

## Topic 3 The Triangular Trade

British slaving ships never sailed empty. On each leg of their three-part voyage they always carried a full cargo. From Britain to Africa they carried trade goods. From Africa to the Caribbean and Americas they carried a human cargo – slaves. And from the Americas to Britain they carried produce grown by slaves.

See *A North East Story* ([www.abdn.ac.uk/slavery/banner1.htm](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/slavery/banner1.htm)) for more information.

### Things to do

The document (**3A**) is the summary of a voyage made by a British slaving ship in 1721–2. A printed copy with explanatory notes is also provided (**3B**), along with a map of the Triangular Trade route (**3C**).

1. Print out the document copy and notes (**3B**) and the map (**3C**).
2. Read through the document and make a list of the ship's calling points.
3. Mark on the map the ship's voyage. **Tip.** You can get more precise information about the destinations from these online maps of West Africa and the Caribbean.

Now answer the following questions. All the answers are contained in the document, but you may have to do some calculations to work them out.

4. Judging by the amount of trade goods he took with him, at which place did Captain Barlow expect to buy the most slaves?
5. Captain Barlow would have started buying slaves as soon as he arrived at Whydah. Calculate how long these people would have been kept on the ship before they arrived in Barbados.
6. If Captain Barlow also put slaves onboard at Cape Coast Castle, how long would they have spent on the ship before arriving in Barbados?
7. It is often said that the 'Middle Passage' (the voyage from Africa to the Americas) took about six to ten weeks. Looking at your answers to the two questions above, why is this statement misleading?
8. Assume that all the crew remained alive. Calculate how many slaves there were to each crew member when the ship left Whydah. What effect do you think this ratio might have had on how the crew behaved towards the slaves?
9. How many slaves died on the voyage from Whydah to Barbados? What percentage was this of the total number?
10. What clues are there in the document to explain why so many slaves died?
11. Calculate the average price per person that Captain Barlow received when he sold the slaves.
12. Look at all the costs of the voyage and the money raised from selling the slaves. Was the slave-trading part of the voyage profitable by itself?

**Resource 3A A British slaving voyage, 1721–2**

The document below summarises the slaving voyage of ship owned by the Royal African Company in 1721–2.

In the 17th century, the Royal African Company had a government monopoly of English trade with West Africa. This meant that only its ships could trade there. At its peak, the Company was shipping 5,000 slaves a year to the Caribbean and Americas. After 1698, however, the Company lost its monopoly and had to share the trade with private merchants. It steadily lost business until it finally ceased trading in 1752.

212) Whydah-Fregate. — own Ship — — — Samuel Barlow.

Purchase money 300 Tuns } Round for Whydah, thence to Jamaica, or Barbados, in case  
 £ 1000. 18 Tuns } African salt in for £ 28 of bread round.  
 48 Min

Outsell  
 £ 3285: 4: 6. Negroes intended 550.

Cargo { Goods for } CC — 1751: 13: 0  
 { Stores } Whydah. 10193: 16: 0 } £ 11945: 9: 0.

Sailed from Spithead Febr. 4<sup>th</sup> 1722<sup>o</sup>  
 Arrivd at CC April 20<sup>th</sup>  
 Sailed thence May 22<sup>o</sup>  
 Arrivd at Whydah May 27<sup>th</sup>  
 Sailed thence Sept. 9<sup>th</sup> with 500 Negroes, 459 Oz of Gold.  
 15 large Tith & 51 Serenillos.  
 Arrivd at Barbados Nov<sup>r</sup> 10<sup>th</sup> with 371 Slaves, viz<sup>t</sup>

229	Men
77	Women
49	Boys
16	Girls
371	w <sup>th</sup> sold for £ 10180: 0: 0

Sailed from Barbados 11<sup>th</sup> May 1722.  
 Arrivd in the Downs 27<sup>th</sup> June  
 brought home

255	Casks of Sugar
52	Casks of Indigo
66	Elephants brith
25	Tuns of Tustick
459	Oz of Gold — w <sup>th</sup> came out in m <sup>th</sup> 459 Oz

Capt. Barlow representing this Ship to be very crack  
 and not fitt for the Com<sup>rs</sup> service, at a Court held  
 Aug<sup>r</sup> 1. 1722 she was Orderd to be Sold.  
 Upon a Review of her, the Comm<sup>ee</sup> of Shipping  
 Reported that she may properly be fitted out for the  
 Service again, and Sept. 13<sup>th</sup> the same was agreed  
 to by the Court, & orderd to be done w<sup>th</sup> all expedition.

vide p: 56.

**Resource 3B Printed version of a British slaving voyage, 1721–2**

**Whydah – Fregate** ----- own Ship ----- **Samuel Barlow**

Purchase money 300 Tuns )  
 £1000. 18 Guns ) Bound for Whydah, then to Jamaica, or Barbados in case  
 40 Men ) he can sell 'em for £28 per head round.

Outsett  
 £3285.4.6. Negroes intended 550.

Cargo (Goods for (CCC – 1751.13.0. )  
 ( (Whydah – 10193.16.0.) £11945.9.0.  
 (Stores )

Sailed from Spithead Febr<sup>y</sup>. 4<sup>th</sup> 1720/1.  
 Arrived at CCC April 28<sup>th</sup>.  
 Sailed thence – May 22<sup>d</sup>.  
 Arrived at Whydah May 27<sup>th</sup>.  
 Sailed thence Sept<sup>r</sup>. 9<sup>th</sup> with 500 Negroes, 459 Oz. of Gold,  
 15 larger Teeth & 51 Screvelios.  
 Arrivd at Barbados Nov<sup>r</sup>. 18<sup>th</sup> with 371 Slaves, Viz<sup>t</sup>.

229 Men  
 77 Women  
 49 boyes  
 16 Girls  
 371 w<sup>ch</sup>. Sold for £10188.0.0.

Sailed from Barbados 11<sup>th</sup> May 1722.  
 Arrivd in the Downes June 27<sup>th</sup>.

brought home  
 255 Casks of Sugar  
 52 Casks of Indigo  
 66 Elephants teeth  
 25 Tuns of Fustick  
 459 Oz. of Gold – w<sup>ch</sup>. came out in melting 439 Oz.

Capt. Barlow representing this Ship to be very crank  
 and not fitt for the Comp<sup>ys</sup>. Service, at a Court held  
 Aug<sup>st</sup>. 1. 1722 she was Ordered to be Sold.

Upon a Review of her, the Comm<sup>ee</sup>. of Shipping  
 Reported that she may properly be fitted out for the  
 Service again, and Sept<sup>r</sup>. 13<sup>th</sup>. the same was agreed  
 to by the Court, & ordered to be done w<sup>th</sup>. all expedition.

A North East Story - Scotland, Africa and Slavery in the Caribbean

### **Explanatory notes**

**Whydah** – the name of the slaving ship; also a slaving port in Dahomey (now the Republic of Benin), and one of the destinations for this voyage

**own Ship** – the ship is owned by the Royal African Company, not leased

**Samuel Barlow** – the ship's captain

**300 Tuns** – the size of the ship

**18 Guns** – the number of cannons onboard the ship

**40 Men** – the size of the crew

**Purchase money** and **Outsett** – the cost of buying and fitting out the ship for the voyage

**Negroes intended** – the number of slaves the Company wanted Captain Barlow to buy

**Goods** – trade goods shipped from Britain to exchange for slaves and other purchases

**Stores** – provisions for the Company's trading forts in Africa

**CCC** – Cape Coast Castle, a British trading fort on the Gold Coast (now in Ghana)

**February 4<sup>th</sup> 1720/1** – February 4<sup>th</sup> 1721 in today's calendar

**Oz.** – an ounce, 1/16<sup>th</sup> of a pound

**Teeth** – elephant tusks; ivory

**Screvelios** – small elephant tusks

**Vizt.** – videlicet, a Latin term meaning 'that is to say' or 'namely'

**Downes** – The Downs, a sheltered area of sea off the east coast of Kent

**Fustick** – a tropical American tree that produces a yellow dye

**crank** – unfit for sailing

**Court** – the Royal African Company's Court of Directors

**Resource 3C Map of the Triangular Trade**

