Name_____

Slavery

In North America, the thirteen British colonies grew quickly. Farms and industry began to thrive. With this expansion, workers were needed. Some people did work as indentured servants. An indentured servant is different from a slave because this person can earn his or her freedom after an agreed-upon term. Many people came to the New World as indentured servants; someone else paid for their passage in return for a required number of years of service, but eventually the person could earn his or her freedom. This was not so with slavery.

Slavery was introduced in America as early as the 1600s. Slavery expanded in the colonies as the New World began to grow. In fact, the population grew so quickly that many colonists feared they would be overpowered by the slaves. Slave codes were put into place. These codes kept slaves from gathering in large numbers and also from traveling without permits.

The daily life of a slave varied. Some were given jobs as house slaves, while others toiled in fields working long, strenuous hours. Slaves were treated differently depending on their owners. Some were treated very cruelly and punished in barbaric methods, such as being hit with a whip. Others were treated as family such as the life of slave Phyllis Wheatley, who was taught to read and write and was later given her freedom by her owner. Unfortunately, stories like Phyllis Wheatley's did not often occur. The issue of slavery would not be settled in America until 1865 at the end of the Civil War.

Text Questions

1. According to the text, why were slaves needed in the New World?
   a. More people were needed to settle the colonies.
   b. Disease forced them from their own homes.
   c. Farms and industry were rapidly expanding in the New World.
   d. People in Europe had slaves, so people in the New World wanted to continue the practice.
2. What is one difference between an indentured servant and a slave?
   a. An indentured servant could work to earn his or her freedom.
   b. Only males could be indentured servants.
   c. Slaves had free passage to the colonies; therefore, they were unable to be indentured servants.
   d. Unlike a freed slave, an indentured servant could never leave the thirteen colonies even once the person earned his or her freedom.
3. What was the purpose of the Slave codes?
   a. to stop slaves from organizing and trying to be free
   b. to give slaves their own set of laws
   c. to stop slaves from learning to read
   d. to separate slaves from their families
4. Which statement is true about Phyllis Wheatley?
   a. She was the only slave ever taught to read and write.
   b. She was freed from slavery because her owners were afraid of her.
   c. The treatment she received from her owners was not the usual treatment most slaves experienced.
   d. Her life was perfect.
5. Which is an antonym for the word *toiled* as it is used in the last paragraph?
   a. labored
   b. worked
   c. struggled
   d. relaxed

LIVEWORKSHEETS