

## **Riding on the Eve of Revolution**

### **Lesson #1 of the 1775: Perspectives Module**

#### **ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS**

Who took the news into the Massachusetts countryside that the British were marching toward Concord? What risks did those messengers take? How have their journeys been remembered?

#### **OVERVIEW**

On April 18, 1775, the British planned yet another search and destroy mission, aimed at removing arms and supplies from the countryside. Their target was the village of Concord, a hotbed of anti-British sentiment and a major supply cache. Anti-British intelligence in Boston quickly alerted Patriot leader Dr. Joseph Warren, who gave the fateful order to send the alarm, lighting the fuse that would start the Revolution. Warren sent for Revere and William Dawes in the evening on April 18, once the British intention was clear. Revere would take the short, but more dangerous, water route from Boston across the harbor to Charlestown, while Dawes would ride out across Boston Neck. Warren was concerned that John Hancock and Samuel Adams, both staying in Lexington, were the targets of the British foray. Revere had ridden through Lexington earlier in April, carrying messages to the Provincial Congress meeting in Concord, and knew the route well.

Revere and Dawes departed Boston around 10pm. At the same time, two signal lanterns briefly showed from the Old North Church steeple, a prearranged signal designed by Revere to alert the alarm network across the Harbor. The famous “one if by land, two if by sea” signaled that the British would row across Boston harbor instead of marching out over the neck. Even before Revere landed, the alarm was already spreading across the countryside.

Upon reaching the Charlestown shore, Revere mounted and began his ride to Lexington. Passing through the towns of Somerville, Medford, and Menotomy (Arlington), Revere did not yell “the British are coming!”, instead accounts show that Revere passed the message of “the Regulars are coming out.” The phrase “the British are coming,” would have been confusing to locals, who still considered themselves British. Everyone knew what “the Regulars are coming out” meant, and as Revere passed through, more alarm riders rode out, signal guns fired, church bells rang, all alerting the countryside to the coming threat. As the alarm spread, Minutemen grabbed their weapons and headed for town greens, followed by the rest of the Militia.

#### **OBJECTIVES**

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

1. Knowledge

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LESSON PLAN TEACHING GUIDE

- Briefly explain the events of Paul Revere’s ride to warn the Massachusetts villages on April 18, 1775, that a British expedition was leaving Boston and heading to Concord.
2. Comprehension/Application/Analysis
    - Examine multiple primary sources to gain an appreciation for Revere and the other midnight messengers.
  3. Evaluation
    - Discuss findings from primary sources and consider what was at risk on the eve of the American Revolution.

**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 18, 1775.
2. Distribute or show in large size the map of the midnight messenger’s route and the route of the British soldiers for students to examine and reference.
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.

The Ride	<i>Paul Revere’s Deposition, 1775</i>
The Ride	<i>"Describing the Events that Took Place at Lexington and Concord"</i>
Revere’s Letters	<i>Rachel Revere’s Captured Letter</i>
Revere’s Letters	<i>Paul Revere’s Letters to his wife and son</i>
Memory	<i>"Story of the Battle of Concord and Lexington and Revere’s ride Twenty Years Ago"</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 18, 1775, for the Americans, the British and the messengers?
  - What risks did the midnight messengers take?
  - What do you think could have happened if Revere, Dawes and Prescott did not spread the news about the British expedition?
  - What makes events “defining” in history?
  - How have the messengers been remembered or turned into history myth? How would you suggest the messengers should be remembered?

## 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](#)
- [April 18-19, 1775 Map](#)

## OPTIONAL HOMEWORK/ASSESSMENT/ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:

### ***Option 1: Location Study***

Have the students examine the historical map and choose a location along the rider’s route to research. (Some articles and resources are listed on the [Lesson Plan Page](#)).

Is this location mentioned in an included primary source? If so, include the quote about the location.

The students can write a paragraph summary about the location, then working together put the locations in sequential and geographical order to describe the messenger’s ride. How far was it between locations? What was the most important location? Why?

### ***Option 2: Boston Virtual Field Trip***

Students can watch the [Boston Virtual Field Trip](#), which tours historic Boston, Lexington and Concord. Students can then write a short essay about a place of interest that they saw in the video. For additional resources related to the Boston Virtual Field Trip, including more information about featured sites, please visit [this resource hub/landing page](#).

TRUST

