

TTP After Abolition
How proud can Britain be of the Royal Navy's efforts to end the Atlantic Slave Trade in the 19th Century?

Resource Sheet 1 [Version B] - Facts and Opinions about the West Africa Squadron

Facts	Facts
<p>1807 – A small number of Royal Navy vessels were assigned to the task of patrolling the Atlantic ocean for illegal slaving ships</p> <p>1819 – The West African Squadron was formed</p> <p>1829 - the worst year for the squadron, 204 men died out of the total strength of 792, the majority in an outbreak of yellow fever on board HMS Eden.</p> <p>1830 – W.A. Squadron consisted of 9 RN ships; cost of maintenance £106,111</p> <p>1832 – HMS Black Joke burned because of rotten hull; a Royal Navy surgeon wrote: 'it has done more towards putting an end to the vile traffic in slaves than all the ships of the station put together'.</p> <p>1840 – BWAS helped British forces destroy Gallinas (West Africa) slave barracoons* = new British policy of direct intervention on the African coast, leading to numerous treaties signed with local chiefdoms</p> <p>1847 = WAS consisted of 32 ships: 6 were steam driven, and was actively engaged in intervention at sea and now on land as well</p> <p>1850s - By the 1850s, around 25 vessels and 2,000 officers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Between 1807 and 1847, roughly one in four slavers were captured <p>* Slave holding pens</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes slave ships being chased by the Royal Navy jettisoned their slave cargo overboard. • The cost in the lives of the Squadron crew members was high due to diseases on the West coast of Africa; the introduction of quinine reduced Malaria deaths • Captured slave ships were often sold and bought by other slave traders • In its history it had captured 595 ships and freed 45,612. The total cost of suppression between 1816 and 1865 was a about £12.4 million
	Opinions
	<p>Marika Sherwood, 'After Abolition': 'almost always its vessels were old and the most inefficient the Navy possessed.'</p>
	<p>Quaker Abolitionist, Joseph Sturge, who founded the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society in 1839, thought the Squadron should be withdrawn as a failure.</p>
	<p>Palmerston, British Prime Minister, in 1862 complained: 'If there was a particularly old, slow-going tub in the navy, she was sure to be sent to the coast of Africa to try and catch the fast-sailing American clippers.'</p>
	<p>Historian, James Walvin (A Short History of Slavery: 'The slaving poacher of the 18th century became the world's abolitionist gamekeeper of the 19th century.'</p>