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African Americans in the Making of Early New England

**United States History I
Grade 10**

Note: *The following Lesson* is designed to be part of a larger unit on the history of the 13 colonies. It is intended to introduce students to the development of slavery in New England and prepare them to compare slavery in New England and the southern colonies.

Lesson Title: Characteristics of Slavery in Colonial New England

Objective:

Students will analyze and evaluate the characteristics of slavery in colonial New England

Lesson Preparation Homework:

Ask the students to write a paragraph about what they already know about slavery in colonial New England. Explain that they should not do research but only use their prior knowledge to complete the assignment.

Part 1- Activator: Map Analysis (See Handout below)

Present the map, *African American Population by Town in the Colonies of Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island circa 1755*, to the class using both a projection and the handout. Ask the class to work independently for about 5 minutes, making observations and asking questions about the map and recording them on the chart given. Then after 5 minutes, ask the students to work with a partner or small group to share their observations and questions and then discuss the reflection question and record their responses.

Call the class together after 5 minutes and review the students' observations, questions, and reflections. Then summarize the input of the class and transition to the lesson introduction.

Part 2- Lesson Introduction: (See Handout below)

Provide the students with the handout on the *Northern Slave Economy* and ask them to do the following as they read: underline 3 details that they already knew, put a star next to 5 details that they did not know and write a question mark next to a portion they found the most surprising. Ask the students to read quietly for about 5 minutes independently and then have them share their responses with a partner. Call the class together after 5 minutes and review how the reading confirmed what they already knew, presented new information, and was surprising. Encourage the students to synthesize the reading with the map from the activator as you move on to part 3 of the lesson.

Part 3- Slavery in Diverse New England Settings (See Handout below)

Tell the students that they are now going to build upon their analysis of the map and the reading by considering the range of settings in which enslaved African Americans worked. Tell the students that they will be asked to work in small groups for 7 minutes to imagine what daily life was like for an enslaved African American in different settings across New England. Pass out the handout titled *Slavery in Diverse New England Settings*. Explain to the students that their job is to imagine what daily life was like for enslaved African Americans living in a northern port city, a small town and a farmstead on the fringes of northern settlement. Ask the students to record their thoughts using the chart provided on the handout.

After 7 to 10 minutes, bring the students back together as a class and review their thoughts on each setting one at a time. Use student responses as opportunities to clarify, correct and build upon student ideas with instruction. Provide additional information and specific examples by discussing slavery in Boston, Deerfield, and Hadley, Massachusetts, as you build on student ideas and contributions.

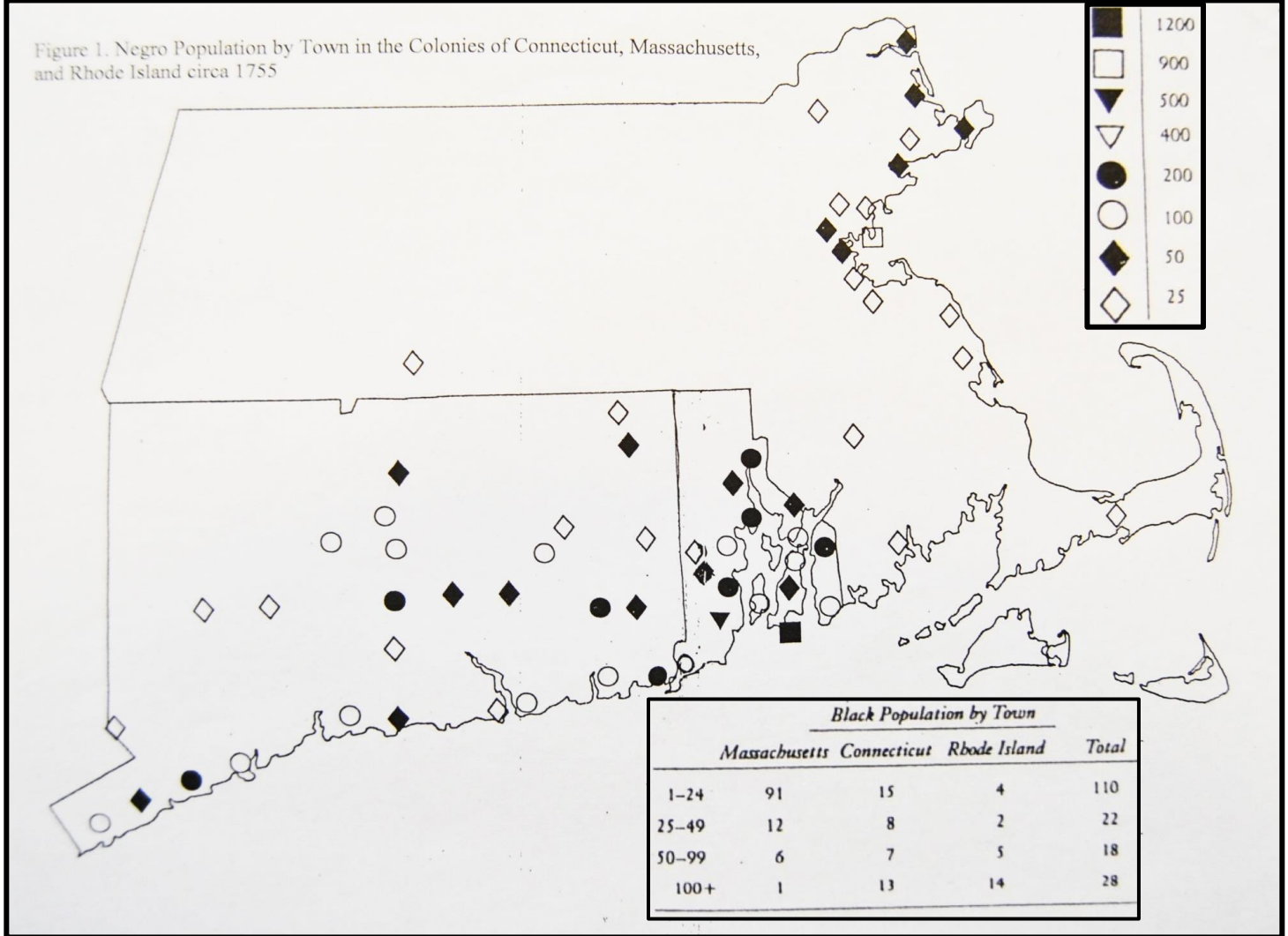
Part 4 – Assessment

End the class by asking students to select and illustrate the daily life experienced by enslaved African Americans in **one** of the settings. As they draw their illustrations ask critical thinking questions such as:

1. How might the experience of enslaved women differ from that of men in these settings?
2. How might the values of the Puritan settlers influence the way slavery was practiced?
3. How might the experience of slaves in New England be different or similar to those in the southern colonies?

Have students share and explain their illustrations and use their descriptions along with their responses to the questions above to provide feedback and clarification.

African American Population by Town in the Colonies of Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island circa 1755



A. Write down 5 observations about the map above

B. Create and write down 3 questions about the map above.

C. Reflect: What do you think this map suggests about the role of African Americans in colonial New England? Why?

Blank space for student observations.

Blank space for student questions.

Blank space for student reflection.

☑ Lesson Introduction -----

As you read, underline 3 details that you already knew, put a star next to 5 new details you learned in the text, and write a question mark next to the part of the reading you found most surprising.

The Northern Slave Economy

For nearly two hundred years the North maintained a slave regime that was more varied than that of the South. Rather than using slaves as primarily agricultural labor, the North trained and diversified its slave force to meet the needs of its more complex economy. Owned mostly by ministers, doctors, and the merchant elite, enslaved men and women in the North often performed household duties in addition to skilled jobs.

When a slave replaced the household head's labor, this often enabled the household head to develop a profession or a craft. This would raise the status and income of his family.

“ ..a devastating experience of slavery in America had resulted in the condition of poverty of northern free people of color and the climate of persistent prejudice against them. —Joanne Pope Melish, *Disowning Slavery*.

The introduction of slave labor into the New England household economy enabled its expansion from small-time farms to large agricultural production, the expansion of local and regional markets, widespread entrepreneurial activity, and the rise of manufactories.

From the seventeenth century onward, slaves in the North could be found in almost every field of Northern economic life. They worked as carpenters, shipwrights, sailmaker, printers, tailors, shoemakers, coopers, blacksmiths, bakers, weavers, and goldsmiths. Many became so talented in the crafts that the free white workers lost jobs to them.

<http://www.medfordhistorical.org/medford-history/africa-to-medford/slaves-in-new-england/>

Numbers and Percentages of Slaves in Three New England Colonies/States

Year	Rhode Island		Connecticut		Massachusetts	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
1700	426	5.9	450	2.0	800	1.0
1755	4,697	11.5	3,587	2.7	4,500	2.2
1774	3,761	6.3	6,464	3.2	5,249	1.5
1783	2,806	5.4	?	-	4,377	1.2
1790	948	1.3	2,764	1.0	0 (?)	-

☑ Slavery in Diverse New England Settings -----

Imagine: What would daily life be like for enslaved African Americans living in a northern port city, a small town and a farmstead on the fringes of northern settlement (Melish, pg. 122).

Use the chart below to brainstorm ideas about how enslaved African Americans had different experiences in each setting.

Slavery in Colonial New England

A Northern Port City	A Small Town	A Farmstead on the Frontier

Consider: How might enslaved African Americans in these different settings also have similar experiences?

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