

As tensions between the colonists and the British grew, a split developed and widened between those taking sides in America.

Loyalists, (colonists who chose to remain loyal to the king), kept a close watch on patriots (those opposing British laws). In Boston, General Thomas Gage, the British commander-in-chief in the colonies, made plans to seize patriot arms and ammunition stored at the nearby town of Concord. He also decided to arrest Sam Adams and John Hancock, two patriot leaders who were hiding out in the neighboring village of Lexington.

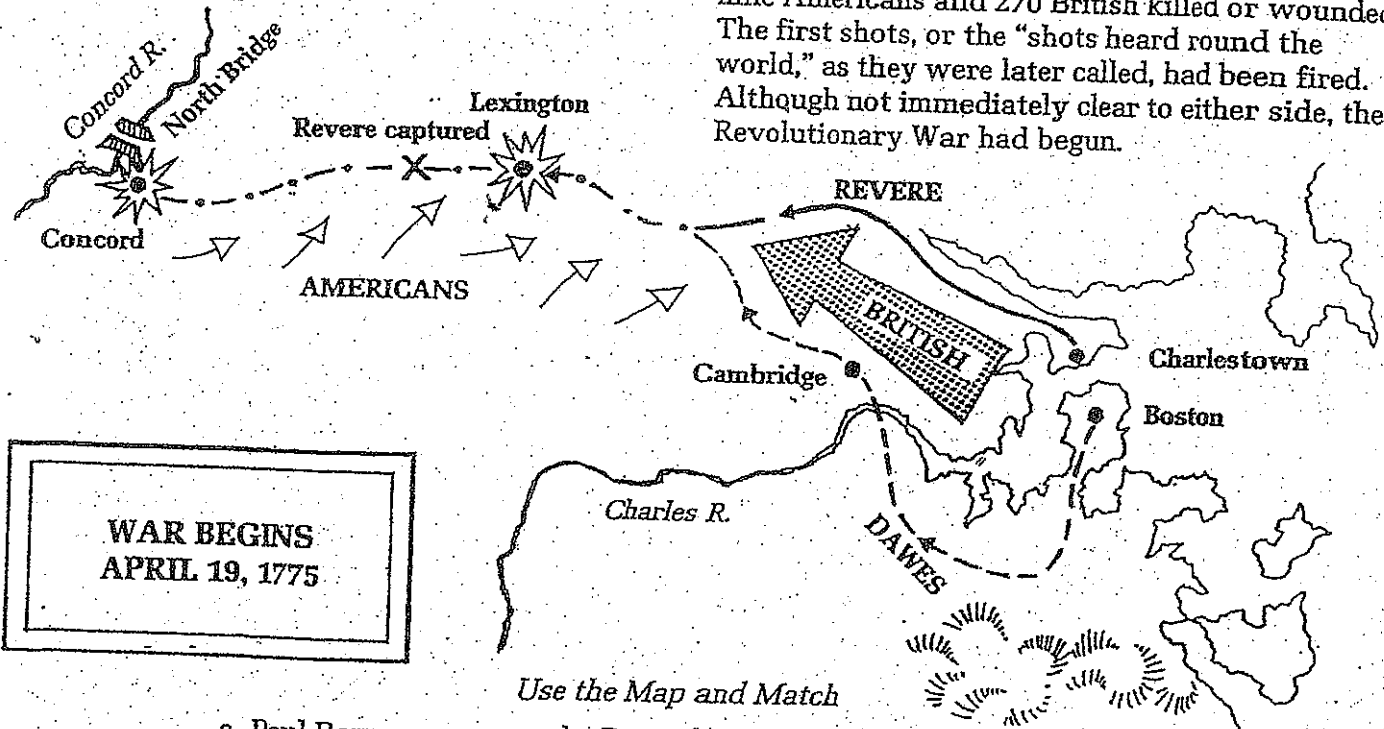
Through spies, the patriots learned of Gage's plans. By a prearranged signal in Boston, patriots would warn those in Lexington if the British were marching their way.

Near midnight, April 18, 1775, Gage sent his soldiers toward Lexington. Paul Revere and William Dawes rode ahead to warn the local minutemen, or patriot volunteers. Adams and Hancock escaped.

At dawn, seventy minutemen met the English soldiers on the village green at Lexington. Shots were fired. When the smoke cleared, eight colonists were dead and ten wounded.

Pressing on to Concord, the British were again engaged in fighting, this time at the bridge north of Concord. Here, British soldiers were killed. As the British retreated back to Boston, they were fired upon by minutemen hiding behind rocks and trees.

At day's end, the casualties had mounted: forty-nine Americans and 270 British killed or wounded. The first shots, or the "shots heard round the world," as they were later called, had been fired. Although not immediately clear to either side, the Revolutionary War had begun.



Use the Map and Match

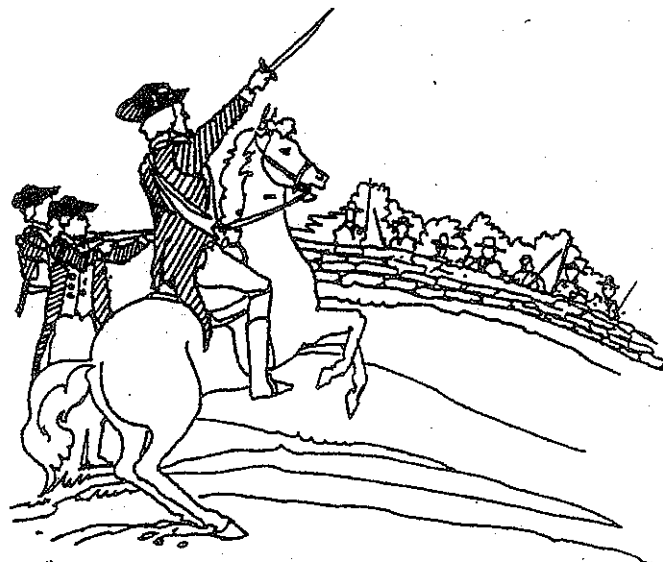
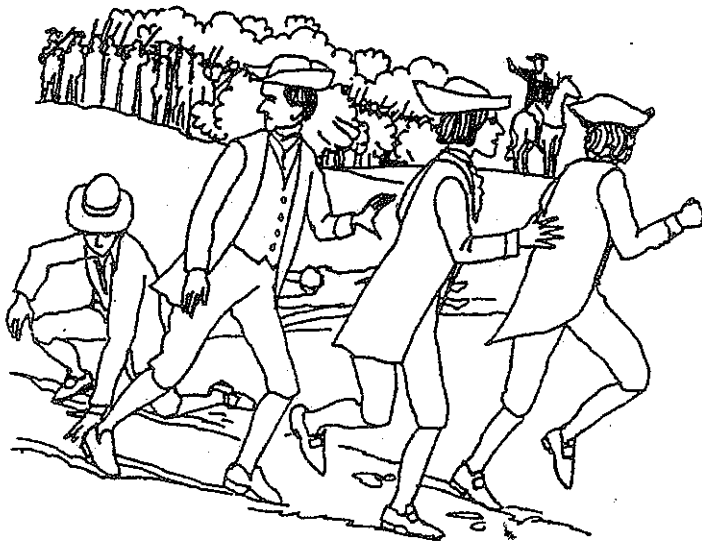
- a. Paul Revere                      b. General Gage                      c. William Dawes

1. Which rider left from Boston to warn the minutemen of the British march? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Which rider left from Charlestown? \_\_\_\_\_
 

a. Jamestown                      b. Lexington                      c. Concord
3. What village did both riders manage to reach? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Which town had Paul Revere passed when he was captured? \_\_\_\_\_
 

a. Village Green                      b. North Bridge                      c. South Bridge
5. Where did the fighting at Concord take place? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Can you guess how the term "minutemen" originated? \_\_\_\_\_

The Battle of Lexington was the beginning of the fighting in what became known as the American Revolutionary War. The battle is shrouded in mystery, as conflicting accounts were published from the start. Below are excerpts from two newspapers, one American and the other British, which offered their respective readers different views of what happened that day on the Lexington green.



**From the *Salem Gazette*:**

*Last Wednesday, the 19th of April, the troops of His Britannic Majesty began hostilities against the people with a cruelty no less brutal than that received by our ancestors from the worst savages of the wilderness.*

*At Lexington a company of militia about 100 strong, gathered near the meeting house. The troops arrived within sight of the militia, just before sunrise. Approaching within a few feet of them, the commanding officer spoke to the men of the militia roughly as follows: "Disperse, you rebels — throw down your arms and disperse!" At this the British troops cheered. Immediately one or two officers fired their pistols, and then instantly four or five of the soldiers fired their guns. Then all of the troops seemed to fire their weapons. Eight of our men were killed, and nine were wounded.*

**From the *London Gazette*:**

*When they (British soldiers) arrived at Lexington they found an armed group of the country people on a village green close to the road. When the king's troops marched up to them to ask why they were assembled there, they ran off in great confusion. Then several guns opened fire upon the king's troops from behind a stone wall, and also from the meeting house and other houses. One man was wounded and Major Pitcairn's horse was shot in two places. Because of this attack by the rebels, the troops returned the fire and killed several of them.*

*After this, the detachment marched on to Concord without anything further happening.*

*Review and Write*

- Describe how the two accounts both agree and disagree. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- Who do you feel was at fault for the bloodshed? Why do you think so? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
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