

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A PLANTATION POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES Grades 3-8

The following post-visit activities were developed to help review and reinforce the information the students learned during their visit to Drayton Hall. These activities were created to help meet multi-disciplinary standards across the curriculum. Please note that the number of stations vary based upon the number of students participating. Your students may not have participated in every station.

*During the 18th and 19th centuries, Drayton Hall was a working plantation that used an enslaved labor force – Africans and African Americans. These slaves were both skilled and unskilled laborers. During your visit to Drayton Hall each of the stations focused on the many contributions that the slaves made to the plantation economy. Some of these slaves were mentioned by name, including **Affy** (who was possibly Glen and Thomas Drayton’s nursemaid), **Carolina** (possibly an apprentice brick mason in 1760), **Dembo** (a field slave), **Hercules** (a field hand), **Judith** (who worked in the house), **June** (a field slave), **Mary** (who may have been learning to cook), **Quash** (who became a master carpenter), **Sampson** (another field slave), and **Will** (who may have been an apprentice cooper). As you discuss your visit to Drayton Hall with your students, try to encourage them to refer to the slaves by name as much as possible.*

I. Kitchen Station (may be combined with the Housekeeping Station)

1. **Mary** was a slave cook at Drayton Hall. Have the students compose a diary entry for **Mary** describing a “day in her life”. What time did she get up? Who helped her in the kitchen? What tasks did she complete in addition to cooking for the Draytons? What did she eat? Where did she get the food she prepared, and what time did she complete her work for the day? Have the students illustrate the diary entry.
2. Have the students prepare a menu to feed the Draytons and the slaves at Drayton Hall – approximately 50 people. Who is doing the food preparation? How many meals will they have to feed to the Draytons? How many meals for the slaves? Do the Draytons and the slaves eat the same foods? How much food is each person served? Does anyone get seconds? How long will it take to prepare and cook all the food? Will all the food be grown on the plantation or will some of it have to be purchased? Would **Mary**, the cook, use a cookbook? Why or why not?
3. Have your students think about the foods they eat every day. From where did the food originate? What is American Cuisine? Have the students draw a map

identifying the countries of origin for their favorite foods. Do the students eat any of the same foods that the Draytons and their slaves ate during the 18th century?

4. Have your students think about food preparation. How much of the food they eat is grown and prepared at home? How much of their food is prepared in a factory? How often do they eat fast food or in a restaurant? Compare these findings to how the Draytons ate. Use a T chart to compare and contrast the results.
5. Plan a Plantation Feast for your classroom: include favorite foods from Africa such as peanuts and benne seed wafers, favorites from England such as tea and cakes, and American favorites such as cornbread. Have the students decide on a decorative theme featuring African, English or American motifs. Don't forget to include music, perhaps some classical music as well as African drums.

II. Housekeeping Station *(may be combined with the Kitchen Station)*

1. Have the students think about the chores that they do at home. Are they on the task system? Using a T chart, have them list the typical chores they do at home as well as list the typical chores for which a slave child would be responsible. Compare and contrast both lists. Do the students think that they are overworked today?
2. Plantations tried to be self-sufficient. Have the students list the ways plantations were self-sufficient. Now have the students think about being self-sufficient today. Have the students list items that we make today at home. How do the lists compare?
3. On a plantation the plantation mistress (at Drayton Hall the mistress was Mrs. Drayton) was responsible for overseeing the production of all the clothing for the slaves. One of the items a seamstress or tailor would need is a pincushion. Have your students sew their own pincushion. **Materials needed:** fabric squares 4" x 4", ribbon, needles, pins, thread, scissors, and fiberfill. **Directions:** Pin 2 squares right sides together; using a running stitch beginning 1/3 away from the center of one side, sew around 3 sides and end 1/3 away from the first side, leaving 1/3 open; turn fabric and stuff with fiberfill; stitch opening closed; cut a 12" length of ribbon and tie the ends together in a bow; sew the bow onto stitched closure. The ribbon can be used to loop the cushion over a belt.
4. Have the students research clothing styles from the 18th century. The students can then make a collage of the different styles for men and women or have the students illustrate a book of 18th century clothes. Another option is to have the students create a life-size outfit on a large sheet of paper. Have each student

“model” their ensemble on a classroom runway by holding their illustration in front of them as they walk the runway describing it to the class and why it is fashionable. The rest of the class can be critics and critique the outfit.

5. **Affy** was a house slave who was probably the nursemaid for John Drayton’s children. Have the students write a diary entry for **Affy** describing what it was like taking care of Glen and Thomas Drayton when they were young boys at Drayton Hall. Did she indulge the boys or was she strict?

III. Field Station

1. Rice was the primary cash crop at Drayton Hall. Today, rice is a popular crop throughout the world. Using a world map, have the students mark where rice is grown today. What country produces the most rice? How much rice does the United States produce? Is rice still grown in South Carolina?
2. During the 18th century most people were small farmers. Have the students pretend that they are farmers. Have each student write up a farm proposal planning out a new farm. How many acres is the farm? How big are the fields? How long is each field and how wide? What is the total square footage of each field? What crops do they plan to grow? What time of year will they plant each crop? Why are seasons important? Where will they plant these crops? How will they water them? Do they need to build a greenhouse? Include in the proposal a diagram showing the arrangement of crops on the farm. Be sure to have them include the farmhouse.
3. Indigo was once an important crop grown at Drayton Hall. It produced a dark blue dye. Have the students experiment with other plants. Can those plants be used for dye? What color dye can those plants produce? Have the students research to learn which plants the Indians used for dye. Are plants still used for dye today?
4. Slaves often sang songs while they worked in the fields. Have the students compose a work song and perform it for another class. The students could also change the song and sing it in a call-response format or sing it as a round, like Row, Row, Row Your Boat.
5. **Dembo, Hercules, June, and Sampson** were slaves who may have worked in the rice fields at Drayton Hall. Have your students compose a journal entry detailing their work in the rice fields, including activities that the students learned about at the field station.

IV. Artisan Station

1. *During the 18th century, the plantation cooper was one of the most important skilled craftsmen on the plantation. Have the students list the different types of containers a cooper would make and what they would hold. Then have them list the equivalent 21st-century container. How are they alike and how are they different? Have them draw some of the different buckets and barrels that they saw at Drayton Hall.*
2. *During the 18th century children learned a skill or trade by becoming an apprentice. Often by age 10, a young child would be sent to live in the home of a master craftsman to learn a trade. Have your students choose an 18th century trade to research. After they have learned about the trade, have them imagine that he or she is an apprentice learning that trade. Have the students compose a letter home to his or her family describing his or her apprenticeship.*
3. *Have the students study a famous craftsman such as master blacksmith Phillip Simmons of Charleston. How did he or she learn the trade? Did the artisan go to school, apprentice, or both? What made the artisan choose his or her trade?*
4. *Have the students read Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem The Village Blacksmith. Compare that poem to what the students learned about a plantation blacksmith. Using a Venn diagram, compare and contrast the blacksmiths.*
5. *Have the students compose The Plantation Blacksmith poem, similar to Longfellow's poem.*

V. Pastimes and Amusements Station (Grades 3-5)

1. *Many 18th-century games are still popular today. Have your students research 18th-century games to find ones that are still popular. Can they make these games themselves? Have the students make some simple versions of the games that they researched and play them in class. Are they still fun to play? Why or why not?*
2. *During the 18th century, the minuet was a very popular dance performed by one couple at a time. Have the students find the directions for this dance and teach it to the class. What kind of music should be played while dancing the minuet? Could the students dance the minuet to 21st-century music? Have them try the dance with classical music and then with modern music.*
3. *During their visit to Drayton Hall the students played Thread the Needle while reciting a ditty. Have the class compose their own ditty to recite while playing Thread the Needle.*
4. *Glen and Thomas Drayton were young boys at Drayton Hall when their older half-brothers William Henry and Charles were away attending school in*

England. Have your students imagine they are Glen or Thomas and compose letters to their older brothers detailing the fun things they were doing at Drayton Hall during their free time.

5. A Bilbo Catcher was a popular toy in the 18th century that encouraged hand to eye coordination. Your students can make a similar toy, a cup and ball, using a paper cup, string and ping-pong ball. Ask the students if similar toys are still sold today in stores? What are they called?

VI. Slave House Station

1. Oral history is an important way to remember the past. For slaves who could not read or write, storytelling became one of the ways the slaves could record their culture and heritage. Have your students interview an older family member, friend or neighbor and share the story with the class. The interviews could then be compiled into a classroom oral history book that the students could illustrate.
2. For centuries, storytelling was one of the most common forms of entertainment. Have the students research a folktale and tell it to their classmates. What is important when telling a good story?
3. Music was an important part of slave culture. Slaves often sang when they were working, as well as in the slave quarter in the evening. Have the students compose a song describing a special event, a typical day, or to honor someone important. The students could accompany themselves with simple instruments such as shakers (rice in a covered cup) and drums (a desk).
4. Gullah is a Creole language developed from the blending of English and African languages. It is also a culture. Read to the students a Gullah story and discuss what it means. Ask the students why it is important to preserve the Gullah culture for the future.
5. One kind of American quilt is called a friendship quilt. A group of friends would each make one square for the quilt and then the quilters would gather together to assemble the quilt. Each square would represent the quilter using a special design or symbol. Have each of your students design a quilt square on construction paper for a classroom quilt. Your quilt might even tell a story. Tape the squares together and display it on a bulletin board. What can you learn about the quilters from the quilt squares?
6. Food and music are an important part of the Gullah traditions. Have the class prepare a Gullah festival, including favorite Gullah foods and music.

Eighth-Grade Additions/Alternate Projects

- 1. The African slaves transported to America were members of many different tribes and nations. Have the students research the different tribes in Africa and their cultures and what their contributions were to African-American culture today.*
- 2. Have the students research the slave trade triangle and make a map documenting the trade routes and goods.*
- 3. Being sold at auction was humiliating and traumatic for African slaves. Have the students compose a diary excerpt documenting the experience of slaves at an auction.*
- 4. Compare and contrast the task system and the gang system. Why was the task system used at Drayton Hall?*
- 5. Conditions for slaves during the middle passage were horrible. Have the class list the issues that slaves faced, such as limited space and mobility in cargo holds, poor food, etc., and what the resulting consequences would be for them.*