

# Arguments for Slavery

## Introduction:

African slavery was introduced into the New World as early as 1515. The first set of African enslaved workers was brought to the Caribbean to work on cattle ranches and farms. With the huge success of the sugar industry literally millions of Africans were forcibly transported to work on large sugar estates.



*African slaves*

This evil system found **support** among the following groups of persons:

1. The Planters who got huge profits and were able to afford a lavish lifestyle.
2. Governors and other government officials whose job it was to see to the orderly development of the colonies.

**3. West India Interest in England.** This group comprised absentee planters who had gone to live in England.

**(a)** Most of these persons argued along racial lines. They felt that the black race was inferior, backward and uncivilized and this (though not true) justified their enslavement.

**(b)** Some even used the Scriptures to back their arguments. They said that the blacks were ordained to be 'hewers of wood and drawers of water'. They went further to state that it was quite alright to enslave a person as long as that person was a heathen and the West Africans were heathens.

**(c)** Some even managed to convince themselves that the Africans were not really humans and did not have any souls.



*An anti slavery medallion*

Others argued on **economic** grounds.

**(a)** The laws of Europe respected and recognized private property. The enslaved were private property, bought and paid for.

**(b)** Only the enslaved could supply the large number of workers required on the estates.

**(c)** They already possessed the necessary agricultural skills

**(d)** Slave labor was cheap and therefore necessary for the profitable production of sugar

**(e)** Slaves would only work if enslaved

**(f)** They had tried the Encomienda and Indentured Servant systems and those had failed. Enslaved African labor had done well so far.

**(g)** It was slave labor that provided England (Europe) with the capital to finance her Industrial Revolution.

**(h)** Slavery and the slave trade had led to the developments of many ports and towns in England.