

Boston Field Study

Paul Revere's Ride: The Rest of the Story

by Elaine Grant (West Jordan High School)

Materials needed: Copy of *A Letter from Col. Paul Revere to the Corresponding Secretary Jeremy Belknap*, copy of the poem *Paul Revere's Ride* by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (Both are available online).

Divide the class in half. Provide one half of the class with the Longfellow poem and the other half with the Revere letter. Keep in mind that the letter is much longer than the poem. Ask students to work in pairs and read and summarize what they read. Tell students that the summary should only include main ideas and key events and people so they can retell the story based on the text.

Give students time to read through their respective texts in pairs. Some of the words may be challenging so have students try to figure out the meanings using context. Have them write one summary per pair. When everyone is finished, choose one volunteer from each text to tell their story. Have a student read the Longfellow poem summary first. While the letter summary is being read, have students listen for discrepancies with the poem and have a student record on the board every time there is a difference. (You can decide if you want to write out the actual discrepancies or just make a tally mark). Have a discussion on primary and secondary sources and talk about which source would be most reliable and why.

Teach about the Battles of Lexington and Concord including the role of Paul Revere and other key people. Use the Doolittle Prints if possible and discuss why they would and would not be reliable.

Have students respond to the following questions on their own paper.

1. Consider the intended audience and purpose of Longfellow's poem. Do you think it is important for a poem like this to be historically accurate? Why or why not?
2. Consider the intended audience and purpose of Revere's letter. Do you think Paul Revere's own account is accurate? Why or why not?
3. Name two new things you learned from Paul Revere's own account.
4. How have these two accounts changed your perception of Paul Revere's Ride? Be specific! (Use the back if necessary)