

Name: _____ Period: _____

Boston Massacre DBQ: Document 1

Background Information: In the 1700s, tensions were growing between Britain and America thanks in part to the taxes placed by the British Parliament on certain goods bought by American colonists. The colonists felt the taxes were unfair and began organizing their efforts to resist the increased intrusion by England into colonial affairs.

Tensions were especially high in busy seaports like Boston, Massachusetts, where taxes on imports would hurt the trade-based economy and impact colonists at all levels of society. As protests against the taxes began to spread, the British sent additional troops to America to enforce the laws. Tensions reached their peak on March 5, 1770, when British soldiers fired into a crowd of unhappy taxpayers, killing five of the colonists. The event would become known as the Boston Massacre.

This DBQ explores the question: Who was responsible for the Boston Massacre?

Document 1: Paul Revere's depiction of the landing of British troops in Boston, 1768

NOTE: Paul Revere was an American silversmith, engraver, and a Patriot in the American Revolution. He engraved this view of the 1768 landing of the British troops in Boston sent to suppress the disorder following the passing of the Townshend Acts, a set of laws that placed import taxes (duties) on glass, paper, paint, lead, and tea.

"A VIEW OF PART * OF THE TOWN OF * BOSTON IN NEW * ENGLAND * AND BRITISH SHIPS * OF WAR LANDING * THEIR TROOPS 1768"



Observations about the engraving:

Document 2: Thomas Preston, Captain British of the army, account of the Boston Massacre, 1770, deposition for trial

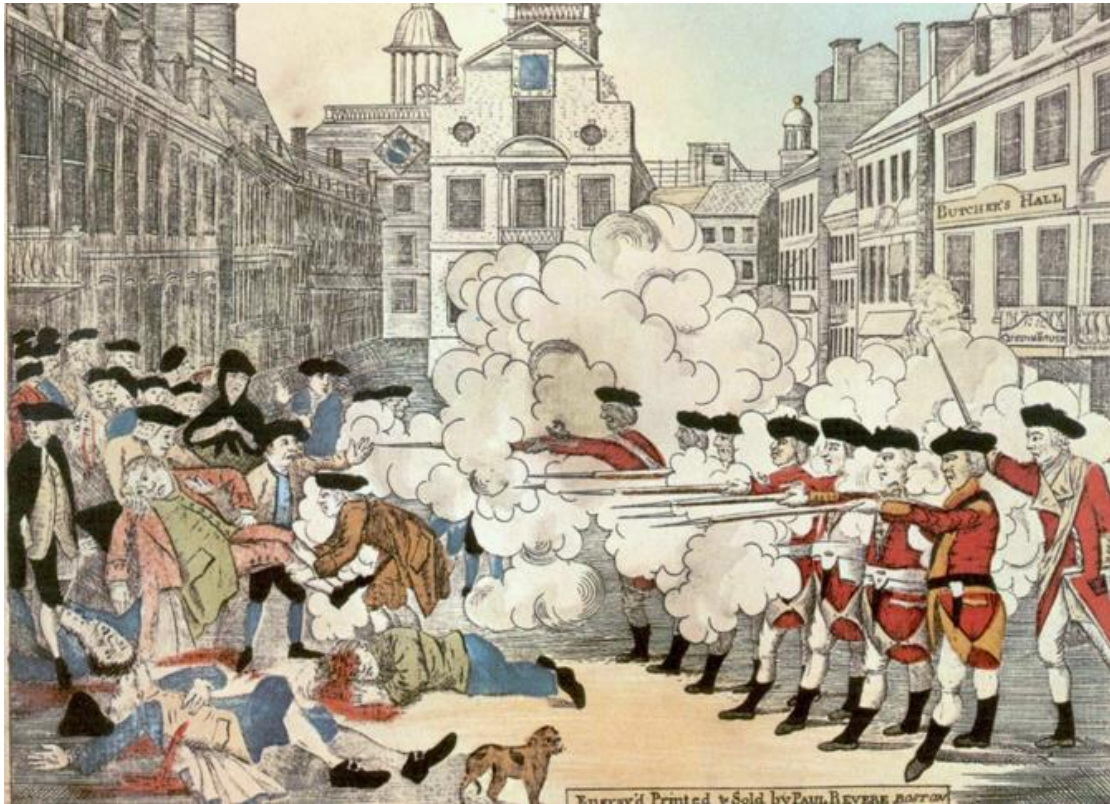
"On Monday night about 8 o'clock two [British] soldiers were attacked and beat. The guard informed me the town inhabitants were assembling to attack the troops. I saw the people in great commotion, and heard them use the most cruel and horrid threats against the troops... So far was I from intending the death of any person that I suffered the troops to go to the spot where the unhappy affair took place without any loading in their pieces (weapons); nor did I ever give orders for loading them.

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. 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.... 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, and [while] asking him why he fired without orders, I was struck with a club on my arm...

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 whole of this melancholy affair was transacted in almost 20 minutes. I assured the men 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. I am, though perfectly innocent, to expect but the loss of life in a very ignominious [disgraceful] manner."

Boston Massacre DBQ: Documents 3 and 4

Document 3: Paul Revere's engraving of the Boston Massacre, 1770



Document 4: British depiction of the Boston Massacre, 1770



Document 5: "Boston, March 12. The Town of Boston affords a recent and melancholy Demonstration ..." Article from pages 2-3 of *The Boston-Gazette, and Country Journal*, Number 779, 12 March 1770

Appearing a week after the Boston Massacre, this lengthy account includes details of the growing tensions and skirmishes in Boston that lead up to the violent outburst in front of the Custom House.

On the Evening of Monday, being the 5th Current, several Soldiers of the 29th Regiment were seen parading the Streets with their drawn Cutlasses and Bayonets, abusing and wounding Numbers of the Inhabitants.

A few minutes after nine o'clock, four youths, named Edward Archbald, William Merchant, Francis Archbald, and John Leech, junior, came down Cornhill together, and seperating at Doctor Loring's corner, the two former were passing the narrow alley leading to 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 a 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 thro' his cloaths inside the arm close to the arm-pit and grazed the skin. Merchant then struck the soldier with a short stick he had, & the other Person ran to the barrack & bro't with him two soldiers, one armed with a pair of tongs the other with a shovel: he with the tongs pursued Archbald back thro' the alley, collar'd and laid him over the head with the tongs.

The noise bro't people together, and John Hicks, a young lad, coming up, knock'd 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 10 or 12 of them came out with drawn cutlasses, clubs and bayonets and set upon the unarmed boys and young folks, who stood them a little while, but finding the inequality of their equipment dispersed.

On hearing the noise, one Samuel Atwood, came up to see what was the matter, and entering the alley from dock sqaure, heard the latter part of the combat, and when the boys had dispersed he met the 10 or 12 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 (unarmed) 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 ; 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 Kingstreet, where they attacked single and unarmed persons till they raised much clamor, 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 Kingstreet, Capt. Preston, with a party of men with charged bayonets, came from the main guard to the Commissioners 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 town man with a cudgel struck him over the hands with such force that he dropt his firelock; and rushing forward aimed a blow at the Captain's head, which graz'd his hat and fell pretty heavy upon his arm: However, the soldiers continued the fire, successively, till 7 or 8, or as some say 11 guns were discharged.

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

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.

Boston Massacre DBQ: Documents 6 and 7

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Document 6: Witness Jane Whitehouse's trial deposition.

"A Man came behind the Soldiers walked backwards and forward, encouraging them to fire. The Captain stood on the left about three yards. The man touched one of the Soldiers upon the back and said fire, by God I'll stand by you. He was dressed in dark colored clothes.... He did not look like an Officer. The man fired directly on the word and clap on the Shoulder. I am positive the man was not the Captain.... I am sure he gave no orders.... I saw one man take a chunk of wood from under his Coat throw it at a Soldier and knocked him. He fell on his face. His firelock⁷ was out of his hand.... This was before any firing."

Document 7: Witness Newton Prince, an African-American, a member of the South Church, trial deposition.

"Heard the Bell ring. Ran out. Came to the Chapel. Was told there was no fire but something better, there was going to be a fight. Some had buckets and bags and some Clubs. I went to the west end of the Town House where [there] were a number of people. I saw some Soldiers coming out of the Guard house with their Guns and running down one after another to the Custom house. Some of the people said let's attack the Main Guard, or the Centinel who is gone to King street. Some said for G-ds sake don't lets touch the main Guard. I went down. Saw the Soldiers planted by the Custom I house two deep. The People were calling them Lobsters, daring 'em to fire, saying damn you, why don't you fire. I saw Capt. Preston out from behind the Soldiers. In the front at the right. He spoke to some people. The Capt. stood between the Soldiers and the Gutter about two yards from the Gutter. (We) All saw two or three strike with sticks on the Guns. The People whilst striking on the Guns cried fire, damn you fire. I have heard no Orders given to fire, only the people in general cried fire."

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Boston Massacre DBQ: Document 1

Analysis Questions: Answer in at least TWO sentences (total) per question:

1. Author: Who created the source? What do you know about the author? How might that affect its meaning?

2. Context: When and where was it created? What was going on historically at that time and place? How might this affect its meaning?

3. Audience: For whom was this source created? (Infer who would most likely have been the people to see it.) How might this affect its meaning?

4. In the ribbon at the top, it says "The Town of Boston in New England and British Ships of War Landing Their Troops 1768". What evidence from that statement **shows bias** from Paul Revere's perspective? How could he have worded it to not include this bias? How might it have been worded if it had been created from a British point of view?

5. Does this picture represent a Positive or Negative view of the British's landing of troops in Boston? Use evidence from the picture to support your response.

6. Purpose/Significance: Use what you know about the time period and author to infer the **reason why** this source was created. What is the main idea of the source? Why is it important?

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Boston Massacre DBQ: Document 2, Analysis

Analysis Questions: Answer using at least two sentences per question.

(1) Author: What do you know about the person who is giving the testimony in this account of the Boston Massacre? How might this affect its meaning?

(2) Who is most responsible for the attack according to the speaker? Use **TWO** pieces of **evidence** from the source to support your opinion.

(3) What event in Thomas Preston's account do YOU think "started" the "massacre"?
Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

(4) Does Preston think he is to blame for this? How does he deflect or deny blame?
Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

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Boston Massacre DBQ: Documents 3 and 4

Analysis Questions: Answer in at least two sentences per question

(1) How might Paul Revere's status as a rebel/patriot influence your view of Document 3? Is there any evidence of bias on his part?

(2) How might the fact that Document 4 was produced for publication in a pro-British newspaper influence your view of this depiction? Does the source indicate bias?

(2) Compare and Contrast the two images. What are **two** similarities? What are **two** differences?

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Boston Massacre DBQ: Document 5 (Newspaper account), Analysis

Analysis Questions: Answer in at least two sentences per question

1. Author: Who created the source? How might that affect its meaning?

2. Audience: For whom was this source created? How might this affect its meaning?

3. In this account, what event or events “started” the “massacre”? **Use evidence** from the text to support your answer.

4. Who does the author think is to blame for the event? **Use evidence** from the text to support your answer.

5. According to the article, who do YOU think is most responsible for the attack? Use **TWO** pieces of evidence from the source to support your opinion.

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Boston Massacre DBQ: Documents 6 and 7- Analysis Question(s)

Answer with at least two complete sentences per question.

1. Do you think Jane Whitehouse and Newton Prince are reliable witnesses? Explain.

2. What, if anything, tells you they may not be biased towards any side?

3. Which side, if any, do their accounts appear to support? Specifically, which previous document(s) does their testimony corroborate (confirm)?

Conclusion: Based on ALL of the evidence, who was responsible for the Boston Massacre?