Slavery and the Sugar Plantation - Task 2: Main activity

Primary Sources:

Source A: *Acts Passed in the Island of Barbados, from 1643-1762*

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| Act 42: ‘Negro slaves in all courts of justice and adjudging to be estates real [real estate or property] and shall descend unto heir and widow…and custom of inheritance.’  Act 82: A master ‘may wilfully kill a negro of his own…he shall pay the treasury £15 sterling.’ |

1. What do these acts reveal about the attitudes of white, European planters towards black slaves?
2. Does the fine described in Act 82 seem like a fair punishment?
3. Why do you think masters were not more severely punished for killing black slaves?

Source B*: Edward Littleton, Barbados Sugar Planter*

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| ‘ if a mill feeder be catch’t by the finger…his whole body is drawn in, and he is squeezed to pieces.’  If a boyler ( boiler) get any part into the scalding sugar…it sticks like glew ( glue). Tis hard to save either limb or life’ |
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1. What would happen to a boiler if they came into contact with the boiling sugar?
2. How dangerous was sugar production for black slaves working on sugar plantations?
3. Do you think that slavery was the only way that people would perform such dangerous work?

Secondary Sources: *Richard Dunn, ‘Sugar and Slaves’*

*Source C:*

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| *‘A field gang of thirty slaves, working with hoes could hole or trench two acres a day…’*  *‘At harvest time field gangs of slaves cut canes by hand with curved knives called bills’*  *‘grinding the cane was dangerous work’* |

1. Describe the work done by field gangs of slaves? What was it like?
2. To what extent does Source C agree with Source B about the nature of the work done by slaves on the plantation?
3. To what extent does Source C agree or disagree with the images that you were given of sugar plantations?