

## TEACHERS NOTES

### Dutty Boukman

#### Links to the National Curriculum for Key Stage 3 History

Students will gain historical perspective by placing their growing knowledge into different contexts, understanding the connections between national and international history; between cultural, economic, military and political history.

This lesson would easily fit into schemes of learning on the following topics:

- Political power, industry and empire.
- The Transatlantic Slave Trade: its effects and its eventual abolition
- The History of protest and/or civil rights movements.
- The lesson is also relevant to Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural SMSC development

The lesson gives students the ability to be reflective about their own non-religious beliefs and perspective on life, their knowledge of, and respect for, different people's feelings and values.

It offers the opportunity to develop reasoned views about moral and ethical issues. Giving students a chance to understand and appreciate the viewpoints of others on historical issues.

### Lesson Structure

**Enquiry Question: What did it take for enslaved Africans to resist and rise-up in Haiti?**

**Learning objective: To explore the factors that helped enslaved Africans resist and rise-up in Haiti.**

This lesson looks at the story of Dutty Boukman and the factors that led enslaved Africans to resist and rise-up in Haiti.

**Starter:** Use the illustration as stimulus material for the question 'What does this image reveal about Dutty Boukman?' Students might pick up on the revolutionary, religious, military or maroon elements.

**Main task part one – focused reading.** Students read the story of Dutty Boukman and summarise in two ways. First, they assign a title to each paragraph in the text. Then they summarise each paragraph in one or two short bullet points.

**Main task part two – analysis of factors.** Students use what they have learned from the story of Dutty Boukman to identify and explain the factors that helped enslaved Africans to resist and rise-up on Haiti. They may pick up on the significance of the Vodou religion, the extensive communication network developed by enslaved peoples, the astute intellect of leaders, like Boukman, who understood the economic value of the plantations, or highlight the inspirational leaders themselves.

**Plenary:** Read/watch Independence Day a poem by Lawrence Hoo and think about the characters of inspirational, revolutionary leaders like Dutty Boukman. What did it take for the likes of Boukman to resist and rise-up in Haiti? How is this reflected in Lawrence's poem?

### **Misconceptions about Vodou**

It is important to avoid stereotypes and misconceptions in regard to the Vodou religion – these may need to be challenged. It may be difficult for students to understand how enslaved Africans were able to travel to religious meetings or communicate with enslaved people on plantations across Saint Domingue. Awareness of the large Maroon community on Saint Domingue and jobs, such as Boukman's role as a coachman, may help in understanding how messages could be disseminated across the island.

### **Contextual knowledge** (much more depth in focused reading task):

Dutty Boukman was a Vodou priest and revolutionary leader who inspired the uprising on Saint Domingue in 1791 that would become the Haitian revolution. With Cecile Fatiman, he organised a co-ordinated mass insurrection across Haiti predominantly aimed around disrupting the colonial economic system by burning plantations and refineries.

Boukman was killed in the fighting that followed and his head placed on a spike. The reaction of the French colonists to the uprising was brutal – some 10,000 enslaved Africans were killed within weeks. This led to a point of no return for most enslaved people on Saint Domingue – join the revolution or be killed. The revolution was taken up by Toussaint L'Ouverture and other leaders who organised Africans into an effective fighting force and succeeded in establishing a free, independent country.

**On the next page is the text from the poem "Independence Day" which is performed as part of this lesson.**



## **Independence Day**

It is taught that freed slaves and abolitionists set the enslaved free  
But what about all the enslaved that fought to overcome their captivity

There is so little recorded to explain this  
Making it almost look like they lived in bliss

This could not be further from the truth  
If they did not obey they'd be hanging from a noose

But their pride, strength and unity was too strong  
To allow others to keep them enslaved for too long

Throughout the entire period of this legal trade  
Enslaved Africans fought for their freedom till the grave

Their most triumphant battle was in Haiti  
Where after a 13 year war they became free

Dutty Boukman started the rebellion after a spiritual ritual  
That galvanised their strength and focused their will

Then Jean-Francois, Biassou and others carried it on  
Until Toussaint Louverture and Jean-Jacques Dessalines ensured they won

On January 1st 1804 Haiti declared itself an independent nation  
Did this have any bearing on Britain's 1807 law of abolition?

Even though Haiti had become free  
Many more were still bound in slavery

Unable to decide or plan for themselves  
While being tormented in this living hell

Of being subjected to the will and desires of others  
Who beat, killed and raped sisters and mothers  
As well as all others from fathers to brothers  
Through a hierarchy defined by colours

The true brutality that was served and dished out  
Was too horrendous to be recorded or talked about



The lynchings and burnings were seen as a family outing, a community event  
But the raping, sodomy and torture was how the slavers would silently vent

Through implementing this brutality as a show of power  
They believed it would make the enslaved forever cower

But to their horror and ultimately their demise  
The will for freedom would always uprise.

Lawrence Hoo