

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

TTP/Resource Sheet 1

Context of Royal Navy's efforts to suppress the Atlantic Slave Trade

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| USA and France set up naval patrols. American ships were, from time to time, sent to help the West Africa Squadron. Neither nation came close to matching Britain's contribution | Britain was the greatest naval power in the 19 th Century, having a 'two-power' standard: i.e. being stronger than the next two powers |
| Britain was at war between 1800 and 1815, and again in 1854-56; for the remaining periods of the 19 th century she faced no other major wars | The Atlantic Slave Trade continued after 1807, both legally and illegally |
| Britain was the dominant 'World power' of the 19 th century | American marines carried out raids in early 19 th century on bases belonging to 'Barbary' pirates in North Africa who carried on a trade in white slaves |
| Britain's trade and industry made her the richest nation in the world in the 19 th century | Britain's vast empire and trade routes required her naval power to be stretched across the globe |
| An estimated 90% of the goods traded for slaves in West Africa after 1807 were manufactured in Britain; British credit financed half of the Cuban and Brazilian slave trade after 1807 | Britain continued after 1807 and 1833 to consume vast quantities of slave-produced goods, particularly cotton in the cotton textile industry |
| Many West African chiefs continued to participate in the slave trade | Britain made the crime of illegal slave trading punishable by transportation in 1811 and by death in 1824 |
| The USA passed laws to end the slave trade, but they were far from universally obeyed by Americans prior to 1860s | 1819-1859: roughly 1 in 4 of the slavers were captured, but only about 1 in 8 of the slaves exported were liberated |
| The Slave Trade was virtually stamped out in the northern division, some infamous spots lingered in the Bight, but in the south, at the mouth of the Congo and in Angola, it still flourished | Slaves were often thrown overboard if a Royal Navy ship was sighted and gave chase |