

Title of Lesson: *The Value of a Slave*

(Suggested grade level: 4, 5, 10)

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Background Information:

- The teacher should read and transcribe the following primary sources:
Page one of the [Inventory of the estate of Lewis Golson, Sr.](#)
[Bill of sale for a slave bought by David Tate from Sophia McComb](#)
- In the Lewis Golson, Sr., estate is a listing for “3 hogsheads,” a term for a barrel that can contain 63 gallons whereas a standard barrel can contain 31½ gallons. The listing for “head hogs” is a listing for actual livestock. There is also a listing for “muwl” which means “mule.”

Overview of lesson: Students will use primary sources to investigate the economic aspect of slavery in the United States and the role of slavery as a cause of the Civil War.

Content Standards

[Alabama Course of Study: Social Studies](#) (Bulletin 2004, No. 18)

Fourth Grade: Standard 6, p.31

Fifth Grade: Standard 12, p. 40

Tenth Grade: Standard 9, p. 73

National Standards for History, 1996

Standards in History for Grades K-4 (p. 30)

Topic 2, Standard 3 – The people, events, problems, and ideas that created the history of their state

3C – The student understands the various other groups from regions throughout the world who came into his or her own state or region over the long-ago and recent past.

Standards in History for Grades 5-12 (p. 95)

Era 4, Standard 2 – How the industrial revolution, increasing immigration, the rapid expansion of slavery, and the westward movement changed the lives of Americans and led toward regional tensions.

2D – The student understands the rapid growth of “the peculiar institution” after 1800 and the varied experiences of African Americans under slavery.

Curriculum Standards for Social Studies, (Bulletin 111, 2010)

Chapter 4 Learning Expectations: Early Grades

Standard 5 – Individuals, Groups, and Institutions, p.78

Chapter 5 Learning Expectations: Middle Grades

Standard 5 – Individuals, Groups, and Institutions, p.108

Chapter 6 Learning Expectations: High School

Standard 5 – Individuals, Groups, and Institutions, p. 139

Primary Learning Objective(s):

- The student will interpret primary sources to identify the factors which determined a slave’s monetary worth.
- The students will infer from the primary sources the importance of slavery on the economy of the South and that slavery was a major cause of The Civil War.

Time allotted: 60-90 minutes

Materials and Equipment:

- Copies of the bill of sale for a slave bought by David Tate from Sophia McComb
- Copies of the inventory of the estate of Lewis Golson, Sr.
- [Copy of slave advertisement, Charleston, South Carolina, 1780](#)
- [Copy of slave advertisement, Lumpkin, Georgia, 1859](#)

Technological Resources:

- Computer with internet access
- LCD projector and screen

Background/Preparation:

- The students should have an understanding of the growth of slavery in the South after the invention of the cotton gin.
- The students should be familiar with the plantation system.
- The students should be able to calculate percentage.

Procedures/Activities:**Engagement/Motivation Activity:**

Ask students if a monetary value can be assigned to a human being. Ask students if they had to place a value on themselves, could they or would they. Tell students, “When slavery was legal in the United States, there were monetary values put upon human beings.”

Step 1	<p>Display or distribute copies of the Charleston, South Carolina, advertisement for slaves. Explain that the letter “f” in this advertisement was an early way to write the letter “s.” Also explain to students that smallpox was an often fatal disease. Have a whole-group discussion on the advertisement by guiding students with the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does this appear to be? • Because the word slave or slavery is not in the advertisement, how do you know it is an advertisement for slaves? • Why do you think the advertisement states that the slaves are “fine and healthy?” • Why does the advertisement mention smallpox?
Step 2	<p>Display or distribute copies of the Lumpkin, Georgia, advertisement for slaves. Explain to students that this advertisement was printed eighty years after the first</p>

	<p>advertisement. Point out that the “f” is no longer an “s” because spelling had become more standardized. Have a whole-group discussion on the advertisement by guiding students with the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does this appear to be? • Because the word slave or slavery is not on the advertisement, how do you know it is an advertisement for slaves? • Why does the seller list the skills of some of the slaves? • How does the seller present himself in this advertisement? • What does the advertisement mean when it says, “Give him a call at his Mart?” (Make sure the students understand that this does not refer to a phone call.)
<p>Step 3</p>	<p>Display or pass out a transcribed copy of the bill of sale for a slave bought by David Tate from Sophia McComb. Point out to the students that the bill of sale is March 1819 and refers to the “Alabama Territory.” Remind students that Alabama became a state on December 14, 1819. Define the following words or any other words that the students do not understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • heirs • executors • title • warrant <p>Have a whole group discussion on the advertisement by guiding students with the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who were Sophia McComb, David Tate, and Flora? • Who do you think Elijah Lloyd and John Weatherford were? • Why would they have signed the document? • Why doesn’t Flora have a last name? • How old is Flora? • How much did David Tate pay for Flora? • Why do you think Flora is valued at five hundred dollars?
<p>Step 4</p>	<p>Display page one of the inventory of the estate of Lewis Golson, Sr. Have students look at the slaves listed on page one, and discuss in a whole group the different values placed on the slaves. Ask students why they think some slaves cost more than others. Lead students to conclude that value could be affected by gender, age, health, and skills. Nine lines down on the inventory are “Priscilla & girl child Lucy.” Ask the students why the two would be valued at five hundred dollars? Remind students that Lucy could be sold and separated from her mother, Priscilla.</p>
<p>Step 5</p>	<p>Have students note the values given to livestock and values given to slaves in the inventory. Ask the students, “Which had the higher economic value and why?”</p>
<p>Step 6</p>	<p>Have the students add up the total value of all the slaves on page one. Display page four and have students write down the total value of the estate. Have students calculate the percentage of the Lewis Golson’s estate invested in slaves.</p>

Step 7	Lead the students to understand the importance of slavery in the economy of the South. Lead students to discuss the role of slavery as a cause of the Civil War.
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Assessment Strategies:

- Suggested essay question for unit test:
What would have happened to the value of Lewis Golson's estate if slavery had ended during his life-time? Does this help explain why the South was willing to go to war over slavery?

Extension:

- Have students convert the value of the slaves and the livestock to current monetary values using the ["Measuring Worth"](#) Web site.

Remediation:

- Give students a review on the calculating percentages.

Accommodation:

- Allow students to use calculators.
- Allow additional time for skill mastery.

Modification:

- Review Individualized Education Plans, 504 Plans, and Gifted or ELL Plans for instructional and assessment accommodations or modifications.
- Provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate comprehension and mastery of appropriate learning objectives.