**The Economics of Slavery**

*Lesson Questions:*

1. How was slavery a fundamental part of the economy in America in the early to mid-1800s?
2. How did slavery impact the production of goods?

*Lesson Objectives:*

* Determine if slavery was profitable in the American economic system
* Evaluate the economic argument supporting slavery in America

*NCSS Standards:*

STANDARD VII: PRODUCTION, DISTRIBUTION AND CONSUMPTION

* challenge learners to apply economic concepts and reasoning when evaluating historical and contemporary social developments and issues

*Common Core Standards Grades 11-12:*

Reading: Key ideas and details: #2: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

Writing: Text Types and Purposes: #3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.

*Activities:*

1. Warm-up: Quick write—Why do you think that people bought and sold slaves in America? (5 minutes)
2. Discussion of Warm-Up (5 minutes)
3. Prezi- Basic discussion of the American economic system and how slavery factored into it (10 minutes)
4. Students will receive various bills of sale for slaves. (10 minutes)
   1. Students will read the document and write down how much the slaves cost and what year they were purchased.
   2. Students will discuss with their classmates and will determine the average cost of a slave.
5. Graphing- Students will read the handouts on “graphing economic trends” and “who profits from slavery” from <http://www.americaiam.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/AIA_Acitivity_Sheets.pdf>
   1. Students will complete a graphic organizer with a partner to graph the labor market and commodity market during slavery. (20 minutes)
6. Project a runaway slave news article on the board and read it together as a class. (10 minutes)
   1. Students will hypothesize why slave owners would be willing to pay so much to find their runaway slaves. Students will use their graphs to support their answer.
7. Students will read “Was slavery the engine of American economic growth?” from <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/slavery-and-anti-slavery/resources/was-slavery-engine-american-economic-growth> (15 minutes)
   1. Students will complete a think-pair-share to answer the question: Was slavery indispensable to the growth of the western economies?
8. Closure (10 minutes)- students will pretend they are an American living in the 1800s and will write a postcard to their friend overseas in another country explaining why slavery exists in the United States, using economics as their argument.