

The Shot Heard Round The World Lesson Plan: A Nation is Born A Lesson Plan to Accompany the Virtual Reality Experience

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

What events led to the “Shot Heard ‘Round The World”? What personal choices did people face on April 19, 1775, at the beginning of the American Revolution?

OVERVIEW

The actions at Lexington, Concord and along the stretch of Massachusetts countryside now remembered simply as “Battle Road” were the “shots heard round the world” transitioned the war of words to one of bullets and the long trek to American independence.

By April 1775, British General Thomas Gage faced the threat of outright rebellion Massachusetts after years of rising tensions. He hoped to prevent violence by ordering the seizure of weapons and powder being stored in Concord, Massachusetts, twenty miles northwest of Boston.

British troops marched into the small town of Lexington at about 5:00 a.m. and found a militia company of more 70 men led by Capt. John Parker. When the vanguard of the British force rushed toward them across the town green, Parker ordered his company to disperse. At some point a shot rang out—historians still debate who fired it—and the nervous British soldiers fired a volley, killing seven and mortally wounding one of the retreating militiamen. The British column moved on toward Concord, leaving the dead, wounded and dying in their wake.

Arriving in Concord, British commanders ordered several companies to secure the North Bridge across the Concord River and sent other troops to look for the weapons and powder. A growing assembly of close to 400 militia from Concord and the surrounding towns gathered on the high ground, where they saw smoke rising from Concord. Mistakenly assuming the Redcoats were torching the town, the militia companies advanced. The British soldiers retreated to the opposite shore and prepared to defend themselves. The Redcoats opened fire, killing several men. The Minute Men fired, killing three British soldiers and wounding nine others. This volley is considered “the shot heard round the world” and sent the British troops retreating.

While retreating to Boston, the British were attacked from all sides by swarms of angry Minute Men along what is now known as Battle Road. When they reach Lexington, Parker’s men take their revenge for the violence suffered that morning, firing on the British regulars from behind cover. For the next 12 miles, the British are continually ambushed by Minute Men shooting from behind trees, rock walls, and buildings. British reinforcements arrived, but the Minute Men pursue them as they retreated back to Boston. Eight years of war followed, and those who stood their ground against Gage’s troops eventually earned independence from Britain and became citizens of the democratic United States of America.

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
 - Study a primary source and note what the writer heard, saw, and felt on April 19, 1775.
3. Evaluation
 - Discuss the choices that different people faced or made during the Battle of Lexington and Concord and how these individual choices shaped the American Revolution and pursuit of liberty.

ACTIVITIES

1. Watch the [Virtual Reality Experience video](#).
2. If helpful, use the [Lesson's PowerPoint](#) to explore the context and history; the PowerPoint introduces context and foundational knowledge about the beginning of the American Revolution at Lexington and Concord.
3. Distribute the [lesson's worksheet](#).
4. Students will read a primary source and fill out the worksheet which will guide them through exploring the document. Primary Sources are available on the Lesson Plan Page; any are suitable for this activity except "Concord Hymn."
5. Encourage a class discussion about what the students have learned and what they are still curious about. Invite students to share from Question 10 on the worksheet; discuss the different decisions people made in the video and what decisions the students might have chosen if they were in those historic circumstances.

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

- [Video](#)
- [PowerPoint](#)
- [Primary Source Worksheet](#)

OPTIONAL HOMEWORK/ASSESSMENT/ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:

Option 1: Historical Memory

The phrase “The Shot Heard ‘Round The World” was created by author Ralph Waldo Emerson several decades after the Battle of Concord.

Have students explore [this primary source](#), written by one of Ralph Waldo Emerson’s ancestors who witnessed the battle and then read the poem [“Concord Hymn.”](#)

Discuss how historical memory* and ideas of an event can alter our perceptions of what happened. Is it important to read many sources and try to discover details about what really happened? Is historical memory good?

*Definition: Historical Memory: refers to the way by which groups of people create and then identify with specific narratives about historical periods or events.

Option 2: Real Historical People

While the video experience follows the stories of fictional characters, there are known life-stories and experiences of real people who witnessed or participated in Battle of Lexington and Concord at the beginning of the American Revolution.

Have the students selected a historical person connected to Lexington and Concord. (There are 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? Was Lexington and Concord a defining moment of this person’s life? Did they do other notable actions in the Revolutionary War?

Legacy and Impact:

Reflect on the individual's lasting legacy. 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? How is this person remembered today?