

Introducing *African Passages*

African Passages is an online exhibit consisting of 49 image resources (photographs, maps, and documents) and 35 extended captions that commemorate the Ashley River Corridor in Charleston, South Carolina, as a unique site of memory in the history of slavery in the United States. This teaching guide offers suggestions for how teachers might use this website in their classes. It is structured so that teachers can use as much or as little of the suggested activities and questions as fits their needs.

1. Have students consider the footprints image on the site's home page. Print the page and make an overhead transparency to show the whole class. Use questions such as these to arouse curiosity and create interest:
 - Whose footprints are these?
 - Where is the person walking?
 - Where are the footprints headed? Are they coming or going?
 - Where will the footprints end?
 - What questions do you have about this image?
 - Why do you think this image was chosen for the home page of this website?
2. Have the students list five (5) descriptive words (adjectives) for this image and explain their choices.
3. Discuss what students think the title, *African Passages*, means.
4. Introduce the term "sites of memory" to students.

To belong somewhere typically implies being fixed in time and space. Sites of memories are important locations where space (place) and time meet memory; they are places around which cultural memory has formed. Since human memory tends to be a fleeting, fragile thing, the identification of sites of memory helps people today recall the past and make the modern world more meaningful because of these connections to the past. We learn how those in the past faced situations and problems similar to those we still deal with today and we better understand how and why things are the way they are now.

All around the world individuals and organizations are working to preserve sites of memory and the powerful stories from the past they have to tell today. Sites of memory may involve the actual physical place itself as well as concepts and practices (i.e., customs and traditions) and objects.

African Passages explores the physical and cultural remnants of interactions between European Americans and African Americans over time along the Ashley River Corridor in South Carolina. Its goal is to help people better understand and appreciate the significance of what happened at this site of memory.