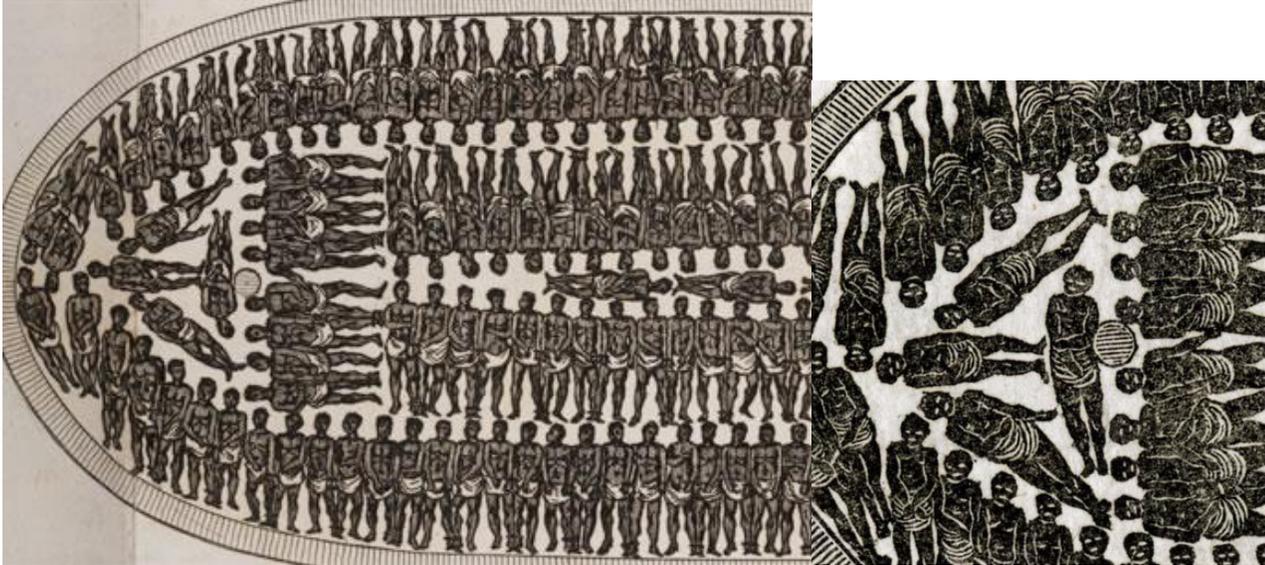


Focus Question #2: What were the conditions like on the slave ships crossing the Atlantic?

Source A: Illustration showing conditions below the decks of the British slaving ship, Brookes.

The two images are part of a print created in 1789 of a slave boat called the Brookes. According to the label of the print, the boat was built to carry 454 slaves. Records show that in 1783 the vessel carried more than 600 enslaved Africans across the Atlantic to the Americas.



Source B: Autobiography of a Former Slave

Olaudah Equiano was born in West Africa. As a young boy, he was kidnapped by an African tribe and sold to European slave traders, who took him to Virginia. He eventually purchased his freedom and moved to England. He later wrote an autobiography describing his experiences as a slave. Below are passages of Equiano's autobiography:

"I was soon put down under the decks, and there I received such a smell in my nostrils as I had never experienced in my life: so that, with the loathsomeness [unpleasantness] of the stench [smell], and crying together, I became so sick and low that I was not able to eat, nor had I the least desire to taste anything. I now wished for the last friend, death, to relieve me; but soon, to my grief, two of the white men offered me food; and, on my refusing to eat, one of them held me fast by the hands, and tied my feet, while the other flogged [whipped] me severely. I had never experienced anything of this kind before. . . ."

Source C: Slave Ship Doctor

Alexander Falconbridge served as a doctor on British slave ships during the 1780's. Below is a passage that he wrote about his experience:

"The men [slaves], on being brought aboard the ship, are immediately fastened together by hand-cuffs on their wrists, and by irons riveted [bolted together] on their legs. They are frequently stowed [placed] so close, they can only lie on their sides.

Their food is served to them in tubs, about the size of a small water bucket. They are placed around these tubs in companies [groups] of ten...If [they] refused to take sustenance [eat], I have seen coals of fire, glowing hot, put on a shovel, and placed so near their lips, as to scorch and burn them..."

Source D:***World Population (in millions):***

	1750	1800	1850
World	791	978	1262
Africa	106	107	111
Americas	18	31	64

Percentage of the World's Population:

	1750	1800	1850
Africa	13.4%	10.9%	8.8%
Americas	2.3%	3.2%	5.1%

Source E:

“During the years of the slave trade (from about 1502 to 1888—when Brazil made slavery illegal), it has been estimated that over 12 million Africans were forcibly removed from Africa and transported across the Atlantic. The social and economic costs of the slave trade had a huge impact on West Africa. Many families were separated never to be reunited. The loss of so many young workers hurt West Africa’s economy. The slave trade led to the abandonment of productive farmland. Many African communities simply disintegrated [collapsed]. West Africa was left impoverished by its relationship with Europe. At the same time the economic development and wealth of Europe and the European colonies in the New World grew.

The slave trade also increased warfare within Africa. African kings and warlords were anxious to trade slaves with Europeans to acquire guns. Between the years 1750 to 1800, Africans imported 20 million guns from Europeans. African rulers were in competition with each other, so the acquisition of guns provided an edge over their rivals. This increased their drive to capture and sell slaves. The demand for slaves, combined with the supply of guns, encouraged rulers to attack neighbors.”