

Background

Slave women would often spend time any free time quilting on the plantations. When slaves were freed, they continued to make quilts in their new homes and they developed bold quilts based on traditional American and African American quilts. They would use these to tell the story of their people and enslavement.

Task

Create a knowledge quilt which helps to explain the legacy of slavery. Choose a topic from the list below. Research the topic thoroughly using any books provided by your teacher and the internet. Summarise the main ideas in a few key words or short quotations; images and/or illustrations.

Use your materials to fill in the template provided. You could adopt a colour scheme which you feel is appropriate. It is important to keep to the template so your work can be 'stitched' to others to create a larger piece. Try to make your theme clear and your key points stand out. You should also try and make your piece of quilt as symmetrical as possible.

Topics to explore:

Culture and music:

- Music: Billie Holiday's 'Strange Fruit'; 'We shall Overcome'; The Freedom Singers.
- Sport: Jesse Owens (1936); Mexico Olympics (1968).
- Poetry: Su Ben, Quincy Mac.
- Film: *Roots*; *Twelve Years a Slave*; *Selma*; *Mississippi Burning*.
- Books: S. Northup *Twelve Years a Slave*; A. Walker *The Colour Purple*.

Political:

- Jim Crow Laws
- Civil Rights Act (1960)
- Voting Rights Act (1965)
- Barack Obama

Civil Rights:

- Key individuals: Martin Luther King; Rosa Parks; Malcolm X.
- Campaign groups: NAACP; The Black Panthers.
- Events: Montgomery bus boycott, Selma to Montgomery march, March on Washington.

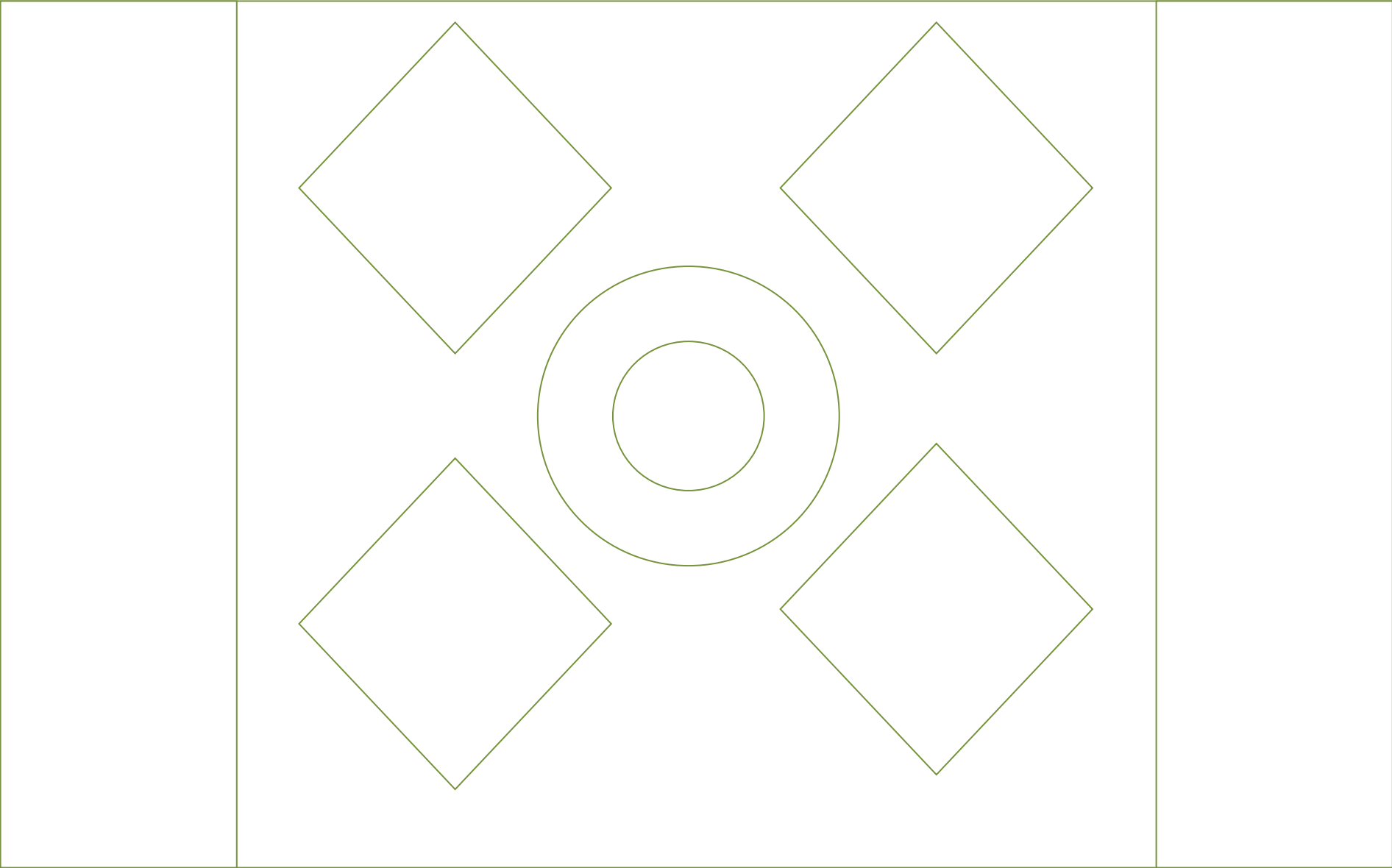
Racism:

- Ku Klux Klan
- #blacklivesmatter

Physical impact:

- Plantation mansions
- Stately homes (e.g. Harewood House, England was built from money made through slavery)
- Public monuments

Quilt template



Teaching notes

Students can either work individually or in small groups on this topic. You could allocate different topic areas or allow students a free choice. The lists included are not intended to be exhaustive. Students could also choose to work on just one element (e.g. music) or a whole area (e.g. culture).

The idea is that they curate a group of images, words, and/or illustrations to show the legacy of slavery. They can stick down images and write in words. They could even do this entirely electronically and then print out their work. They should be encouraged to use plenty of colour, a symmetrical design and strong contrasts to make it as graphic as possible.

You can then stitch (possibly literally - if students work in done on card it is possible to sew pages together with string!) each student or group's work together to make a giant class display.

Example quilts for inspiration can be found at xroads.virginia.edu/~ug97/quilt/atrad.html