Guiding Questions & Listening Guide for the *1619* Podcast, Episode 2 — "The Economy That Slavery Built"

Before reading -

1. 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?

Directions: As you listen to the podcast, respond to the questions in the right column.

Time Stamp	Main Topic	Questions
0:00-6:20	Introduction/Anecdote about Nikole Hannah Jones' family Story of Emmett Till (*brief but may be difficult to listen to)	1. 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? 2. 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. Take time to process	3. How did the invention of the cotton gin influence both the economy and the treatment of enslaved people? 4. How were Native American people impacted by the expansion of cotton plantations in the United States? 5. 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	6. 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?

This document is adapted from the Pulitzer Center's listening guide for the *1619* podcast.

		7. 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	8. 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? 9. 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? Explain why.
25:57-31:56	Jesmyn Ward poem - 1808 Act prohibiting the importation of slaves *Graphic descriptions of violence against enslaved people. Take time to process.	10. 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? 11. How do you imagine Ward felt writing and creating this piece? How do you feel listening to it? 12. What are some important events in recent history that may inspire thoughtful poetry?