

The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere: Literature v. History

by Tim Bailey

UNIT OVERVIEW

This unit is part of the Gilder Lehrman Institute’s Teaching Literacy through History resources, designed to align to the Common Core State Standards. These units were developed to enable students to understand, summarize, and analyze original texts of historical and literary significance. Through this step-by-step process, students will acquire the skills to analyze any primary or secondary source material.

Over the course of three lessons the students will compare and contrast two different versions of one of the most iconic events in American history: the midnight ride of Paul Revere. The comparison will be made between the poem “Paul Revere’s Ride,” by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and a description of the event written by Paul Revere himself. Students will use textual evidence from these two sources to draw their conclusions and write an argumentative essay.

UNIT OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to

- Describe and analyze the historical meaning and importance of a poem.
- Describe and analyze the historical meaning and importance of a primary source document.
- Compare, analyze, and assess the similarities and the differences between the poem and the primary source document.
- Write a short persuasive essay, arguing the reliability and validity of the poem as a source of historical information.

NUMBER OF CLASS PERIODS: 3

GRADE LEVEL(S): 6–12

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.1: Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.1: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.5: Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.

LESSON 1

OVERVIEW

The students will listen to a reading of the poem “Paul Revere’s Ride,” written by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in 1860. Using a graphic organizer and the text of the poem, they will analyze both the meaning of the poem and the story it tells. Student understanding of the text will be determined during classroom discussion and by examining the graphic organizers completed by the students.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was one of the most popular poets in American history. In 1860, as the American Civil War loomed on the horizon, Longfellow wrote a poem telling the story of the midnight ride of Paul Revere eighty-five years after the event. Longfellow had set out to write a poem that would inspire a feeling of patriotism and unity as the United States was tearing itself apart. He sought to show Paul Revere’s bravery and independence. What he created was a folk hero. In the years following its publication in the *Atlantic Monthly*, the poem began to be taken as historical fact and has been used in textbooks as the basis for teaching what actually happened during the night of April 18–19, 1775.

MATERIALS

- “Paul Revere’s Ride,” by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (excerpts)
- Teacher Resource: Full text of “Paul Revere’s Ride,” Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Source: Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *Tales of a Wayside Inn* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1863), pp. 18–25.
- Graphic Organizer: “Paul Revere’s Ride”

PROCEDURE

You may choose to have the students do the lessons individually, as partners, or in small groups of no more than three or four students.

1. Discuss the information in the Historical Background.
2. Read “Paul Revere’s Ride” aloud to the students. (There are also dramatic readings available online.)
3. Hand out the excerpts from “Paul Revere’s Ride.” Make certain students understand that the original text has been abridged for this lesson.
4. “Share read” the poem with the students. This is done by having the students follow along silently while you begin reading aloud, modeling prosody, inflection, and punctuation. Then ask the class to join in with the reading after a few sentences. Continue to read along with the students, still serving as the model for the class. This technique will support struggling readers as well as English language learners (ELL).
5. Hand out the Graphic Organizer: “Paul Revere’s Ride.” Students will look at the chunks of text from the poem and determine which words or phrases are the most important. For this lesson, because they will need to assess the usefulness of the poem as a source of information, they will be looking for concrete terms, like *red-coats* or *Medford*, rather than the words the poet used to create mood, like *spectral* or *borne on the night-wind*. They will copy the selected words and phrases into the box on the right side of the chart. After they have determined what is most important, they will

summarize the text in their own words.

6. Students can brainstorm as partners or in small groups but must complete their own organizer in order to complete the assignment. Remember to emphasize that they are to first select the author's words to determine what is important in the text and then summarize the meaning of the passage in their own words.
7. Class discussion: Have groups or individual students share their summaries and compare them with other groups' summaries.

LESSON 2

OVERVIEW

The students will read a letter by Paul Revere in which he describes the events surrounding his famous midnight ride on April 18, 1775. Using the text of the letter and a graphic organizer, they will analyze one of the most iconic moments in American history as told by the one person who would know best what actually happened. Student understanding of the text will be determined during classroom discussion and by examining the graphic organizers completed by the students.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Paul Revere provided three accounts of his ride on April 18, 1775. His first two accounts, a draft and a corrected copy of a deposition, both dated 1775, were made at the request of the Massachusetts Provisional Congress. These depositions, taken from all eyewitnesses to the skirmish on Lexington Green, were compiled in the hopes of obtaining proof that the British had fired the first shot.

Though written twenty-three years after the event, the most complete account of the ride is Paul Revere's letter to Jeremy Belknap, corresponding secretary of the Massachusetts Historical Society, dated 1798.

MATERIALS

- Paul Revere's Letter to Jeremy Belknap, ca. 1798 (excerpts). Source: Manuscript Collection, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts. The full transcript of the letter and images of the letter are available on the website of the Massachusetts Historical Society, www.masshist.org/database/99.
- Graphic Organizer: Paul Revere's Letter to Jeremy Belknap

PROCEDURE

You may choose to have the students do the lessons individually, as partners, or in small groups of no more than three or four students.

1. Discuss the information in the Historical Background.
2. Hand out the excerpts from Paul Revere's Letter. Make certain that students understand that the original text has been excerpted for this lesson.
3. "Share read" the letter with the students as described in Lesson 1.
4. Hand out the Graphic Organizer: Paul Revere's Letter. Students will look at the chunks of text from

the letter in the graphic organizer and determine which words or phrases are the most important in that text; they will copy those words and phrases into the box on the rightside of the chart. After they have determined what is most important, they will summarize the text in their own words.

5. Students can brainstorm as partners or in small groups but must complete their own organizer in order to complete the assignment.
6. Class discussion: Have groups or individual students share their summaries and compare them with other groups' summaries.

LESSON 3

OVERVIEW

The students will compare and contrast the famous poem "Paul Revere's Ride," by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, with a letter written by Paul Revere in which he reflects upon the events that occurred that April night in 1775. The students will analyze the similarities and the differences between the poem and the primary source document. The students will then write a short essay arguing the validity of the poem as a reliable source of historical information.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

For many years the poem "Paul Revere's Ride" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow has been used to teach what happened in the early morning hours of the first day of the American Revolution. Paul Revere himself wrote letters in which he described, in great detail, exactly what happened that night and in the first hours of morning. How reliable is the poem when compared to the writings of the man who was actually there?

MATERIALS

- "Paul Revere's Ride," by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (excerpts)
- Paul Revere's Letter to Jeremy Belknap, ca. 1798 (excerpts)
- Compare and Contrast Organizer

PROCEDURE

You may choose to have the students complete the graphic organizer portion of the lesson individually, as partners, or in small groups of no more than three or four students. However, each student is responsible for writing his or her own essay.

1. Discuss the information in the Historical Background.
2. The students should have the two completed assignments from Lessons 1 and 2. They will refer to them to complete today's organizer.
3. The students will complete the Compare and Contrast Organizer. Students should use exact wording from the two texts, both the poem and the letter, as they draw their comparisons. This will give them better textual evidence when they write their essay.
4. The students will write an argumentative essay that answers the question "Is Longfellow's poem a reliable source of information about Paul Revere's ride?" The students must use textual evidence from both the poem and the letter to make their arguments.

**HANDOUTS FOR THE MIDNIGHT RIDE OF PAUL REVERE: LITERATURE V.
HISTORY**

“Paul Revere’s Ride,” by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

(excerpts)

Listen, my children, and you shall hear
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,
On the eighteenth of April, in Seventy-five;
Hardly a man is now alive
Who remembers that famous day and year.

He said to his friend, “If the British march
By land or sea from the town to-night,
Hang a lantern aloft in the belfry arch
Of the North Church tower as a signal light,—
One, if by land, and two, if by sea;
And I on the opposite shore will be,
Ready to ride and spread the alarm
Through every Middlesex village and farm,
For the country-folk to be up and to arm.”

Then he said, “Good night!” and with muffled oar
Silently rowed to the Charlestown shore,
Just as the moon rose over the bay,
Where swinging wide at her moorings lay
The Somerset, British man-of-war;
A phantom ship, with each mast and spar
Across the moon like a prison bar,
And a huge black hulk, that was magnified
By its own reflection in the tide. . . .

Meanwhile, impatient to mount and ride,
Booted and spurred, with a heavy stride
On the opposite shore walked Paul Revere.
Now he patted his horse’s side,
Now gazed at the landscape far and near,
Then, impetuous, stamped the earth,
And turned and tightened his saddle-girth;
But mostly he watched with eager search
The belfry-tower of the Old North Church,
As it rose above the graves on the hill,
Lonely and spectral and sombre and still.
And lo! as he looks, on the belfry’s height
A glimmer, and then a gleam of light!
He springs to the saddle, the bridle he turns,
But lingers and gazes, till full on his sight

A second lamp in the belfry burns!

A hurry of hoofs in a village street,
A shape in the moonlight, a bulk in the dark,
And beneath, from the pebbles, in passing, a spark
Struck out by a steed flying fearless and fleet;
That was all! And yet, through the gloom and the light,
The fate of a nation was riding that night;
And the spark struck out by that steed, in his flight,
Kindled the land into flame with its heat.

He has left the village and mounted the steep,
And beneath him, tranquil and broad and deep,
Is the Mystic, meeting the ocean tides;
And under the alders, that skirt its edge,
Now soft on the sand, now loud on the ledge,
Is heard the tramp of his steed as he rides.

It was twelve by the village clock
When he crossed the bridge into Medford town.
He heard the crowing of the cock,
And the barking of the farmer’s dog,
And felt the damp of the river fog,
That rises after the sun goes down.

It was one by the village clock,
When he galloped into Lexington.
He saw the gilded weathercock
Swim in the moonlight as he passed,
And the meeting-house windows, black and bare,
Gaze at him with a spectral glare,
As if they already stood aghast
At the bloody work they would look upon.

It was two by the village clock,
When he came to the bridge in Concord town.
He heard the bleating of the flock,
And the twitter of birds among the trees,
And felt the breath of the morning breeze
Blowing over the meadows brown.
And one was safe and asleep in his bed
Who at the bridge would be first to fall,

Who that day would be lying dead,
Pierced by a British musket-ball.

You know the rest. In the books you have read,
How the British Regulars fired and fled,—
How the farmers gave them ball for ball,
From behind each fence and farm-yard wall,
Chasing the red-coats down the lane,
Then crossing the fields to emerge again
Under the trees at the turn of the road,
And only pausing to fire and load.

So through the night rode Paul Revere;
And so through the night went his cry of alarm
To every Middlesex village and farm,—
A cry of defiance and not of fear,
A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door,
And a word that shall echo forevermore!
For, borne on the night-wind of the Past,
Through all our history, to the last,
In the hour of darkness and peril and need,
The people will waken and listen to hear
The hurrying hoof-beats of that steed,
And the midnight message of Paul Revere.

Source: Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *Tales of a Wayside Inn* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1863), pp18–25.

Teacher Resource: Full text of “Paul Revere’s Ride” by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Listen, my children, and you shall hear
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,
On the eighteenth of April, in Seventy-five;
Hardly a man is now alive
Who remembers that famous day and year.

He said to his friend, “If the British march
By land or sea from the town to-night,
Hang a lantern aloft in the belfry arch
Of the North Church tower as a signal light,—
One, if by land, and two, if by sea;
And I on the opposite shore will be,
Ready to ride and spread the alarm
Through every Middlesex village and farm,
For the country-folk to be up and to arm.”

Then he said, “Good night!” and with muffled oar
Silently rowed to the Charlestown shore,
Just as the moon rose over the bay,
Where swinging wide at her moorings lay
The Somerset, British man-of-war;
A phantom ship, with each mast and spar
Across the moon like a prison bar,
And a huge black hulk, that was magnified
By its own reflection in the tide.

Meanwhile, his friend, through alley and street,
Wanders and watches with eager ears,
Till in the silence around him he hears
The muster of men at the barrack door,
The sound of arms, and the tramp of feet,
And the measured tread of the grenadiers,
Marching down to their boats on the shore.

Then he climbed to the tower of the church,
Up the wooden stairs, with stealthy tread,
To the belfry-chamber overhead,
And startled the pigeons from their perch
On the sombre rafters, that round him made
Masses and moving shapes of shade,—
Up the trembling ladder, steep and tall,
To the highest window in the wall,
Where he paused to listen and look down

A moment on the roofs of the town,
And the moonlight flowing over all.

Beneath, in the churchyard, lay the dead,
In their night-encampment on the hill,
Wrapped in silence so deep and still
That he could hear, like a sentinel’s tread,
The watchful night-wind, as it went
Creeping along from tent to tent,
And seeming to whisper, “All is well!”
A moment only he feels the spell
Of the place and the hour, and the secret dread
Of the lonely belfry and the dead;
For suddenly all his thoughts are bent
On a shadowy something far away,
Where the river widens to meet the bay,—
A line of black that bends and floats
On the rising tide, like a bridge of boats.

Meanwhile, impatient to mount and ride,
Booted and spurred, with a heavy stride
On the opposite shore walked Paul Revere.
Now he patted his horse’s side,
Now gazed at the landscape far and near,
Then, impetuous, stamped the earth,
And turned and tightened his saddle-girth;
But mostly he watched with eager search
The belfry-tower of the Old North Church,
As it rose above the graves on the hill,
Lonely and spectral and sombre and still.
And lo! as he looks, on the belfry’s height
A glimmer, and then a gleam of light!
He springs to the saddle, the bridle he turns,
But lingers and gazes, till full on his sight
A second lamp in the belfry burns!

A hurry of hoofs in a village street,
A shape in the moonlight, a bulk in the dark,
And beneath, from the pebbles, in passing, a spark
Struck out by a steed flying fearless and fleet;
That was all! And yet, through the gloom and the light,

The fate of a nation was riding that night;
And the spark struck out by that steed, in his flight,
Kindled the land into flame with its heat.

He has left the village and mounted the steep,
And beneath him, tranquil and broad and deep,
Is the Mystic, meeting the ocean tides;
And under the alders, that skirt its edge,
Now soft on the sand, now loud on the ledge,
Is heard the tramp of his steed as he rides.

It was twelve by the village clock
When he crossed the bridge into Medford town.
He heard the crowing of the cock,
And the barking of the farmer's dog,
And felt the damp of the river fog,
That rises after the sun goes down.

It was one by the village clock,
When he galloped into Lexington.
He saw the gilded weathercock
Swim in the moonlight as he passed,
And the meeting-house windows, black and bare,
Gaze at him with a spectral glare,
As if they already stood aghast
At the bloody work they would look upon.

It was two by the village clock,
When he came to the bridge in Concord town.
He heard the bleating of the flock,

And the twitter of birds among the trees,
And felt the breath of the morning breeze
Blowing over the meadows brown.
And one was safe and asleep in his bed
Who at the bridge would be first to fall,
Who that day would be lying dead,
Pierced by a British musket-ball.

You know the rest. In the books you have read,
How the British Regulars fired and fled,—
How the farmers gave them ball for ball,
From behind each fence and farm-yard wall,
Chasing the red-coats down the lane,
Then crossing the fields to emerge again
Under the trees at the turn of the road,
And only pausing to fire and load.

So through the night rode Paul Revere;
And so through the night went his cry of alarm
To every Middlesex village and farm,—
A cry of defiance and not of fear,
A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door,
And a word that shall echo forevermore!
For, borne on the night-wind of the Past,
Through all our history, to the last,
In the hour of darkness and peril and need,
The people will waken and listen to hear
The hurrying hoof-beats of that steed,
And the midnight message of Paul Revere.

Source: Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *Tales of a Wayside Inn* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1863), pp18–25.

Name: _____ Period: _____ Date: _____

Lesson 1: “Paul Revere’s Ride,” by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (excerpts)

<p>Listen, my children, and you shall hear Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere, On the eighteenth of April, in Seventy-five; Hardly a man is now alive Who remembers that famous day and year.</p> <p>He said to his friend, “If the British march By land or sea from the town to-night, Hang a lantern aloft in the belfry arch Of the North Church tower as a signal light,— One, if by land, and two, if by sea; And I on the opposite shore will be, Ready to ride and spread the alarm Through every Middlesex village and farm, For the country-folk to be up and to arm.”</p> <p>Then he said, “Good night!” and with muffled oar Silently rowed to the Charlestown shore, Just as the moon rose over the bay, Where swinging wide at her moorings lay The Somerset, British man-of-war; A phantom ship, with each mast and spar Across the moon like a prison bar, And a huge black hulk, that was magnified By its own reflection in the tide.</p>	<p>Key words/phrases:</p> <p>In your own words:</p>
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Meanwhile, impatient to mount and ride,
Booted and spurred, with a heavy stride
On the opposite shore walked Paul Revere.
Now he patted his horse's side,
Now gazed at the landscape far and near,
Then, impetuous, stamped the earth,
And turned and tightened his saddle-girth;
But mostly he watched with eager search
The belfry-tower of the Old North Church,
As it rose above the graves on the hill,
Lonely and spectral and sombre and still.
And lo! as he looks, on the belfry's height
A glimmer, and then a gleam of light!
He springs to the saddle, the bridle he turns,
But lingers and gazes, till full on his sight
A second lamp in the belfry burns!

A hurry of hoofs in a village street,
A shape in the moonlight, a bulk in the dark,
And beneath, from the pebbles, in passing, a spark
Struck out by a steed flying fearless and fleet;
That was all! And yet, through the gloom and the light,
The fate of a nation was riding that night;
And the spark struck out by that steed, in his flight,
Kindled the land into flame with its heat.

He has left the village and mounted the steep,
And beneath him, tranquil and broad and deep,
Is the Mystic, meeting the ocean tides;
And under the alders, that skirt its edge,
Now soft on the sand, now loud on the ledge,
Is heard the tramp of his steed as he rides.

Key words/phrases:

In your own words:

<p>It was twelve by the village clock When he crossed the bridge into Medford town. He heard the crowing of the cock, And the barking of the farmer's dog, And felt the damp of the river fog, That rises after the sun goes down.</p> <p>It was one by the village clock, When he galloped into Lexington. He saw the gilded weathercock Swim in the moonlight as he passed, And the meeting-house windows, black and bare, Gaze at him with a spectral glare, As if they already stood aghast At the bloody work they would look upon.</p> <p>It was two by the village clock, When he came to the bridge in Concord town. He heard the bleating of the flock, And the twitter of birds among the trees, And felt the breath of the morning breeze Blowing over the meadows brown. And one was safe and asleep in his bed Who at the bridge would be first to fall, Who that day would be lying dead,</p>	<p>Key words/phrases:</p> <p>In your own words:</p>
<p>You know the rest. In the books you have read, How the British Regulars fired and fled,— How the farmers gave them ball for ball, From behind each fence and farm-yard wall, Chasing the red-coats down the lane, Then crossing the fields to emerge again Under the trees at the turn of the road, And only pausing to fire and load.</p> <p>So through the night rode Paul Revere; And so through the night went his cry of alarm To every Middlesex village and farm,— A cry of defiance and not of fear, A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door, And a word that shall echo forevermore! For, borne on the night-wind of the Past, Through all our history, to the last, In the hour of darkness and peril and need, The people will waken and listen to hear The hurrying hoof-beats of that steed, And the midnight message of Paul Revere.</p>	<p>Key words/phrases:</p> <p>In your own words:</p>

Paul Revere's Letter to Jeremy Belknap, ca. 1798

(excerpts)

. . . On Tuesday evening, the 18th, it was observed, that a number of Soldiers were marching towards the bottom of the Common. About 10 o'Clock, Dr. Warren Sent in great haste for me, and begged that I would imediately Set off for Lexington, where Messrs. Hancock & Adams were, and acquaint them of the Movement, and that it was thought they were the objets. When I got to Dr. Warren's house, I found he had sent an express by land to Lexington—a Mr. Wm. Daws. The Sunday before, by desire of Dr. Warren, I had been to Lexington, to Mess. Hancock and Adams, who were at the Rev. Mr. Clark's. I returned at Night thro Charlestown; there I agreed with a Col. Conant, & some other Gentlemen, ~~in~~ ~~Charleston~~, that if the British went out by Water, we would shew two Lanthorns in the North Church Steeple; & if by Land, one, as a Signal; for we were aprehensive it would be dificult to Cross the Charles River, or git over Boston neck. I left Dr. Warrens, called upon a friend, and desired him to make the Signals. I then went Home, took my Boots and Surtout, and went to the North part of the Town, where I had kept a Boat; two friends rowed me across Charles River, a little to the eastward where the Somerset Man of War lay. It was then young flood, the Ship was winding, & the moon was Rising. They landed me on Charlestown side. When I got into Town, I met Col. Conant, & several others; they said they had seen our signals. I told them what was Acting, & went to git me a Horse . . . I set off upon a very good Horse; it was then about 11 o'Clock, & very pleasant. . . . I saw two men on Horse back, under a Tree. When I got near them, I discovered they were British officer. One tryed to git a head of Me, & the other to take me. I turned my Horse very quick, & Galloped towards Charlestown neck, and then pushed for the Medford Road. The one who chased me, endeavoring to Cut me off, got into a Clay pond, near where the new Tavern is now built. I got clear of him, and went thro Medford, over the Bridge, & up to Menotomy. In Medford, I awaked the Captain of the Minute men; & after that, I alarmed almost every House, till I got to Lexington. I found ~~Mr.~~ Messrs. Hancock & Adams at the Rev. Mr. Clark's; I told them my errand, and inquired for Mr. Daws; they said he had not been there; I related the story of the two officers, & supposed that He must have been stopped, as he ought to have been there before me. After I had been there about half an Hour, Mr. Daws came; after we refreshid our selves, ~~we~~ and set off for Concord, to secure the Stores, &c. there. We were overtaken by a young Docter Prescott, whom we found to be a high Son of Liberty. I told them of the ten officers that Mr. Devens mett, and that it was probable we might be stoped before we got to Concord; for I supposed that after Night, they divided them selves, and that two of them had fixed themselves in such passages as were most likely to stop any intelegence going to Concord. I likewise mentioned, that we had better allarm all the Inhabitents till we got to Concord; the young Doctor much approved of it, and said, he would stop with either of us, for the

people between that & Concord knew him, & would give the more credit to what we said. We had got nearly half way. Mr Daws & the Doctor stoped to allarm the people of a House: I was about one hundred Rod a head, when I saw two men, in nearly the same situation as those officer were, near Charlestown. I called for the Doctor & Daws to come up; —~~were two & we would have them~~ in an Instant I was surrounded by four; —they had placed themselves in a Straight Road, that inclined each way; they had taken down a pair of Barrs on the North side of the Road, & two of them were under a tree in the pasture. The Docter being foremost, he came up; and we tryed to git past them; but they being armed with pistols & swords, they forced us in to the pasture; —the Docter jumped his Horse over a low Stone wall, and got to Concord. I observed a Wood at a Small distance, & made for that. When I got there, out Started Six officers, on Horse back, and orderd me to dismount; —one of them, who appeared to have the command, examined me, where I came from, & what my Name Was? I told him. He asked me if I was an express? I answered in the afirmative. He demanded what time I left Boston? I told him; and aded, that their troops had catched aground in passing the River, and that There would be five hundred Americans there in a short time, for I had alarmed the Country all the way up. He imediately rode towards those who stoppd us, when all five of them came down upon a full gallop; one of them, whom I afterwards found to be Major Mitchel, of the 5th Regiment, Clapped his pistol to my head, called me by name, & told me he was going to ask me some questions, & if I did not give him true answers, he would blow my brains out. He then asked me similar questions to those above. He then orderd me to mount my Horse, after searching me for arms. He then orderd them to advance, & to lead me in front. When we got to the Road, they turned down towards Lexington. When we had got about one Mile, the Major Rode up to the officer that was leading me, & told him to give me to the Sergeant. As soon as he took me, the Major orderd him, if I attempted to run, or any body insulted them, to blow my brains out. . . .

Source: Manuscript Collection, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts,
www.masshist.org/database/99.

Name- _____ Period- _____ Date- _____

Lesson 2: Paul Revere's Letter to Jeremy Belknap

Dear Sir,

. . . On Tuesday evening, the 18th, it was observed, that a number of Soldiers were marching towards the bottom of the Common. About 10 o'Clock, Dr. Warren Sent in great haste for me, and begged that I would imediately Set off for Lexington, where Messrs. Hancock & Adams were, and acquaint them of the Movement, and that it was thought they were the objets. When I got to Dr. Warren's house, I found he had sent an express by land to Lexington—a Mr. Wm. Daws. The Sunday before, by desire of Dr. Warren, I had been to Lexington, to Mess. Hancock and Adams, who were at the Rev. Mr. Clark's. I returned at Night thro Charlestown; there I agreed with a Col. Conant, & some other Gentlemen, that if the British went out by Water, we would shew two Lanthorns in the North Church Steeple; & if by Land, one, as a Signal; for we were apprehensive it would be dificult to Cross the Charles River, or git over Boston neck. I left Dr. Warrens, called upon a friend, and desired him to make the Signals. I then went Home, took my Boots and Surtout, and went to the North part of the Town, where I had kept a Boat; two friends rowed me across Charles River, a little to the eastward where the Somerset Man of War lay. It was then young flood, the Ship was winding, & the moon was Rising.

Key words/phrases:

In your own words:

They landed me on Charlestown side. When I got into Town, I met Col. Conant, & several others; they said they had seen our signals. I told them what was Acting, & went to git me a Horse . . . I set off upon a very good Horse; it was then about 11 o’Clock, & very pleasant . . . I saw two men on Horse back, under a Tree. When I got near them, I discovered they were British officer. One tryed to git a head of Me, & the other to take me. I turned my Horse very quick, & Galloped towards Charlestown neck, and then pushed for the Medford Road. The one who chased me, endeavoring to Cut me off, got into a Clay pond, near where the new Tavern is now built. I got clear of him, and went thro Medford, over the Bridge, & up to Menotomy. In Medford, I awaked the Captain of the Minute men; & after that, I alarmed almost every House, till I got to Lexington. I found Messrs. Hancock & Adams at the Rev. Mr. Clark’s; I told them my errand, and inquired for Mr. Daws; they said he had not been there; I related the story of the two officers, & supposed that He must have been stopped, as he ought to have been there before me. After I had been there about half an Hour, Mr. Daws came; we refreshid our selves, and set off for Concord, to secure the Stores, &c. there. We were overtaken by a young Docter Prescott, whom we found to be a high Son of Liberty.

Key words/phrases:

In your own words:

I told them of the ten officers that Mr. Devens mett, and that it was probable we might be stoped before we got to Concord; for I supposed that after Night, they divided them selves, and that two of them had fixed themselves in such passages as were most likely to stop any intelegence going to Concord. I likewise mentioned, that we had better allarm all the Inhabitents till we got to Concord; the young Doctor much approved of it, and said, he would stop with either of us, for the people between that & Concord knew him, & would give the more credit to what we said. We had got nearly half way. Mr Daws & the Doctor stoped to allarm the people of a House: I was about one hundred Rod a head, when I saw two men, in nearly the same situation as those officer were, near Charlestown. I called for the Doctor & Daws to come up; — in an Instant I was surrounded by four; —they had placed themselves in a Straight Road, that inclined each way; they had taken down a pair of Barrs on the North side of the Road, & two of them were under a tree in the pasture. The Docter being foremost, he came up; and we tryed to git past them; but they being armed with pistols & swords, they forced us in to the pasture; —the Docter jumped his Horse over a low Stone wall, and got to Concord. I observed a Wood at a Small distance, & made for that.

Key words/phrases:

In your own words:

When I got there, out Started Six officers, on Horse back, and orderd me to dismount; —one of them, who appeared to have the command, examined me, where I came from, & what my Name Was? I told him. He asked me if I was an express? I answered in the afirmative. He demanded what time I left Boston? I told him; and aded, that their troops had catched aground in passing the River, and that There would be five hundred Americans there in a short time, for I had alarmed the Country all the way up. He imediately rode towards those who stoppd us, when all five of them came down upon a full gallop; one of them, whom I afterwards found to be Major Mitchel, of the 5th Regiment, Clapped his pistol to my head, called me by name, & told me he was going to ask me some questions, & if I did not give him true answers, he would blow my brains out. He then asked me similar questions to those above. He then orderd me to mount my Horse, after searching me for arms. He then orderd them to advance, & to lead me in front. When we got to the Road, they turned down towards Lexington. When we had got about one Mile, the Major Rode up to the officer that was leading me, & told him to give me to the Sergeant. As soon as he took me, the Major orderd him, if I attempted to run, or any body insulted them, to blow my brains out. . . .

Key words/phrases:

In your own words:

Name- _____ Period- _____ Date- _____

The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere: Compare and Contrast

Use the chart below to analyze both the poem "Paul Revere's Ride" and Paul Revere's letter.

Similarities	Differences

Using this information, write a short essay that answers the following question: Is Longfellow's poem a reliable source of information about Paul Revere's ride? Use evidence from both texts to make your arguments.