

Digging Deeper  
into the

# Boston Massacre



# Directions

1. This lesson is designed for your students to analyze images and a secondary source about the Boston Massacre.
2. As a preview, place your students into groups of 2-3. Give each group all three images of the Boston Massacre. Use the **Image Analysis Questions** to guide your students through a quick analysis of the images – have each group share out their information before you read the content information. Want to increase engagement? Use the **Crop It tool** (students cut out center to create moveable frame) for students to look closely at each image. For extra durability, create your Crop It tool on colored cardstock.
3. Pass out the **content readings** on the Boston Massacre. Read the page with your students or allow your students to read the information with a partner. Assign one partner the point of view of an American Patriot, and the other the point of view of a Loyalist. As they read, have them discuss how the events of the Boston Massacre might look from each point of view.
4. When your students finish reading, have them write a dialogue (back and forth conversation) from the point of view of a Loyalist or Patriot. Be sure to review the directions to ensure they include the key terms in their dialogue. When they have finished their dialogue, give them each a puppet to act-out their dialogue to another partner group.

*Show your students the puppets before the activity to increase engagement and excitement about their learning.*



# Word Wall Terms

# act

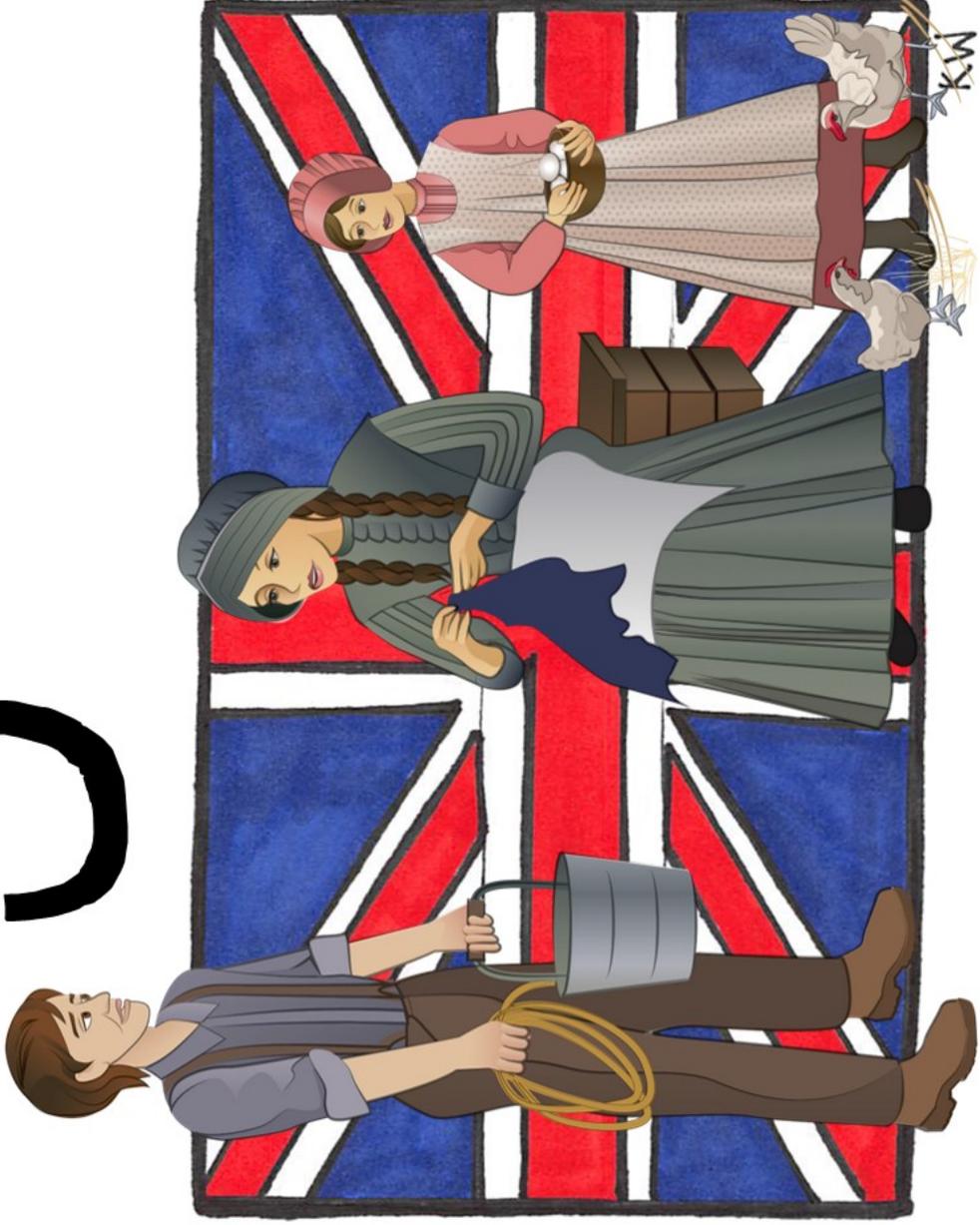
New Rules or Laws



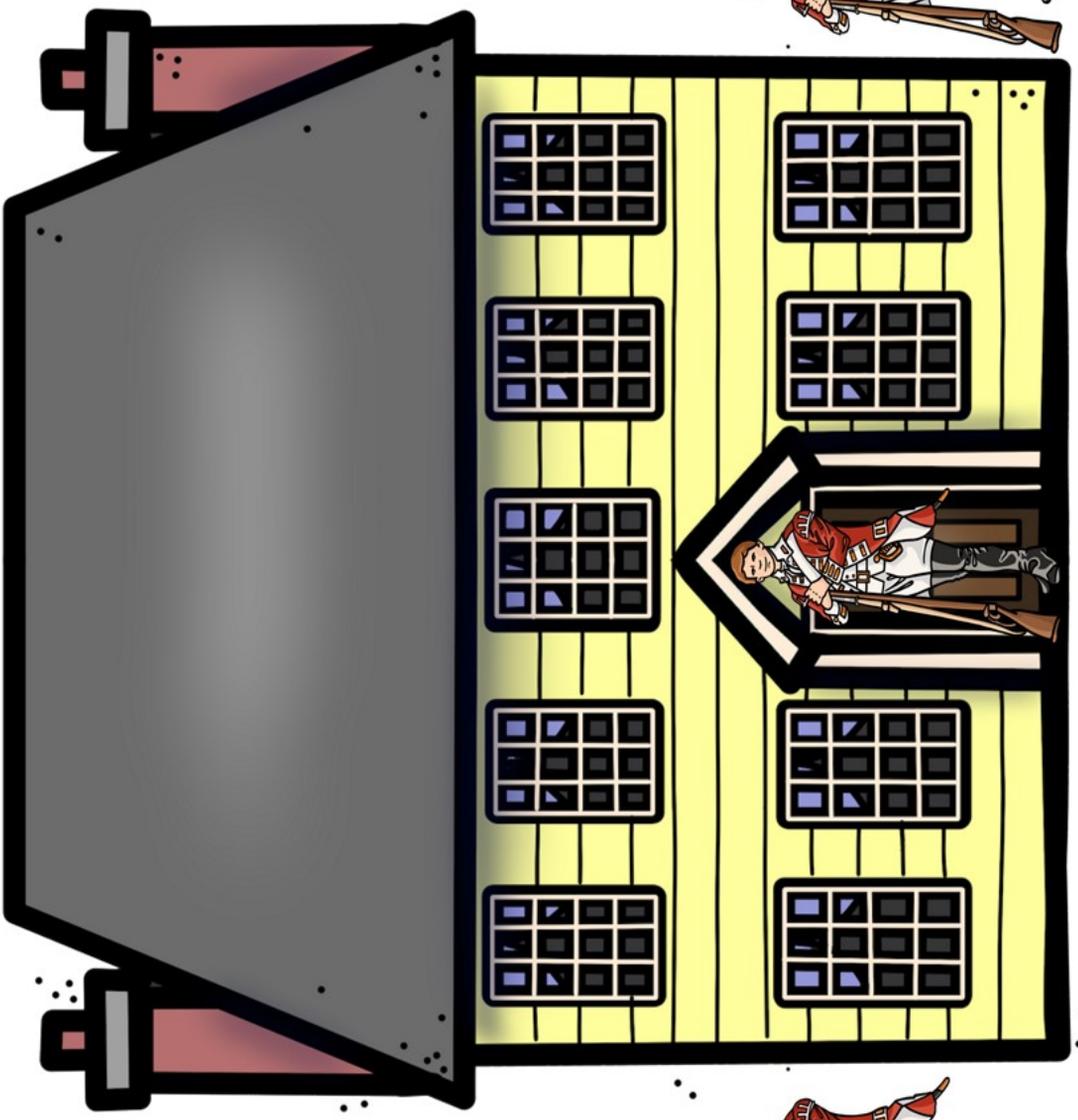
# Patriot



# Loyalist



# quarterming

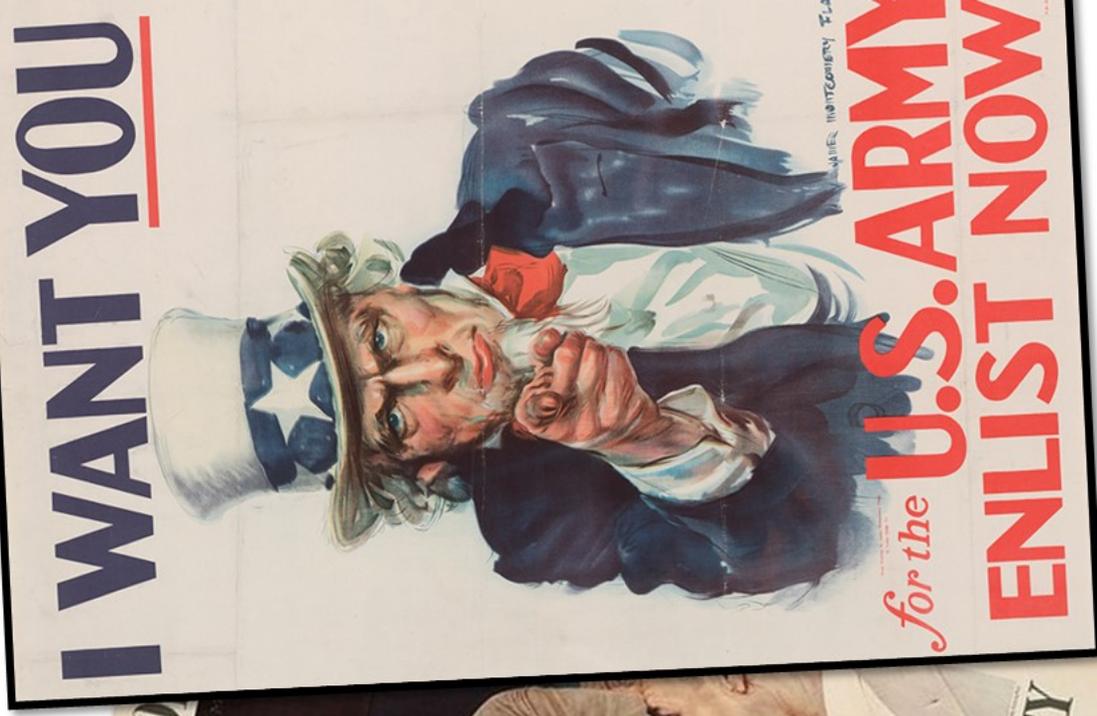


massacre

MASS  
MURDER

**POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS**

# propaganda



# acquitted



mob

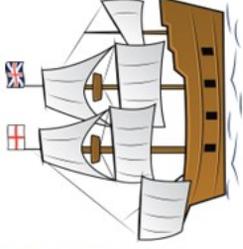
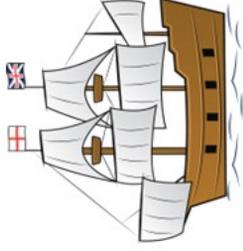




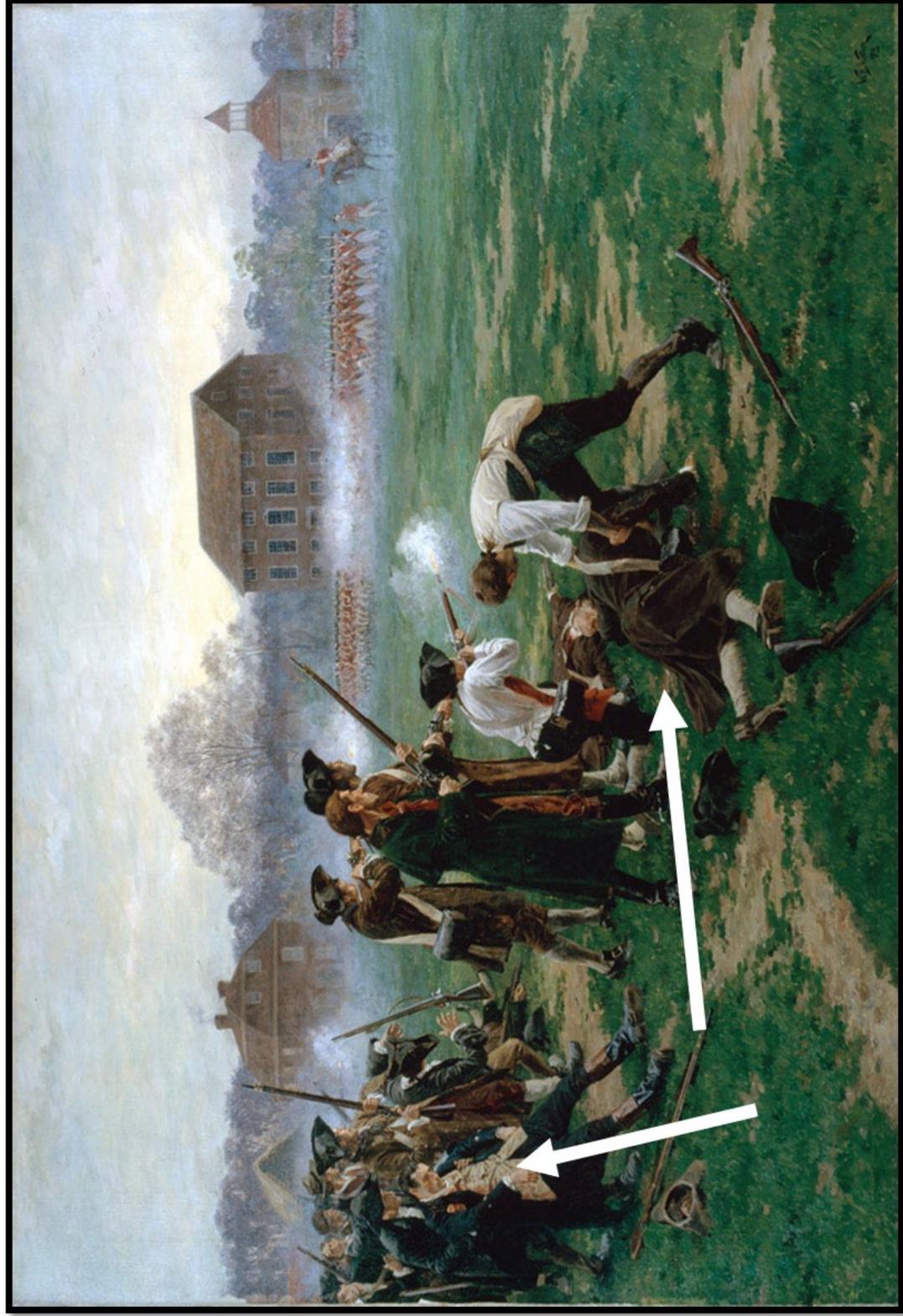
# musket



# customers

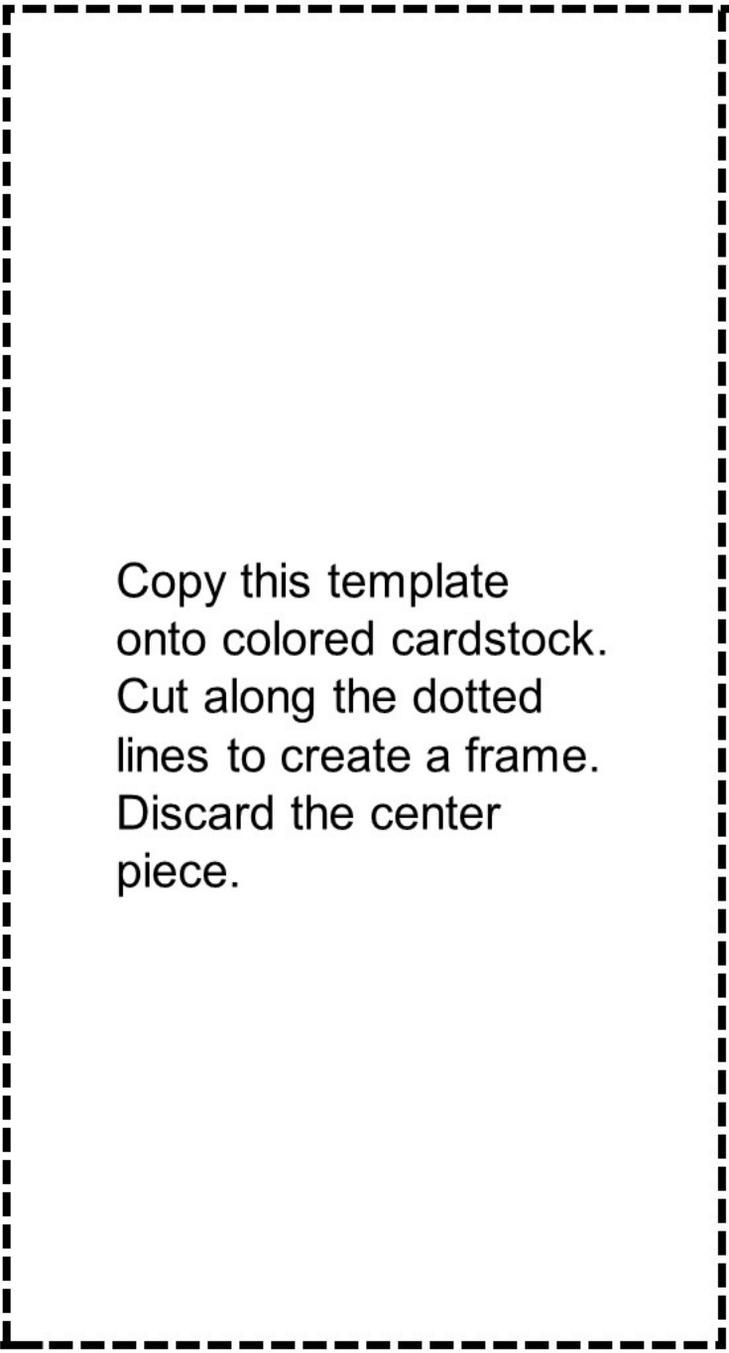


# casualties



# Preview Activity

USE THE CROP-IT TOOL, QUESTIONS, AND  
IMAGES TO PREVIEW THE LESSON



Copy this template  
onto colored cardstock.  
Cut along the dotted  
lines to create a frame.  
Discard the center  
piece.

# Image Analysis Questions



**Directions:** Examine each of the images depicting the Boston Massacre. Discuss the following questions with your group:

1. List 3 details you see in each image.
2. What are 3 similarities you see in each image? 3 differences between the images?
3. What words or descriptions would go with each of these images?
4. Whose story are these images telling?
5. What facts do you think are accurate? What facts do you think are left out?

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# The Boston Massacre



Printed beneath image by Paul Revere

"Unhappy BOSTON! see thy Sons deplore, Thy hallow'd Walks besmear'd with guiltless Gore: While faithless P--n and his savage Bands, With murd'rous Rancour stretch their bloody Hands; Like fierce Barbarians grinning o'er their Prey, Approve the Carnage, and enjoy the Day. The Patriot's copious Tears for each are shed, A glorious Tribute which embalms the Dead But know, FATE summons to that awful Goal, Where JUSTICE strips the Murd'rer of his Soul"

# The Boston Massacre



An 1856 print of the Boston Massacre. This painting was created shortly before the American Civil War.

# The Boston Massacre



BOSTON MASSACRE.

*From an original Engraving by Alonzo Chappel, in the possession of the Publishers.*

*Copyright, 1868, by G. C. Publishers, New York.*

An 1868 print of the Boston Massacre. This painting was created almost 100 years after the Boston Massacre.

# Tensions Lead to Bloodshed

Tensions were high across the American colonies in 1770. The British government had passed many taxes and restrictive laws. American colonists were on edge as a result of the increased presence of British soldiers in their homes and towns due to the *Quartering Act*. The *Townshend Acts* passed by Parliament cause resentment and anger in the American Colonies. Letters are written to the British government by several prominent American citizens such as **Sam Adams**. Rather than changing the restrictive laws, the British government closes the Massachusetts assembly. American colonists attack tax collectors and the British government reacts by sending more troops to Massachusetts. The scene in Boston is set for conflict.

On **March 5, 1770**, a seemingly small act of aggression spiraled out of control into a *"massacre"*. A British soldier was on duty outside of the **customs** house. Private Hugh White was the only soldier guarding the King's money stored inside the Custom House on King Street. A teenage colonist, Edward Garrick, started harassing Private White. This started a series of insults being shouted back and forth and ended with Garrick on the ground after being hit in the head by Private White's **musket**. As Garrick laid on the ground, he yelled for help - and help arrived! Church bells rang as many angry American colonists swarmed the street. Hundreds of angry American colonists rushed to defend Garrick, and soon Private White is surrounded by an angry **mob**. **Reinforcements** arrive to support the British soldier, but seven men against an angry mob becomes a situation that quickly escalated out of control. Yelling soon changed into violence as American colonists started to throw stones covered in snowballs at the British soldiers. American colonists *"armed with clubs, sticks..."* surrounded the British soldiers.

Quickly moving past taunting, an American colonist struck a British soldier with a club and caused him to fall on the ground. The soldier quickly got up but is hit and falls again. In desperation, he raised his musket and fired. Startled by the gunshot, the other British soldiers also fired their weapons into the crowd. Bullets started to fly as American colonists flee the scene in fear for their lives.

When the smoke cleared, bodies lay scattered along the street. Five American colonists were killed, some dying immediately and two others dying later. Many others were wounded. **Crispus Attucks**, a formerly enslaved man, lost his life, along with Samuel Gray, James Caldwell, Patrick Carr, and Samuel Maverick. Crispus Attucks was the first African American to die in the Revolutionary War.

The city of Boston was on edge, anger and emotions were out of control. In order to calm the situation, the governor promised to arrest the British soldiers involved in the incident. At a later trial, the soldiers, defended by **John Adams**, were **acquitted** (not found guilty) of murder. The jury believed that they were threatened by the crowd but should have delayed firing.

The violence in Boston inflamed the colonists. **Propaganda** was written in newspapers and circulated around the 13 Colonies by both the Patriots and Loyalists, trying to encourage Americans to join their side. **Paul Revere**, one of the Sons of Liberty, distributes an image, showing the British soldiers firing on innocent American colonists. This propaganda image, along with others, angers people in the colonies. Americans are one step closer to war with Great Britain.



Paul Revere's engraving of the Boston Massacre was used as propaganda to anger American colonists.

# Opinion/Proof

What do you think? Prove the statement true or false with 3 facts from the reading.

Opinion

Proof

The British caused the Boston Massacre.



# Opinion/Proof

What do you think? Prove the statement true or false with 3 facts from the reading.

Opinion

Proof

The Americans caused the Boston Massacre.



# Primary Source Quotes

## Quote One

*"a motley rabble of saucy boys, ... The colonists precipitated a conflict by their mad behavior."*

~John Adams in court defending the British soldiers after the Boston Massacre

## Quote Two

*"The madness of mobs or the insolence of soldiers, or both, when too near to each other, occasion some mischief."*

**Benjamin Franklin, 1768** (concerning the presence of British soldiers in the Colonies)

## Quote Three

*"They stood with their pieces before them to defend themselves. A party, about 12 in number with sticks in their hands, who stood in the middle of the street gave three cheers and immediately surrounded the soldiers and struck upon their guns with their sticks and passed along the front of the soldiers toward Royal Exchange Lane striking soldiers' guns as they passed. Numbers were continually coming down the street."*

**An eyewitness to the Boston Massacre**

## Quote Four

*"[If the British troops were not withdrawn] it is a moral certainty that the people of this town would have taken to their arms... and it is most probable the confusion would have continued until the troops were overpowered."*

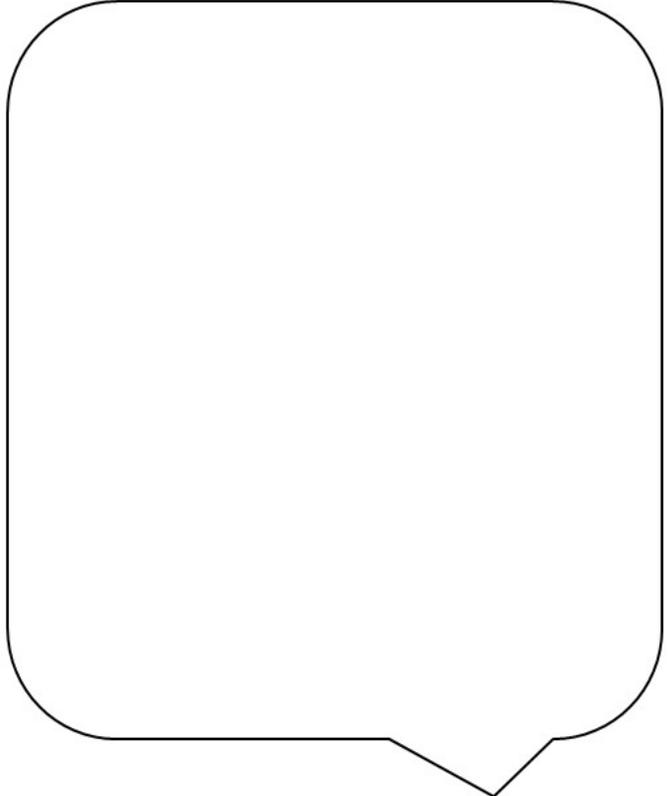
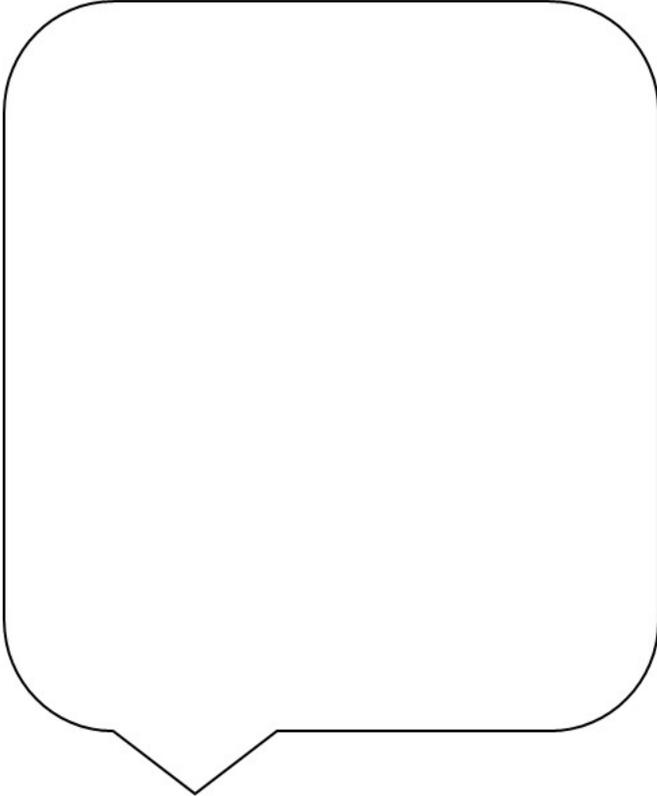
**Thomas Hutchinson's report to London, 1770**

## Primary Source Analysis

1. What words stand out to you in each quote? Highlight them.
2. Which quote best describes the Boston Massacre? Explain your reasoning.
3. What do the first three quotes have in common?
4. How do these sources show the actions and thoughts of the colonists? The British?

# The Boston Massacre

**Directions:** Write a dialogue (conversation) describing the events of the Boston Massacre from two different points of view - the American Patriots and the British soldiers. Be sure to include these key vocabulary terms and people: Patriot, massacre, mob, reinforcement, quartering, propaganda, John Adams, Paul Revere, and Crispus Attucks. You will then be given puppets to act out your dialogue to another group.



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Your classmates will evaluate your puppet show. Follow these steps to success!

1. Write a dialogue on the handout between two people discussing the Boston Massacre. Your dialogue needs to last at least one minute and summarize the content you have learned. Check with your teacher before you move on to the next step.
2. Practice your dialogue with your puppets. You will need to entertain and educate your audience.
3. Perform your dialogue to a small group. They will use the rubric below to evaluate your performance.



✂  
US  
History

## The Boston Massacre

|  |                 |                             |                                     |       |
|--|-----------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------|
| Did the puppet show use all of the terms in the word bank? | Yes - 10 points | Only 4-5 terms - 7 Points   | Only 2-3 terms - 5 points           | Total |
| Did the puppet show last at least 1 minute?                | Yes - 10 points | Only 45 seconds - 7 Points  | Less than 30 seconds - 5 points     | Total |
| Did the dialogue sound like a natural conversation?        | Yes - 10 points | A little awkward - 7 points | Didn't really make sense - 5 points | Total |
| Was the puppet show interesting?                           | Yes - 10 points |                             | No - 0 points                       | Total |
| Was the puppet show historically accurate                  | Yes - 10 points |                             | No - 0 points                       | Total |

Partners: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Points: \_\_\_\_\_



Directions: Cut out these puppets and glue them to a craft stick or a straw.



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# About the Author

## What do I believe about Social Studies instruction?

- ✓ Students need to be engaged to learn.  
-Schlechty's *Design Qualities of engagement*
- ✓ History can be fun and rigorous at the same time.  
-Bower's *Bring Learning Alive!*
- ✓ All students can learn – we just need to support them in different ways.  
-Seidnitz's *Seven Steps*
- ✓ Kids need to continuously review content through games and engaging activities.  
-Himmele's *Total Participation Techniques*
- ✓ Writing is essential for learning, not just assessment.  
-Daniels' *Content Area Writing*
- ✓ Vocabulary instruction must be intentional and engaging.  
-Marzano *Academic Vocabulary*
- ✓ History should not be trivial pursuit – dig deeper and teach with essential questions and enduring understandings.  
-Wiggins & McTighe *Essential Questions*
- ✓ Students are social – purposeful talk is crucial to learning.  
-Walsh *Quality Questioning*
- ✓ Students need to read in Social Studies – reading informational text cannot be mastered without constant practice.  
-Kinsella's *Considerate Text*
- ✓ "Soft skills" of collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and creativity are essential to future success in the job market.  
-Muir *Reasons Millennials Get Fired*
- ✓ Everyone's story needs to be told – we have a great responsibility for helping students see patterns in history across time. Teachers should not be afraid to teach the "hard history".  
-Dawn



Dawn Viñas has served in education for over a quarter of a century.

Dawn earned her Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction from Texas A&M University. In her education journey, she was shaped by her various roles as a classroom teacher, instructional coach, curriculum coordinator, professional development trainer, university professor, and teacher-author. Dawn has provided Social Studies professional development for over 20 years to more than 10,000 teachers from Alaska to Florida. In 2015, Dawn started Social Studies Success<sup>®</sup> with the mission to revolutionize social studies instruction. With a goal of improving instruction, Dawn is currently providing consulting, classroom resources, and professional development services to several school districts across the state of Texas. Do you have a question or would you like to purchase a license for your district? You can reach Dawn [here](#).

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