

Lesson Title	Exploring Antebellum Savannah
Grade Level(s)	8-12
Timeline	2-3 45-minute class periods

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How did the institution of slavery and affect how groups in and around Savannah interacted with one another?

OBJECTIVES

- Understand that laws were created throughout the South to restrict the independence of free people of color and enslaved people and to keep them as a lower class of people
- Determine that slavery was not just work done in fields, but that it varied widely based on a number of factors
- Recognize that slavery was not just a system used to force individuals to labor for another’s gain but that many people made money facilitating the buying and selling of people to others
- Investigate how the system of slavery was so prominent and all-encompassing that it defined the geographies of southern cities like Savannah

STANDARDS

Social Studies
SS8H4c. Explain how technological developments, including the cotton gin and railroads, had an impact on Georgia’s growth.
SSUSH7d. Investigate political, economic, and social developments during the Age of Jackson.
SSUSH2b. Describe the Middle Passage, the growth of the African population and their contributions, including but not limited to architecture, agriculture, and foodways.
SSSocSC3. Describe adaptation, cooperation, accommodation, and competition in the context of social control.
SSSocSC4. Analyze the function of social institutions as agents of social control across differing societies and times.
SSSocIC1. Analyze forms of social inequality.
SSPSP1. Analyze the impact of the social environment on behaviors, and attitudes.

Geography
SSWG1 Explain why physical characteristics of place such as landforms, bodies of water, climate, and natural resources act as contributing factors to world settlement patterns.
SSWG2. Evaluate how the physical and human characteristics of places and regions are connected to human identities and cultures.
SSWG4a. Assess demographic patterns of population using graphs, maps, and other models.
SSWG5a. Describe how and why agricultural techniques and technology have changed over time.

Economics
SSEF6b. Explain how investment in equipment and technology can lead to economic growth.

INTRODUCTION

Savannah has held a prominent position in Georgia history since the colony's founding. By the antebellum period, it was the most populous and economically productive urban center in the state and a thriving regional shipping hub. Savannah boasted a diverse population from various religious groups and immigrants to free people of color working and mingling with whites of differing economic status and background.

Underneath this seemingly harmonious landscape, Savannah was largely dominated by the institution of slavery and the systems in place to ensure its survival. Next to the cotton brokerage houses on the bustling wharf were the insurers and auctioneers of the slave trade. Many of the most influential citizens were slaveholders and made much of their fortune by profiting from enslaved labor. The major agricultural exports of the city were largely harvested, refined, and transported by enslaved workers. Even the roads, fortresses, and other infrastructure were constructed with forced labor.

Savannah appears unique compared with many other southern cities. Although the institution of slavery was central to the city's identity, there were no major uprisings and some forms of autonomy (like secret schools) were tolerated even though they were clearly illegal. Additionally, there was a significant number of successful free people of color residing within Savannah.

SUMMARY

This experience provides a close look at Savannah block-by-block concerning how each street, building, etc. related to the wealth, system of slavery, or how people lived and worked among one another. There are two major areas to explore: the geography of Savannah and the four major groups of individuals who inhabited the city.

ELEMENTS

There are five categories for the geography of the city. At the bottom left, there are charts for population numbers and a legal system page that shows five different laws. Within the five geography categories are three closer looks at the bottom left of the map: how the buying and selling of people was a business, the difference between plantation-based slavery and slavery within a city like Savannah, and a brief look at the role of the local cemetery.

The five available geography categories are:

- RED - Richardson's Life in Savannah
- ORANGE - Owens' Life in Savannah
- GREEN - Geography of Urban Slavery
- BLUE - Public Life in Savannah
- PURPLE - City Plan

Inside these five categories are three more galleries:

- Both the RED and ORANGE buttons allow access to The Economics of Slavery
- The GREEN button allows access to Comparing Urban and Rural Slavery
- The PURPLE button allows access to Laurel Grove South Cemetery

INHABITANTS OF THE CITY PROCEDURE

Inform students that they are going to explore the various individuals who inhabited Savannah during this time period. Just like we classify groups in society today, we can, to some degree, similarly classify groups in historical periods. Students can explore four different galleries of primary sources.

1. Have students launch section six of the virtual exploration. It can be accessed through the Table of Contents or by clicking Inhabitants in the Discover menu.
2. Assign student groups to one of the four galleries (Working Class White, Wealthy, Enslaved People, and Free People of Color).
3. Give each group a large piece of flip chart paper or post one in four different sections of the room.
4. Have each group write the name of their gallery at the top of the paper. Below their group or class name, they should complete a **Body Biography**.
5. Each group can assign a member a different part of the body to explore. There are several categories to use in this exercise. Some of the most common are:
 - HEAR - What sounds, voices, rumors, etc. are around this person?
 - SEE - Where is this person's focus? What does this person see?
 - THINK - What are their internal thoughts? What do they think about their situation?
 - TOUCH - What do they hold?
 - STAND ON/FOR - What are their principles?
 - SPINE - What is their motivation?
6. Groups can then report their findings back to the class to give everyone a better sense of who these individuals were.
 - Encourage students to use evidence from their exploration to justify their biographies by claiming "They stand on _____ because _____."

LIFE AND LABOR SAVANNAH GEOGRAPHY PROCEDURE

After gaining a better understanding of Savannah's inhabitants during the antebellum period, students should be ready to explore how they interacted within the city. Explain to students that they are going to look deeper into what life was like for the people who lived in Savannah in the decades before the Civil War.

1. Launch the Life and Labor section either by clicking section seven in the Table of Contents or clicking Life and Labor in the Discover menu.
2. Break students into groups and assign them one of the map colors:
 - RED - Richardson
 - ORANGE - Owens
 - GREEN - Enslaved Individuals/Free People of Color
 - BLUE - Interaction/Working Class
3. Have student groups create a Day-in-the-Life schedule for an individual, listing their activities and the places they may have gone in the city.
 - Encourage students to refer to the Inhabitants flip charts the class completed earlier as well as the galleries in the "Inhabitants of the City" section.
 - Students can also refer back to the Main House and Slave Quarters for insight into how individuals like Richard Richardson or George W. Owens might have lived their lives. The Main House and Slave Quarters can also be useful for a better understanding of the lives of individuals enslaved by the Owens family.

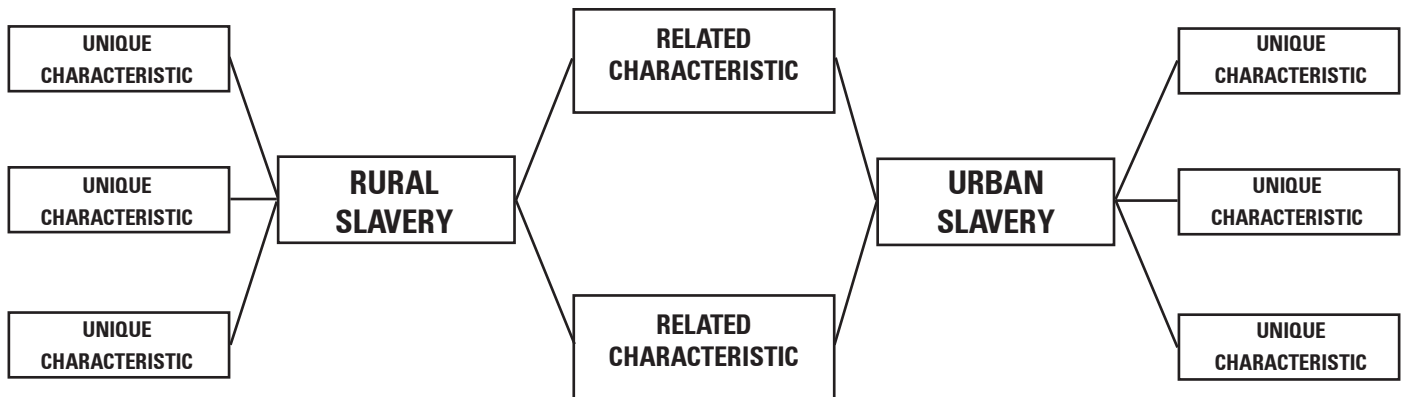
INQUIRY/EXTENSION

- For a culminating activity, combine the Legal System, Inhabitants, and Life and Labor sections together and have students individually write a diary entry explaining a day in their life discussing two out of the following three:
 - Legal issue
 - Place they went
 - Thoughts and/or conversations they had

COMPARING RURAL AND URBAL SLAVERY PROCEDURE

Inform students that they are going to examine different kinds of enslaved labor to gain a better understanding of the diverse landscape of work that enslaved individuals were forced to do during the antebellum period.

- Ask students to create a graphic organizer similar to the one below or print a version for them from page seven.



- Students can launch the Comparing Urban and Rural Slavery galleries from either the red (Richardson’s Life) or orange (Owens’ Life) buttons. They should click the scroll at the bottom left of the map.
- Ask students to fill in the sections for “unique” and “related” characteristics with evidence from the two galleries.
- Have students review the differences and similarities between the two galleries in the tab “Comparing Urban and Rural Slavery” and encourage them to summarize their findings with statements like: “I think that urban/ rural enslavement _____ because _____.” Students should support their answers with evidence from the text or pictures.

INQUIRY/EXTENSION

To go deeper into the lives of enslaved people and their struggle to escape bondage, check out the Criminal podcast episode: [In Plain Sight](#) about Ellen and William Craft’s daring escape from enslavement in Macon, Georgia.

LEGAL SYSTEM PROCEDURE

Inform students that they are going to look more closely at the legal system of antebellum Georgia and how it was used to maintain control over racial relations in Savannah. Students should complete the Inhabitants section before exploring this section. There are five different laws that students can explore.

1. Inside the Life and Labor section (section seven), ask students to click on the Chart button at the bottom left. This chart is available to print from page _____.
2. Ask students to get in pairs and assign each pair one of seven time periods (1800, 1810, 1820, 1830, 1840, 1850, 1860). Tell them that populations are made up of many different groups. Remind students of the previous Inhabitants section and prompt them to recall the four different groups discussed.
 - Help students understand the mathematics behind the chart by asking them to write a simple equation for their year:

$$\text{Total Population} = \text{Number of Free People of Color} + \text{Number of Enslaved Individuals} + \text{Number of White People}$$

- Then have students write the proportion of People of Color, including both Free People of Color and Enslaved Individuals, to the number of White People:

$$\frac{\text{Free People of Color} + \text{Enslaved Individuals}}{\text{White Population}} = \frac{\text{Total Population of People of Color}}{\text{White Population}}$$

- Explain to students that the “Percent of Total Population” represents the fraction they just created from their data. Students should notice that for six of the seven time periods, People of Color clearly constitute a majority of the population.
 - To summarize this analysis, ask each pair to discuss the ONE THING that stands out to them.
3. Now ask the class a question: Can you think of any laws or rules today that restrict where you can go, when you can go there, or how many people can be somewhere at a certain time?
 - Allow pairs time to brainstorm answers to the question. (They will likely include curfews, age restrictions, or even bathroom passes.)
 - Follow this question by asking students to explain why they think these rules or laws are in place. (Students are likely to suggest safety but some may hint that it has something to do with controlling their behavior.)

Inform students that southern antebellum society largely favored white men (and property-owning white men) above all others and there was a social ladder where some people were higher up with more power and others were lower down with less power.

4. Continue by explaining that many laws during this time in cities like Savannah were created to maintain this system by restricting the movements and freedoms of non-white individuals.
5. Have students launch the Legal System exploration by clicking the Legal System button at the bottom left of the Life and Labor section (section seven).

6. Have students create a graphic organizer like the following or handout one to each student from page eight.

Name of the Law	Year Passed	Group(s) Discussed	What Restrictions Are Mentioned?	What Evidence Is There of the Restrictions?	Why Do You Think the Law Was Created?	What Questions Do You Have?

7. Jigsaw this activity by dividing students into groups of five and have each student within the group explore one of the laws. They should use the document to complete one row of their chart.
8. After completing their analysis, groups should come together to discuss the law they examined, allowing other members within the group to complete their charts while listening to each other.

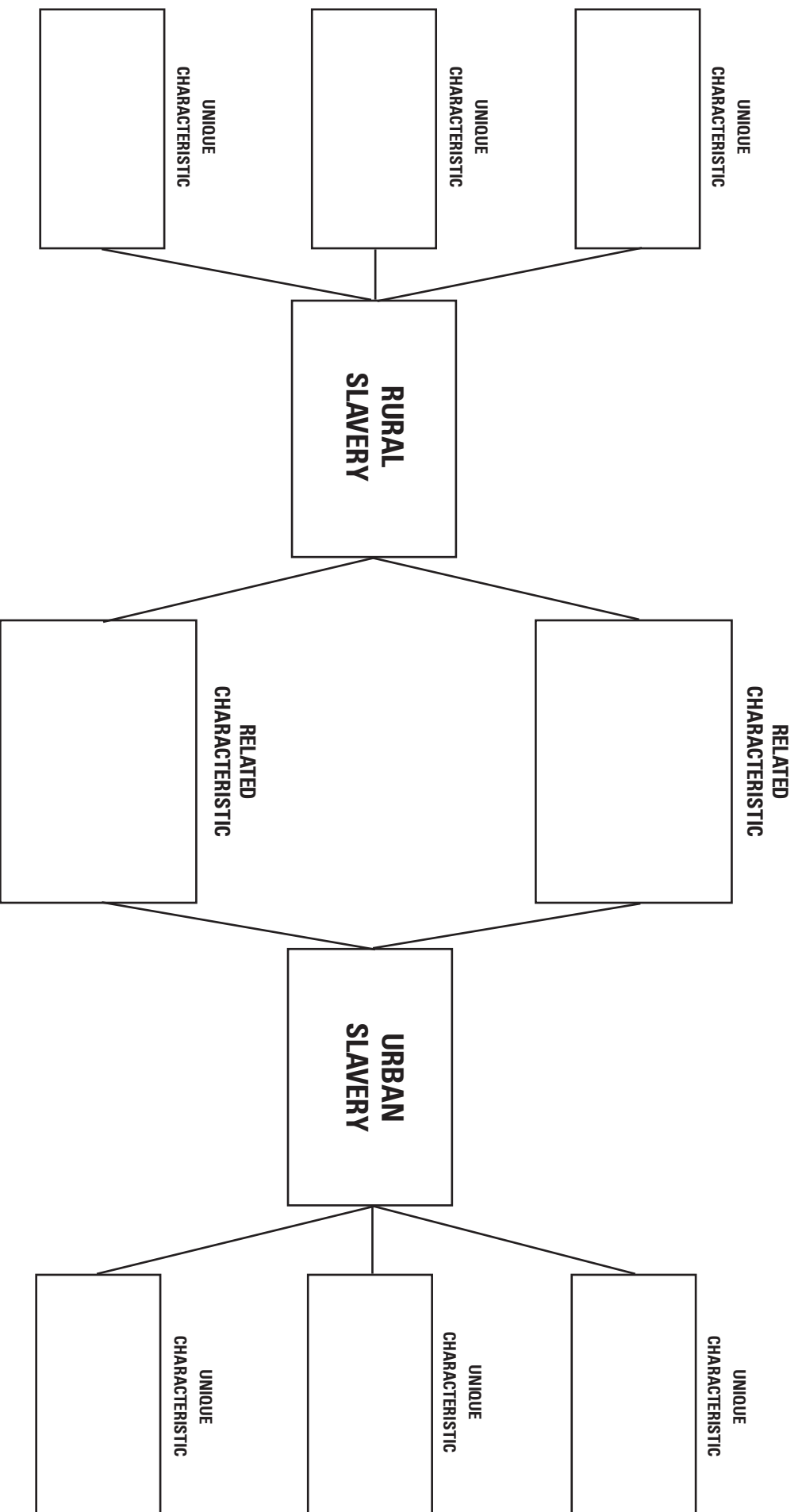
ECONOMICS OF SLAVERY PROCEDURE

Inform students they will be analyzing a very sensitive topic: the buying and selling people. After reviewing previous sections, students should be more aware of the connections between the growing agricultural economy and the institution of slavery. Essentially, as the cotton gin made cotton farming more profitable, the demand for enslaved labor increased.

The Economics of Slavery section offers a glimpse into the complex economics behind the domestic slave trade. Just like there are insurance companies, brokers, and auctions today, these systems existed for the buying and selling of enslaved individuals. Savannah played an integral role in this system.

1. Have students launch the Economics of Slavery section by clicking on either the red or orange buttons on the Savannah map. Students should see the Economics of Slavery scroll appear at the bottom left of the map.
2. Ask students to observe the first gallery image. After reading the description, have them write down an emotion that comes to mind and then a brief sentence explaining why they chose that emotion.
3. Assign students to inspect either the second, fifth, sixth, or seventh documents (not the newspaper ads or auction illustration) and have them identify the type of document (manifest, record, receipt) and write down three to five ideas they think are important to understanding the significance of the document.
4. Arrange students into small groups or pairs and give each group several minutes to compare their lists and combine them into one list of five items.
5. After compiling their summaries, ask students to list ONE QUESTION they still have.
6. Let student pairs share their lists and questions with the class.

COMPARING RURAL AND URBAN SLAVERY GUIDE



COMPARING RURAL AND URBAN SLAVERY GUIDE

Name of the Law	Year Passed	Group(s) Discussed	What Restrictions Are Mentioned?	What Evidence Is There of the Restrictions?	Why Do You Think the Law Was Created?	What Questions Do You Have?

