

Colonization and Revolutionary War

Paul Revere's Ride and the Shot Heard Round the World

On April 19, 1775, the American Revolution began. Before the first shots of war were fired, Paul Revere left Boston under a cloak of darkness. He rode his horse to nearby Lexington. Two leaders of the revolution, John Hancock and Samuel Adams, were hiding there. Adams had organized the Boston Tea Party. Hancock would eventually become the first signer of the Declaration of Independence. The British felt that they could **squelch**¹ the revolution if they could capture these men. Luckily both men escaped just as the British entered their house!

As he galloped across the countryside to Lexington, Revere called out to any colonists that could hear him. He warned them that British soldiers were coming. The colonists had a militia. These troops could be ready in case of any sort of attack. They were called Minutemen because they could prepare so quickly. Minutemen came from farms all over the countryside and gathered together in Lexington. The Minutemen lined up and waited for the British to arrive in their red uniforms. The Redcoats came and the men stood facing each other for a few moments. No one moved. Then, the air burst with noise. A shot was fired. No one knows who fired first, but the war started. Shots **resounded**² back and forth. Later, that first shot would be nicknamed "The shot heard round the world." The whole world was watching. They wanted to see what would happen to the colonies as they tried to battle one of the greatest countries in the world.

Years later, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote a poem about Paul Revere's famous ride. The details of Longfellow's poem are not completely accurate. Longfellow wanted to **arouse**³ **patriotism**⁴ rather than record history.

¹ **squelch**-- to cause to be silent, crush

² **resounded**-- echoed

³ **arouse**-- to stir to action, excite

⁴ **patriotism**-- love and loyal support of one's country

Read the **excerpts**⁵ below from this famous poem. How do they make you feel?

The Landlord's Tale: 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...

A hurry of hoofs in a village street,
A shape in the moonlight, a bulk in the dark,
And beneath, from the pebbles, in passing, a spark
Struck out by a steed flying fearless and fleet:
That was all! And yet, through the gloom and the light,
The fate of a nation was riding that night;
And the spark struck out by that steed, in his flight,
Kindled the land into flame with its heat.
He has left the village and mounted the steep....
It was two by the village clock,
When he came to the bridge in Concord town.
He heard the bleating of the flock,
And the twitter of birds among the trees,
And felt the breath of the morning breeze
Blowing over the meadow brown.
And one was safe and asleep in his bed
Who at the bridge would be first to fall,
Who that day would be lying dead,
Pierced by a British musket-ball.

You know the rest. In the books you have read,
How the British Regulars fired and fled,--
How the farmers gave them ball for ball,
From behind each fence and farm-yard wall,
Chasing the red-coats down the lane,
Then crossing the fields to emerge again
Under the trees at the turn of the road,
And only pausing to fire and load.

⁵ **excerpts**--passages taken out of a book or other source

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Why was Paul Revere's ride so important?
 - a. He helped John Hancock and John Adams escape from the British troops.
 - b. He was able to give weapons to the Minutemen.
 - c. He was able to alert the Minutemen that the British troops were coming.
 - d. He was able to save his horse from harm.

2. When did Paul Revere's famous ride begin?
 - a. It began on April 19, 1775.
 - b. It began on April 19, 1776.
 - c. It began on July 4, 1776.
 - d. It began on April 18, 1775.

3. In the first paragraph it says Paul Revere left Boston under a "cloak of darkness."

That means he left

- a. Wearing a black cloak
 - b. During the night
 - c. During the day
 - d. Wearing a white cloak

4. What was Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's purpose in writing "The Landlord's Tale; Paul Revere's Ride"?
 - a. He wanted to make sure everyone knew the true facts.
 - b. He wanted to arouse patriotism.
 - c. He was unhappy with Paul Revere.
 - d. He wanted to support England.

5. Why were the colonial troops called "Minutemen"?
 - a. They prepared quickly for an attack.
 - b. It only took them a minute to defeat the British.
 - c. They came from all over the colonies.
 - d. They were named after their general, George Minute.

6. Halfway through the poem, Longfellow writes: “And the spark struck out by that steed, in his flight; Kindled the land into flame with its heat.” What do you think he meant?

7. Why was the “shot heard round the world” so important to other countries?

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

John Hancock escaped British capture, _____ becoming the first signer of the Declaration of Independence.

- a. after
- b. later
- c. since
- d. beyond

9. Answer the following question based on the sentence below.

Paul Revere galloped across the countryside to Lexington, warning colonists that the British soldiers were coming.

In this sentence, the word Lexington best answers which question?

- a. Who?
- b. What?
- c. Where?
- d. Why?

10. **Vocabulary Word:** excerpts: passages taken out of a book or other source.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: _____

Teacher Guide and Answers**Passage Reading Level:** Lexile 710**Featured Text Structure:** Descriptive – the writer explains, defines or illustrates a concept or topic**Passage Summary:** The passage discusses Paul Revere's ride to warn American colonists that British soldiers were coming, and the beginning of the American Revolutionary War, started by the "shot heard round the world." Excerpts from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem about Paul Revere's ride are also included.

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Suggested answer: Answers may vary. The horse was traveling so fast that it blazed its own trail.

7. Why was the “shot heard round the world” so important to other countries?

Suggested answer: Since England was one of the most powerful countries in the world, other countries wanted to see how the colonists would fight against them. Some countries may have been interested in gaining power if England lost, while others may have been worried that their colonies might try to rebel too.

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Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: answers may vary.