



## Space in the Home: Enslaved Field Worker's Cabin

### Students will learn...

- The conditions in which enslaved people lived on Washington's farms
- To think about the implications of space as a part of the mental tortures of slavery

### You will need...

- Measuring tape and string
- The [virtual tour](#) of the Replica Enslaved Field Worker's Cabin
- [Map of Washington's Five Farms](#)
- [Five Farms Enslaved Population Infographic](#) and [Population at Mount Vernon in 1799 Infographic](#)
- Space in Your Life Activity Sheet
- *Optional*: Building Comparison Handout

- Now show them the inside. What else do they notice?
- They will probably mention that it is very small. In fact, this cabin is 16X14 feet.
- In the classroom or outside have students measure and mark the size of the cabin.<sup>1</sup>
- Now, tell your students that the enslaved field worker Priscilla, lived in a house this size with her six children. Reflect on what that must have been like.

Remember: A 2018 article revealed that an average studio apartment in America has shrunk by 10% in 10 years to 515 sq. ft. This cabin is less than half that size: 225 sq. ft.<sup>2</sup>

### Opener: Washington's Five Farms

- Show your students the map of Washington's five farms.
- Locate where the Mansion House is and circle or color in the five farms (on an interactive whiteboard or on their papers).
- Now, show your students the infographics (perhaps two students per pair) and analyze the demographics of the people at Mount Vernon and the five farms.

### Task: Mapping out Space

- Show your students the virtual tour of the cabin. Start with just the outside. What do they notice? How was it made?

### Closer: Space and Community

- Talk about the psychological limitations of the building- where people slept, what activities could be done at one time, the lighting, etc.
- Distribute the Space in Your Life Activity Sheet for students to read a little more about the enslaved cabins and then have them talk to a partner to answer the questions .
- Come back together and discuss how the limitations on space were a part of the mental entrapment of enslaved people not just a physical one.
- *Optional*: Show them the Building Comparison Handout and ask them about the discrepancies between Washington's life and his enslaved workers.

<sup>1</sup> Please do not have students reenact the housing situation! This is a highly controversial approach and not advised by George Washington's Mount Vernon.

<sup>2</sup> Source: Research done by RENTCafe and Yardi Matrix 2018

<https://www.mountvernon.org/education/for-teachers/>