

Name: _____

Class: _____

British Prison Ships

Directions: Answer each question based on information from the document. Provide evidence to support your answer.

Document A:

Cruelty Presiding over the Prison Ship



1) According to the image, what conditions did prisoners endure aboard British prison ships? Cite evidence to support your answer.

Document B: Captain Mackenzie of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers (British)

With respect to their **provisions** they have no real cause of complaint, as they are served with the same kind of **provisions** issued to The King's troops when on board Transports. They certainly are very Sickly, owing to their want of Clothing and necessaries, salt **provisions, confinement**, foul air, & little exercise. They are limited mainly in the Churches, Sugar houses, and other large buildings, and have the liberty of walking in the yards. But they are such low spirited creatures, particularly the Americans, that if once they are taken sick they rarely recover.

Provisions: Supplies

Confinement: Stuck in an area

2) According to the document, what conditions did prisoners endure aboard British prison ships? Cite evidence to support your answer.

Document C: Excerpt by Christopher Vail and Christopher Hawkins

“There was only one passage to go on deck in the night,” he recalled, and the guards would only allow two men up at a time. “Many of the Prisoners were troubled with the disentary [chronic diarrhea] and would come to the steps and would not be allowed to go on deck, and had to ease themselves on the spot, and the next morning for 12 feet around the hatches was nothing but **excrement**.” As bad as the nauseating stench was the noise: “There were all kinds of business carried on,” Vail wrote, “some playing cards, others swearing, stealing, fighting, and some dying. *Many* dying, in fact: death visited the lower decks so often that the men handled **corpses** as casually as they would sacks of grain or animal **carcasses**...”

Excrement: Poop
Corpses: Dead Bodies
Carcasses: Dead animal

In his autobiography, Christopher Hawkins wrote of widespread dysentery that left him and others covered with “bloody and loathsome filth” by morning, of fisticuffs between demoralized prisoners, of savage whippings, of one man so hungry he ate lice from his shirt.

3) According to the document, what conditions did prisoners endure aboard British prison ships? Cite evidence to support your answer.

Questions:

4) How might both captives and captors be affected by holding individuals in captivity?

5) What does the treatment of prisoners of war say about a nation?