

## Slavery in America

### Examples of Observations and Inferences from a Historical Text: the Narrative of Olaudah Equiano

It is important to hone our skills for making observations and inferences – and to know the difference!

**OBSERVATIONS** are things that are mentioned in the document – noticing specific things the author has said.

**INFERENCES** are connections from the document to other things you know – reading between the lines.

Inferences may be right or wrong, but seem likely, based on evidence you see in the document.

Here are *some examples* for discussion – there are many more you could find in this historical narrative!

ORIGINAL TEXT	OBSERVATIONS	INFERENCES
<p>My father, besides many slaves, had a numerous family, of which seven lived to grow up, including myself and a sister, who was the only daughter. As I was the youngest of the sons, I became, of course, the greatest favourite of my mother, and was always with her; and she used to take particular pains to form my mind.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Olaudah’s father owned slaves</li> <li>○ Olaudah was one of seven children</li> <li>○ Olaudah’s mother favored him</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Some Nigerians owned slaves.</li> <li>○ Sons were favored over daughters</li> <li>○ Olaudah must have felt special because his mother favored him</li> </ul>
<p>I was trained up from my earliest years in the arts of agriculture and war; and my mother adorned me with emblems, after the manner of our greatest warriors. In this way I grew up till I was turned the age of eleven, when an end was put to my happiness in the following manner:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Olaudah learned how to plant food and fight in war before he was 11</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Maybe his people were at war?</li> <li>○ Olaudah must have known how to fight</li> </ul>
<p>Generally, when the grown people in the neighbourhood were gone far in the fields to labour, the children assembled together in some of the neighborhood's premises to play; and commonly some of us used to get up a tree to look out for any assailant, or kidnapper, that might come upon us; for they sometimes took those opportunities of our parents' absence, to attack and carry off as many as they could seize.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The children used to look out for kidnappers</li> <li>○ Sometimes people would capture kids and carry them off</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The kidnapers may have been slave traders</li> <li>○ The kids’ parents must have been worried about their children when they went off to work</li> </ul>

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ORIGINAL TEXT	OBSERVATIONS	INFERENCES
<p>One day, as I was watching at the top of a tree in our yard, I saw one of those people come into the yard of our next neighbour but one, to kidnap, there being many stout young people in it. Immediately, on this, I gave the alarm of the rogue, and he was surrounded by the stoutest of them, who entangled him with cords, so that he could not escape till some of the grown people came and secured him. But alas! ere long, it was my fate to be thus attacked, and to be carried off, when none of the grown people were nigh.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Olaudah saw a kidnapper try to steal the neighbor children one day</li> <li>○ That kidnapper was caught by the young people when Olaudah told them he was there</li> <li>○ Olaudah was captured later</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Olaudah must have been afraid</li> <li>○ The people must have caught many kidnappers in this way. Maybe they put them in prison? Or killed them?</li> </ul>
<p>One day, when all our people were gone out to their works as usual, and only I and my dear sister were left to mind the house, two men and a woman got over our walls, and in a moment seized us both; and, without giving us time to cry out, or make resistance, they stopped our mouths, and ran off with us into the nearest wood. Here they tied our hands, and continued to carry us as far as they could, till night came on, when we reached a small house, where the robbers halted for refreshment, and spent the night. We were then unbound; but were unable to take any food; and, being quite overpowered by fatigue and grief, our only relief was some sleep, which allayed our misfortune for a short time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Two men and a woman kidnapped Olaudah and his sister</li> <li>○ Women took part in kidnapping children too</li> <li>○ They took them to a house</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The people who captured slaves were not all men. Women were enslaving people too.</li> </ul>