

Inquiry Design Model (IDM) Blueprint™

Lesson Overview	In 1860, the schooner <i>Clotilda</i> illegally transported more than 100 Africans to Mobile, Alabama—over fifty years after the international slave trade had been outlawed. After emancipation, survivors pooled their resources, purchased land, and founded Africatown, a self-governed Black community rooted in West African traditions. This lesson uses Africatown as a case study to help students explore the concept of the African Diaspora, cultural resistance, and identity formation.
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Compelling Question	How does the story of the Clotilda and the founding of Africatown help us understand the African Diaspora and why it matters?
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Standards and Practices	<p>Alabama State Standard (2024) – 10th Grade</p> <p>11c - Describe how Alabamians were impacted by growing sectionalism from 1832 to 1861, including the reliance on cotton and slave labor, the Second Creek War, and secession.</p> <p>17c - Investigate and recount the experiences of immigrant communities in urban America, including patterns of settlement, cultural assimilation, and origins of migration.</p> <p>Human Geography 11a - Explain how urban sprawl affects a city, the communities around it, and the natural environment.</p> <p>C3 Framework:</p> <p>Dimension 1: Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries D1.1–D1.5 (Constructing compelling and supporting questions)</p> <p>Dimension 2: Applying Disciplinary Concepts and Tools – History D2.His.1–14 (Historical sources, causation, context, continuity and change, and argumentation)</p> <p>Dimension 3: Evaluating Sources and Using Evidence D3.1–D3.4 (Gathering, evaluating, and using sources as evidence)</p> <p>Dimension 4: Communicating Conclusions and Taking Informed Action D4.1–D4.8 (Constructing arguments, presentations, and civic action)</p> <p>NCSS Themes:</p> <p>Theme I: Culture – Cultural preservation, identity, and resistance</p> <p>Theme II: Time, Continuity, and Change – Historical legacy of the transatlantic slave trade</p> <p>Theme III: People, Places, and Environments – Forced migration and settlement</p>
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	<p>Theme V: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions – Community building in Africatown</p> <p>Theme VI: Power, Authority, and Governance – Enslavement, emancipation, and self-governance</p>		
Staging the Question	<p>Students will view a short video about the Clotilda and Africatown. Afterward they will examine a picture of Kossula. For this activity, they will participate in a turn-and-talk to create a list of questions they may have.</p>		
Supporting Question 1	Supporting Question 2	Supporting Question 3	
<p>What were the events that surrounded the travels of the <i>Clotilda</i> and the arrival of the Africans to Mobile and how did the survivors establish Africatown?</p>	<p>How does Africatown illustrate the African Diaspora through cultural survival, resistance, and identity formation?</p>	<p>Why does Africatown matter today, and what does it reveal about the long-term impact of the African Diaspora?</p>	
Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task	
<p>Students will work in groups to create a timeline surrounding the events of the <i>Clotilda</i> and the establishment of Africatown.</p>	<p>Students will research the concept of diaspora and use their findings to explain how Africatown reflects diasporic experiences. The Diaspora Evidence Organizer will help students collect and organize evidence.</p>	<p>Students will research the present-day conditions of Africatown, how it fits within the greater Mobile area, and the ongoing efforts to maintain and protect it as a historic community.</p>	
Featured Sources	Featured Sources	Featured Sources	
<p>Excerpts from <i>Barracoon</i></p> <p>Clotilda: The Exhibition Timeline</p> <p>Encyclopedia of Alabama - Clotilda</p>	<p>Excerpts from <i>Barracoon</i></p> <p>Diaspora Evidence Organizer</p> <p>Students will conduct their own research. The example websites listed below may help guide their investigation:</p> <p>Introduction to American Studies: African Diaspora (Fiveable)</p> <p>Museum of the African Diaspora</p> <p>Hearing Spirit Speak: Preserving Africatown as a Site of Black Resistance</p>	<p>Africatown Business & Community Panel</p> <p>Africatown C.H.E.S.S. (Clean, Healthy, Educated, Safe & Sustainable)</p> <p>Africatown Community Development Corporation</p> <p>Africatown Heritage Preservation Foundation</p> <p>Africatown Redevelopment Corporation</p>	

	<p>Clotilda: America's Last Slave Ship and the Community of Africatown</p> <p>Africatown: In Summary The Spirit of Place</p>	<p>Clotilda Descendants Association M.O.V.E. (Making Opportunities Viable for Everyone) Gulf Coast CDC</p> <p>Mobile County Training School Alumni Association</p> <p>Mobile Environmental Justice Action Coalition</p> <p>History Museum of Mobile</p> <p>Africatown: In Summary The Spirit of Place</p> <p>Africatown Neighborhood Plan</p>
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<p>Summative Performance Task</p>	<p>Argument</p>	<p>Students will choose a way to tell the story of the Clotilda and Africatown and explain why it matters, using evidence to support their thinking.</p> <p>Suggestions may include, but not be limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A podcast episode or recorded interview (student as historian, survivor, or descendant). ● An illustrated narrative or short story based on historical evidence. ● A spoken word poem or performance piece grounded in sources. ● A social media awareness campaign (posts, reels, captions, hashtags explaining Africatown's significance). ● A letter to a historical society or school board arguing why Africatown should be studied/preserved.
	<p>Extension</p>	<p>Additional extension activities may be designed and implemented that would connect this lesson to students' local area, regional history, and community resources. These are only suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Diaspora culture project – Students can explore how music, food, language, or religion reflect African retentions and adaptations across the diaspora. ● Policy & memory project - Students can write proposals arguing how and why historical sites like Africatown should be protected. ● Art as memory project - Students can create visual art, poetry, or music inspired by Africatown and diaspora themes.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Literature connection - Pair with excerpts from <i>Barracoon</i> and have students craft reflective or analytical responses. ● STEM connection – Students can explore archaeology, shipwreck discovery, or environmental studies connected to the Mobile River and Africatown.
Taking Informed Action	<p>Students may design one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Educational poster or PSA ● Mini-exhibit for school display ● Reflection letter on historical preservation ● Proposal for an Africatown awareness activity 	

Key Vocabulary: African Diaspora, Transatlantic Slave Trade, Emancipation, Cultural Resistance, Identity, Reconstruction, Africatown, Clotilda.

Conceptual Takeaways:

- Diaspora is created through movement, often forced, and reshapes people, cultures, and societies.
- Cultural traditions can survive displacement and become forms of resistance.
- Africatown demonstrates how African survivors rebuilt community, identity, and culture after enslavement.
- Local histories reveal global historical patterns.

Dr. Lisa H. Matherson - lhmatherson@ua.edu
 Dr. Elizabeth K. Wilson - ewilson@retiree.ua.edu
 Dr. Russell Hammack - rhammack@jsu.edu