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The REAL Midnight Ride of Paul Revere

Objective: Students will be able to take Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem and differentiate between the correct and incorrect information.

Time frame: 45-60 minutes (for 5th graders with lots of scaffolding)

Instructions:

Tell your students that you are going to read a famous poem about the beginning of the Revolutionary War and figure out what is fact and fiction about that poem. This would be a great time to pull out pictures of Lexington, Concord, and Paul Revere's house that you took on the trip.

Read *Paul Revere's Ride* by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow to your students. There are several picture books available that help young students picture what is going on. Christopher Bing illustrates my favorite. (Ted Rand illustrated another great rendition.) As you read the book out loud, tell the students to take short notes about where Revere went while he was on his midnight ride. While reading it, you may also want your students to fill out the chart at http://kidsandhistory.net/paulvm/h1_seq.html to help them order the sequence of events.

After reading the poem, discuss with your students that, although it is a famous poem, many parts are incorrect. One poet wrote *The Midnight Ride of William Dawes* as almost a complaint. That poem can be found here: <http://www.paul-revere-heritage.com/midnight-ride-william-dawes.html>. Talk to your students about why Longfellow wrote the poem and why parts are incorrect. You can either have a discussion about which parts they think may be wrong, or give them resources to help them figure it out.

Next, fill out a map with your students that show four different routes. (A good map that includes Boston, Lexington, and Concord on it is located at <http://www.history.army.mil/books/AMH-V1/Map03.jpg>.) One route shows Paul's ride as portrayed by the book, one showing the actual route he took, one showing the route of William Dawes, and the last depicting the way Samuel Prescott went.

The students can use their notes to draw Revere's path as told by Longfellow. Some good websites that can help you draw the other three paths are

http://kidsandhistory.net/paulvm/h2_real.html (this one gives short excerpts from Revere's personal account), <http://www.paulreverehouse.org/ride/real.html> (this website includes a map with the routes and the times they arrived at key points), and <http://www.historynet.com/paul-reveres-true-account-of-the-midnight-ride.htm> (this last site has a full account from Revere).

This would be a great time to review what a key is on a map. You can have the kids help decide what symbol to put at the place where Revere was captured.

As a final assessment, give students a copy of the table attached to fill out (or fill out on projector as a class). You can have them work in groups or individually depending on how much you have previously talked about Revere.

One more awesome website that I used for this lesson:

<http://history.howstuffworks.com/history-vs-myth/paul-revere-ride1.htm>

Myths About Paul Revere's Ride

Can you complete the chart with the correct information?

Myth	Fact
The sole credit for the success of the ride was given to Revere only. He rode alone.	
All the events described in the poem occurred on the night of April 18, 1775.	
The signal in the North Church "One, if by land, and two, if by sea" was meant for him.	
He climbed the tower of the Old North Church the night of the ride.	
There were dead bodies in the yard of the Old North Church.	
Revere rode triumphantly into Concord.	
His ride through the night was enjoyable and uneventful.	
The purpose of Revere's Midnight Ride was to prevent the British troops from capturing the secret store of ammunitions in Concord.	

The following chart was taken from <http://www.paul-revere-heritage.com/myths-and-facts.html> and gives a list of myths from the poem.

Myth	Fact
The sole credit for the success of the ride was given to Revere only. He rode alone.	Two other riders, Williams Dawes and Samuel Prescott, accompanied Revere.
All the events described in the poem occurred on the night of April 18, 1775.	The poem distorted the occurrence of events. The planning of the signals “one, if by land, two, if by sea” happened on April 16th, two days before the actual ride. The dead bodies in the Old North Church courtyard occurred the day after the initial battle at Lexington.
The signal in the North Church “One, if by land, and two, if by sea” was meant for him.	The signal was from him to the Patriots.
He climbed the tower of the Old North Church the night of the ride.	Two days before the Midnight Ride he went to Charlestown and met Colonel Conant with whom he set up the plan to place the lanterns that would signal what route the British were taking. He did not climb the tower.
There were dead bodies in the yard of the Old North Church.	He did not go to the Old North Church that night and there were not dead bodies. The battle did not start until the next day in Lexington.
Revere rode triumphantly into Concord.	He rode to Lexington to warn Samuel Adams and John Hancock but never made it further to Concord because he was captured but soon released by the British soldiers. Another messenger Dr. Samuel Prescott, rode from Lexington to Concord to warn the residents.
His ride through the night was enjoyable and uneventful.	He was captured and interrogated by the British and then let go.
The purpose of Revere’s Midnight Ride was to prevent the British troops from capturing the secret store of ammunitions in Concord.	It is not widely known that it was not just the weapons that were stockpiled by the Patriots. Here are some of other items that were safeguarded by Revere’s early warning: spades, axes, medicine chests, tents, hogsheads of flour, pork, beef, salt, boxes of candles, wooden spoons, dishes, canteens and even casks of wine and raisins.