

# Olaudah equiano's experiences and the british slave trade research paper sample

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Olaudah Equiano who was also known as Gustavus Vassa, was a known African who engaged actively in abolishing of slave trade in an event known as British movement for the abolition of the slave trade. (Equiano, O. 1999).

In the story we find that Equiano was abducted when was still very young and sold off to slave traders where he worked as a slave. Apart from being a slave, he also worked as an author, merchant, and explorer in South America, the Caribbean the Arctic the American colonies and the United Kingdom where he settled by 1792. (William, L. & Andrews, F. 1997).

In a stage known as the middle passage, Equiano describes it as hellish because of the horrific conditions he witnessed and encountered. During this stage, a slave ship which was carrying several slaves capsized killing several slaves before they reached their destination. (William, L. & Andrews, F. 1997). That is before they reached the shores of what was termed as their new homes. Equiano could remember vividly well the slave woman who was wearing a muzzle as she dies and he was shocked and at the same time astonished.

In the slavery, Equiano remembered how they starved daily as well as suffering of other fellow slaves. Amongst other things, there were dreadful punishments especially to men. (Equiano, O. 1999). People were being beaten up and forced to work longer hours with little time to rest. In case one was found doing something contrary to the white man rule, he was suppose to be hanged or rather be stacked to the ground and most shockingly, the ears were cut bit by bit.

Equiano also shared with us that his father also had slaves in Africa. There existed tribal war and the slaves were given tough rules. One of the rules

Equiano remembered was that committing adultery was punishable by death. Equiano said that at one time, a girl committed adultery and to his surprise, she was spared. (Walvin, E. & James, G. 2000). The reason was that she was pregnant and no any other woman could suckle the baby. Instead, the mother was made a slave and the baby made her life to be spared. However, Equiano compared the slavery in his father's home and that of the British. (Equiano, O. 1999). He concluded that in Africa, slaves were not treated so badly to an extent hat both the slaves and other people's food were the same and this brought the picture of equality.

According to Equiano, the British were Christians and one of the scriptures in the bible states that do to your neighbor something which is good when done to you. (William, L. & Andrews, F. 1997). But this was contrary to the religious inspiration of the British since they tortured slaves. They even kill some slaves and this was against the bible. Africans were treated and taken like beasts because of their color and race. (Walvin, E. & James, G. 2000). However, Equiano himself was introduced to Christianity by the whites and he had a strong believe in God. He kept on inspiring himself that one day he would be free from slavery in God's will.

There was also sexual abuse of very innocent female slaves. Rape was against the African culture where Equiano was coming from. He was shocked to see both African and white woman who had the same features except color but the white chose to rob off African women their innocence leaving behind the white women. (William, L. & Andrews, F. 1997). One of the most emotional moments for Equiano was when he was separated from his beloved sister. He could not make out the possible fate which was a waiting

his sister. He could be raped at the same time, he could die of any diseases but the most likely one was the former.

Equiano through his story also pointed out that African slaves were denied the opportunity to learn as well as freedom. (Walvin, E. & James, G. 2000). Since he was captured, Equiano longed to be free and to learn hence he gathered what he could from the people around him while he was still in Africa. He learned religion, languages and even culture of his captors. He tried to engage in import trade in order to buy his freedom. He even told his colleagues that life has lost meaning without freedom.

In conclusion, we could summarize the life of Equiano as quite inspirational since he moved from idyllic life to a state of captivity. (William, L. & Andrews, F. 1997). This is realized when he engaged in business and later on became famous. He also believed in spiritual power; although he found Christianity with the British people, he came to believe in God and later on was freed. He also learned to live with the foreigners and to an extent that he refused to return to Africa even after being freed. (Equiano, O. 2007). Equiano worked his way towards being freed rather than to escape and this gives us moral inspiration to work hard even under tough circumstances.

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