Capitalism is to be celebrated

### 1950's – Present Conservative History

- Writers focus on history serving as a moral guide.
- History is more about people than events
- Heroes should be celebrated
- Natural law governs events

### 1960's-1970's New Left History

- Writers focus on the parts of American history that have been overlooked.
- History should expose violence, racism, oppression.
- America is not a melting pot
- Individualists and rebels should be celebrated

### 1980's – present People's History

- Writers focus on common people.
- History should be derived from primary sources like diary entries, letters
- Conflict is cultural, not moral or economic
- The ongoing struggle in America is trying to figure out how to live
- History should serve to help people better understand each other
- Global perspective is needed



