

Lesson 14:
Battle of Lexington -
Who Shot First?

Unit 6
Grade 4



Warm Up

Activity 1: Read the following sentences

- Jamar's point of view is that Pat cannot be trusted.
- Juan is trying to change Jamar's point of view.
- The story is told from a child's point of view.
- The author's point of view is that Columbus was courageous.

Use the sentences above as clues to define the term "point of view."

Point of view is _____

Activity 2: read the story below then answer questions 1 and 2 that follow.

A teacher walked by a group of students eating breakfast in the cafeteria. The teacher sees that there is juice on the floor next to Ben and Joel's table. The teacher asks, "who did this?"

Kim is Ben's best friend. Kim replies, "I did not see what happened but Joel probably did it."

Chloe does not like Ben.

Questions

1. What is Kim's point of view? _____

2. Predict what Chloe is going to say in response to the teacher who asked, "who did this?" Explain why Chloe might say this.

Chloe will probably say _____

because _____

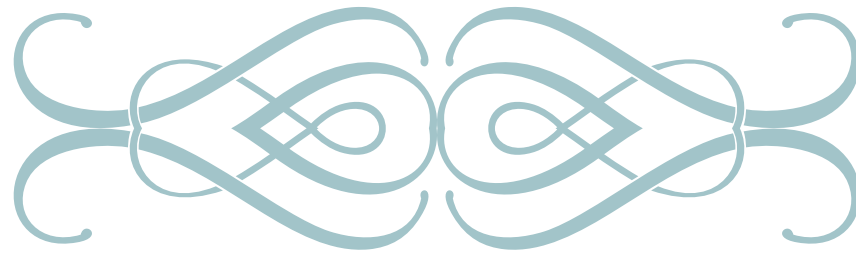


Who Fired First?



The battle of Lexington is commonly viewed as the first battle of the war between the colonies and their mother country - Great Britain. The war is not yet one for independence. Rather, it is a war being fought in defense of what the colonists view as their rights.

This lesson is one in which they will address the question *who fired the first shot at the battle of Lexington?*



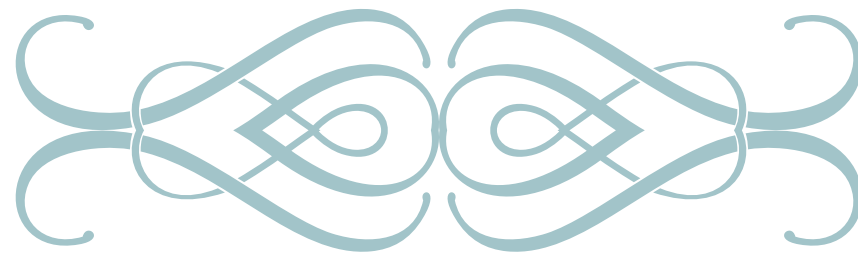
How Bad Were Things Getting?

Keep in mind all of the tensions that have been building up between the colonists and their mother country. There were riots after the Stamp Act was passed, a “standing army” of British soldiers stationed in the colonies, five colonists were shot and killed at the Boston “Massacre,” and now colonists have dumped 342 chests of British tea into the water.

John Adams wrote “What Measures will the Ministry take, in Consequence of this?” In other words, he wondered how the King and Parliament would respond to the “Tea Party.”

Well, he did not have to wonder very long. King George and members of Parliament were pretty fed up with the colonists at this point. In fact, Parliament passed new laws designed to punish the colonists until the tea was paid for (the colonists never did pay for the tea). Parliament called the new laws the “Coercive Acts.” Coerce means to force someone to do something e.g., pay for the destroyed tea. The colonists renamed the new laws the “Intolerable Acts” - laws that were intolerable from the colonists point of view. They hoped their name would lead people throughout the 13 colonies to sympathize with them.

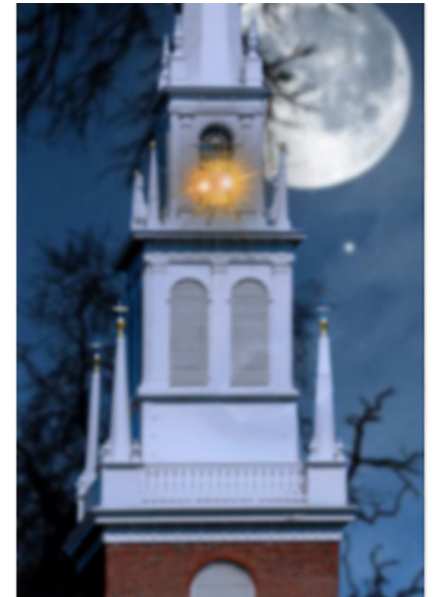
Perhaps the most “intolerable” of the new laws was one that placed British warships in Boston Harbor and closed the port of Boston. When news of this law reached other colonies, it appeared that the British were now going to cut off supplies and starve the people of Boston until the tea was paid for. Also, people were very upset because the new laws punished everyone in Boston rather than those who destroyed the tea. More people now believed that a war between the colonists and Britain was possible.

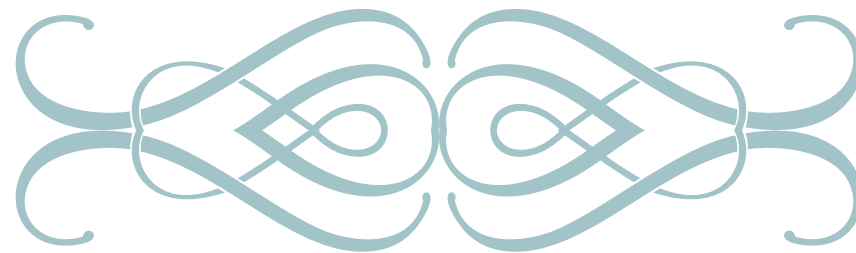


What Happened Next?

The British learned that colonists in the Boston area were storing up weapons in the town of Concord [find Boston and Concord on the map above...Boston is to the east, Concord is west of Boston]. British officials planned to sneak out early in the morning of April 19, 1775, and seize the weapons. This would be a 17-mile march to Concord. That is a long walk for anyone, let alone soldiers carrying heavy packs, guns, and uniforms. They started the march under cover of dark at 2 o'clock in the morning.

The colonists had spies all over Boston and knew of the British plan. They had arranged a signal that would alert everyone that the British were coming - lanterns lit in the church bell tower. One lamp would be lit if the British were coming by land, two lamps if they were coming by sea. in the words of the famous poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow "One if by land, and two if by sea."





The “Midnight Ride”

Three colonists jumped on their horses - Paul Revere, Samuel Prescott, and William Dawes. Their plan was to ride from Boston to Concord, alerting colonists all along that way that the British were coming. They rode throughout the night.

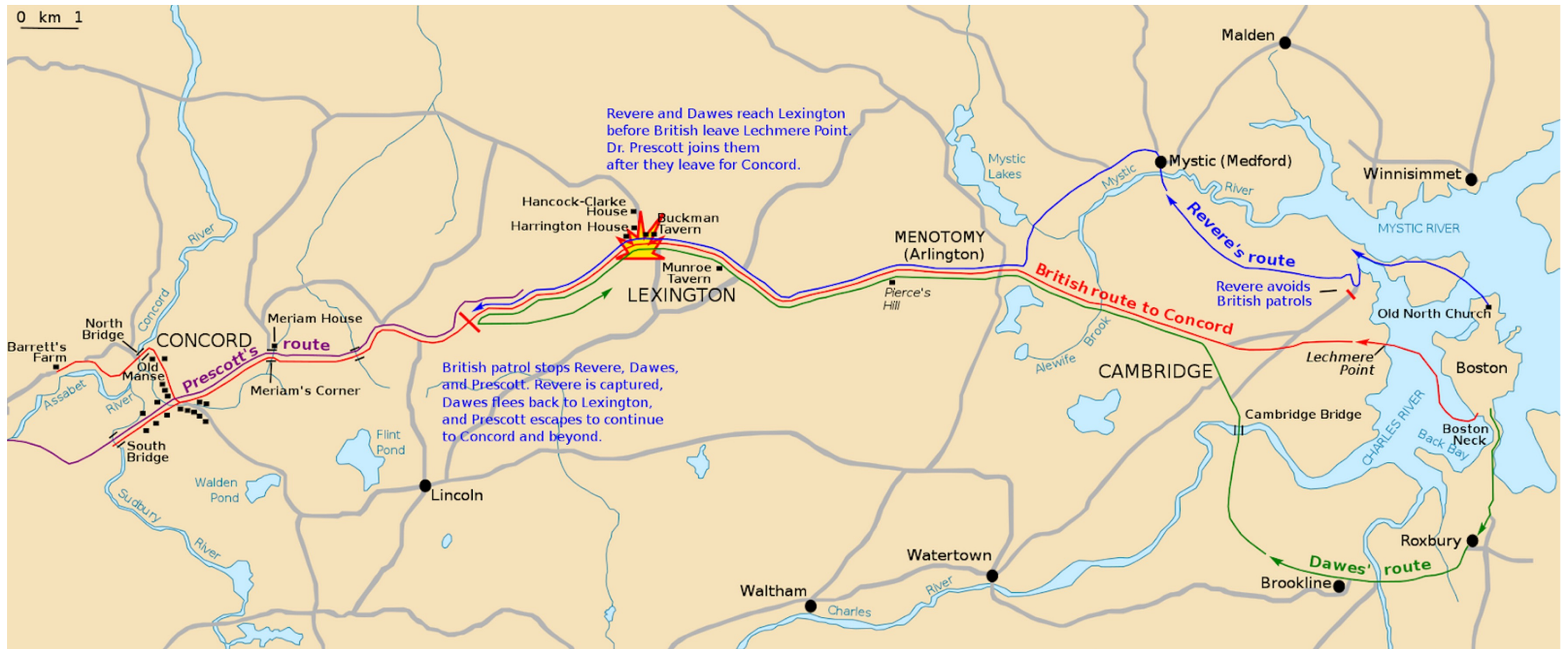
Before the British soldiers arrived at Lexington [find Lexington on the map], colonists knew they were coming. Eighty colonial militia (men acting as soldiers) under the command of John Parker had gathered on “the green” - a large open grassy area - at Lexington to slow the British down so other colonists would have time to remove the weapons from Concord.

The British soldiers arrived in Lexington as the sun was rising on April 19, 1775. Soon, eight colonists would be dead in what would become the first shots fired in a war between Great Britain and her American colonies. The question is - who fired the first shot?





Resource #2: Background Information - Map





Does it Really Matter Who Fired the First Shot?

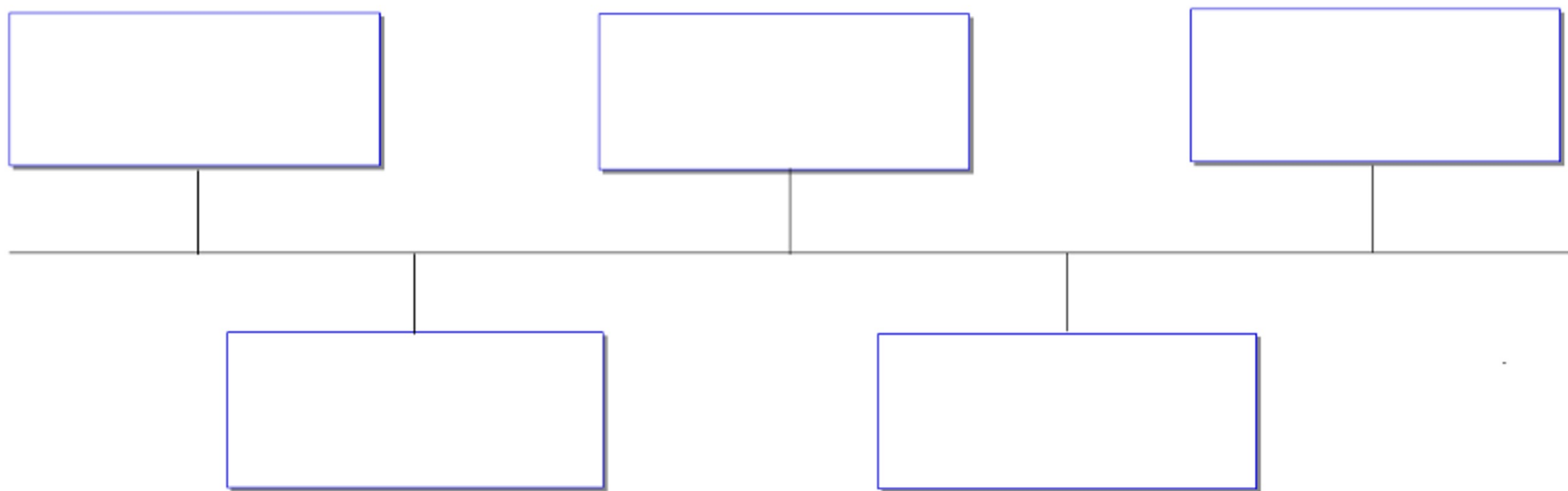
To some, the question *who fired the first shot* might seem like a pretty unimportant question. But it is not. Why? Because clever people on both sides of the conflict - colonists and British soldiers - could accuse whoever fired the first shot as being the aggressor - the one that started the fighting and the war. And it would be easier for “victims” to get people to sympathize with them, support their side and maybe even take up arms against the other side.

Resource 3: Battle of Lexington Chronology

Name _____

Directions: Use the events listed below to create a horizontal timeline of the events leading up to the battle of Lexington. The events should be written into the boxes on the timeline so that the event that occurred first is written into the box on the far-left side of the timeline while the event that occurred last is written into the box on the far-right side of the timeline.

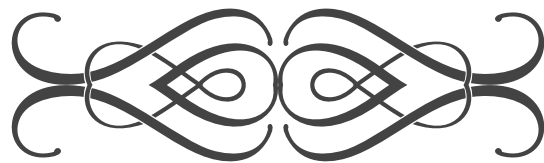
- Paul Revere begins his ride
- Lantern lit in church tower
- Colonists hide weapons at Concord
- 8 colonists killed at Lexington
- British march to Concord



One **CAUSE** on this timeline is _____.

It caused _____ to happen.

One **EFFECT** on this timeline is _____.



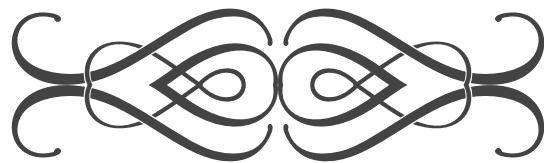
If these two men asked who started the problems between the colonies and their mother country, what can we reasonably infer each man would say and why?

George Doe -
British Soldier



George Roe -
Colonist





What you just did was called sourcing.

George Doe -
British Soldier



Historians always source documents. Sourcing involves looking at who wrote or created something to try to get a better understanding of why they may have written or created what they did. This is an important skill to have! In fact, historians source a document before they ever begin reading it. Keep this in mind as you do the next activity.

George Roe -
Colonist



Who fired the first shot?

You are going to be paired with another students. One student is going to read Source 1 and the other student is going to read Source 2.

You will read a document and underline the sentence that BEST identifies who allegedly fired the first shot.

Resource 4: Accounts of the Battle of Lexington

Account 1 [modified]

About 5 miles from a Town called Lexington we heard that there were hundreds of colonists gathered to try to stop us from going to Concord. At 5 o'clock in the morning we arrived there and saw between 200-300 colonists gathered in a Common in the middle of the Town. We continued marching but also prepared ourselves in case the colonists attacked us. We did not plan to attack them. But when we got near the colonists they fired one or two shots. Without being given any orders, our soldiers rushed at them, and started shooting back. The colonists ran away. Several of them were killed.

Diary of John Barker, a British Soldier

1- According to Account 1, who fired the first shot at Lexington - a colonist or a British soldier? Write your conclusion and the sentence that supports it in the space below.

Account 2 [modified]

I, John Robbins, being old enough to testify that, I was with Captain John Parker on the green or commons on the 19th of April. I stood in the front row of the militia. Suddenly, about a thousand British soldiers appeared. They were about 60 or 70 yards away from us, yelling as they marched quickly toward us.

An officer shouted, "Throw down your weapons, you villains, you rebels." Our militia started to leave when the highest-ranking officers said, "Fire, by God, fire." We were hit by many shots from them at a close distance. Several of our men were shot dead. Our militia men, I believe, had not yet fired a gun.

Statement of John Robbins,

Colonist and Member of the Lexington Militia (April 24, 1775)

2- According to Account 2, who fired the first shot at Lexington - a colonist or a British soldier? Write your conclusion and the sentence that supports it in the space below.



What did you learn from your reading? Fill out this chart.

1. Did you source your document before reading? Were you able to predict what the source would say based on the sourcing strategy?
2. Do we know who fired the first shot after reading the accounts of people who witnessed the battle of Lexington?
3. Why might there be two different accounts of the same event?

Resource 5: Recording Conclusions Name _____

Source	According to the Source, Who Fired First? What is the source's point of view?
#1 John Barker	
#2 John Robbins	
#3 Video - April Morning	
#4 Video - Johnny Tremain	

Reflect: What is your conclusion? Who fired the first shot at Lexington on April 19, 1775, to start the American Revolution?





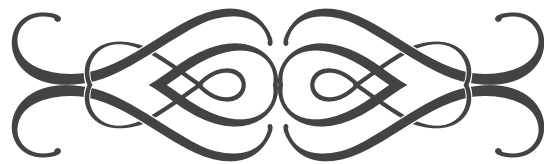
History Goes to Hollywood

We are going to watch two video clips about the Battle of Lexington and Concord. Pay close attention to how the movies answer the question - **who fired the first shot**.

Questions to answer after the video:

- According to the movie, who fired the first shot - the colonists or British soldiers?
- Does it appear that the people who made the movie read the same primary source documents that you read? Explain.
- Which primary source document is each movie clip based on?





Why might there be
different accounts of
the same event?

Paul Revere's Ride by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Listen, my children, and you shall hear
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,
On the eighteenth of April, in Seventy-Five:
Hardly a man is now alive
Who remembers that famous day and year.
He said to his friend, "If the British march
By land or sea from the town to-night,
Hang a lantern aloft in the belfry-arch
Of the North-Church-tower, as a signal-light,—
One if by land, and two if by sea;
And I on the opposite shore will be,
Ready to ride and spread the alarm
Through every Middlesex village and farm,
For the country-folk to be up and to arm."

Then he said, "Good night!" and with muffled oar
Silently rowed to the Charlestown shore...

So through the night rode Paul Revere;
And so through the night went his cry of alarm
To every Middlesex village and farm,—
A cry of defiance, and not of fear,
A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door,
And a word that shall echo forevermore!
For, borne on the night-wind of the Past,
Through all our history, to the last,
In the hour of darkness and peril and need,
The people will waken and listen to hear
The hurrying hoof-beats of that steed,
And the midnight message of Paul Revere.





Concord Hymn by Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1837

By the rude bridge that arched the flood,
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,
Here once the embattled farmers stood
And fired the shot heard round the world.

The foe long since in silence slept;
Alike the conqueror silent sleeps;
And Time the ruined bridge has swept
Down the dark stream which seaward creeps.

On this green bank, by this soft stream,
We set today a votive stone;
That memory may their deed redeem,
When, like our sires, our sons are gone.

Spirit, that made those heroes dare
To die, and leave their children free,
Bid Time and Nature gently spare
The shaft we raise to them and thee.

