

# African slavery

[Sociology](#), [Slavery](#)



The following essay will describe the historical case study of African Slavery and also the basic human rights that were exploited from the African people between the 17th and 19th centuries. For five centuries Europeans went to Africa, took people by force then sold them to other European people in their countries. The Africans were captured in warfare or raids and loaded onto ships that traveled mostly over the Atlantic Ocean. They were forced to work as slaves to break the land and to labour on sugar, tobacco, coffee and cotton plantations.

The slaves were kept chained together in the ship's hold. They were put in very fine spaces and unable to move about. Disease was common aboard the ship in the unhealthy conditions where people were unable to go to the toilet. When slaves died they remained chained up until the crew took them away. Many Africans committed suicide instead of facing the brutal life as a slave. Most Africans captured this way were taken to the Americas. Africans that knew each other or spoke the same language were split up and all given European names.

It was sheer luck whether the slave would be bought by a kind or a cruel master. They were either placed in the harsh work of a field slave or as a household slave doing the easier tasks. The younger the slave was the more money he or she would cost. They worked from dawn till dark and some would die from exhaustion. The women would sometimes have abortions or kill their babies to prevent their child from suffering the life of a slave. In the southern states, plantation owners explained to their slaves that they were free.

Many chose to stay with their masters and work as paid labourers. Back then freedom did not mean equality or fair treatment so blacks kept fighting for human rights but struggled. Europeans quickly made laws that restricted and controlled the lives of black people and made necessary another century of struggle for civil rights. Slavery ended in 1838 by the British who had made it illegal. Human rights back then compared to nowadays is changed dramatically for the better and we need to appreciate that.