

Crossroads of Revolution

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Lesson Plan – Suggested Level: Grade 5

Framing Questions: How did occupations, socio-economic standing and physical surroundings (natural and material culture) influence the political and personal outlooks of the inhabitants?

Main Ideas:

- Laws created by Parliament required soldiers in the colonies to enforce and maintain discipline.
- Boston was practically an island with few ways to travel to mainland.
- Citizens in Boston were basically under martial law and prisoners in their own town created by a standing army of the British government.
- Once out of Boston, surrounding towns in the countryside offered refuge for colonists.

Overview of the Coercive Acts:

<http://www.masshist.org/revolution/coercive.php>

The Coercive Acts, known by colonists as the Intolerable Acts, were a group of laws imposed on the American colonists as punishment for dumping tea in the Boston Harbor. With these laws Britain imposed severe penalties on the colony of Massachusetts. Boston Harbor was closed, not allowing trade ships in or out of the harbor until the destroyed tea was paid for. This created a hardship for colonists in Boston, eventually leading to more confrontations between colonists and British troops.

1. How did the Coercive Acts make citizens feel like prisoners in their own homes?

2. How did the closing of Boston Harbor affect the supply of food and supplies in the city?
3. Did the punishment (Coercive Acts) seem to fit the crime (dumping tea into the harbor)? Explain.

Document:

Map of Boston Area Highlighting Path Taken by Paul Revere (April 18, 1775)

(<http://www.nps.gov/mima/forteachers/upload/MIMAmmap2.pdf>)

Without knowledge of the physical geography of the Boston region it is difficult to understand the events of the night preceding the beginning of the American Revolution and the Battles of Lexington and Concord. Boston is a town surrounded by bodies of water on three sides with a long strip of land (neck) leading to the mainland. The Charles and Mystic Rivers, along with Boston Harbor and a series of barrier islands, are important parts of the landscape. These maps illustrate the paths taken by the Patriots (Paul Revere, William Dawes, and Samuel Prescott), and the British forces, along with an account of their return.

1. How intimidating would it be to know your only way out of Boston was guarded by regulars of the British Army? Describe your fears.
2. How difficult would it be to hide supplies you needed for your family as you passed through the one guarded exit from town? How would you disguise your supplies?
3. The city of Boston is surrounded by troops on ships. Do you think this created tension and fear in Bostonians? Explain why you would feel safe or threatened?

Landscape:

Hartwell Tavern, Concord, Massachusetts
(Photo by Claire Damarodas)



Hartwell Tavern, built in 1732, was given to Ephraim and Elizabeth Hartwell when they were married. The Hartwells had nine children living in the house, and they opened part of their home as a tavern. The tavern was on the main road running from Boston through western Massachusetts. Travelers passing on their way to and from Boston stopped and shared the latest news while discussing important issues of the day. The tavern played a significant role as a landmark in the community. On the night of April 18, 1775, Dr. Samuel Prescott of Concord escaped the British soldiers (who also captured Paul Revere and Williams Dawes). Dr. Prescott entered the tavern and awakened Ephraim, telling him British regulars were on the march. Redcoats passed by the tavern on their way to Concord and again on their way back to Boston on April 19, 1775.

1. Describe the role that the Hartwell Tavern played in the community.
2. What were the different uses of a tavern?
3. Identify the different types of peoples who would visit Hartwell Tavern (be sure to include occupations, socio-economic standing within the community, religion, and political beliefs).
4. How would different people traveling through influence the political beliefs of this time period?
5. Describe the land around the Hartwell Tavern and how it was used.

Artifact:

Permit to Pass Through British Lines, Boston, May 1775
(<http://www.masshist.org/database/527>)

Once British troops seize Boston they restrict movement in and out of the town fearing the importation of weapons. Besieged Bostonians and General Thomas Gage reach an informal agreement allowing traffic on the Boston Neck, provided no firearms are carried, and travelers must obtain a pass or permission slip to leave or enter the town. Patriot residents leave the town city while many Loyalists who live outside its limits flock to safety within its boundaries, both groups seeking protection of like-minded people.

1. How would it feel if you needed to obtain a pass from the government to travel to the next town? Explain.
2. If you think about it, doesn't the US government use passports, similar to a pass, to travel in and out of our country? Do you feel we are justified to use these restrictions on travelers? What are the reasons we should keep using passports or not? (The Iroquois Nation's lacrosse team was denied entry to England in July 2010 because England would not recognize their passports from the Iroquois Nation. Do you agree with this decision?)

3. Passes were issued because the British feared the transporting of firearms to the rebel colonists to use against the British Regulars. If Bostonians had to turn in firearms as well as not travel with them in and out of the town, were they denying colonists the right to “bear arms”? Do you think this has something to do with the second amendment being added to our constitution guaranteeing us to that right?

4. How do you think this requirement of traveling with passes affected the feelings and loyalties of the colonists? Do you think Patriots and Loyalists felt the same way?

Assessment: After completing this unit of study write a point-of-view essay persuading your classmates to adopt your belief system (Patriot, Tory, Pacifist)