



Boston Massacre Newspaper Articles

Content Area/Topic: American Revolution

Grade/Grade band: 5

Tech Needs: Individual devices, or paper copies of primary sources

Estimated Time: 20-30 minutes

Contributor:

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Essential Question:

How did colonists react to the Boston Massacre?

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy Considerations

In many ways, the American Revolution can feel foreign to modern students. The distance of time combined with the socio-political changes in our communities can make this event feel distant. Challenge yourself to explain exactly why this event from the past matters to students today, not just in terms of why it should matter but a compelling argument that connects with what students believe does matter. Concepts like power, justice, fairness, and more can help draw connections between what students believe to be important and how this history influences the way we define those concepts today.

Materials

- ☐ [Observe/Think/Wonder form](#) for each student
- ☐ Digital or paper copies of the primary source photos from Library of Congress: [Four coffins of men killed in the Boston Massacre](#) and [Coffin of Patrick Carr](#)

Lesson Sequence

1. Using digital or paper copies of *Four coffins of men killed in the Boston Massacre* and *Coffin of Patrick Carr*, each student will take 5 minutes to complete an Observe/Think/Wonder form.
2. Share their responses as a class. Many students will have noticed that some words appear to be spelled differently, for example, Laft. Explain that what appears to be an *f* is an elongated *s*. Read aloud, or provide a transcription of the text: on *Four coffins* begin with paragraph directly above coffins and sentence following, all of *Patrick Carr*. See transcriptions below.

Transcription of *Four coffins of men killed in the Boston Massacre*

Last Thursday, agreeable to a general request of the inhabitants, and by the consent of parents and friends, were carried to their grave in succession, the bodies of Samuel Gray,

This activity was last updated on 8/1/2023. If you have questions about this activity, please contact the MNHS Teacher Education and Curriculum Development team: ted@mnhs.org.

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Samuel Maverick, James Caldwell, and Crispus Attucks the unhappy victims who fell in the bloody massacre of Monday evening preceding!

Transcription of Coffin of Patrick Carr

Last Wednesday night died, Patrick Carr, an inhabitant of this town, of the wound he received in King Street on the bloody and execrable night of the fifth instant— he had just before left his home, and upon his coming into the street received the fatal ball in his hip which passed out at the opposite side; this is the fifth life that has been sacrificed by the rage of the soldiery, but it is feared it will not be the last, as several others are dangerously languishing of their wounds. His remains were attended on Saturday last from Faneuil Hall by a numerous and respectable train

On this occasion most of the shops in town were shut, all the bells were ordered to toll a solemn peal, as were also those in neighboring towns of Charlestown, Roxbury, etc.

3. Ask students “How did colonists react to the deaths of these men at what became known as the Boston Massacre? What evidence from the primary sources support their claims?” This can be done orally as a class or in writing.

Extensions/Adaptations

1. Connections can be made to the reactions of people during more recent events, such as the killing of George Floyd.
2. Can be used in conjunction with Paul Revere’s print from the Library of Congress: [The bloody massacre perpetrated in King Street Boston on March 5th 1770 by a party of the 29th Regt.](#)

Resources

- The Massachusetts Historical Society’s website includes a [feature](#) with background information and primary sources reactions and responses to the Boston Massacre.