

KEYPOINT REVISION: INTERMEDIATE HISTORY

THIS ACCURSED TRADE: THE BRITISH SLAVE TRADE: 1770-1807

REVISION FILE

THE EFFECTS OF SLAVE TRADE: BRITAIN

KP7

BACKGROUND

The profits from the slave trade were tremendous. One of the first English slave traders, Sir John Hawkins made two slaving voyages from Guinea to the Caribbean in 1562 and 1564. The profits from these made him the richest man in England. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Spanish, Portuguese and Dutch were the main slave traders but British involvement gradually increased. Under the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 Britain gained the right to supply Spanish colonies with 160,000 slaves each year. By the 1730s the British ships dominated the Atlantic slave trade. British merchant sold slaves in the West Indies, America and the Spanish colonies in South America. For the rest of the century, until the abolition of the slave trade in 1807, Britain was the world's leading slave trader. The slave trade dominated the British economy. It supplied Britain with sugar, chocolate, rum and coffee to consume, American cotton cloth to wear and tobacco to smoke. Between 1700 and 1810 British ships carried about 3.4 million African slaves across the Atlantic. From 1699 to 1807 there were 12,103 slaving voyages from British ports.

3,351 from London
2,105 from Bristol
5,199 from Liverpool

- Two hundred years of trading in African slaves allowed Britain to become a world economic power and helped to finance the Industrial Revolution. British merchants involved in the slave trade became very rich.
- Britain sold many goods (cloth, metals, guns) to Africa. The trade provided work for thousands of manufacturers of cloth, metal and guns.
- Britain imported valuable produce (sugar, coffee, tobacco, cotton) paid for by the sale of slaves. Much of this was re-exported to Europe for very large profits
- The slave trade made Britain the world's leading sea power. More ships were needed and thousands of jobs were created making ships, sails, ropes etc. The trade provided thousands of sailors with work.
- The government got most of its money from customs duties (tax) related to the slave trade. The government tightly controlled the trade and all slave ships had to be licensed.
- Banking and insurance services developed as a result of the slave trade. Many well known British banks and businesses - Lloyds insurance market, Imperial Tobacco, the Midland Bank and more - grew out of slave labour and slave dealing.
- The trade led to the growth of ports such as Bristol and Liverpool. The slave trade made Liverpool one of the largest ports in the world and led to a big increase in the population of the town.
- New docks and warehouses were built and thousand were employed as dock workers etc. Liverpool became an important center of shipbuilding. Many manufacturers and craftsmen moved to the town and worked making goods for the trade.
- The slave trade brought a lot of money to the town- many Liverpool merchants became very wealthy. Many of the public buildings in Liverpool (and private mansions) were built from the profits of the slave trade.