

TheatreEspresso

WAKE UP TO HISTORY!



UPRISING ON KING STREET: THE BOSTON MASSACRE

STUDY GUIDE

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The *Uprising on King Street: The Boston Massacre* study guide is based on the play of the same name, written by Christopher Robin Cook, Wendy Lement and Derek Nelson.

The *Uprising on King Street* study guide was written by Wendy Lement, with contributions by Anna Heck and Taryn Face.

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About Theatre Espresso

Theatre Espresso creates, produces, and performs interactive dramas that bring history to life for students, in order to foster a generation of critical thinkers and true citizens. Since 1992, Theatre Espresso has toured its educational dramas to schools, museums, libraries, and courthouses throughout New England. Inspired by the highly successful Theatre-in-Education teams of Great Britain and by the belief that drama is a potent teaching tool, Theatre Espresso's work challenges students to make critical judgments, explore social relationships, reflect on the role of law and human rights in our society, and question accepted truths about the history of America. These plays confront students with complex situations—based on actual historical events—that provoke a variety of opinions and solutions. By asking students to consider themselves *participants in the drama*—inhabitants of 1706 Salem Village, members of the post-Civil War U.S. Congress, or Supreme Court Justices—the company engages students in examining contradictory events and testimony in order to reach their decision.

For more information about Theatre Espresso, visit our website at:

www.TheatreEspresso.org

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Learning Goals

- To explore the relationship between England and the American colonies prior to the American Revolution.
- To examine tensions between British soldiers and the citizens of Boston that led to the Boston Massacre.
- To debate who should be held responsible for the Boston Massacre.
- To examine the roles of class and race in the administration of justice.

About the Play

Uprising on King Street: The Boston Massacre examines the legal responsibilities of a government when it sends a military force to occupy a foreign land. Similar in format to our other dramas, *Uprising on King Street* engages students with the people and events central to the Boston Massacre of 1770, and asks them to weigh the issues and arguments. In role as jurors, students perceive the Boston Massacre through the eyes of witnesses – ordinary men and women from a variety of ethnic and racial backgrounds – who were both shaped by, and instrumental in shaping, history. A diverse company of eight professional actors recreates the events that led to the Massacre. Students question key players and debate the critical points of the case. Ultimately, students decide whether Captain Preston, the British officer in command the night five Bostonians were killed, should be held accountable for the Massacre. The drama compels students to grapple with very contemporary questions: Is violence ever necessary to keep the peace? What role does class play in the administration of justice? Is democracy able truly to provide justice for all?

What Happened in History?

The Seven Years War with France left Britain 133 million pounds in debt. To boost Britain's economy, Parliament enacted a series of tax initiatives on the American colonies. In 1764, they imposed the Sugar Act, which placed a three cent tax on imported sugar and higher import taxes on non-British cloth, coffee, indigo and wine. In 1765, they added both the Stamp Act, which required a royal stamp be purchased and placed on any publicly printed document, and the Quartering Act, which forced colonists to provide housing and supplies to British troops serving in the colonies. These Acts failed to raise enough revenue to relieve Britain's debt. Hoping to raise between £35,000 – £40,000 per year, Lord Townshend created the Townshend Revenue Act in 1767, taxing all colonial imports of lead, paint, paper, glass, and tea.

Governor Bernard and his successor, Acting Governor Thomas Hutchinson, were charged with implementing these acts, which were despised by a majority of Boston's 16,000 inhabitants. Colonists were already upset that their hopes of independence were stifled.

Two regiments of British troops sent to Boston in 1770 further burdened an already aggrieved populace. Heavy taxation, forceful conscription, a harbor blockade, and high unemployment overshadowed daily life for Bostonians.

Just ten days before “the horrid massacre,” as Sam Adams dubbed it, eleven-year-old Christopher Seider was shot by a British soldier during a protest. A week later soldiers clashed with ropewalk workers angry over the loss of jobs to the occupying British force. On March 5, what started as a group of boys taunting the guard, quickly escalated into a riot as Bostonians hurled sticks and snowballs at the soldiers. Led by Captain Preston, British soldiers from the 29th Regiment rushed to the scene. Reports of what occurred that night are varied and confused. Some accounts suggest that Crispus Attucks insulted the troops and baited them to fire. After Attucks knocked down Private Hugh Montgomery, someone shouted “fire,” and Attucks was shot and killed. Additional shots were fired, three more men died (James Caldwell, Samuel Gray, Samuel Maverick), and six were wounded.

The following October, Captain Preston and his soldiers were arrested for murder. In their depositions, British soldiers claimed that Preston ordered them to fire, but Preston denied the accusation. Ignoring public sentiment, John Adams defended both Preston and the British soldiers at trial. Preston was acquitted, as were six of his men in a separate trial. Two soldiers were convicted of manslaughter and branded on their thumbs. The events of the Boston Massacre became a precipitating event to the American Revolution.

Timeline of Events

March 22, 1765: The **Stamp Act** is imposed by Britain, taxing all printed materials in the colonies. The colonists protested this action, which they felt placed an undue burden upon them.

March 24, 1765: The **Quartering Act** is imposed by Britain. This law ordered colonists to house and provide for British soldiers stationed within their towns. Provisions included food, firewood, bedding, beer and candles.

March 18, 1766: This Stamp Act is repealed, but Britain passes the **Declaratory Act**, binding the colonies to the laws of Parliament.

July 2, 1767: The **Townshend Revenue Act** is passed, taxing paint, oil, lead, glass, paper, and tea. Revenue from these taxes was to fund the administration of justice in the colonies. The Act produces a backlash of hostility from the colonists.

May 9, 1768: John Hancock’s boat the *Liberty* arrives in Boston carrying wine. Bostonians unloaded the ship without paying custom duties.

June 10, 1768: The *Liberty* is seized and riots erupt against custom officials.

1769: Thomas Hutchinson replaces Francis Bernard, becoming Acting Governor of Massachusetts.

March 2, 1770: Ropewalk workers and British soldiers quarrel at John Gray's ropewalk. Mathew Kilroy (a soldier who is later convicted for his actions during the Boston Massacre) is involved in the fighting.

March 5, 1770: The Boston Massacre occurs.

March 6, 1770: Captain Preston is arrested and sent to jail. Bostonians assemble at Faneuil Hall to call for the removal of all British troops. John Adams agrees to defend Captain Preston.

March 12, 1770: Captain Preston provides his view of the events of March 5 in an official deposition.

March 13, 1770: Captain Preston and eight of his soldiers are indicted by a grand jury for murder.

April 28, 1770: A letter is published in a London newspaper, detailing Captain Preston's story of the massacre and his anger toward the citizens of Boston.

June 2, 1770: This same letter is published in the Boston papers, enflaming animosity among the colonists against Preston and his men.

July 1770: *A Short Narrative of the Horrid Massacre*, containing the depositions of 96 witnesses is published and distributed throughout Boston in an attempt to influence potential jurors in the trials of Preston and the soldiers.

September 7, 1770: Preston and his soldiers are arraigned and plead "not guilty."

October 24-30, 1770: Captain Preston is tried and acquitted.

November 27, 1770: The trial of the eight soldiers begins.

December 5, 1770: Six of the British soldiers are acquitted, while two of them, Hugh Montgomery and Mathew Kilroy, are convicted of manslaughter.

December 14, 1770: Montgomery's and Kilroy's sentences are reduced to a branding of their right thumbs.

Late-December 1770: Captain Preston sails back to England.

Vocabulary

Abhorrent - disgusting or strongly hated.

Acquit- To clear a defendant on trial from the accusations given. In the play, the jury decides whether or not to acquit Captain Preston from the charge that he ordered his troops to fire on the crowds of Boston.

Appalachians - A range of mountains in North America, extending from Canada to central Alabama. At the time of the Boston Massacre, the land west of this mountain range had not yet been colonized.

Bait - To tease and torment by criticizing or insulting in order to provoke the opposing party.

Bayonet - A blade that fits on the end of a rifle. These weapons were used against the citizens of Boston in the Boston Massacre.

Bolster - To support or prop up.

***Celestial** - Relating to the sky or the heavens.

Character Witness - One witness who testifies under oath as to the moral character and reputation of another.

Chevron - A badge with angled stripes, worn on the sleeve of a military or police uniform, indicating the rank and merit of the wearer.

Conspiracy - An agreement to perform an illegal or wrongful act. During the play, Samuel Adams participates in a conspiracy to print and distribute the sealed depositions of 96 witnesses in an attempt to sway the jury against Captain Preston.

***Convolve** - To roll together or coil up.

Counsel - A lawyer – or group of lawyers – who provides legal advice and conducts cases in court. Robert Treat Paine and John Adams acted as prosecuting and defending counsels respectively in Captain Preston’s trial.

Crown - The head of a state or country (and its colonies and territories) headed by a constitutional monarchy. King George III of England was referred to as the Crown prior to the American Revolution.

Deluge - A great flood or a heavy downpour.

Discredit - To damage someone’s reputation.

Deposition – Testimony by a witness under oath that is transcribed or recorded for use in court.

***Enwrap** - Filled with delight; enraptured.

Epaulet - A fringed strap worn on the shoulders of military uniforms.

Fisticuffs - A fistfight.

Fortuitous- Happening by accident or chance, usually good fortune. Captain Preston uses the term sarcastically in his scene with John Adams.

Gallows - An execution device consisting of two upright posts supporting a crossbeam and a noose. If Preston had been convicted of murder, he would have been sent to the gallows.

Garter - An elasticized band worn around the leg to hold up a stocking or sock.

Gourd - Any of several plants that have a hard rind like the pumpkin, squash, and cucumber. In the play Governor Bernard uses the idiomatic expression “out of his gourd” to question the sanity of Prime Minister Grenville’s decision to impose the Quartering Act upon the Colonists.

Implement - A tool or instrument used in doing work. The weapons used during the massacre were referred to as threatening implements.

Inadmissible - Not deserving of admittance as evidence in court.

***LO** – An expression used to attract attention or to show surprise.

Lobster Backs - A derogatory 18th century term for British troops, which refers to their red coats. During the trial of Captain Preston, many of the witnesses called British soldiers “lobster backs.”

Lynched - To be executed without due process of law, especially to be hanged by an unruly mob.

Manslaughter - The unlawful killing of one human by another without the implied intention to do harm.

Mayhem - A state of violent disorder or confusion.

Mulatto - A person of mixed racial heritage, primarily used to describe someone of both white and black parentage. Witnesses at the trial of Captain Preston used the term “mulatto” to describe Crispus Attucks who was the first person killed in the Massacre.

Musket - A shoulder gun used from the late 16th through the 18th century.

Oyez – A term used three times in succession to introduce the opening of a court of law, instructing persons present to listen.

Pillory - To publicly ridicule and abuse.

Pound - The basic monetary unit of Britain, worth 20 shillings.

Premature - Occurring or developing before the usual or expected time.

Proclamation - An official, formal public announcement

Propriety - Proper and appropriate behavior.

Prosecutor - A government attorney who presents the state's case against the defendant in a criminal prosecution.

Ransacked - Wrongfully emptied or stripped of all items of value.

Redcoat - A British soldier, especially one serving during the American Revolution.

Riot - A wild disturbance created by crowd of people.

Sentinel - One who keeps guard; a sentry.

Sons of Liberty- A clandestine (or secret) Patriot organization formed in protest to the Stamp Act. The founders originally called themselves the Loyal Nine.

Summation - The concluding section of a speech or argument containing a summary of principal points.

Surtout - A man's overcoat in the style of a frock coat. Several witness claimed that Captain Preston wore a surtout the night of the Massacre, but others insisted he wore a red coat.

Taunt - To reproach in a mocking or insulting manner.

Taxation – Monetary charge against a citizen's person or property or activity to support the government.

Testimonial - A statement in support of a particular truth, fact or claim.

Wanton - Cruel, merciless and malicious.

*Words that appear in Phillis Wheatley's poem about the Boston Massacre.

Key Players

Boston Lawyers and Political Leaders

JOHN ADAMS was a Braintree-born, stubborn man who hated school, but had a passion for the law. After graduating from Harvard University, he joined several political organizations. Adams embarked on a successful career as a lawyer and statesman. Ignoring public sentiment, he served as defense counsel for Captain Preston and his soldiers after the Boston Massacre; Robert Auchmuty Jr. was his co-counsel. Prior to the Revolution, Adams signed the Declaration of Independence. After the War, he became George Washington's Vice President and then the second president of the United States.

SAMUEL ADAMS was a prominent Bostonian and John Adams' second cousin. More politically minded than his cousin John, he openly opposed British rule and led a committee to denounce taxation. Samuel was a clerk for the Massachusetts Assembly and an elected representative to the General State Court. Following the Boston Massacre, Samuel Adams took a strong stance against the British soldiers and Captain Preston, and he petitioned for the removal of troops from the colonies. Samuel Adams later became a member of the Continental Congress and signed the Declaration of Independence. After the War, he served as Lieutenant Governor and then Governor of Massachusetts.

THOMAS HUTCHINSON served both as Lieutenant Governor and then as Acting Governor of Massachusetts at the time of the Massacre. Though born in Boston, he was a Loyalist who supported the policies of Britain. Immediately following the Massacre, he went to King Street and confronted Preston about the command to fire. He then attempted to calm the crowd pleading, "Let the law have its course. I will live and die by the law." After the Massacre, he reluctantly removed British troops to appease the Patriots and resisted the idea of a quick trial. He remained in power during the Stamp Act Riots and the Boston Tea Party, but eventually moved to London, where he died.

ROBERT TREAT PAINE was raised in Taunton, Massachusetts, and graduated from Harvard University. He taught school, studied theology and worked as a merchant marine in Europe before becoming a prosecuting attorney. Paine was the prosecuting attorney against Captain Preston during the Boston Massacre trials; Samuel Quincy acted as co-counsel. Paine, a member of the Provincial Assembly, sought to guard the rights of the colonists. He fought both for Preston's conviction and for the quick removal of British troops. After losing the case to John Adams, Paine became a member of the Continental Congress, and he signed the Declaration of Independence. After Independence, he became Attorney General and then a Supreme Judicial Court justice before his death in 1814.

Boston Women

ABIGAIL ADAMS was the wife of John Adams, and they had five children together. She strongly supported her husband, even in his controversial choice to defend Captain Preston after the Massacre. A woman of letters, she chronicled both her own life and

critical moments in American history from 1760 to the end of the century. She was this nation's second First Lady, and was the mother of the sixth US President, John Quincy Adams.

PHILLIS WHEATLEY was born in Senegal, West Africa (circa 1753), and brought on a slave ship to Boston in 1761. There, she was purchased by John Wheatley as a companion for his wife Susanna. Wheatley was highly educated and became the first African American to publish a book of poetry, *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*, which made her a well-known poet both in Boston and abroad. She loved to write about her New England upbringing. Wheatley was freed in 1774 following the publication of her poems in England (and Susanna's death). At the time of the Boston Massacre in 1770, Wheatley lived blocks from the site of the violence, and she wrote a poem to commemorate the men who died.

British Soldiers and Civilian Leaders

LORD CHARLES TOWNSHEND was Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer prior to the Massacre, but died before it occurred. He was responsible for levying many of the taxes that enraged the colonists.

CAPTAIN THOMAS PRESTON, a forty-year-old Irishman, was the British officer on duty of the 29th Regiment on March 5, 1770 – the day of the Boston Massacre. He was described as a calm and distinct man. Many believe he gave the command to fire on the taunting crowd. Eventually, he was acquitted of murder charges. He returned to England and was paid £200 pounds compensation for difficulties incurred after the Massacre.

PRIVATE HUGH WHITE served as sentry on King Street on March 5, 1770. Around 8:00 that evening, White began to quarrel with Edward Garrick, a wig-maker's apprentice, over non-payment of a bill owed by a fellow soldier. The argument escalated into violence, as White struck Garrick in the face with his musket. Soon a crowd gathered and threw insults at White. White ran to the Custom House for reinforcements.

PRIVATE HUGH MONTGOMERY was one of the eight soldiers to march to the Custom House in an attempt to rescue Hugh White. After making their way to White, Montgomery and the other soldiers were surrounded by the mob. Crispus Attucks grabbed ahold of Montgomery's musket, and after a skirmish, Montgomery shot and killed him. Montgomery was one of two soldiers convicted in the deaths of five Bostonians.

PRIVATE MATHEW KILROY was one of the British soldiers involved in the violence at Gray's Ropewalk on March 2. He and Hugh Montgomery were found guilty of manslaughter in the Boston Massacre. Montgomery and Kilroy pleaded "the privilege of clergy," a moved that reduced their punishment from imprisonment to a branding on the right thumb.

Men Killed in the Massacre

CRISPUS ATTUCKS is often referred to as the “first martyr of the American Revolution.” He was a mulatto (also known as Michael Johnson) who was the first to fall in the Massacre. Patriots characterized Attucks as a hero fighting for freedom. Loyalists called him a “rabble rousing villain” who began the Massacre by taunting the guard and hitting a British soldier with a club and bayonet. Attucks was killed instantly when two balls punctured his chest.

JAMES CALDWELL was a second mate on a ship of Captain Morton. He was shot in his back by two balls.

SAMUEL GRAY was a rope-maker. Three days before the Massacre, he fought with Private Mathew Kilroy (later convicted of manslaughter) at Gray’s Ropewalk during a clash between British soldiers and local ropewalk workers. Gray was killed immediately when a ball entered his head.

SAMUEL MAVERICK, the youngest man killed, was a seventeen-year-old apprentice to an ivory maker. A ball shot through his stomach and out his back. He died the following morning.

Key Witnesses in the Trial of Captain Preston

THEODORE BLISS was unsure of who gave the first order to fire, but was almost certain it was not Captain Preston. He was standing near the Captain and asked him if they were loaded. He watched as people threw snowballs at the soldiers. He heard the word “fire!” many times.

BENJAMIN BURDICK heard about the fighting and came out with his highland broadsword. He claimed that one of the soldiers pushed his bayonet at him. He was not sure who gave the command to fire but heard it from behind the line of soldiers. He saw someone passing behind them who looked like an officer.

DANIEL CALEF insisted that Preston give the command to fire. He knew him by his red coat, yellow jacket and silver hat.

ROBERT GODDARD claimed adamantly that Captain Preston was the man who gave the command to fire. He stood so near him that he could see his face clearly.

RICHARD PALMES saw Captain Preston standing with his soldiers ready to fire with their bayonets fixed. He saw the first shot go off, but did not know who had ordered it.

Pre-Performance Lesson Plans

Lesson 1: The Crime Scene

Goal: To introduce students to the world of the play, *Uprising on King Street: the Boston Massacre*.

Objectives:

1. To review what students know and/or assume about life in late 18th century England and the Colonies.
2. To compare and contrast life in the Colonies with that of Britain.

Method:

1. Prepare two display tables of selected items – one table representing Britain and one representing the Colonies. Each display may include pictures, written words, and props.
 - a. Station 1 = Suggested items for American Colonies:
 - i. Piece of a colonial flag
 - ii. Brown fabric/color swatch
 - iii. (Boston) Bean pot
 - iv. Picture of the North Church
 - v. Patriot-style hat
 - vi. Newspaper headlines announcing the Stamp Act.
 - b. Station 2 = Suggested items for Britain:
 - i. White ‘judicial’ wig
 - ii. Parchment paper
 - iii. Red fabric/ color swatch
 - iv. Musket
 - v. Island (the word written out)
 - vi. Crown (indicating the King)

** You can include additional items associated with the Colonies, Boston, the Patriots, the Massacre, The Red Coats and/or Britain. Choose simple or more difficult items depending on the age/abilities of your students.
2. Explain to the students that they will be playing the role of investigators. They will be studying evidence that has already been compiled at the lab.
3. Split the class into two groups and ask each group to circle a table. Ask students to examine the items on their table silently. They can pick up items and inspect them.
4. Now ask the students to identify each item and to discuss the following:
 - a. Why are all of these items together?
 - b. Describe people who may be associated with these items.

- c. What conclusions might you draw from these items?
 - d. Where/when are we in history?
- *A scribe should record each group's findings.

5. Ask the two groups to switch stations and repeat the procedure in number 4.
6. Ask the groups to prepare brief oral reports comparing and contrasting the two displays. Each group then reports its findings to the rest of the class.
7. Handout the "What Happened in History?" section of this study guide and ask students to take turns reading it out loud. Discuss what is now known about the world of the play.

Follow-up Homework Assignment:

Ask students to create a poster-board size collage, designating half of the board to the British and the other half to the Colonies. Suggest that students use magazines, Internet resources, their own sketches/drawings, newspapers and any other available media. Ask them to focus on the differences in lifestyles, perspectives, wealth, community, and social order between the two groups.

Lesson 2: What Do You think?

Goal: To examine tensions between the Patriots and the British prior to the Boston Massacre.

Objectives:

1. To explore the deteriorating relationship between American Colonists and the English.
2. To examine the perceptions of the British and the Colonists, both of themselves and of each other.
3. To investigate the root causes of the Boston Massacre.

Method:

1. Ask students to present their collages from the homework assignment in Lesson 1.
2. Connect the student presentations to a discussion of the relationship between England and the Colonies prior to the Boston Massacre. Discuss the following:
 - a. What is the financial situation in Britain following the seven years war with France?
 - b. Why (and how) does Britain exert its power over the Colonies?

- c. Why do many of the Colonists want to distance themselves from England? Why do others want to keep a close relationship with the mother country?
 - d. What keeps England from allowing the Colonists full freedom?
3. Divide the class into two groups. Give each group a large piece of paper and some markers and ask them to either trace someone or draw the outline of a person. Ask one group to write the word “British” and the other group will write the word “Colonists” above their figure.
 4. Ask students to take turns writing words inside the figure that describe how citizens of Britain (for the first group) and of the Colonies (for the second group) perceive themselves.
 5. Now ask students to take turns writing words outside the figure that describe how the other group might perceive them. Allow about 10-15 minutes for this exercise.
 6. Ask the British group to read the words inside their figure out loud to the class as if they were British citizens. Ask the Colonists to read the words outside the British figure (in their role as Colonists).
 7. Now switch and repeat the above exercise with the figure created by the Colonists.
 8. Discuss the perceptions of the two groups. How could these perceptions create or exacerbate tensions? How could these tensions lead to the events of the Boston Massacre?

Follow-up Homework Assignment:

Copy and distribute the list of “Key Players” of the Boston Massacre in the study guide. Ask the students to decide what characters they would like to research. For the purposes of the following lesson, students should not choose Lord Townshend.

Lesson 3: Pack Your Bag

Goal: To explore the differences and similarities between the British and the Colonists.

Objectives:

1. To reflect on the personal feelings of the British and the Patriots on the eve of the Massacre.
2. To begin to create characters based on historical figures.

Method:

1. List the Key Players of the Boston Massacre on the board. Ask students to write their names next to the historical figure they would like to study. It's fine for a number of students to choose the same figure.
2. Distribute a small brown bag to each student. In the center of the room, place markers, crayons, and colored pencils and scrap paper.
3. Explain the exercise – Students write the name of their selected historical figure on their bag. From the point of view of their character on the evening of the Boston Massacre, students answer each of the following questions by drawing a picture on a piece of scrap paper.
 - i. Where am I just prior to the Boston Massacre?
 - ii. What is most important to me?
 - iii. What do I fear most?
 - iv. If heading to King Street, what will I bring with me?
 Students place their drawings in their bag.
4. Ask students to report to the class: who they are, who they are loyal to, and what they have “packed” in their bag.

Follow- up Homework Assignment:

Ask students to research their character and write a brief biography. There will be a lot of information available about some of the historical figures, such as John Adams and Robert Paine, and less about others, such as the British soldiers.



Post-Performance Lesson Plans

Lesson 1: Tavern Meeting

Goal: To explore the concerns and hopes of the Colonists and the British Soldiers.

Objectives:

1. To bring historical characters to life.
2. To improvise a scene with the characters in order to better understand their motivations.

Method:

1. Discuss incidents of conflict between the Colonists and the British soldiers in the days leading up to the Massacre (e.g., the death of Christopher Seider and the clash between the soldiers and the ropewalk workers).
2. Discuss the Colonists' resistance to British rule (see the *Sons of Liberty* website: <http://www.ushistory.org/declaration/related/sons.htm>).
3. Ask students to present their biography from the homework assignment in the previous lesson.
4. Divide the students into two groups based on their biographies. Group One will play British soldiers, Group Two will play Colonists. Each group formulates a list of their concerns just prior to the Boston Massacre. Ask both groups to share their ideas with the class.
5. Group One improvises a short scene that takes place in a tavern on the night before the Massacre. They have gathered to voice their concerns.
6. Once the scene is underway, increase the tension by having the British soldiers enter the tavern.
7. Discuss what took place in the scene. Ask students to draw connections between what happened in the tavern and modern day conflicts between citizens of a country and an occupying force.

Follow up Homework Assignment:

Ask students to write a journal entry from the perspective of their character on March 5, 1770 -- the day following the Boston Massacre. If their character died that night, they can write their own obituary.

Lesson 2: Hear Ye, Hear Ye!

Goal: To examine the subjective nature of reporting.

Objectives:

1. To explore why people often report on the same events in contrasting ways.
2. To attempt to write a fair and balanced headline and article, while holding strong sympathies for one side or the other.

Method:

1. Discuss the difference between an article and an editorial.
2. Project the article from the *Boston Gazette* on an overhead projector (attached at end of this study guide). Ask for student volunteers to read sections aloud.
3. Briefly review the historical events that occurred on March 5, 1770.
4. Divide the class into four groups (A, B, C & D). Groups A and B are Patriots who sympathize with the Sons of Liberty, while Groups C and D are Loyalists who sympathize with Preston. Distribute copies of the following (attached at the end of this study guide):
 - Group A and B - *Anonymous Account*
 - Group C and D - *Captain Preston's Account*
5. Ask groups to read and discuss the documents.
6. Ask each group to write a newspaper headline and the opening paragraph of a fair and impartial article about the Massacre.
7. Students read their headlines and opening paragraphs to the class.
8. Discuss whether the writing was fair and balanced or biased.

Follow-up Homework Assignment:

Ask students to write a headline and short editorial from the perspective of the party they sided with in the class exercise.

Lesson 3: Whose Side Are You On?

Goal: To debate issues of justice and responsibility raised by Captain Preston's trial.

Objectives:

1. To review the arguments presented by John Adams and Robert Paine in the drama.

2. To question the motivations of Key Players in the trial and develop a more in-depth understanding of the events.

Method:

1. Discuss the arguments that were presented by John Adams and Robert Paine during the trial in terms of substance and style.
2. Discuss the testimony given by witnesses for the prosecution and the defense.
 - i. Were the witnesses reliable? How do you determine whether or not a witness is reliable? Were some of the witnesses biased toward one side or the other? If so, how could you tell?
 - ii. Do you believe Captain Preston gave the order to fire into the crowd? Why or why not?
 - iii. Could the crowd have been considered dangerous? What makes a crowd dangerous?
 - iv. Could Preston have prevented the violence? How?
 - v. Even if Captain Preston didn't order his troops to fire, should he still be held accountable for the Massacre? Why or why not?
3. Explain that Captain Preston was not allowed to testify at his trial because British law prevented it. Ask for a volunteer to play Captain Preston. Set up the situation: the class will improvise the examination and cross-examination of Captain Preston (had it been allowed at the time of the trial).
4. Divide the class in half. Anyone in the first group may ask a question of Captain Preston in role as his defense attorney John Adams. Once all the questions have been asked and answered, prompt students from the second group to cross-examine Preston in role as the prosecuting attorney, Robert Paine.
5. Take a vote as to whether Captain Preston should be held accountable for the Massacre.

Additional Resources

Books

- Allison, Robert J. *The Boston Massacre (New England Remembers)*. Commonwealth Editions: Beverly, MA, 2006.
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Boston Gazette and Country Journal, March 12, 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.¹

¹ <http://personal.pitnet.net/primarysources/boston.html>

Excerpts from: *Captain Thomas Preston's Account of the Boston Massacre, March 13, 1770*

On Monday night about 8 o'clock two soldiers were attacked and beat. But the party of the townspeople in order to carry matters to the utmost length, broke into two meeting houses and rang the alarm bells, which I supposed was for fire as usual, but was soon undeceived. About 9 some of the guard came to and informed me the town inhabitants were assembling to attack the troops, and that the bells were ringing as the signal for that purpose and not for fire, and the beacon intended to be fired to bring in the distant people of the country. This, as I was captain of the day, occasioned my repairing immediately to the main guard. 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. On which I desired him to return for further intelligence, and he soon came back and assured me he heard the mob declare they would murder him. This I feared might be a prelude to their plundering the king's chest. I immediately sent a non-commissioned 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. Nay, so far was I from intending the death of any person that I suffered the troops to go to the spot where the unhappy affair took place without any loading in their pieces; nor did I ever give orders for loading them. This remiss conduct in me perhaps merits censure; yet it is evidence, resulting from the nature of things, which is the best and surest that can be offered, that my intention was not to act offensively, but the contrary part, and that not without compulsion. 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; that the soldiers were upon the half cock and charged bayonets, and my giving the word fire under those circumstances would prove me to be no officer.

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.²

² <http://www.let.rug.nl/usa/D/1751-1775/bostonmassacre/prest.htm>

Excerpts from: *Anonymous Account 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

The outrageous behavior and the threats of [a Custom House sentry] occasioned the ringing of the meeting-house bell near the head of King street, which bell ringing quick, as for fire, it presently brought out a number of inhabitants, who being soon sensible of the occasion of it, were naturally led to King street, ... where their stopping had drawn together a number of boys, round the sentry at the Custom House... 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 fire-arms 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 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.

It was not expected... that such an outrage and massacre, as happened here on the evening of the fifth instant, would have been perpetrated. There were then killed and wounded, by a discharge of musketry, eleven of his Majesty's subjects, viz.:

- Mr. Samuel Gray, killed on the spot by a ball entering his head.
- Crispus Attucks, a mulatto, killed on the spot, two balls entering his breast.
- Mr. James Caldwell, killed on the spot, by two balls entering his back.

- Mr. Samuel Maverick, a youth of seventeen years of age, mortally wounded; he died the next morning.
- Mr. Patrick Carr mortally wounded; he died the 14th instant.
- Christopher Monk and John Clark, youths about seventeen years of age, dangerously wounded. It is apprehended they will die.
- Mr. Edward Payne, merchant, standing at his door; wounded.
- Messrs. John Green, Robert Patterson, and David Parker; all dangerously wounded.³

³ <http://www.let.rug.nl/usa/D/1751-1775/bostonmassacre/anon.htm>



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