

# Year 9 Assessment - Source Evaluation

## Amistad

**Source A: Painting published in 1839**



**Source B: Details of the Amistad Mutiny was provided to the Supreme Court in January 1841.**

On the 27<sup>th</sup> of June 1839, the schooner (ship) Amistad, being the property of Spanish subjects, cleared out from the port of Havana, in the island of Cuba, for Puerto Principe, in the same island.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> of August, the vessel was discovered by Lieutenant Gedney, of the United States ship; Washington, at anchor on the high seas, at the distance of half a mile from the shore of Long Island. The vessel, with the negroes and other persons on board, was brought by Lieutenant Gedney into the district of Connecticut

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of September, Ruiz and Montez (slave owners) filed claims and libels, in which they asserted their ownership of the negroes as their slaves, and of certain parts of the cargo.

**Source C: Statement signed by Jose Ruiz (August, 1839)**

I bought 49 slaves in Havana, and shipped them on board the schooner Amistad...For the four first days every thing went on well. In the night heard a noise...All of us were asleep except the man at the helm. Do not know how things began; was awoke

by the noise... There was no moon. It was very dark. I took up an oar and tried to quell the mutiny; I cried no! no! I then heard one of the crew cry murder.

They (the slaves) called me on deck, and told me I should not be hurt. I asked them as a favor to spare the old man. They did so. After this they went below and ransacked the trunks of the passengers. Before doing this, they tied our hands. We went on our course—don't know who was at the helm.

**Source D: Statement signed by Antonio, the cabin boy on the Amistad (August, 1839)**

We had been out four days when the mutiny broke out. That night it had been raining very hard, and all hands been on deck. The rain ceased, but still it was very dark. Clouds covered the moon.

Joseph, the man in irons, was the leader; he attacked Senor Montez. After killing the Captain and the cook, and wounding Senor Montez, they tied Montez and Ruiz by the hands till they had ransacked the cabin. After doing so, they loosed them, and they went below. Senor Montez could scarcely walk. The bodies of the Captain and mulatto were thrown overboard and the decks washed. One of the slaves who attacked the Captain has since died.

**Source E: Statement signed by Pedro Montez (August, 1839)**

We left Havana on the 28<sup>th</sup> of June. I owned 4 slaves, 3 females and 1 male. For three days the wind was ahead and all went well. Between 11 and 12 at night, just as the moon was rising, sky dark and cloudy, weather very rainy, on the fourth night. I went on deck, and they attacked me. I seized a stick and a knife with a view to defend myself. I did not wish to kill or hurt them. At this time the prisoner wounded me on the head severely with one of the sugar knives, also on the arm. I then ran below and stowed myself between two barrels, wrapped up in a sail. The prisoner rushed after me and attempted to kill me, but was prevented by the interference of another man. I recollect who struck me, but was not sufficiently sensible to distinguish the man who saved me. I was faint from loss of blood. I then was taken on deck and tied to the hand of Ruiz.

**Source F: The New York Morning Herald reported that one of its readers had visited Joseph Cinque in prison ( Sept. 18, 1839)**

I nstead of a chivalrous leader with the dignified and graceful bearing of Othello, imparting energy and confidence to his intelligent and devoted followers, he saw a sullen, dumpish looking negro, with a flat nose, thick lips, and all the other characteristics of his countrymen, without a single redeeming or striking trait, except the mere brute qualities of strength and activity, who had inspired terror among his companions by the indiscriminate and unsparing use of the lash. And instead of intelligent and comparatively civilized men, languishing in captivity and suffering under the restraints of the prison, he found them the veriest animals in existence, perfectly contented in confinement, without a ray of intelligence, and sensible only to the wants of the brute.

No man, he said, more thoroughly appreciated the hideous horrors of the slave trade, or had conceived a more decided aversion to slavery in all its phases; but he was certain that the natives of Africa would be improved and elevated by transferring them to the genial climate of Carolina, and the mild restraints of an intelligent and humane planter.

### Tasks

1. In what year did the Amistad rebellion take place? (1)
2. In what does the picture in **source A** agree with the written statement in **source D**? (3)
3. Which source is more accurate, **source A** or **source D** in what happened on the Amistad? (You will need to explain why in your answer) (4)
4. Using **sources C, D, and E** create a table (as shown below) and answer yes or no in the columns. (9)

	Source C	Source D	Source E
Do the sources refer the mutiny taking place at night?			
Do the sources refer to the weather being rainy?			
Do the sources refer to the ransacking of the cabin?			

5. What source(s) refers to the leader of the mutiny by name? (2)
6. Is **source F** in favour of the mutineers? (You will need to show evidence to support your answers – use quotes) (6)
7. What conclusion does **source F** make about the role of African people? (6)
8. Is **source F** a useful source to show people's views on slavery across the United States? (Use the evidence to support your answer.) (8)
9. I imagine that you are the Captain of the USS Washington (the ship that captured the Amistad). Write a report on the incident.  
You must include extracts from all witness statements in your report.
  - Write about when the incident took place.
  - Who was killed.
  - The weather.
  - How long the ship has been taken over. (8)