

The slavery issue

Slaves were used as a cheap labor force for the plantations of the South. The wealthy plantation owners wanted to maximize the profit they made on growing crops, primarily cotton. Because the cost of slave labor was so low, plantation owners shipped black people from Africa and other parts of the world to the Americas to work on the plantations. Slaves were bought at auctions and then began a life of hard work, usually in appalling conditions. The work was difficult and exhausting, and frequently in hot and miserable surroundings. The people forced into slave labor were often given little food, insufficient clothing, and not enough rest. Slaves could be beaten by their owners for no reason, and families could be separated and sold to different owners, never to see or hear from each other again. It was illegal for slaves to be taught to read or write. Slaves were denied basic rights, and slave owners justified this treatment as the “South’s peculiar institution.”



Read the text and ...

a) look for these words in English in the text :

* un propriétaire :

* riche, prospère :

* refuser (ou nier) :

* une culture ou une récolte :

* le repos :

* qui ne coûte pas cher (*adj*):

b) find a synonym in the text for :

- a problem (*n*) =

- (hard) work (*n*) =

- horrible or shocking (*adj*) =

- not high (*adj*) =

- very tiring (*adj*) =

- expensive (*adj* = *cher*) =

➡ Talk about how slaves had to live.

Rappel : HAD TO = obligation
be ALLOWED TO = être autorisé à...

Match each verb with an element on the right and say whether slaves **had to** do these actions or **weren't allowed to** do them.

- live
- talk
- work
- use
- wear
- read
- be



COTTON PLANTATION IN SOUTH CAROLINA

- at all
- educated
- in small, wretched* huts on plantations
- Wretched: misérable, pitoyable /'retʃɪd/
- in their own language
- their birth name
- old and ill-fitting* clothes
- from sunrise to sunset
- * ill-fitting (*adj*) = too big or too small