

## The South

### Section 3



#### MAIN IDEAS

1. Slaves worked at a variety of jobs on plantations.
2. Life under slavery was difficult and dehumanizing.
3. Slave culture centered around family, community, and religion.
4. Slave uprisings led to stricter slave codes in many states.

### Key Terms and People

**folktales** stories with a moral

**spirituals** songs that combine African and European music and religious beliefs

**Nat Turner's Rebellion** the name given to the 1831 rebellion led by Nat Turner

**Nat Turner** Virginia slave who led a rebellion against slaveholders in 1831

### Academic Vocabulary

**aspect** part

## Section Summary

### SLAVES AND WORK

Most planters used the gang labor system to get their fields farmed. In this system enslaved men, women, and children over 10 years of age all did the same fieldwork from dawn until dark.

Slaves with special skills often were rented out by their owners. Sometimes these slaves were allowed to keep part of what they earned. As a consequence, some skilled slaves were able to save enough money to buy their own freedom.

**How could skilled slaves buy their freedom?**

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### LIFE UNDER SLAVERY

To most southern slaveholders, slaves were property, not people. As property, slaves could be bought and sold. Usually, this business occurred at a slave auction. At these auctions family members could be sold away from each other forever.

**What could happen to family members at a slave auction?**

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**Section 3, continued**

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Many slaveholders used cruel punishments to make sure their slaves stayed obedient. In addition, many states passed strict slave codes. These laws limited what slaves could do. For example, in some states it was illegal to teach slaves to read and write.

**How were laws used to control slaves?**

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**SLAVE CULTURE**

For enslaved African Americans, the family was the most important **aspect** of their lives. Parents made sure their children knew the African part of their history, including African customs and traditions. Since they could not read and write, they passed this information verbally. Some of their stories were **folktales**—stories with morals—to teach children how to survive slavery.

**How did slaves keep their culture alive?**

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Religion was also an important part of the culture of enslaved African Americans. Christian slaves believed that, in God's eyes, they were equal to anyone else. They held onto the hope that someday they would be freed. Often, these beliefs were expressed in the **spirituals** they sang.

**SLAVE UPRISINGS**

Enslaved African Americans found a variety of ways to protest their treatment. Some even ran away. But getting all the way North to freedom was filled with dangers and hardships. Most runaways were caught and forced to return.

Sometimes, slaves protested with violence. They risked certain punishment. This was true of Virginia slave **Nat Turner**. During **Nat Turner's Rebellion** in 1831, slaves killed about 60 white people. In the end, though, more than 100 slaves were killed, and Turner was executed. As a result, many states strengthened their slave codes.

**When did Nat Turner's Rebellion occur?**

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**CHALLENGE ACTIVITY**

**Critical Thinking: Analyze** Write a paragraph explaining why southern slaveholders would want to keep slaves from learning to read and write.

Section 3, *continued*

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folktale

Nat Turner's Rebellion

slave codes

Nat Turner

spirituals

**DIRECTIONS** Answer each question by writing a sentence that contains at least one word from the word bank.

1. What was a story with a moral called?

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2. What did some slaves use to express their religious beliefs?

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3. Who led the most violent slave revolt in the United States?

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4. What event in 1831 led to the death of about 60 white people in Virginia?

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5. What was one way slaveholders attempted to keep slaves under control?

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