Amistad Curriculum Grades 9 to 12

Four classroom units with student readings, source inquiry, five day lessons, assessments, teacher notes, and answer guidance.

Curriculum alignment

NJSLS Social Studies 2020: 6.1 U.S. History America in the World, 6.2 World History Global Studies, and 6.3 Active Citizenship at the grades 9 to 12 band. NJSLS ELA 2023: RI.CR.9–10.1 and RI.CR.11–12.1 for thorough textual evidence, with grade appropriate argument and research expectations.

Unit alignment

Unit	NJSLS Social Studies 2020	Instructional match
1	6.2.12.HistoryCC.1.b	Analyze motivations for the Atlantic slave trade and its impacts across regions.
2	6.2.12.HistoryCC.5.d	Relate colonial legacies to African nations building economies and identities.
3	6.1.12.HistoryCC.4.a; 6.1.12.HistoryUP.4.a	Analyze change in federal and state power and conflicting views of Reconstruction.
4	Amistad integration and Social Studies historical sourcing practice	Audit a curricular interpretation using traceable evidence and a revision rationale.

Amistad purpose

The units place African and African American people within the central narrative as historical actors. Students investigate African societies, slavery and resistance, the construction of freedom, and the choices that shape public memory. The 2021 Township of Union guide supplies grade band inspiration; the readings and tasks here are original.

Standards references

NJDOE Social Studies: https://www.nj.gov/education/standards/socst/ NJDOE ELA: https://www.nj.gov/education/standards/ela/2023/ Amistad Commission: https://www.nj.gov/education/amistad/about/

Contents

Unit 1 How Did Atlantic Slavery Shape the Modern World

Unit 2 How Did African Movements Contest Empire

Unit 3 How Was Citizenship Contested After Emancipation

Unit 4 Who Decides What Enters the Historical Narrative

Student pages follow. Teacher pages and answer guidance begin after all four units. External source items are named and linked for the teacher to retrieve; students can complete the original readings and tasks printed here.

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Unit 1 How Did Atlantic Slavery Shape the Modern World

Grades 9 to 12 Name _____ Date _____

Inquiry

How did Atlantic slavery link labor, law, finance, and resistance across regions?

Reading one

The Atlantic slave trade joined African, European, and American histories through forced migration and coercive labor. African states and communities had varied political and commercial histories before and during the trade. European merchants and colonial authorities built shipping, credit, insurance, plantation, and legal systems that extracted wealth from enslaved labor. The benefits and harms were distributed unequally. Quantitative voyage records reveal scale and routes, but often record people as cargo and cannot recover every individual experience.

Reading two

Enslaved Africans resisted aboard ships, through flight, in labor and family life, in revolt, and in courts. Abolition emerged through sustained Black organizing alongside other political and economic changes. Causation requires more than one factor: sugar and cotton markets, state enforcement, land seizure, racial ideology, and finance reinforced one another, yet their effects differed by place and period. A defensible argument names mechanisms and limits, rather than suggesting that one voyage or statute explains the entire Atlantic world.

Source study

Source 1 Slave Voyages database. https://www.slavevoyages.org/ Record the database name, query filters, date range, and what estimates cannot tell us about individuals.

Source 2 National Archives slave trade documents. https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/slave-trade.html Analyze the creator, purpose, and dehumanizing categories in one dated document; compare with the database pattern.

Document evidence card

Record Slave Voyages estimates. Slave Voyages, Trans Atlantic Slave Trade Estimates, interactive research database. https://www.slavevoyages.org/assessment/estimates

What the record shows The database aggregates voyage information by region and period to estimate forced embarkation and disembarkation. Its filters permit a comparison across time and place, but students must record the exact filters and values they use.

Limit Aggregate estimates are a scholarly reconstruction; they do not identify every person or explain all local effects.

Analyze What causal claim could a dated regional estimate support, and what would remain unproven?

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Source organizer

Source and date	What it shows	What it cannot show

Text dependent questions

1. Explain two mechanisms by which coerced labor generated wealth.

2. Why must voyage data be interpreted with caution?

3. Identify two forms of resistance and explain their different settings.

4. What additional evidence would test a claim about finance and plantation labor?

Five day learning path

Day 1 Do Now: What was the system?. I Do: Model causal network. We Do: Map trade and legal institutions. They Do: Draft causal claim.

Day 2 Do Now: What can numbers show?. I Do: Model database filters. We Do: Analyze one voyage data set. They Do: Record estimate and caveat.

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Day 3 Do Now: Whose voice survives?. I Do: Model archive sourcing. We Do: Analyze legal or shipping record. They Do: Answer questions 2 and 3.

Day 4 Do Now: Which causes mattered?. I Do: Model multi causal paragraph. We Do: Compare quantitative and textual evidence. They Do: Draft document based argument.

Day 5 Do Now: What are the limits?. I Do: Model counterclaim and qualification. We Do: Peer assess evidence. They Do: Submit causal argument.

Assessment

Write a document based causal argument using a database result and an archival record. Explain one meaningful limit of each source.

RACE response

Restate and answer the inquiry. Cite specific details from the reading and source study. Explain how each detail supports the answer. For K to 2, an oral explanation or teacher scribed response is acceptable.

Evidence checklist

☐ I answered the inquiry. ☐ I named a source. ☐ I used accurate details. ☐ I explained what the details show. ☐ I checked limits or uncertainty.

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