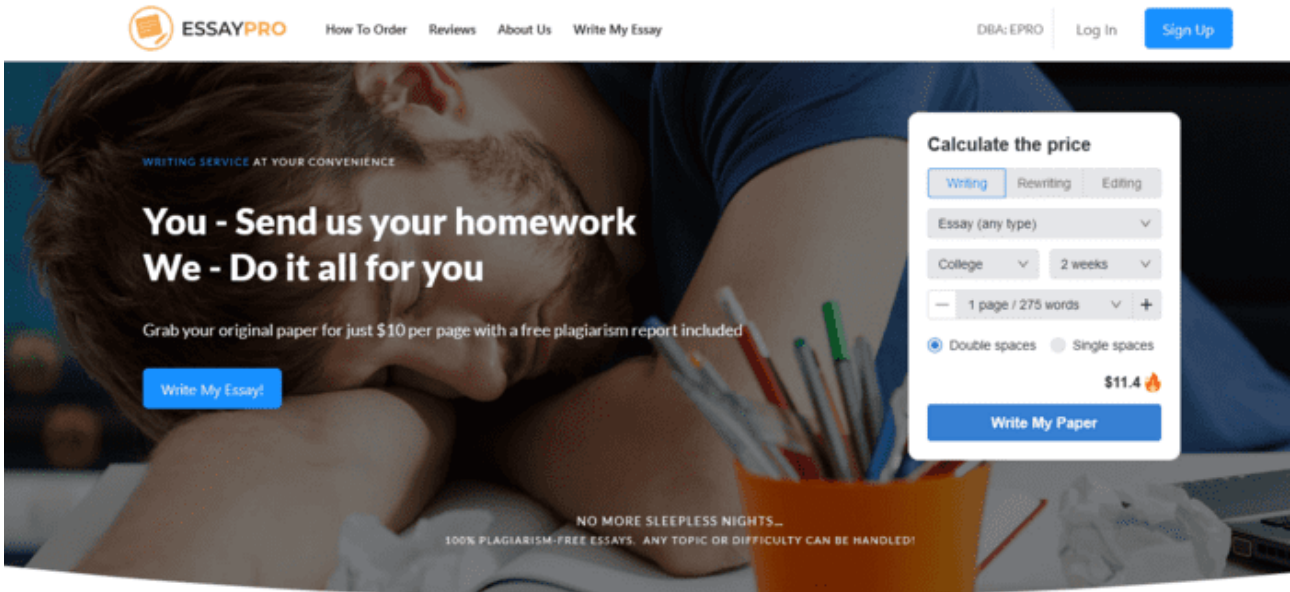


# Slave Narratives



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## Slave Narratives

The Middle Passage was almost inconceivable. Hundreds upon hundreds of Africans were abducted from their homes to go on boats to America. They were stacked like books on shelves in order to bring enough Negroes for a profitable slave trade. The life on the boats on the way to the New World was so bad that the Africans [preferred](#) death to their gruesome future.

The conditions on the boats were hellish. The slaves on the ships were packed like sardines and chained together. Among the gripping words that Olaudah Equiano, a [slave](#) abducted when he was just eleven years old, used to describe the Middle passage are hopeless, low, brutal, and wretched. The temperature in the disease-infested rooms was inconceivable. There was no fresh air for the Negro [inhabitants](#). The feeling of shock and isolation only added to the sorrow and horror of the situation. Alexander Falconbridge, a surgeon aboard these slave ships, recalled that the "hot floor was covered with blood and mucus. It was like a slaughter-house." The sickening stench was great due to the loathsome filth from the pestilential heat. As Olaudah Equiano said, "sleep was the only [temporary] refuge." The dejection and despair of the circumstances caused many people

to bitterly cry, shriek, and groan in inconceivable horror and fear. The savage cruelty of the slave traders and boat crew was terrifying. The Negroes were deprived of food and health treatments, and due to the cramped conditions this caused great waves of sickness and disease. These ships created an absolute hellish existence for the abandoned Africans aboard them. Although describable, the anguish of these people cannot be fully understood.

The African's, due to these excruciating conditions, were completely and utterly terrified. During the slave trades, the noise and clamor was so frightening that many slaves attempted at running away in the tumult. On the boats, many people tried to jump overboard. Attempted suicide usually just increased the despair of the situation. Negroes were punished for any attempt at escape or purposeful personal harm. If one did not eat, they were flogged until they ate the disgusting food.

The slave traders expressed brutal cruelty to the slaves aboard the ships. They treated the Negroes as if they were imported typical goods. They spent the least amount of effort and money in making the conditions aboard the boats tolerable in order to ensure a higher profitable outcome.

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