

Classroom Activity

Slavery past & present.

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Slavery has been around for thousands of years. The Romans used slavery as one of the ways they ran their Empire.

Some slaves were well-treated, others died in appalling conditions. Some slaves could be freed through manumission, others were born and died in slavery.



Slavery in Roman times.



Tiberius

For some Romans, such as our dinner party host, Tiberius Lucilius Maximus, slaves were a way to show off your wealth.

Romans thought that people who weren't Roman citizens were inferior and Tiberius probably didn't think using them as slaves was wrong. He thought it was normal because everyone else was doing it and it worked for him.



Brighid

Hello, My name is Brighid and I come from Britannia. I was captured by the Romans and sold as a slave. My owner renamed me Aurelia, which means golden – because I have blond hair. My job is to serve my owner and his friends at the banquet. I hope I don't drop anything – I've been told I'll be beaten if I do.



Fronto

Salve! My name is Fronto and I am one of the chief slaves for my master. I am his chief cup bearer, a job like a butler, and it's my job to organise tonight's banquet. It's going to be pretty big, so I need to get it right. So much to do!

Q: How do you think Aurelia/Brighid or Fronto felt about being slaves?

What did the Romans say about slaves?

Divide into groups and study what some ancient Romans said about slaves. Read the questions on the next page and prepare your answers as a group. Discuss your answers as a class.

Seneca

"Look at our kitchens, and the cooks, who bustle about over so many fires; is it, think you, for a single belly that all this bustle and preparation of food takes place?"

Apuleius

"Their skins were seamed all over with the marks of old floggings, as you could easily see through the holes in their ragged shirts that shaded rather than covered their scarred backs; but some wore only loin-cloths. They had letters branded on their foreheads and half-shaved heads and irons on their legs. Their complexions were frightfully yellow, their eyelids caked with the smoke of the baking ovens, their eyes so bleary and inflamed that they could hardly see out of them."

Horace

"It makes me sick to see a slave with greasy paws, from licking at some food he thieved."

Petronius

"He never went to school, but I educated him by sending him round the hawkers in the market. He is terribly clever; he is a cobbler too, a cook, a confectioner, a slave of all the talents. He has only two faults, and if he were rid of them he would be simply perfect. I bought him for three hundred denarii."

Cicero

"The servants who wait are filthy and some of them decrepit; one man doubles the parts of cook and steward. He does not keep a baker or a properly stocked larder, and sends out for his bread and his wine".

Discussion questions:

Read the questions and prepare answers for a class discussion.

- Did all the Romans seem to have the same opinion of slaves? Discuss who showed concern for slaves and who didn't.
- Pick two quotes and describe how they make you feel & why?
- Was life for all slaves the same or different? Explain your answer.
- If you had lived in Roman times - how do you think you would have felt about having your own slave.
- If you had lived in Roman times - how do you think you would have felt about being bought as a slave?
- Have opinions on slavery changed since Roman times?

Classroom Activity

Does slavery still exist today?

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It is believed millions of children and adults are trapped in slavery in every single country in the world. Including yours.

Modern slavery is the severe exploitation of other people for personal or commercial gain. It can take many forms such as forced labour, human trafficking, forced marriage and the slavery of children.



Can we help to stop slavery?

Have you ever eaten chocolate? It tastes great, right? But did you know some of the chocolate we buy involves child slavery?

Chocolate is made from the cocoa bean. Around 2 million children are involved in the farming of the cocoa bean, many of them slaves. Some need to work to support their families, but some are sold to work on the cocoa farms. In a recent investigation of cocoa farms supplying chocolate company Nestle, it was found that 7% of the people working on cocoa farms were children.



<https://www.fairlabor.org/blog/entry/fla-highlights-underlying-challenges-child-labor-after-extensive-investigation-nestl%C3%A9>

Whilst most are between the ages of 12 and 16, some are as young as 5. Their day starts at 6am and the children have to use chainsaws to clear the forests.

They use large, heavy knives called machetes to chop down the cocoa beans which are put into large sacks which can weigh 100lbs. These have to be dragged back to the farm.

Aly Diabate, a former cocoa slave, said:

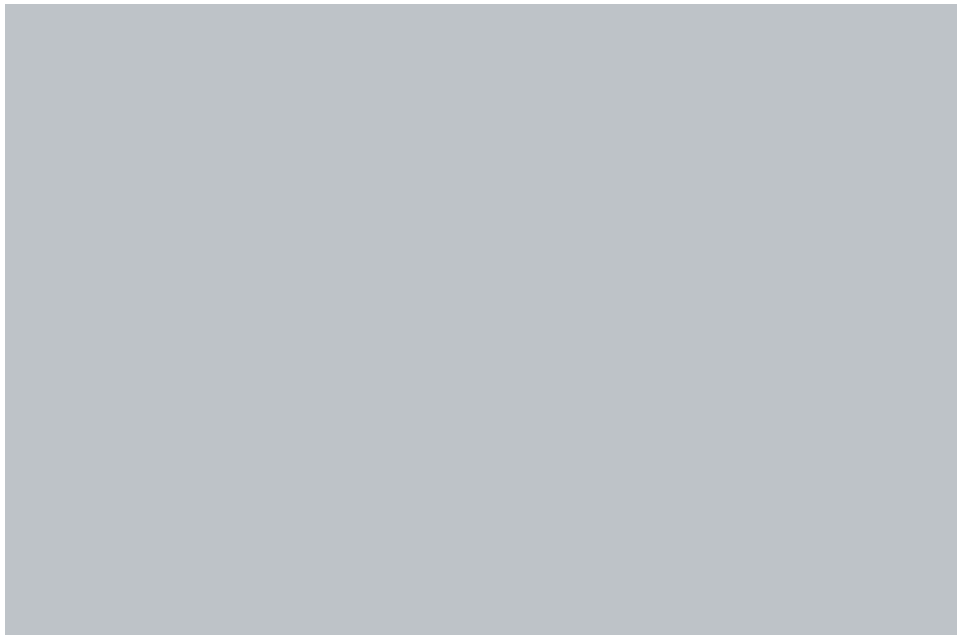
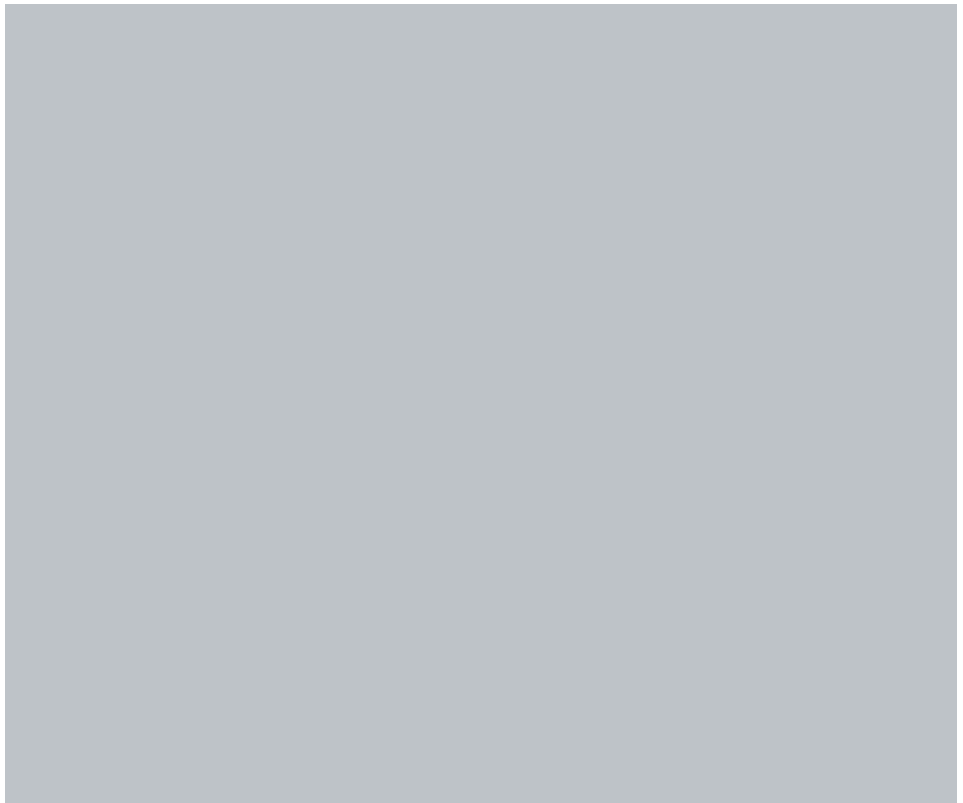
“Some of the bags were taller than me. It took two people to put the bag on my head. And when you didn’t hurry, you were beaten.”

You can make a choice!

Some companies ensure that no slavery is involved in their chocolate and we can decide to only buy chocolate that doesn’t involve child slavery. Better still is to buy products that are marked as Fairtrade.



Articles about modern slavery & food.



Discussion questions:

Read the questions and prepare answers for a class discussion.

- Why do you think people had slaves in Roman times?
- Why do you think people have slaves today?
- Have things changed since Roman times? Do you think things are better / worse today?
- Why shouldn't we have slaves today? Is it fair?
- How is your life different to that of the young children working as slaves?
- How can you help stop child slavery?