

# Document Based Question

By Marie Johnson and Judy Sutherland



Paul Revere's Engraving of the Boston Massacre, 1770

Were the British soldiers that fired upon a crowd of Bostonian colonists on March 5, 1770, justified (have a right) in doing so? As a culminating project on the Boston Massacre you will write a paragraph answering this question. Your answer must be supported by primary source evidence.

Were the British soldiers that fired upon a crowd of Bostonian colonists on March 5, 1770, justified in doing so? As a culminating project on the Boston Massacre you will write a paragraph answering this question. Your answer must be supported by primary source evidence.

## Source 1: Paul Revere's engraving of the Boston Massacre

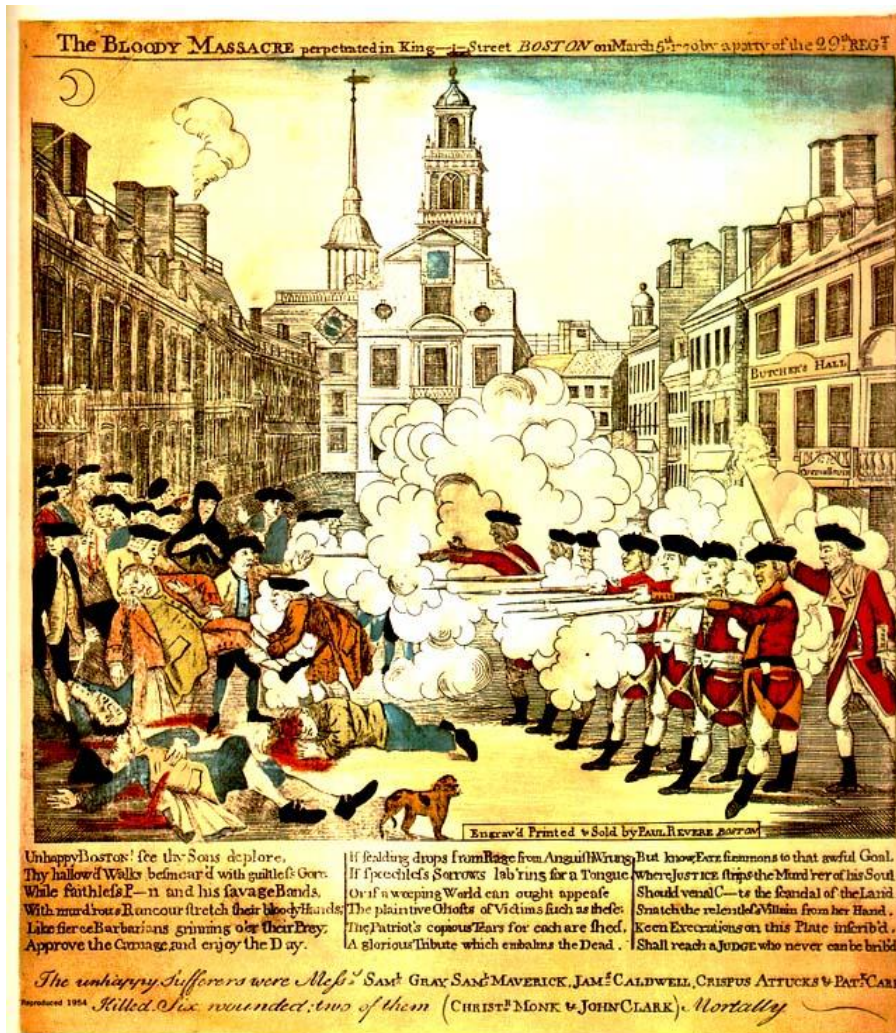
### Teacher Notes Day 1--Introducing the Boston Massacre

Do this activity **before reading from the textbook** version of the Boston Massacre. Students should be aware that British soldiers were sent to Boston to keep the peace due to some colonist protesting taxes by harassing tax collectors. Project the image for whole class viewing so students can see colors. Walk students through this analysis.

### Vocabulary

- engraving—image created by carving on metal or wood. Used for printing.
- massacre—the killing of many innocent people.
- perpetrated—the person who committed a crime or dastardly action
- rancor—malice, meanness, nastiness
- carnage—bloodshed, slaughter

Document Note: This engraving created by Paul Revere was widely published in the colonies following the Boston Massacre.



Source

<http://www.bostonmassacre.net>

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### Text in the engraving:

1. What dates do you see?
2. Who is the artist?
3. Read the words at the top of the image.
  - a) What do these words tell you?
  - b) What kind of feeling do the words convey?

### Image in the engraving:

4. What **colors** does the artist use that grabs your attention first?
5. Describe what you see on the right side of the picture?
  - a) How are the people organized? How many people are there?
  - b) What are they doing?
  - c) What can you tell about the people from their clothing and their expressions?
6. Describe what you see on the left side of the picture?
  - a) How are the people organized?
  - b) How many people are there?
  - c) What are they doing?
  - d) What can you tell about the people from their clothing and their expressions?
7. What does this image tell us about the event that occurred on March 5, 1770?
8. Does the artist take the side of the British soldiers or of the colonists? Explain your answer using details from the image.

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Teacher Notes Day 2—Introduce newspaper article; Teacher will need to guide students in analysis of this article.

### Vocabulary:

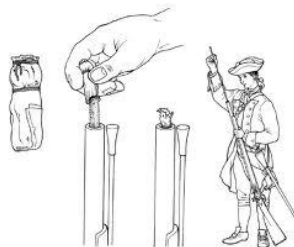
- customs house—a building for keeping tax money due on exports and imports
- brandishing—swinging menacingly
- mean countenance—angry expression
- cudgel—bat like weapon
- admonished—scolded, reprimanded
- barrack—building for lodging soldiers
- cutlasses—curved sword
- bayonets—long knives attached to guns
- dispersed—spread apart
- stave—wooden slats from a barrel
- clamour—commotion, noise

Document Note: This article appeared in the Boston Gazette and Country Journal in its edition of Monday, March 12, 1770.

A few minutes after nine o'clock four youths, named Edward Archbald, William Merchant, Francis Archbald, and John Leech, jun., came down Cornhill together, and separating at Doctor Loring's corner, the two former were passing the narrow alley leading Mr. Murray's barrack in which was a soldier **brandishing** a broad sword of an uncommon size against the walls, out of which he struck fire plentifully. A person of **mean countenance**, armed with a large **cudgel** bore him company. Edward Archbald **admonished** Mr. Merchant to take care of the sword, on which the soldier turned round and struck Archbald on the arm, then pushed at Merchant and pierced through his clothes inside the arm close to the armpit and grazed the skin. Merchant then struck the soldier with a short stick he had; and the other person ran to the **barrack** and brought with him two soldiers, one armed with a pair of tongs, the other with a shovel. He with the tongs pursued Archbald back through the alley, collared and laid him over the head with the tongs. The noise brought people together; and John Hicks, a young lad, coming up, knocked the soldier down but let him get up again; and more lads gathering, drove them back to the barrack where the boys stood some time as it were to keep them in. In less than a minute ten or twelve of them came out with drawn **cutlasses**, clubs, and **bayonets** and set upon the unarmed boys and young folk who stood them a little while but, finding the inequality of their equipment, **dispersed**.



*cutlass*



*Soldier loading musket & attaching bayonet*

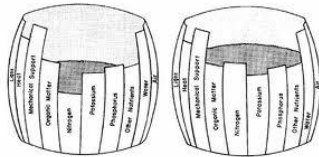
On hearing the noise, one Samuel Atwood came up to see what was the matter; and entering the alley from dock square, heard the latter part of the combat; and when the boys had dispersed he met the ten

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or twelve soldiers aforesaid rushing down the alley towards the square and asked them if they intended to murder people? They answered Yes, by G-d, root and branch! With that one of them struck Mr. Atwood with a club which was repeated by another; and being unarmed, he turned to go off and received a wound on the left shoulder which reached the bone and gave him much pain. Retreating a few steps, Mr. Atwood met two officers and said, gentlemen, what is the matter They answered, you'll see by and by. Immediately after, those heroes appeared in the square, asking where were the boogers? where were the cowards? But notwithstanding their fierceness to naked men, one of them advanced towards a youth who had a split of a raw



**stave** in his hand and said, damn them, here is one of them. *barrel staves*

...But the young man seeing a person near him with a drawn sword and good cane ready to support him, held up his stave in defiance; and they quietly passed by him up the little alley by Mr. Silsby's to King Street where they attacked single and unarmed persons till they raised much **clamour**, and then turned down Cornhill Street, insulting all they met in like manner and pursuing some to their very doors. Thirty or forty persons, mostly lads, being by this means gathered in King Street, Capt. Preston with a party of men with charged bayonets, came from the main guard to the commissioner's house, the soldiers pushing their bayonets, crying, make way! They took place by the **custom house** and, continuing to push to drive the people off pricked some in several places, on which they were clamorous and, it is said, threw snow balls. On this, the Captain commanded them to fire; and more snow balls coming, he again said, damn you, fire, be the consequence what it will! One soldier then fired, and a townsman with a cudgel struck him over the hands with such force that he dropped his firelock; and, rushing forward, aimed a blow at the Captain's head which grazed his hat and fell pretty heavy upon his arm. However, the soldiers continued the fire successively till seven or eight or, as some say, eleven guns were discharged.



*custom house*

By this fatal manoeuvre three men were laid dead on the spot and two more struggling for life; but what showed a degree of cruelty unknown to British troops, at least since the house of Hanover has directed their operation, was an attempt to fire upon or push with their bayonets the persons who undertook to remove the slain and wounded!

*(The rest of the article is optional reading. Descriptions of dead and wounded are given.)*

Mr. Benjamin Leigh, now undertaker in the Delph manufactory, came up and after some conversation with Capt. Preston relative to his conduct in this affair, advised him to draw off his men, with which he complied. The dead are Mr. Samuel Gray, killed on the spot, the ball entering his head and beating off a large portion of his skull.

A mulatto man named Crispus Attucks, who was born in Framingham, but lately belonged to New-Providence and was here in order to go for North Carolina, also killed instantly, two balls entering his breast, one of them in special goring the right lobe of the lungs and a great part of the liver most horribly.

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Mr. James Caldwell, mate of Capt. Morton's vessel, in like manner killed by two balls entering his back.

Mr. Samuel Maverick, a promising youth of seventeen years of age, son of the widow Maverick, and an apprentice to Mr. Greenwood, ivory-turner, mortally wounded; a ball went through his belly and was cut out at his back. He died the next morning.

A lad named Christopher Monk, about seventeen years of age, an apprentice to Mr. Walker, shipwright, wounded; a ball entered his back about four inches above the left kidney near the spine and was cut out of the breast on the same side. Apprehended he will die.

A lad named John Clark, about seventeen years of age, whose parents live at Medford, and an apprentice to Capt. Samuel Howard of this town, wounded; a ball entered just above his groin and came out at his hip on the opposite side. Apprehended he will die.

Mr. Edward Payne of this town, merchant, standing at his entry door received a ball in his arm which shattered some of the bones.

Mr. John Green, tailor, coming up Leverett's Lane, received a ball just under his hip and lodged in the under part of his thigh, which was extracted.

Mr. Robert Patterson, a seafaring man, who was the person that had his trousers shot through in Richardson's affair, wounded; a ball went through his right arm, and he suffered a great loss of blood.

Mr. Patrick Carr, about thirty years of age, who worked with Mr. Field, leather breeches-maker in Queen Street, wounded; a ball entered near his hip and went out at his side.

A lad named David Parker, an apprentice to Mr. Eddy, the wheelwright, wounded; a ball entered his thigh.

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## 1. Using the information in this newspaper article about the Boston Massacre, put the following events in order.

\_\_\_\_\_ With that one of them struck Mr. Atwood with a club which was repeated by another; and being unarmed, he turned to go off and received a wound on the left shoulder which reached the bone and gave him much pain.

\_\_\_\_\_. . . a soldier brandishing a broad sword of an uncommon size against the walls, out of which he struck fire plentifully.

\_\_\_\_\_ By this fatal manoeuvre three men were laid dead on the spot and two more struggling for life; but what showed a degree of cruelty unknown to British troops . . . was an attempt to fire upon or push with their bayonets the persons who undertook to remove the slain and wounded!

\_\_\_\_\_ On this, the Captain commanded them to fire; and more snow balls coming, he again said, fire, be the consequence what it will!

\_\_\_\_\_ A few minutes after nine o'clock four youths, named Edward Archbald, William Merchant, Francis Archbald, and John Leech, jun., came down Cornhill together . . .

\_\_\_\_\_ In less than a minute, ten or twelve of them came out with drawn cutlasses clubs, and bayonets and set upon the unarmed boys and young folk who stood them a little while but, finding the inequality of their equipment, dispersed.

\_\_\_\_\_ Thirty or forty persons, mostly lads, being by this means gathered in King Street, Capt. Preston with a party of men with charged bayonets, came from the main guard to the commissioner's house, the soldiers pushing their bayonets, crying, make way!

2. What terms does the author use in describing the British soldiers? What do these words suggest about the soldiers?

3. What terms does the author use in describing the colonists? What do these words suggest about the colonists?

4. Using evidence from the article, explain a possible motive for the British soldiers confronting the colonists.

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5. Using evidence from the article, explain a possible motive for the colonists confronting the British soldiers.

6. Does the author take the side of the British soldiers or of the colonists? Explain your answer using details from the article.



Were the British soldiers that fired upon a crowd of Bostonian colonists on March 5, 1770, justified in doing so? As a culminating project on the Boston Massacre you will write a paragraph answering this question. Your answer must be supported by primary source evidence.

### Source 3: John Bufford's lithograph of the Boston Massacre

**Teacher Notes Day 3--Introducing a different perspective on the Massacre**  
Project the image for whole class. Review the analysis process used with Paul Revere's engraving (Source 1). Students should try this analysis independently.

#### Vocabulary

- abolitionist—a person wanting to abolish (get rid of) slavery
- lithograph—an image created using a metal plate for printing
- perspective—point of view

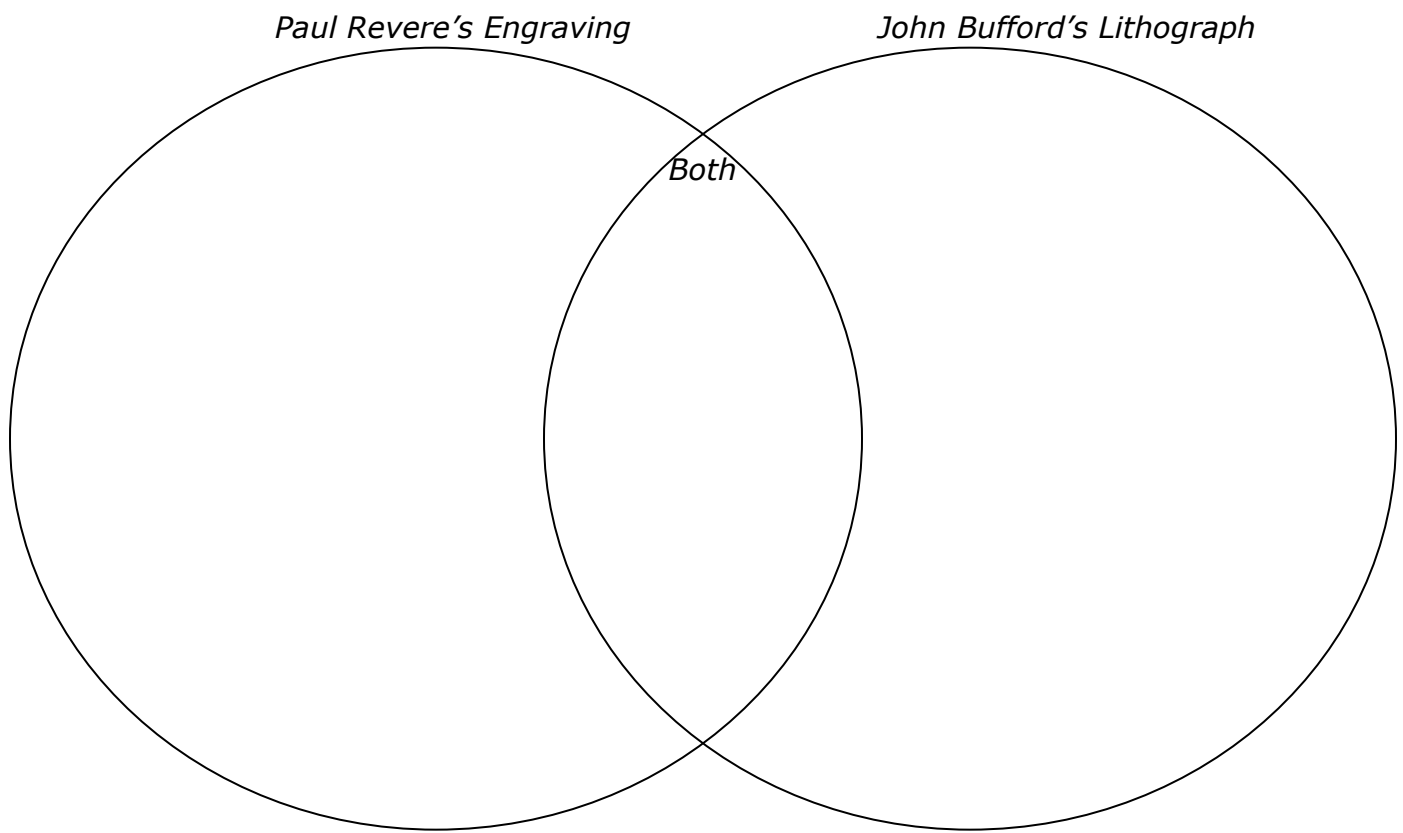
Document Notes: John Bufford's lithograph, a variation Paul Revere's engraving depicting Crispus Attucks death during the Boston Massacre. Used as a symbol for abolitionists during the Civil War. Created in 1856.



Source  
<http://www.bostonmassacre.net>

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1. Describe what you see on the right side of the picture?
  - a) How are the people organized?
  - b) How many people are there?
  - c) What are they doing?
  - d) What can you tell about the people from their clothing and their expressions?
2. Describe what you see on the left side of the picture?
  - a) How are the people organized?
  - b) How many people are there?
  - c) What are they doing?
  - d) What can you tell about the people from their clothing and their expressions?
3. What does this image tell us about the event that occurred on March 5, 1770?
4. Does the artist take the side of the British soldiers or of the colonists? Explain your answer using details from the image.
5. Compare and contrast Source 1, Paul Revere's engraving, and Source 3, John Bufford's lithograph of the Boston Massacre.



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## Source 4: Captain Preston's Trial Transcripts

Teacher Notes Day 4--Introducing the Trial: teachers may want to shorten Preston's transcript.

### Vocabulary

- melancholy—sad, glum
- imminent—coming soon
- provocations—needling, baiting
- prelude—before something happens
- vengeance—revenge, getting even
- plundering--robbing
- sentry—a soldier on guard duty
- commotion—noise and movement
- beacon—light to alert people

Document Note: This is a Captain Thomas Preston's account of the Boston Massacre taken from the trial transcripts.

### Captain Thomas Preston's Account of the Boston Massacre

On Monday night about 8 o'clock two soldiers were attacked and beat. But the party of the townspeople in order to carry matters to the utmost length, broke into two meeting houses and rang the alarm bells, which I supposed was for fire as usual, but was soon undeceived. About 9 some of the guard came to and informed me the town inhabitants were assembling to attack the troops, and that the bells were ringing as the signal for that purpose and not for fire, and the **beacon**



*beacon*

intended to be fired to bring in the distant people of the country. This, as I was captain of the day, occasioned my repairing immediately to the main guard. In my way there I saw the people in great **commotion**, and heard them use the most cruel and horrid threats against the troops. In a few minutes after I reached the guard, about 100 people passed it and went towards the custom house where the king's money is lodged. They immediately surrounded the **sentry** posted there, and with clubs and other weapons threatened to execute their **vengeance** on him. I was soon informed by a townsman their intention was to carry off the soldier from his post and probably murder him. On which I desired him to return for further intelligence, and he soon came back and assured me he heard the mob declare they would murder him. This I feared might be a **prelude** to their **plundering** the king's chest. I immediately sent a non-commissioned officer and 12 men to protect both the sentry and the king's money, and very soon followed myself to prevent, if possible, all disorder, fearing lest the officer and soldiers, by the insults and **provocations** of the rioters, should be thrown off their guard and commit some rash act.



*sentry*

They soon rushed through the people, and by charging their bayonets in half-circles, kept them at a little distance. Nay, so far was I from intending the death of any person that I suffered the troops to go to the

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spot where the unhappy affair took place without any loading in their pieces; nor did I ever give orders for loading them. This remiss conduct in me perhaps merits censure; yet it is evidence, resulting from the nature of things, which is the best and surest that can be offered, that my intention was not to act offensively, but the contrary part, and that not without compulsion. The mob still increased and were more outrageous, striking their clubs or bludgeons one against another, and calling out, come on you rascals, you bloody backs, you lobster scoundrels, fire if you dare, G-d damn you, fire and be damned, we know you dare not, and much more such language was used. At this time I was between the soldiers and the mob, parleying with, and endeavouring all in my power to persuade them to retire peaceably, but to no purpose. They advanced to the points of the bayonets, struck some of them and even the muzzles of the pieces, and seemed to be endeavouring to close with the soldiers. On which some well behaved persons asked me if the guns were charged. I replied yes. They then asked me if I intended to order the men to fire. I answered no, by no means, observing to them that I was advanced before the muzzles of the men's pieces, and must fall a sacrifice if they fired; that the soldiers were upon the half cock and charged bayonets, and my giving the word fire under those circumstances would prove me to be no officer. While I was thus speaking, one of the soldiers having received a severe blow with a stick, stepped a little on one side and instantly fired, on which turning to and asking him why he fired without orders, I was struck with a club on my arm, which for some time deprived me of the use of it, which blow had it been placed on my head, most probably would have destroyed me.

On this a general attack was made on the men by a great number of heavy clubs and snowballs being thrown at them, by which all our lives were in **imminent** danger, some persons at the same time from behind calling out, damn your bloods-why don't you fire. Instantly three or four of the soldiers fired, one after another, and directly after three more in the same confusion and hurry. The mob then ran away, except three unhappy men who instantly expired, in which number was Mr. Gray at whose rope-walk the prior quarrels took place; one more is since dead, three others are dangerously, and four slightly wounded. The whole of this **melancholy** affair was transacted in almost 20 minutes. On my asking the soldiers why they fired without orders, they said they heard the word fire and supposed it came from me. This might be the case as many of the mob called out fire, fire, but I assured the men that I gave no such order; that my words were, don't fire, stop your firing. In short, it was scarcely possible for the soldiers to know who said fire, or don't fire, or stop your firing. On the people's assembling again to take away the dead bodies, the soldiers supposing them coming to attack them, were making ready to fire again, which I prevented by striking up their firelocks with my hand. Immediately after a townsman came and told me that 4 or 5000 people were assembled in the next street, and had sworn to take my life with every man's with me. On which I judged it unsafe to remain there any longer, and therefore sent the party and sentry to the main guard, where the street is narrow and short, there telling them off into street firings, divided and planted them at each end of the street to secure their rear, momentarily expecting an attack, as there was a constant cry of the inhabitants to arms, to arms, turn out with your guns; and the town drums beating to arms, I ordered my drums to beat to arms, and being soon after joined by the different companies of the 29th regiment, I formed them as the guard into street firings. The 14th regiment also got under arms but remained at their barracks. I immediately sent a sergeant with a party to Colonel Dalrymple, the commanding officer, to acquaint him with every particular. Several officers going to join their regiment were knocked down by the mob, one very much wounded and his sword taken from him. The lieutenant-governor and Colonel Carr soon after met at the head of the 29th regiment and agreed that the regiment should retire to their barracks, and the people to their houses, but I kept the picket to

Source

<http://www.bostonmassacre.net>

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strengthen the guard. It was with great difficulty that the lieutenant-governor prevailed on the people to be quiet and retire. At last they all went off, excepting about a hundred.

1. Using the information in this newspaper article about the Boston Massacre put the following events in order.

\_\_\_\_\_ At this time I was between the soldiers and the mob, parleying with, and endeavouring all in my power to persuade them to retire peaceably . . .

\_\_\_\_\_ Immediately after a townsman came and told me that 4 or 5000 people were assembled in the next street, and had sworn to take my life with every man's with me.

\_\_\_\_\_ In my way there I saw the people in great **commotion**, and heard them use the most cruel and horrid threats against the troops.

\_\_\_\_\_ I immediately sent a non-commissioned officer and 12 men to protect both the sentry and the king's money, . . .

\_\_\_\_\_ I assured the men that I gave no such order; that my words were, don't fire, stop your firing.

\_\_\_\_\_ On Monday night about 8 o'clock two soldiers were attacked and beat.

2. What terms does Captain Thomas Preston use in describing the colonists? What do these words suggest about the colonists?

3. Using evidence from the transcripts, explain a possible motive for the British soldier confronting the colonists.

4. Identify two events that differ in the explanation the newspaper gave of the Boston Massacre and Captain Preston's account.

5. Does Captain Preston's explanation change your view about what happened at the Boston Massacre? Explain.

Were the British soldiers that fired upon a crowd of Bostonian colonists on March 5, 1770, justified in doing so? As a culminating project on the Boston Massacre you will write a paragraph answering this question. Your answer must be supported by primary source evidence.

## Source 5: Dr. Jeffries's Testimony

Day 4 or 5 depending on time available.

### Vocabulary

- defense—a lawyer who defends the accused; prove the person on trial not guilty
- prosecution—a lawyer who represents the government; prove the person guilty
- surgeon—a doctor
- apprehensive—worried, uneasy
- native—born in that country (Ireland)
- quell—control, subdue
- malice—with meanness, meaning to do harm

Document Note: This is Dr. Jeffries testimony given at the trial of Captain Preston.

Q. Was you Patrick Carr's **surgeon**?

A. I was...

Q. Was he [Carr] **apprehensive** of his danger?

A. He told me...he was a **native** of Ireland, that he had frequently seen mobs, and soldiers called upon to **quell** them...he had seen soldiers often fire on the people in Ireland, but had never seen them bear half so much before they fired in his life...

Q. When had you the last conversation with him?

A. About four o'clock in the afternoon, preceeding the night on which he died, and he then particularly said, he forgave the man whoever he was that shot him, he was satisfied he had no **malice**, but fired to defend himself.

Source

<http://www.bostonmassacre.net>

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1. What happened to Patrick Carr?

2. According to Dr. Jeffries testimony, how did Patrick Carr feel about the man who shot him? Explain.

3. Does Dr. Jeffries's testimony support the Defense or the Prosecution? Explain.

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## Paragraph Scoring Rubric

<b>A range</b>	Student has taken a stance and supports their opinion with 4 details from two of the primary source documents. Paragraph will be 8-10 well written sentences long.
<b>B range</b>	Student has taken a stance and supports their opinion with 2-3 details from primary documents. Paragraph will be 5-7 sentences long.
<b>C range</b>	Student has taken a stance, but does not support with details from primary source documents. Paragraph will be at least 5 sentences long.
<b>D-F</b>	Student's stance is vague or unclear and not supported. Paragraph is less than 5 sentences long.