

Keys to Understanding American Slavery and the Aftermath Video Series

One cannot fully understand the concept of **racism** without fully knowing how it came to be in our society. Slavery shaped the fundamental beliefs of Americans about race and whiteness, and white supremacy was a product and legacy of this enterprise.(1) It shaped the American economy, politics, law, culture of a new nation. Slavery insinuated itself into every relationship, institution, and action.(2) An in-depth study of American slavery literally could take academic years, however, the videos below (a total of 45-60 minutes of viewing time) will provide a general understanding of the basic concepts of this extensive and impactful part of US history.

Key Concept 1

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sy3bl9wJ-kU&list=PLkNRS7yXuH24cZfmdCpzRIKiX9pW_BADu

Slavery, which Europeans practiced before they invaded the Americas, was important to all colonial powers and existed in all North American colonies. Virginians changed British law to protect the growing institution of slavery in the 17th century.

Key Concept 2

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pm5JtTII4is>

Slavery and the slave trade were central to the development and growth of the colonial economies and what is now the United States. Enslaved people in an area just outside New Orleans rippled across the globe to create wealth for the growing nation.

Key Concept 3

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2a5AIXI0IWs>

Protections for slavery were embedded in the founding documents; enslavers dominated the federal government, Supreme Court and Senate from 1787 through 1860. Constitution, written when slavery was seen as a “dying institution,” actually protected the institution and allowed enslavers to aggressively defend its expansion.

Key Concept 4

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n58wc8lzR_k

Slavery was an institution of power, designed to create profit for the enslavers and break the will of the enslaved and was a relentless quest for profit abetted by racism.

Key Concept 5

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3LhTLaNwELU>

Enslaved people resisted the efforts of their enslavers to reduce them to commodities in both revolutionary and everyday ways.

Key Concept 6

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=onHR_3fOVt8

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

Key Concept 7

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iYzY0xC_IIQ

Slavery was the central cause of the Civil War.

Key Concept 8

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5t-4HaJ_ERY

Slavery shaped the fundamental beliefs of Americans about race and whiteness, and white supremacy was both a product and legacy of slavery.

Key Concept 9

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gb-gSnOAFG4>

Enslaved and freed people worked to maintain cultural traditions while building new ones that sustain communities and impact the larger world.

1. Jones, Martha. Teaching Hard History: American Slavery. Teaching Tolerance. September 2020.
<https://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/2019-08/TT-THH-TDQ-Key-Concept-8-Martha-Jones.pdf>.
2. Bethany, Jay and Cynthia Lynn Lysterly, editors. Understanding and Teaching American Slavery, Forward, pg. X11
Madison, WI 2016 ,University of Wisconsin Press.
3. Video: <https://www.tolerance.org/frameworks/teaching-hard-history/american-slavery/key-concept-videos>

