Listening Guide for *The 1619 Project* Podcast
Episode 2: "The Economy That Slavery Built"

1619 *is a* New York Times *audio series hosted by journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones, who created* The 1619 Project *initiative for* The New York Times Magazine. *You can find more information about the podcast along with transcripts for listening at* [nytimes.com/1619podcast](). *Episode two explores how the institution of slavery helped to turn a young and poor nation into a global economic leader. This episode includes some scenes of graphic violence, which we identify in the guide.*

Some questions to consider before listening:

1. What is an economy? What do you know about the history of economics in the United States and where can you go to learn more?
2. Some of the history and personal stories told in this podcast are hard to listen to because they describe painful events. What can we do to take care of ourselves when something is both important to hear and difficult to listen to?

Listening Guide

Time Stamp	Main Topic	Questions to consider
0:00-6:20	Introduction/Anecdote about Nikole Hannah-Jones' family Story of Emmett Till (*brief but may be difficult to listen to)	Does Nikole Hannah Jones' Aunt Charlotte remind you of anyone in your own life? How might their past experiences influence how they interact with you and with the world around them? What are some of the things the Tallahatchie River (and rivers in general) represent in this story? Where else have you seen similar symbolism?
6:20-15:05	Beginnings of the cotton economy *Graphic descriptions of violence against enslaved people. Allow	How did the invention of the cotton gin influence both the economy and the treatment of enslaved people? How were Native American people impacted by the expansion of cotton plantations in the United States?

	students extra time to process.	What connections do Matthew Desmond and Nikole Hannah-Jones draw between the techniques for managing labor and productivity on slave plantations and in modern corporations? Do you find their argument compelling?
15:05-19:57	Establishment of banks and their connections to slavery	Did you know the history of banks allowing plantation owners to take out mortgages on enslaved people? What questions and emotions does it bring up for you? Why was it hypocritical for global investors to buy slave-backed mortgage bonds in the United States while saying they oppose slavery? What questions does this bring up for you about modern trading and investment?
19:57-25:57	Panic of 1837 and the culture of American capitalism	Have you previously heard of the Panic of 1837? What about the economic crisis in the late 2000s? What comparisons do Desmond and Hannah-Jones draw between the two? Does their analysis make sense to you? What is the conclusion Desmond ultimately comes to about American capitalism? What other things might you research to decide whether you agree or disagree with him?
25:57-31:56	Jesmyn Ward poem - 1808 Act prohibiting the importation of slaves *Graphic descriptions of violence against enslaved people. Allow students extra time to process.	Jesmyn Ward wrote this creative work in her imagining and responding to an important series of historical events. What does this demonstrate about how knowledge and research can inspire us to create? How do you imagine Ward felt writing and creating this piece? How do you feel listening to it? What are some important events in recent history that may inspire thoughtful poetry?

Some questions to consider after listening:

1. How has listening to this episode changed your understanding of the ways in which the United States profited off the labor of enslaved people? What about the ways in which global investors outside of the United States profited from American slavery?
2. What additional research do you want to do after listening to the history and research in this episode? What questions do you still have?