



Countdown to Revolution: Cause Tracker

Objective: Students will investigate the causes of the American Revolution by visiting key Boston landmarks and identifying how each site represents a cause or tension that led to the war.

Activity Locations:

- Boston Massacre Site
- Old State House
- Faneuil Hall
- Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum
- Paul Revere House
- Old South Meeting House
- King's Chapel (optional)

Activity Overview:

Students act as history detectives, collecting evidence of growing colonial anger and resistance. At each site, they'll answer: **"What happened here, and how did it help cause the American Revolution?"**

Guiding Questions for Students:

- Who was involved in the event?
- What unfair law or action upset the colonists?
- How did this event bring the colonies closer to revolution?

Wrap-Up (Discussion or Reflection):

After visiting several sites, students reflect on the top three causes they believe were most important and why.

Optional Wrap-Up Prompt:

If you were a colonist in Boston in 1775, would you support starting a revolution? Why or why not?



Cause Tracker

Site	What Happened Here?	Why Did It Matter?
Boston Massacre Site	Example: British soldiers fired on colonists during a protest.	This increased colonial anger and made many want to break away from Britain.
Old South Meeting House		
Boston Tea Party Ships & Museums		
Paul Revere House		
Old State House		
Faneuil Hall		
Kings Chapel		



Life, Liberty, and Boston

Objective: Students will explore historic Boston sites to uncover how the principles of the Declaration of Independence—such as liberty, natural rights, government by consent, and the right to revolt—were shaped by events in the city.

Learning Outcomes:

- Identify the key principles in the Declaration of Independence.
- Connect real-world historical events to abstract civic ideals.
- Practice interpreting historical meaning through site-based learning.

Key Locations:

- Old State House (birthplace of many protests and debates)
- Faneuil Hall (aka "The Cradle of Liberty")
- Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum
- Paul Revere House
- Boston Massacre Site
- Granary Burying Ground (graves of Declaration signers: Samuel Adams, John Hancock)

Activity Overview: Principles in Action Passport

Students receive a Declaration Passport with key principles from the Declaration of Independence. At each site, they will explain what happened, identify the principle represented (by number), and explain how that principle applies.

Wrap-Up Activity:

Ask students:

- Which Boston site do you think best showed one of the Declaration's ideas? Why?
- Do you think the colonists were justified in declaring independence? Explain with evidence from a site.



Declaration Passport

Key Principles from the Declaration:

1. All people have rights, such as life and liberty.
2. The government should get its power from the people.
3. If the government is unfair, people can change or replace it.
4. All people are created equal.

Site	What Happened Here?	Which Principle?	Why?
Old State House	The reading of the Declaration of Independence	2	The public reading of the Declaration of Independence from the balcony of the Old State House represents the key principle of popular sovereignty - the idea that a government's power comes from the people.
Faneuil Hall			
Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum			
Paul Revere House			
Boston Massacre Site			
Granary Burying Ground			



Victory Makers: What Helped the Patriots Win?

Objective: Students will visit sites in Boston that highlight military events, strategies, people, and ideas that helped shape the outcome of the Revolutionary War. They will identify the factors (leadership, foreign allies, geography, and citizens) that turned the tide in those locations.

Locations in Boston:

- Bunker Hill Monument
- Old North Church
- Paul Revere House
- Faneuil Hall
- USS Constitution Museum
- Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum
- (Optional) Dorchester Heights (geographic advantage site)

Activity Overview: Victory Factors Field Guide

Students will use a worksheet to track how each site represents a factor that influenced the war's outcome. At each stop, they'll choose which factor is best represented and explain why.

Wrap-Up:

Which factor do you think was most important in helping the Patriots win—and why? Support your answer with at least one site you visited today.

Learning Outcomes:

- Connect real-world locations to abstract historical outcomes.
- Understand the multiple contributing factors that led to a major historical event.
- Strengthen reasoning and evidence-based explanation skills.



Victory Maker Chart

Site	What Happened Here?	Victory Maker	How?
Bunker Hill Monument	First major battle of the war	Smart strategy	Even though the British won, the Patriots proved they could stand up to the British army.
Old North Church			
Paul Revere House			
Faneuil Hall			
USS Constitution Museum			
Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum			

Victory Makers:

- **Smart Strategy** – Military tactics or surprise moves
- **Strong Leadership** – Important decisions or speeches
- **Support from People** – Civilians helping the war effort
- **Help from Allies** – Help from France or other countries
- **Geography** – Using land and space to their advantage
- **Big Ideas** – Patriot beliefs or inspiring words

Students choose **one** factor per site and explain their choice in a sentence or two.



Revolution Through Their Eyes

Objective: Students explore Boston’s Revolutionary sites to investigate how different social groups were affected by the American Revolution. At each stop, they’ll imagine the event from someone else’s point of view and explain how it changed their life.

Learning Outcomes:

- Understand that the Revolution had complex, varied effects on different people
- Practice empathy and historical perspective-taking
- Develop critical thinking about freedom, justice, and equality

Locations:

- Old South Meeting House – Voices of protest from diverse citizens
- Granary Burying Ground – Graves of key figures, including those who fought for freedom
- Museum of African American History
- Paul Revere House – Role of craftsmen, families, and tradespeople
- Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum – Different perspectives on protest
- Faneuil Hall – Speeches and debates that excluded or included certain groups

Activity Overview: Walk in Their Shoes Journal

Students will receive a short list of social groups and, at each site, pick one to focus on. They’ll reflect on how that person might have experienced or been affected by the Revolution.

Sample Journal Page (repeated per site):

Site:

Choose a perspective:

Woman Enslaved Person Loyalist Patriot Child Native American Tradesperson |

What happened here?

How would this group have felt or been affected by this event or place?

Guiding Prompts:

- Would this group have supported the Revolution?
- What risks or opportunities did this event create for them?
- What was life like for them before and after the war?

Wrap-Up Activity:

Students choose one group and write a short first-person journal entry starting with:

“I lived through the American Revolution as a(n) _____. This is how it changed my life...”



Voices of Boston

Objective: Students will collect direct quotes from informational materials (brochures, exhibit labels, and historical accounts) during their trip and use them to discuss and explain the causes, events, and impact of Boston on the American Revolution.

Learning Outcomes:

- Students practice quoting informational sources accurately
- They learn to support ideas with text evidence
- They deepen their understanding of the historical context and consequences of events in Boston on the American Revolution

Before the Visit (Optional Prep Activity):

- Introduce the American Revolution with a short classroom reading or video.
- Discuss what a quote is and how it can be used to support ideas.
- Share sentence starters:
 - According to the museum brochure...
 - One exhibit label explained that...
 - A historical account said...
 -

During the Trip: Quote Collectors Activity

Step 1: Give each student (or small group) a Quote Collection Sheet to complete during their visit to various sites.

Step 2: Collect quotes from different sources

Examples:

- Museum Exhibit Label: "The flames kindled on the night of the Boston Tea Party have spread over the whole continent."
- Brochure: "On that night, the foundation of American Independence was laid".
- Tour Guide or Digital Kiosk: "Boston is now and ever shall be the cradle of liberty".

Students record:

- The quote
- The source (brochure, label, guide, etc.)
- A quick note on what it explains

Step 3: Discussion or Reflection

After the tour, students:

- Share one of their quotes in small groups
- Use it to explain something they learned



Pilgrim Perspectives

Objective: Students will explore exhibits about the Mayflower Compact and the first Thanksgiving, identify the main ideas and key details, and create a brief, clear summary of each event.

Learning Outcomes:

- Identify the main idea and key details from historical texts or exhibits.
- Summarize key events using their own words.
- Practice clear, concise historical thinking and writing.

Locations:

- Plimoth Patuxet Museums
- Mayflower II (reproduction ship)
- Pilgrim Hall Museum
- National Monument to the Forefathers

Activity Steps:

1. Explore & Observe

Students visit relevant exhibits, reading posted materials, brochures, or listening to guides.

Topics:

- The Mayflower Compact: Why it was written, what it said, who signed it.
- The First Thanksgiving: Who was there, what happened, and why it's remembered.

2. Main Idea Practice

Use a notebook to write down the main idea and two supporting details for each topic:

Prompts to guide them:

- What was the purpose of the Mayflower Compact?
- What agreements did the Pilgrims make?
- Why did the Pilgrims and Wampanoag gather together in 1621?
- What made the first Thanksgiving important?

3. Quick Summary Challenge

After completing the chart, students write a 1–2 sentence summary of each event in their own words.

Example: The Mayflower Compact was a set of rules written by the Pilgrims to govern their new colony fairly. The first Thanksgiving was a feast between the Pilgrims and the Wampanoag to celebrate the harvest and their new friendship.

4. Share & Compare

In small groups, students read their summaries and discuss:

- Were their main ideas similar?
- What details stood out most?



Ride Like Revere — Understanding His Impact

Objective: Students will explore Paul Revere's historic midnight ride, analyze its significance, and explain how his actions contributed to the start of the American Revolution.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this activity, students will be able to:

- Describe Paul Revere's midnight ride and its purpose.
- Explain how his actions helped alert colonial militias.
- Analyze why his ride was a turning point in the lead-up to the Revolutionary War.

Activity Overview:

Students study the story of Paul Revere's ride. They will gather clues from historical sites, interpret the purpose of his actions, and explain how his warning helped spark revolutionary change.

Activity Steps:

1. Start at the Paul Revere House

- Students explore the home and its exhibits to learn about Revere's life, role as a silversmith, and involvement in the Sons of Liberty.
- Prompt: What skills or experiences might have helped Paul Revere become an important messenger for the Patriots?

2. Visit the Old North Church

- Tour Guides or signs explain the "One if by land, two if by sea" signal.
- Students discuss the logistics of the signal system and why it was a clever form of communication.
- Prompt: Why was Revere's message urgent, and what risk did he take to deliver it?

3. Freedom Trail Walk / Site Clues

- Students look for plaques or historical markers related to Revere's ride.
- Find a map of Revere's ride, track his route, and identify key locations. (Charlestown, Lexington, Concord).

4. Reflection

- Have students write a short journal entry as if they were Paul Revere, describing:
 - What they saw
 - Who they warned
 - Why it mattered
- OR: Create a news headline announcing the ride and its importance.

Optional Add-On: [Interactive Map](#)



History Words in the Wild – Vocabulary Scavenger Hunt

Learning Objective:

Students will identify and interpret the meaning of historical vocabulary using context clues.

Overview: While exploring historical sites, students will hunt for and decode historical vocabulary used in signs, plaques, primary sources, and guided tours.

- Give students a list or bingo card with academic words they might encounter during the trip.
- As they see or hear the words (in signs, documents, or tour guide narration), they highlight or check them off.
- Context Clues
 - For each word found, students write down the sentence or phrase they saw/heard it in.
 - Then, they use context clues to write a brief definition in their own words.
- Word Share
 - After the activity, gather the group and have students share a word they found tricky or interesting.
 - Discuss how the context helped them determine its meaning and why the word is important to understanding the historical topic.

Word List Suggestions

colony, settlement, charter, assembly, patriot, loyalist, governance, constitution.

harbor, maritime, trade route, shipbuilding, commerce, currency, acts, siege, treaty, Hessians, militia, minutemen, redcoats, boycott, grievance, independence, legislature, parliament, ratify, rebellion, taxation, blockade, trial, heresy, hysteria, rigging, mast, hull, galleon Puritan, dissenter, theology, congregation, sermon, persecution.



The Boston Massacre Investigation - A Tale of Two Stories

Overview

Students analyze and compare two different accounts of the Boston Massacre:

- A written eyewitness account (e.g., by a British soldier or a colonial patriot)
- Paul Revere's famous engraving of the Boston Massacre

Learning Objective:

Students will evaluate differing perspectives on the same historical event and understand how bias and purpose influence the portrayal of events.

Activity Steps:

- Visit the location of the Boston Massacre near the Old State House. A guide or educator sets the scene by providing key facts and background information.
- Document Comparison
 - Read the brief excerpts from two different historical accounts (one from a Loyalist perspective and one from a Patriot perspective).
 - Show students a copy of Paul Revere's engraving and ask questions about what they see.
- Group Discussion / Guided Analysis
 - What are the similarities and differences between the two sources?
 - What message is each trying to send?
 - What might be the purpose or bias behind each version?
- Reflection & Share
 - In small groups, students create a quick news report or journal entry based on the version they believe is more accurate, explaining their reasoning.

Patriot perspective: A Short Narrative of the Horrid Massacre in Boston

"Thus were we, in aggravation of our other embarrassments, embarrassed with troops, forced upon us... The blood of our fellow citizens running like water thro' King-Street..."

This account paints the victims as innocent citizens and emphasizes the violence inflicted by the soldiers, portraying the event as a cruel and unprovoked attack by an oppressive military force.

Loyalist perspective: Captain Thomas Preston's deposition

"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..."

In his trial testimony, Captain Preston, the commander of the British squad, describes the crowd as a violent and dangerous mob that threatened the soldiers' lives, forcing them to act in self-defense.

The excerpt from the Patriot perspective of the Boston Massacre comes from the anonymously published *A Short Narrative of the Horrid Massacre in Boston*, distributed shortly after the event. A Loyalist account is provided through Captain Thomas Preston's deposition, published in *A Fair Account of the Late Unhappy Disturbance at Boston*.



History Through Many Lenses

Learning Objective: Students will gather, compare, and synthesize information from various formats and media at a historical site.

Overview: Students will explore a historical site and gather information about a specific topic or person by using multiple sources found on-site (plaques, brochures, museum labels, guide narration, and digital kiosks).

Activity Steps:

Assign a Topic or Focus Question

Example topics: What was daily life like for colonists? or Why was Boston important to the American Revolution?

Source Gathering

Students use a graphic organizer or notebook to collect information from at least three different sources:

- A plaque or sign
- A brochure or printed handout
- A digital display, audio guide, or tour guide narration

Compare & Connect

In their organizer, students jot down key facts from each source and answer:

- What new information did each source provide?
- Did any of the sources say something different or unique?
- How did combining the sources help you better understand the topic?

Mini-Presentation

Students share a brief summary that highlights what they learned and how the sources complement each other.



History Through Many Lenses Graphic Organizer

Name:

Date:

Location/Site:

Focus Question:

Source #1: Plaque or Sign

- Where did you find it? (e.g., outside a building, museum exhibit):
- What did it say about your topic?

Source #2: Brochure or Printed Handout

- What section or page was it on?
- What information did it add about your topic?

Source #3: Digital or Spoken Resource (e.g., audio guide, digital screen, tour guide speech)

- What was the source? (circle one):
 - Audio Guide - Tour Guide - Museum Screen - Video Display
- What did you learn from it?

Compare & Connect

- Did each source tell you the same thing? If not, what was different?
- How did using more than one source help you understand the topic better?

Wrap-Up Summary

Write 2–3 sentences summarizing what you learned from all the sources combined:

