

Lexington & Concord

Lesson #2 of the 1775: Perspectives Module

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

What happened on April 19, 1775, in Lexington and Concord? How did people respond to the events that started the American Revolution? What are some of the unique stories and perspectives of people affected or participating in that historic day?

OVERVIEW

The British contingent, under orders from General Thomas Gage, marched out of Boston commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Francis Smith with Major John Pitcairn as second-in-command. Their mission, which Gage hoped to be cloaked in secrecy, was to confiscate and destroy the military supplies secreted in Concord.

On the route that was chosen to reach Concord, the British had to pass through the town of Lexington. With the sun peeking in the east on April 19, 1775, approximately 80 militiamen gathered on the green as the British approached. Parker ordered the men into a parade ground formation as the British changed their course. The redcoats marched onto Lexington Green with the added hope of disarming the militia and calling for them to disperse. In the nervousness of the moment, someone fired a musket. Then the British retaliated in the form of a volley and surged forward in a bayonet attack. The melee was soon over, with eight Lexington militiamen killed and another ten wounded before the rest panicked and fled. Only one British soldier was struck, wounded in the thigh. Order was restored soon after and with the arrival of the rest of Smith's column, the light infantry fired a victory volley before resuming the march on to Concord.

When the British arrived in Concord, some searched nearby farms while others held the town. Militia companies waited near the Old North Bridge and observed. With smoke wafting in the air, the Patriots feared that the British were burning the town. Colonel Barrett ordered the militia to load their muskets and advance toward the bridge but implored them not to fire first. The British, seeing the advance, retreated to a position across the bridge on the town side. And then, a musket discharge reverberated. The now-famous "shot heard around the world" had been discharged. The British and Americans now both fired. Pandemonium erupted in the British lines, and the men hastily retreated toward town. The British officers ordered a return to Boston, which devolved into a rout as the British were continually ambushed by Minute Men shooting from behind trees, rock walls, and buildings along Battle Road. British reinforcements reach Smith and Pitcairn's men on the eastern outskirts of Lexington, but the Americans pursue them until they reached Boston.

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this lesson, the students will be able to:

1. Knowledge
 - Briefly explain the events at Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1775, that started the American Revolution.
2. Comprehension/Application/Analysis
 - Examine multiple primary sources to better understand the events of the historic day and what it meant for the people involved.
3. Evaluation
 - Discuss findings from primary sources and consider the outcomes of the fighting at Lexington and Concord.

ACTIVITIES

1. Use the [Lesson's PowerPoint](#) to explore the context and history; the PowerPoint introduces context and foundational knowledge for exploring stories and accounts of April 19, 1775.
2. Distribute or show in large size the maps of the British expedition's advance and retreat and the movements of the American militia.
3. The primary sources for this perspectives lesson plan offer multiple perspectives on different events; students can be divided into groups to read and fill out the worksheet.

Lexington and Concord	<i>A Deposition of Colonial Militiamen from the Battle of Lexington and Concord</i>
	<i>"I Heard The Guns"</i>
	<i>Loyalist Woman's Account of Lexington and Concord</i>
	<i>"Several Letters Arrived at New-York, dated April 21, 1775"</i>
	<i>"Describing the Events that Took Place at Lexington and Concord"</i>
	<i>The American Crisis (1775)</i>

4. Distribute the [lesson's worksheet](#).
5. Students will read a primary source and fill out the worksheet which will guide them through exploring the document.
6. Encourage a class discussion and draw group conclusions, answering the questions:
 - What were the goals of the April 19, 1775, for the British and the Massachusetts militiamen?
 - Do you notice any personal statements of goals in the primary sources?

- Are there evidences of propaganda perspectives in the primary sources? What might be the purpose behind this?
- What did the incidents that led to the “Shot Heard ‘Round the World” mean to the participants and eyewitnesses that day? What does the phrase symbolize or mean to you?

STANDARDS

Please visit the [Lesson Plan Page](#) and select the “Common Core and NCSS Standards for Social Studies” to view the details.

RESOURCES

Visit the [Lesson Plan Page](#) to find all resources in one convenient place. You’ll find everything mentioned or linked in this Lesson Plan along with additional videos, articles, primary sources, and biographies.

Quick Links

- [PowerPoint](#)
- [Primary Source Worksheet](#)
- [Lexington & Concord Map – British Advance](#)
- [Lexington & Concord Map – British Retreat](#)

OPTIONAL HOMEWORK/ASSESSMENT/ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:

Option 1: Biography Study

Have the students selected a historical person connected to the Battles of Lexington and Concord. (There are eight biography articles already prepared on the [Lesson Plan Page](#)). The students will read the biography and make notes for the following topics. Students can write a short essay, share their findings verbally, or incorporate their findings into a larger class project that might include art, costumes, or props.

Key Life Events:

Identify and describe three key events or milestones in the life of the individual. How did these events shape or influence their character, achievements, or contributions?

Role during the Battles of Lexington and Concord

What did this person do or observe on April 19, 1775? Does this seem to be a significant moment in this person’s life?

Legacy and Impact:

Reflect on the individual's legacy and impact on society. What are the person's major contributions or accomplishments? Do you think these accomplishments were good? How have their actions influenced the course of history or inspired others?

Option 2: Comparing British Soldiers & Massachusetts Militia

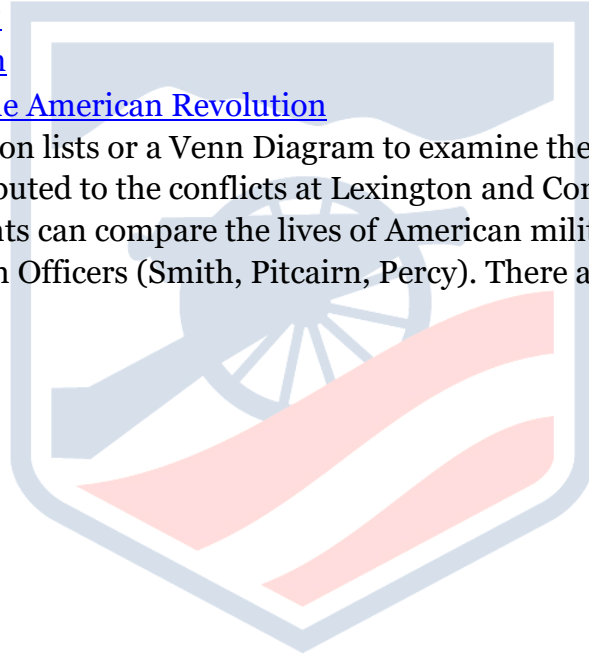
What were some similarities and differences between British soldiers and Massachusetts militiamen in April 1775?

View or read these resources:

- [Citizen-Soldier video](#) (2 minutes)
- [What is a Minuteman?](#)
- [British Army in Boston](#)
- [British Army during the American Revolution](#)

Students can create comparison lists or a Venn Diagram to examine the similarities and differences. How might these have contributed to the conflicts at Lexington and Concord?

If time permits, students can compare the lives of American militia leaders (Parker, Barrett, Davis) with the lives of British Officers (Smith, Pitcairn, Percy). There are biographies listed on the [Lesson Plan Page](#).



AMERICAN
BATTLEFIELD
TRUST ★ ★ ★