

What Do You See?

Teacher's Note: *This activity is best completed after students have toured the Spirits of the Passage exhibit and completed the vocabulary worksheets. Provide a copy of the student handout to each student. If you can, project the first page of the handout on a screen to give students a large image to observe. (If you can project the image, you will only need to print and pass out pages 2 and 3 of this activity.) Allow students the opportunity to study the image and then encourage them to note the elements of the drawing as described below.*

The image below was created by Serge Daget in 1725 and was published in a book for sea captains. The book, advised captains on how to purchase items for trade of goods, including tobacco, cotton, indigo and captive Africans. The numbers corresponded with notes from the book's author.

Can you infer what is happening in this drawing?

Take your time and study this image. How many people do you see? Who might they be? What does their body language tell you about their emotions? What is the difference between the two boats shown? Where do you think this location is? Where do you think the boats are going?



Image Credit: Bibliothèque Nationale

Part 1: Observe and Analyze – Teacher’s Notes

Teacher’s Note: Allow students to record their impressions.

Answer the following questions after you have examined and reflected upon the photo.

A) Give this image a descriptive title: _____

B) Use what you learned from the Spirits of the Passage exhibit to describe what action is being shown at each of the 3 numbered locations on the image.

Caption 5: _____

Caption 6: _____

Caption 7: _____

Part 2: Record, Discuss, and Compare – Teacher’s Notes

Teacher’s Note: Allow students to share their answer to the questions below. Share the background of this image and the answers below, which are based on the artist’s description of the image. If the students’ answers do not match the artist’s descriptions, discuss both. Remember, art is about not just what the artist wants to depict, but also what the audience interprets from the art. The answers were found at www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part1/1h293.html.

A) What title did the artist give this engraving? A View of Calabar.

B) Record what the artist meant to show at each of the numbered locations.

Caption 5: Ship at anchor waiting for the completion of the Slave Trade.

Caption 6: Launch carrying purchased slaves to the Slave Ship.

Caption 7: Negroes on the shore who are wailing and shrieking on viewing their relatives or friends being taken away.

Part 3: Research – Teacher’s Notes

The following questions could be assigned as homework or classwork.

1. **In what country is Calabar?** On the coast of present day Nigeria.
2. **In what year did the first recorded slave ship enter the United States?** 1619 in Jamestown, Virginia.
3. **In what year did the United States officially prohibit the international slave trade?** On March 3, 1807, President Thomas Jefferson signed into act a bill that would “prohibit the importation of slaves into any port or place within the jurisdiction of the United States.” This law did not go into effect until January 1, 1808. In 1820, a law was passed that defined slave trading at sea to be a form of piracy.
4. **In what year did the United States abolish slavery completely?** 1865
5. **How many years were there between the first slave ship arriving in the United States and the development of the laws preventing the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade?** 57 years
6. **How many years passed between the first recorded slave ship in the United States and the complete abolishment of slavery?** Slavery was legal in the United States for at least 246 years (the date of the first recorded slave ship arriving in Jamestown in 1619 until the Emancipation Proclamation went into effect in 1865).
7. **If it was illegal in America to transport slaves from other countries, how did slavery continue for so many more years?** One of the main differences between indentured servitude and slavery in the United States was that a child born to a slave automatically became a slave as well. The law prohibiting the transport of Africans to the United States did nothing to free those Africans who lived in the United States as slaves.

In 1808, the United States made it illegal to transport slaves across the Atlantic. Illegal slave ships, however, continued to bring slaves to the US. The last recorded slave ship to bring enslaved Africans to a port in the United States the *Clotilde* circa 1860. Other illegal slave ships were intercepted at sea, including the *William*, the *Wildfire* and the *Bogota*, which were captured at sea by the U.S. Navy and brought to Key West, Florida in 1860. The African survivors from these ships were eventually freed and sent to the colony of Liberia in Africa.