

Why is the year 1833 a significant turning point in British history?

The year 1833 saw the introduction of The Slavery Abolition Act. This saw the end to Britain's participation in slavery, including the transatlantic slave trade.

What was the transatlantic slave trade?

For approximately 300 years, Britain had taken part in and benefited from the Transatlantic slave trade. Britain was one of many European countries responsible for transporting between 10 and 12 million enslaved African people across the Atlantic Ocean to the Americas. During the 1600s, England and France controlled half of the Transatlantic slave trade.

The enslaved people were denied their freedom and rights. The Middle Passage was notorious for its brutality and for the overcrowded, unsanitary conditions on slave ships, in which hundreds of Africans were packed tightly into tiers below decks for a voyage of about 5,000 miles (8,000 km). They were typically chained together. Many enslaved people lost their lives on the journey to the Americas.

Their role was to work on plantations and to serve in the Americas.



The Slavery Abolition Act 1833

(3 & 4 Will 4 c. 73)

10. *An Act for the Abolition of Slavery throughout the British Colonies*
(28th August 1833)

What did the Slavery Abolition Act do?

The Abolition Act was passed in 1833, coming into force a few years after it had been passed. The Abolition Act outlawed slavery throughout its empire. A similar act had been rejected by Parliament in 1790.

Brazil followed an outlawed slavery in 1850 and the United States outlawed slavery through the Emancipation Proclamation in 1861.

Interestingly, Scotland had made it illegal to own a slave as early as 1778.

Key Vocabulary

Abolition: the act of officially ending or stopping something

Transatlantic: going across the Atlantic Ocean.

Plantation: an estate on which crops such as coffee, sugar, and tobacco are grown

Slave: a person who is the property of another and they are forced to obey them.

Auction: a public sale in which goods or property are sold to the highest bidder. Slaves were sold at auction.

Abolitionist: a person who favours the abolition of a practice - in this instance it would be slavery.

Trade Triangle: the name given to the route in which the trade was conducted. The transatlantic slave trade formed the Middle Passage.

Empire: an extensive group of states or countries ruled over by a single monarch

Liberty: the quality or state of being free

Important Historical Figures

Ignatius Sancho

Charles Ignatius Sancho (c. 1729 - 14 December 1780) was a British abolitionist, writer and composer. Born on a slave ship in the Atlantic, Sancho was sold into slavery in the Spanish colony of New Grenada.

He spent much of his life trying to outlaw slavery. He is first known Black Briton to have voted in Britain.



William Wilberforce

William Wilberforce (24 August 1759 - 29 July 1833)[1] was a British politician, philanthropist, and a leader of the movement to abolish the slave trade.



Key Dates

1562

British traders first become involved in the slave trade.

1698

Private slave traders from Liverpool are allowed to set sail.

1730

First Maroon War in the British colony of Jamaica.

1765

Granville Sharp begins legal challenges to the British slave trade.

1782

The Letters of the Late Ignatius Sancho are published. He was a former slave.

1787

The Society for Effecting the Abolition of the African Slave Trade is founded in London.

1790

The first Abolition Bill is rejected by Parliament.

1807

The Act to Abolish the Transatlantic Slave Trade is passed in Parliament.

1833

Slavery Abolition Act is passed in Parliament, taking effect in 1834.

