

# Stark County Teaching American History Grant

Stark County Educational Service Center  
2100 38th Street NW  
Canton, Ohio 44709

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## *Road to Independence and Revolution* The Boston Massacre

### Grade Level 8

Created by James R. Groetz II  
Lehman Middle School



**Duration** 3 days

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### Overview

This lesson provides the opportunity for students to investigate reasons that American colonists were angry at the British government and the actions that led them to declare their independence. It will involve an online game called “For Crown or Colony.” It will allow students to take an active part and gain an understanding of the period leading up to the drafting of the Declaration of Independence and the American Revolution. They will examine and compare actual transcripts from the trial of the soldiers involved in the shootings known as the “Boston Massacre” so they can view the proceedings from different perspectives. Students will post their ideas about what they think actually happened and who was at fault at the Boston Massacre on their individual accounts at Kidblog.org.

For this lesson the following materials will be needed: computers for teacher and students, a Kidblog.org page for each student, a projector and speakers, access to the Internet,

film clips from the HBO John Adams Mini-Series, web accounts for students and teacher on [www.mission-us.org](http://www.mission-us.org) and [www.kidblog.org](http://www.kidblog.org)

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## **Ohio Academic Content Standards (Current)**

Standard: History

Benchmark E: Explain the causes and consequences of the American Revolution, with emphasis on both colonial and British perspectives.

Indicator 3: Identify and explain the sources of conflict which led to the American Revolution, with emphasis on the perspectives of the Patriots, Loyalists, neutral colonists and the British concerning:

- a. The Proclamation of 1763, the Stamp Act, the Townshend Acts, the Tea Act and the Intolerable Acts;
- b. The Boston Tea Party, the boycotts, the Sons of Liberty, and petitions and appeals to Parliament.

Indicator 4: Explain the results of important developments of the American Revolution including:

- a. a declaration of American independence

## **Revised Ohio Academic Content Strands**

Strand: History

Topic: Colonization to Independence

European countries established colonies in North America as a means of increasing wealth and power. As the English colonies developed their own governments and economies, they resisted domination by the monarchy, rebelled and fought for independence.

Content Statement 5: The ideas of Enlightenment and dissatisfaction with colonial rule led English colonists to write the Declaration of Independence and launch the American Revolution.

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## **Historical Background**

The building crescendo to the American Revolution started after the French and Indian War. Parliament approved law after law, tax after tax, to pay back the English treasury for services rendered during the aforementioned war, to raise revenue for the continuing costs of protecting and administering the colonies, and to prove their power and control over the colonies. However, the colonists began to disagree and assert that since they were unrepresented in Parliament that the home government could not tax the colonies. Colonists argued that taxation without direct representation violated the Magna Carta, as well as the English Bill of Rights. These documents gave all Englishmen the right to oversee and vote on any tax proposed by the King. Loyalists supported the British government, while those resisting Parliament's efforts to exert greater control over the colonies began to call themselves "Patriots." Organized by groups like the Sons of Liberty, these Patriots started both peaceful and violent protests against these new laws and taxes. This powder keg of emotions finally exploded in what was to become known as the Boston Massacre.

The Boston Massacre occurred on March 5, 1770? British soldiers had been stationed in the city after rioting that had occurred two years earlier. Colonists had been harassing soldiers since then, and the initial events on that day seemed no different. A small crowd had gathered in the evening and began insulting a lone sentry in front of the Customs House. The protest escalated as the crowd, now numbering between 300-400 people began to hurl snowballs, ice, oyster shells and other objects. The main guard of about twelve soldiers came out to protect the

sentry and attempt to disperse the crowd. After one of the soldiers was hit by an object, the troops fired into the crowd, killing five civilians, three men and two 17-year olds. A trial followed where the British would be defended by future revolutionary and president, John Adams. Adams appealed to law and order, and in the end seven soldiers were acquitted and two others found guilty of manslaughter. Afterwards, silversmith, engraver and member of the Sons of Liberty, Paul Revere made a print of the event that fueled opposition to the British and helped to make the Boston Massacre a key building block leading to the revolution.

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## **Enduring Understandings/ Essential Questions**

### Enduring Understandings

Governments can impact markets by means of spending, trade regulations and barriers, and taxes.

People view historical events from different political, social and economic perspectives.

### Essential Questions

How do the spending, trade regulations and barriers and taxes of governments impact markets?

How do people from different political, social and economic backgrounds view historic events?

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## **Instructional Strategies**

### **Preparation:**

The teacher must setup accounts for him or herself with both websites before the project begins at <http://www.mission-us.org> and <http://www.kidblog.org>. Also, make sure that one computer in the room/computer lab is hooked up to a projector with speakers. Finally, the teacher should play the game, “For Crown or Colony,” on the <http://www.mission-us.org> website before sharing it with the class in Day 1, and don’t forget to write down the class code that is given to you.

### **Day 1**

Begin class by introducing the students to the website and tell them that they are going to experience Pre-Revolutionary Massachusetts through a game called “For Crown or Colony.” Then, show the introduction video at the start of the game. Review with the students what they saw, including questions like: Who is the main character you will be playing in the video game? What is the year? Where does this take place? Why does Nat have to go to Boston, instead of staying on the family farm? And finally, What is the position that he will be taking? From this point, take Nat into the farm house and show the class how to communicate within the game. Demonstrate how they have choices as to what the character does or how he responds in these conversations that will make each student’s experience in the game unique, like a “Choose your own Adventure” book. Show them how to collect vocabulary words and items along the way. Finally, help them log into the site and make sure that they have your class code for logging in to the program. Last of all, just let them play and experience the game, **but make sure that they save their progress by the end of class.**

### **Day 2**

Start class, by showing the segment of the “John Adams Mini-Series” DVD dealing with the actions of the Boston Massacre. Explain that the class will experience this event within the game, during today’s class. Review what the class saw in Day 1’s experience, and answer

any questions the class has. Then, have the class experience the rest of the game. (The game should be completed by the end of this class session.)

### Day 3

Continue the lesson on Day 3, by showing the trial portion of the “John Adams Mini-Series” DVD, but save the verdict for later. Next, show the Paul Revere engraving. (**Appendix E**) Ask the students what they see. The teacher should talk about primary sources and why this is a primary source. Have each student study at least one primary source from each point of view (both British and Patriot). (**Appendices A-E**) Assign each student to write a blog entry at Kidblog.org <http://www.kidblog.org>. (Make sure to help them to register at this time, if the class does not already have an account. I always suggest using the same username and password as the student has for school computer access.) The blog entry should involve the student pretending to be from this time period. The student can make up their own name, but should show whether they are a Patriot, British Soldier, or Loyalist. They need to explain what they saw happen, as well as, who they think is at fault. Finally, they should make predictions about what this event means and what might happen next. Distribute the rubric to the students, at this time, so the class is aware what is expected of them. At the end of the lesson, show the short verdict section of the “John Adams Mini-Series” DVD.

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## Classroom Materials

### Equipment:

Computer Lab or class set of computers with internet connection  
HBO’s “John Adams Mini-Series” DVD’s – Disc 1

### Resources

#### Websites Used:

<http://www.mission-us.org>  
<http://www.kidblog.org>

### Primary Sources:

“The Boston Massacre,” *Boston Gazette and Country Journal*, 12 March 1770, The Constitution Society, <http://www.constitution.org/primarysources/boston.html> (accessed November 28, 2011). **Appendix A**

Deacon John Tudor, Journal, March 1770, “The Boston Massacre,” Digital History, [http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/documents/documents\\_p2.cfm?doc=293](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/documents/documents_p2.cfm?doc=293), (accessed November 28, 2011). **Appendix B**

Captain Thomas Preston, Report, “Eyewitness Accounts of the ‘Boston Massacre,’” HistoryWiz, <http://www.historywiz.com/primarysources/eyewit-boston.htm>, (accessed November 28, 2011). (British point of view) **Appendix C**

Anonymous, “Eyewitness Accounts of the ‘Boston Massacre,’” History Wiz, <http://www.historywiz.com/primarysources/eyewit-boston.htm>, (accessed November 28, 2011). (American point of view) **Appendix D**

Paul Revere, “The Bloody Massacre Perpetrated in King’s Street,” 1770, HistoryWiz, <http://www.historywiz.com/images/americanrevolution/massacre2.gif>, (accessed November 28, 2011). **Appendix E**

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### **Summative Assessment (or Question)**

Students will write an entry in their blog on <http://www.kidblog.org>. They will be asked to choose the perspective of a Patriot, a British soldier, or a Loyalist from the town of Boston. In their entry, students will need to explain why they think this event happened; who they think was at fault; and predict what they think may happen next because of this action.

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### **Assessment or Answer Key**

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Assessment Rubric

# Blog Entry – Boston Massacre

Component	1	2	3
States who he/she is and which perspective he represents	States name only	States name and whether he/she is a Patriot/British Soldier/Loyalist	States name, whether he/she is a Patriot/British Soldier/Loyalist, and gives details about where he/she is from, age, what his occupation is, family life, etc.
Reasons the Boston Massacre happened	Answers why he/she thinks it happened, but no historical examples, as to why	Answers why he/she thinks it happened, with one example of other historical events leading up to the Boston Massacre, e.g., Stamp Act, boycotts, Townshend Acts, actions of Sons of Liberty and Committees of Correspondence, Quartering Act, etc.	Answers why he/she thinks it happened, with two or more examples of other historical events leading up to the Boston Massacre, e.g., Stamp Act, boycotts, Townshend Acts, actions of Sons of Liberty and Committees of Correspondence, Quartering Act, etc.
Who is at fault?	Answers who is at fault, but no reasons why	Answers who is at fault with only one historically-based reason why	Answers who is at fault with two or more historically-based reasons why
Prediction of actions to come:	Makes a prediction, but fails to analyze why this could possibly happen	Makes a prediction, and successfully analyzes why this could possibly happen	Makes more than one prediction, and successfully analyzes why these things could possibly happen

## Appendix A

### Primary Source

“The Boston Massacre,” *Boston Gazette and Country Journal*, 12 March 1770

On the evening of Monday, being the fifth current, several soldiers of the 29th Regiment were seen parading the streets with their drawn cutlasses and bayonets, abusing and wounding numbers of the inhabitants.

A few minutes after nine o'clock four youths, named Edward Archbald, William Merchant, Francis Archbald, and John Leech, jun., came down Cornhill together, and separating at Doctor Loring's corner, the two former were passing the narrow alley leading to Murray's barrack in which was a soldier brandishing a broad sword of an uncommon size against the walls, out of which he struck fire plentifully. A person of mean countenance armed with a large cudgel bore him company. Edward Archbald admonished Mr. Merchant to take care of the sword, on which the soldier turned round and struck Archbald on the arm, then pushed at Merchant and pierced through his clothes inside the arm close to the armpit and grazed the skin. Merchant then struck the soldier with a short stick he had; and the other person ran to the barrack and brought with him two soldiers, one armed with a pair of tongs, the other with a shovel. He with the tongs pursued Archbald back through the alley, collared and laid him over the head with the tongs. The noise brought people together; and John Hicks, a young lad, coming up, knocked the soldier down but let him get up again; and more lads gathering, drove them back to the barrack where the boys stood some time as it were to keep them in. In less than a minute ten or twelve of them came out with drawn cutlasses, clubs, and bayonets and set upon the unarmed boys and young folk who stood them a little while but, finding the inequality of their equipment, dispersed. On hearing the noise, one Samuel Atwood came up to see what was the matter; and entering the alley from dock square, heard the latter part of the combat; and when the boys had dispersed he met the ten or twelve soldiers aforesaid rushing down the alley towards the square and asked them if they intended to murder people? They answered Yes, by G-d, root and branch! With that one of them struck Mr. Atwood with a club which was repeated by another; and being unarmed, he turned to go off and received a wound on the left shoulder which reached the bone and gave him much pain. Retreating a few steps, Mr. Atwood met two officers and said, gentlemen, what is the matter? They answered, you'll see by and by. Immediately after, those heroes appeared in the square, asking where were the boogers? where were the cowards? But notwithstanding their fierceness to naked men, one of them advanced towards a youth who had a split of a raw stave in his hand and said, damn them, here is one of them. But the young man seeing a person near him with a drawn sword and good cane ready to support him, held up his stave in defiance; and they quietly passed by him up the little alley by Mr. Silsby's to King Street where they attacked single and unarmed persons till they raised much clamour, and then turned down Cornhill Street, insulting all they met in like manner and pursuing some to their very doors. Thirty or forty persons, mostly lads, being by this means gathered in King Street, Capt. Preston with a party of men with charged bayonets, came from the main guard to the commissioner's house, the soldiers pushing their bayonets, crying, make way! They took place by the custom house and, continuing to push to drive the people off, pricked some in several places, on which they were clamorous and, it is said, threw snow balls. On this, the Captain commanded them to fire; and more snow balls coming, he again said, damn you, fire, be the consequence what it will! One soldier then fired, and a townsman with a cudgel struck him over the hands with such force that he dropped his firelock; and, rushing forward, aimed a blow at the Captain's head which grazed his hat and fell pretty heavy upon his arm. However, the soldiers continued the fire successively till seven or eight or, as some say, eleven guns were discharged.

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## **Appendix B**

### **Primary Source**

**“The Boston Massacre,” Deacon John Tudor, 1770.**

**March 1770**

**On Monday Evening the 5<sup>th</sup> current, a few minutes after 9 o'clock a most horrid murder was committed in King Street before the Customhouse by 8 or 9 Soldiers under the command of Capt[ain] Tho[mas] Preston draw from the Main Guard on the South side of the Townhouse.**

**March 5<sup>th</sup>**

**This unhappy affair began by Some boys & young fellows throwing Snow Balls at the sentry placed at the Customhouse Door. On which 8 or 9 Soldiers came to his assistance. Soon after a Number of people collected, when the Capt commanded the Soldiers to fire, which they did and 3 Men were Kill'd on the Spot & several Mortally Wounded.**

**The Capt soon drew off his Soldiers up to the Main Guard, or the Consequences might have been terrible, for on the Guns firing the people were alarm'd & set the bells a Ringing as if for Fire, which drew Multitudes to the place of action.**

**Lieut. Governor [Thomas] Huthchinson, who was commander in Chief, was sent for & Came to the Council Chamber, w[h]ere some of the Magistrates attended. The Governor desired the Multitude about 10 o'clock to separate & go home peaceable & he would do all in his power that Justice should be done &c...**

**The people insisted that the Soldiers should be ordered to their Barracks 1<sup>st</sup> before they would separate, Which being done the people separated about 1 o'clock...**

**The next forenoon the 8 soldiers that fired on the inhabitants were also sent to Jail.**

**Tuesday A.M. the inhabitants met at Faneuil Hall & after some pertinent speeches, chose a Committee of 15 Gentlemen to wait on the Lieut. Governor in Council to request the immediate removal of the Troops.**

**The message was in these Words. That it is the unanimous opinion of this Meeting that the inhabitants & soldiery can no longer live together in safety; that nothing can Rationally be expected to restore the peace of the Town & prevent Blood & Carnage but the removal of the Troops: and that we most fervently pray his Honor that his power & influence may be exerted for their instant removal.**

**His Honor's reply was. Gentlemen I am extremely sorry for the unhappy difference & especially of the last Evening, & Signifying that it was not in his power to remove the Troops &c &c.**

**March 6**

**The Above Reply was not satisfactory to the Inhabitants, as but one Regiment should be removed to the Castle Barracks.**



**In the afternoon the Town adjourned to Dr. Sewill's Meetinghouse [Old South Church] not large enough to hold the people, their being at least 3,000, some suppos'd near 4,000, when they chose a Committee to wait on the Lieut. Governor to let him & the Council Know that nothing less would satisfy the people than a total & immediate removal of the Troops out of the Town...**

**His Honor communicated this advice of the Council to Col Dalrymple & desir'd he would order the Troops down to Castle William. After the Col. Had seen the vote of the Council He gave his Word & honor to the Town's Committee that both the Regiments should be remov'd without delay...**

**March 8**

**Agreeable to the general request of the Inhabitants, were follow'd to the Grave in succession the 4 bodies of Saml Gray, Saml Maverick, James Caldwell & Crispus Attucks, the unhappy Victims who fell in the Bloody Massacre.**

**On the sorrowful Occasion most of the shops & stores in Town were shut , all the Bells were order'd to toll a solemn peal in Boston, Charleston, Cambridge & Roxbery.**

**The several hearses forming a junction in King Street, the Theatre of that inhuman Tragedy, proceeded from thence thro' the main street, lengthened by an immense Concourse of people, So numerous as to be obliged to follow in Ranks of 4 & 6 abreast and brought up by a long Train of Carriages.**

**The sorrow Visible in the Countenances, together with the peculiar solemnity, Surpass description; it was suppos'd that the Spectators & those that follow'd the corps amounted to 15000, some supposed 20,000.**

**Note: Capt Prston was tried for his Life on the affare of the above October 24 1770. The Trial lasted 5 Days, but they Jury brought him in not Guilty.**

## Appendix C

### Primary Source

Captain Thomas Preston, Report, "Eyewitness Accounts of the 'Boston Massacre,'"

Excerpt from the report of Captain Thomas Preston:

...In my way there I saw the people in great commotion, and heard them use the most cruel and horrid threats against the troops. In a few minutes after I reached the guard, about 100 people passed it and went towards the custom house where the king's money is lodged. They immediately surrounded the sentry posted there, and with clubs and other weapons threatened to execute their vengeance on him. I was soon informed by a townsman their intention was to carry off the soldier from his post and probably murder him... I immediately sent a noncommissioned officer and 12 men to protect both the sentry and the king's money, and very soon followed myself to prevent, if possible, all disorder, fearing lest the officer and soldiers, by the insults and provocations of the rioters, should be thrown off their guard and commit some rash act. They soon rushed through the people, and by charging their bayonets in half-circles, kept them at a little distance. ..The mob still increased and were more outrageous, striking their clubs or bludgeons one against another, and calling out, come on you rascals, you bloody backs, you lobster scoundrels, fire if you dare, G-d damn you, fire and be damned, we know you dare not, and much more such language was used. At this time I was between the soldiers and the mob, parleying with, and endeavouring all in my power to persuade them to retire peaceably, but to no purpose. They advanced to the points of the bayonets, struck some of them and even the muzzles of the pieces, and seemed to be endeavouring to close with the soldiers. On which some well behaved persons asked me if the guns were charged. I replied yes. They then asked me if I intended to order the men to fire. I answered no, by no means, observing to them that I was advanced before the muzzles of the men's pieces, and must fall a sacrifice if they fired ...While I was thus speaking, one of the soldiers having received a severe blow with a stick, stepped a little on one side and instantly fired, on which turning to and asking him why he fired without orders, I was struck with a club on my arm, which for some time deprived me of the use of it, which blow had it been placed on my head, most probably would have destroyed me.

On this a general attack was made on the men by a great number of heavy clubs and snowballs being thrown at them, by which all our lives were in imminent danger, some persons at the same time from behind calling out, damn your bloods-why don't you fire. Instantly three or four of the soldiers fired, one after another, and directly after three more in the same confusion and hurry. The mob then ran away, except three unhappy men who instantly expired, in which number was Mr. Gray at whose rope-walk the prior quarrels took place; one more is since dead, three others are dangerously, and four

slightly wounded. The whole of this melancholy affair was transacted in almost 20 minutes. On my asking the soldiers why they fired without orders, they said they heard the word fire and supposed it came from me. This might be the case as many of the mob called out fire, fire, but I assured the men that I gave no such order; that my words were, don't fire, stop your firing. In short, it was scarcely possible for the soldiers to know who said fire, or don't fire, or stop your firing.

## APPENDIX D

### Primary Source

Anonymous, "Eyewitness Accounts of the 'Boston Massacre,'"

THE HORRID MASSACRE IN BOSTON, PERPETRATED IN THE EVENING OF THE FIFTH DAY OF MARCH, 1770, BY SOLDIERS OF THE TWENTY-NINTH REGIMENT WHICH WITH THE FOURTEENTH REGIMENT WERE THEN QUARTERED THERE; WITH SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE STATE OF THINGS PRIOR TO THAT CATASTROPHE ...Whether the boys mistook the sentry for one of the said party (a group of unruly soldiers who had been about the area earlier), and thence took occasion to differ with him, or whether he first affronted them, which is affirmed in several depositions,- however that may be, there was much foul language between them, and some of them, in consequence of his pushing at them with his bayonet, threw snowballs at him, which occasioned him to knock hastily at the door of the Custom House. From hence two persons thereupon proceeded immediately to the main-guard, which was posted opposite to the State House, at a small distance, near the head of the said street. The officer on guard was Capt. Preston, who with seven or eight soldiers, with firearms and charged bayonets, issued from the guardhouse, and in great haste posted himself and his soldiers in front of the Custom House, near the corner aforesaid. In passing to this station the soldiers pushed several persons with their bayonets, driving through the people in so rough a manner that it appeared they intended to create a disturbance. This occasioned some snowballs to be thrown at them which seems to have been the only provocation that was given. Mr. Knox (between whom and Capt. Preston there was some conversation on the spot) declares, that while he was talking with Capt. Preston, the soldiers of his detachment had attacked the people with their bayonets and that there was not the least provocation given to Capt. Preston of his party; the backs of the people being toward them when the people were attacked. He also declares, that Capt. Preston seemed to be in great haste and much agitated, and that, according to his opinion, there were not then present in King street above seventy or eighty persons at the extent. The said party (British soldiers) was formed into a half circle; and within a short time after they had been posted at the Custom House, began to fire upon the people. Captain Preston is said to have ordered them to fire, and to have repeated that order. One gun was fired first; then others in succession and with deliberation, till ten or a dozen guns were fired; or till that number of discharges were made from the guns that were fired. By which means eleven persons were killed and wounded, as above represented.

## Appendix E

### Primary Source

Paul Revere, "The Bloody Massacre Perpetrated in King's Street," 1770

