Close Read: Indentured Servitude and Slavery

How did indentured servitude compare to slavery? What was similar? What was different?

Directions: Read the chart below. In the box below the chart, make three observations about similarities and differences between indentured servants and slaves.

Indentured Servants vs. Slaves

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indentured Servitude</th>
<th>Slavery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description:</strong> An indentured servant was usually someone who chose to immigrate to the colonies from Europe under a contract that outlined the terms of their service. Once their contract was over, they were free from their masters to live their own lives in the colonies. Usually European. Often, in Europe these men and women were criminals or from the poorest class.</td>
<td><strong>Description:</strong> A slave was usually someone who was forced to immigrate against their will from their home country to the colonies. Some were kidnapped, others were bought by slave masters. Once in the colonies, they were forced to do hard labor, for no pay. Usually from Africa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work:</strong> Hard labor, field work, skilled and unskilled labor ranging from farming to brick laying, to building, to sewing and cooking</td>
<td><strong>Work:</strong> Hard labor, housework, farm hand, mostly unskilled labor, ranged from housework to working on plantations to pick crops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pay:</strong> Passage to America, room, lodging, food and freedom dues</td>
<td><strong>Pay:</strong> Usually none, usually born into slavery, were given room, lodging, food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Terms of Work:</strong> Indentured servants were servants who worked for their masters for usually up to 7 years - after which they were freed, upon freedom they were to receive goods such as a year’s worth of corn, acres of land, cows, new clothes, etc.</td>
<td><strong>Terms of Work:</strong> No pay, did what the masters asked them to do, often died from servitude, master determined their treatment, sometimes separated from their family, bought or sold between masters. Slaves were usually slaves for life.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on: PBS - History Detectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Similarities</th>
<th>Differences</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1)</td>
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<td>2)</td>
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<td>3)</td>
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</table>
Directions: Read documents 1 and 2. When you are done reading each document, answer the analysis questions below.

Document 1 - Indentured Servitude

Indenture Servitude Contract Witnessed, that John Reid of New Jersey...has put himself...voluntarily, and of his own free Will and Accord put himself under an indentured servitude to Robert Livingston to live and to Serve from the first Day of November 1742 till the full term of five years be complete and ended....During all which Term the said Servant [John Reid] his said Master [Robert Livingston] faithfully shall serve. Masters Secrets keep servant will keep, masters lawfull Commands gladly every where the servant shall obey: the servant will do no damage to His Master...he shall not waste his said Masters Goods....he shall not engage in relations with women, nor marry during the service of his Term. The servant will not play Cards, Dice, or any other unlawful Game, ....he shall not be absent Day nor Night from his said Masters service, nor visit Ale-houses [bars], taverns [bars].... And the said Master during the said Term shall... provide unto the indentured servant sufficient meat Drink and Lodging....

Source: John Reid Jr - Contract of Indentured Servitude - 11/01/1742

1. According to lines 1 - 3, who is placing John Reid into indentured servitude? Cite textual evidence to support your answer.

2. What does “....voluntarily, and of his own free will and accord...” tell you about John Reid’s indentured service?

3. For how long does John Reid have to be an indentured servant?

4. What does Robert Livingston have to provide his indentured servant with? Support your answer with textual evidence.

5. What kind of primary source does this document seem to be - a contract or a receipt from a sale? Support your answer with textual evidence.
$3,000  Augusta, GA September 20th 1866  
Received of [Paid by] L.A. Johnson Three Thousand Dollars, being in full for the purchase of a Negro Slave named Henry the right to own said Slave: I warrant [guarantee] and defend against the claims of all persons whatsoever, and likewise promise him to be sound and healthy in mind and body, and Slave for life.  As witness my hand of seal. Signed by: HH Hickman

6. What kind of primary source does this document seem to be - a contract or a receipt from a sale? Support your answer with textual evidence.

7. According to document 2, how long will Henry be a slave for?

8. Comparing this document to document 1 - suggest two differences between indentured servitude and slavery.
Directions: Using information from the documents, you will now write a short essay responding to the task with regards to the figures of Colonial American exports in the document provided above.

Task: Using the information from the documents above, and your knowledge of US History complete the following writing prompt:

Compare and contrast slavery and indentured servitude. To illustrate your findings, please complete the following task:

- Develop a script for a dialogue or conversation between an indentured servant and a slave.
  - The script should have two characters - the slave and the indentured servant
  - The dialogue or conversation should highlight the different experiences each has in their respective labor systems
  - Use the documents above to support your creation of the script

In developing your answer be sure to keep these general definitions in mind:

- **compare and contrast** means “to express similarities and differences”