

Lexington and Concord

One mid-April morning in 1775, Thomas Gage, commander of British troops in Boston, learned of a stash of weapons and ammunition the colonial militia had stored 18 miles away in the village of Concord. Gage, determined to meet the threat head on, issued orders to seize the supplies and destroy them.

Paul Revere, a silversmith involved with the Sons of Liberty, supervised a network of spies around the city. Once alerted of the British movements, Revere arranged for a friend to watch from a window of the Old North Church. If the troops left Boston on foot, he was to hang one lantern in the window; if they left by boat, two lanterns were to be placed in the window.

As 800 of King George III's best troops began climbing into boats, Revere took note of the lanterns and set out on a nighttime ride, alarming fellow colonists that, "The Regulars are out! The Regulars are out!" Heeding the warnings of Revere, and fellow rider William Dawes, militia began gathering on the Village Green near Lexington, intending to block the road to Concord.

On the morning of April 19, 1775, a group of around 70 militiamen watched as the British Army swung into battle formation in front of them. British officers ordered the militia to lay down their weapons and disperse, but the colonists didn't move. The defiance ignited a tense standoff. Then a nervous trigger finger fired one of the most important shots in the history of the world.

A stray bullet buzzed across the Lexington Green, and the British responded with deadly accuracy. Several colonists returned fire before running away. Eight militiamen lay dead, and ten more were wounded. No one knows who fired the bullet, but it became known as the "Shot Heard Round the World."

The British marched on, determined to carry out their mission as colonial militia began assembling for Concord's defense. To get there, the militia had to cross the North Bridge which was guarded by three British companies. The British ordered the Americans to stop, and a warning shot was fired into the air. An instant later, the king's army fired a full volley into the Americans. Major Butrick, the American officer, shouted for his men to return fire.



The colonists responded, and the British, facing a full-scale battle, fell back, beginning a 17-mile retreat toward Boston. As news of the fighting spread, colonists from all directions took up positions behind trees, rocks, and even houses, firing at the British troops as they passed.

Many British soldiers began falling out and surrendering, and the army was perhaps minutes away from disintegrating. Suddenly, British soldiers near the front of the advance let out an echoing cheer at the site of a large column of reinforcements marching to rescue them. With a large number of fresh and organized British troops in front of them, the militia abandoned the chase. The Battle of Concord resulted in 99 British soldiers being killed and 174 wounded.

The days of boycotts, protest rallies, and letters to Parliament were over. The War for American Independence had begun.

Multiple Choice: *Select the choice that completes the statement or answers the question.*

1. _____ Thomas Gage, the British commander in Boston, sent soldiers to Concord because
 - a. He was sending them to arrest Paul Revere.
 - b. He learned that the colonial militia was storing weapons there.
 - c. The British patrolled the area on a weekly basis.
 - d. 1/3 of his command had been assigned to barracks in nearby Cambridge.

2. _____ Paul Revere and his fellow midnight rider were informed of the British maneuvers by
 - a. A British soldier serving as a spy for the colonists.
 - b. A fellow midnight rider named Israel Thistle.
 - c. Lanterns hung in the window of the Old North Church.
 - d. An elderly woman buying silver spoons from him.

3. _____ The first shots of the American Revolution were fired
 - a. Just outside of Boston, near the Old North Church.
 - b. Inside the town of Concord.
 - c. On the Village Green near Lexington, Massachusetts.
 - d. On the North Bridge outside of Concord.

4. _____ After the initial exchange of fire with colonial militia, the British soldiers
 - a. Returned to Boston to report the skirmish to General Gage.
 - b. Stayed near Lexington to treat the wounded colonists.
 - c. Marched to Concord to search for weapons.
 - d. Marched on to occupy the barracks in Cambridge.

5. _____ The engagements of Lexington and Concord resulted in
 - a. A truce being called between the American colonists and the British Government.
 - b. The colonial militia laying siege to Concord until the British Army surrendered to them.
 - c. The leaders of the colonial militia being arrested and executed.
 - d. The colonial militia pursuing the British soldiers back toward Boston, inflicting almost 300 casualties on them.

TRUE/FALSE: *Indicate whether the statement is true or false. If the statement is false, write the correct word in the space provided to make the statement true.*

6. _____ The Battle of Lexington erupted on a mid-April morning in 1777.

7. _____ Thomas Gage served as the commander of colonial troops in Boston.

8. _____ Paul Revere arranged for a friend to watch British movements from a window of the Old North Church. _____

9. _____ On the morning of April 19, 1775, a group of 70 militiamen confronted the British Army near Lexington. _____

10. _____ Twelve militia men lost their lives at Lexington. _____

Guided Reading: *Fill in the blanks below to create complete sentences.*

1. British forces in Boston learned of a stash of weapons and ammunition stored 18 miles away in the village of _____.
2. Thomas Gage issued orders to seize the _____ and destroy them.
3. Paul Revere supervised a network of _____ around Boston.
4. If the British left Boston by boat, _____ were to be placed in the window of the Old North Church.
5. _____ set out on a nighttime ride, alarming fellow colonists that, "The Regulars are out! The Regulars are out!"
6. Colonial militia began gathering on the _____ near Lexington, intending to block the road to Concord.
7. The first shot fired at _____ became known as the "Shot Heard Round the World."
8. Near Concord, American forces once again battled the British on the _____ Bridge.
9. The British faced a _____ retreat from Concord back to Boston.
10. The Battle of Concord resulted in _____ British soldiers being killed and 174 wounded.

Vocabulary Check: *Select the option that best identifies the use of the underlined word.*

1. _____ In the third paragraph, the word heeding means
 - a. To discard or ignore.
 - b. To give careful attention to.
 - c. To put off or delay.
 - d. To challenge or debate.

2. _____ “The defiance ignited a tense standoff.” In the previous sentence, the word defiance implies
 - a. Bold resistance to an opposing force or authority.
 - b. The act or practice of complying with a law, custom, command, or rule.
 - c. The act of considering; careful thought; meditation; deliberation.
 - d. To go back on one’s word.

3. _____ “The British marched on, determined to carry out their mission...” In the previous passage, the word determined means
 - a. Lacking in self-assurance, courage, or bravery.
 - b. Afraid; scared; terrified.
 - c. Resolute; staunch; unwavering.
 - d. Predictable from its surrounding context.

4. _____ In the second to last paragraph, the word disintegrating implies
 - a. To protect or strengthen against attack.
 - b. To break up or destroy the cohesion of.
 - c. To discard unused or unwanted items.
 - d. To combine two separate parts into one.

5. _____ “With a large number of fresh and organized British troops in front of them, the militia abandoned the chase.” In the previous sentence, the word abandoned means
 - a. To take hold of suddenly or forcibly; grasp.
 - b. Unrestrained or uncontrolled; uninhibited.
 - c. Utterly lacking in moral restraints.
 - d. Forsaken or deserted.

Student Response: *Please respond to the questions raised below. A thorough response should be a paragraph of at least three to five complete sentences.*

6. Imagine that you were an eye witness to the events that happened on the Village Green in Lexington. Write a descriptive passage or letter describing what you saw.