



# TEACHING TOLERANCE

A PROJECT OF THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER  
TOLERANCE.ORG

## Introduction

In these videos, scholars and historians explore the Key Concepts of the Teaching Hard History framework by discussing slavery's impact on the lives of enslaved people in the United States and the nation's development around the institution. They also explain how enslaved people influenced the nation, its culture and its history.

The resources below can help you analyze each video's content and its connection to the related Key Concept with your students or with colleagues. You can also use them to help build your own content knowledge.

### Resources

For each video, we have included the following:

- the **Key Concept** that the video explores
- an **essential question** to help viewers explore the connection between the video and its related Key Concept
- **vocabulary** words that students may need defined to better understand the video
- **text-dependent questions** that can help viewers understand and analyze the videos

**Note:** There are two sets of text-dependent questions for each video. **Set A** focuses on *identifying* key ideas and details in each video. **Set B** focuses on *analyzing* key ideas and details in each video. Select whichever set is better suited for your classroom.



# TEACHING TOLERANCE

A PROJECT OF THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER  
TOLERANCE.ORG

TEACHING HARD HISTORY: AMERICAN SLAVERY

## Text-Dependent Questions

EDWARD L. AYERS | KEY CONCEPT 6

### Key Concept 6

The experience of slavery varied depending on time, location, crop, labor performed, size of slaveholding and gender.

### Essential Question

How did the domestic slave trade affect the lives of enslaved people?

### Vocabulary

➤ **accelerate** (v.) [ak-sel-uh-reyt]

to increase in speed

➤ **insight** (n.) [in-sahyt]

understanding

➤ **mortality rate** (n.) [mawr-tal-i-tee reyt]

the number of deaths per unit of population in a given place and time

➤ **mobility** (n.) [moh-bil-i-tee]

the quality of being able to move or be moved easily

➤ **paradox** (n.) [par-uh-doks]

a situation exhibiting an apparently contradictory nature

➤ **static** (adj.) [stat-ik]

showing little or no change

➤ **velocity** (n.) [vuh-los-i-tee]

speed

### Sources

Dictionary.com

## Text-Dependent Questions

### Set A

1. During which two decades did the slave trade peak? What typically caused the slave trade to increase?
2. Which age group faced the greatest risk of being sold? What made them especially valuable to enslavers at this time?
3. Why was Maria likely sold to a smaller planter?

### Set B

1. How does Maria Perkins's letter demonstrate the impact the slave trade had on families of enslaved people?
2. Why do you think Maria Perkins's letter is remarkable? Why is this important?
3. Why is it significant that this letter from Maria Perkins is the only record of her family's movement?

## TEACHING HARD HISTORY: AMERICAN SLAVERY

# Text-Dependent Questions

EDWARD L. AYERS | KEY CONCEPT 6 **RESPONSES****Set A**

1. During which two decades did the slave trade peak? What typically caused the slave trade to increase?  
**The slave trade peaked in the 1830s and the 1850s. When cotton prices were high, enslavers, hoping to make a lot of money producing cotton, would buy more enslaved people.**

2. Which age group faced the greatest risk of being sold? What made them especially valuable to enslavers at this time?

**Teenagers faced the greatest danger of being sold because they were then able to begin performing heavy labor or bearing children.**

3. Why was Maria likely sold to a smaller planter?

**Maria was likely sold to a smaller planter because smaller planters often purchased women who could work in the fields, work in the house and increase their investment by bearing children.**

**Set B**

1. How does Maria Perkins's letter demonstrate the impact the slave trade had on families of enslaved people?  
**Perkins's letter demonstrates that the varying demands of the domestic slave trade devastated the families of enslaved people: She had lost one child, Albert, who could have been sold as far away as Texas, and she herself might soon be sold away from her other child and her husband. In the letter, Perkins also shows affection for her husband, so it highlights the emotional bonds that would have been severed through the domestic slave trade.**

2. Why do you think Maria Perkins's letter is remarkable? Why is this important?

**Student answers will vary but might include the following: Perkins's letter is remarkable because she was literate and could write to her husband. The letter is important because it gives historians access to the unfiltered perspective of enslaved people regarding the personal impact of the domestic slave trade.**

3. Why is it significant that this letter from Maria Perkins is the only record of her family's movement?

**The content of the letter emphasizes the commodification of enslaved people's bodies. Either there is no record of what happened to the family or the records that might indicate what happened don't clearly distinguish individuals because the Perkins family members were considered property.**