
MISSION 1: “For Crown or Colony?”
Part 2: A Death in Boston (February 22, 1770)
Writing Prompts

A NOTE TO THE EDUCATOR:

You will need to decide how best to share these writing prompts with your students. You might share them all and ask students to choose one for response. You might assign one or more to the entire group. You might make one or more of the topics the basis for in-class discussions. Make your decisions according to the needs of your group.

You may notice that many of the topics contain some version of the phrase, “Write about a time in your life...” The intention of these prompts is twofold: first, since students remember the content of their own lives, they can more easily respond to the questions and they are more likely to want to express themselves if they feel competent to do so; second, these questions can form a meaningful bridge between what happens in the lives of ordinary people today and the lives of people in history or in historical events themselves. For these reasons, you might decide to use some of those prompts before students encounter the history because thinking about them sets the students up to understand it and to relate to it.

Since students vary in their degree of comfort and skill in writing, you should decide when students write and how much students should write. We do suggest, though, that since students need to share their writing with each other to make personal and historical connections, you encourage them to focus on content rather than on mechanical skills. Pieces can be revised and edited later if you decide they should be shared more formally (such as on a bulletin board or newsletter).

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Read through all the topics. Then choose one of them to write about. Write the title of the piece at the top of your page. Write in complete sentences. After you are finished, proofread your work for correctness.

TOO YOUNG TO KNOW? Nat learns a fair amount of what he knows by overhearing things. While some of the things he hears are surprising and a bit upsetting, we get the feeling that Nat can manage the news he overhears without becoming upset. Write about a time or times in your life when you felt as Nat did, that is, you found out something adults felt you were too young to know about, or that, for some reason, they didn't want you to know. What happened? Were you upset? Explain.

DEAR NAT. Imagine you are Nat's mother or father back in Uxbridge. You just received Nat's letter (see the Part 2 vocabulary activity.). Now write a letter back to Nat telling him the news in Uxbridge and also responding to some of the things he says in his letter. Use as much of the Day 2 vocabulary as you can, and each time you use a word or term, underline it.

TAXES. No one much likes paying taxes, but it's not just paying taxes the colonists don't like. It's that Parliament, which passes the tax laws for the Empire, is made up of Englishmen, with no one from America to speak for Americans. Do you think that really matters? If so, why? If not, why not? Are Americans just acting like spoiled brats who don't want to pay their way? After all, they are protected from other countries by the British Army and the British Navy. Shouldn't they chip in for the cost of the protection as they do in England?

TAXES AND TEA. England has robust trade in tea with India and China. English traders export tea all over the world, including to the American colonies. Their tea business is so good, that the price of English tea, even with the tax added to it, is cheaper than tea imported from other parts of Europe. Also, you have drunk English tea your whole life, and you like it better. Would you go into Mr. Lillie's store and buy some? What obstacles would you face if you decided to do that? What risks might there be? Shouldn't you have the right to buy any tea you like? (You may choose to write from Nat's point-of-view.)

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IS LIBERTY TEA TEA?

One recipe for Liberty Tea (Mrs. Edes's favorite), is as follows:

- 3 tbs dried raspberry leaves
- 5 cups boiling water

What makes tea tea? Is Liberty tea really tea? On the internet, search on the term "What is tea?" Read at least three articles about tea. Then write: tell what tea is, where it comes from, and whether Liberty Tea is really tea. Is herbal tea really tea? Explain. Did you learn anything about tea that was surprising or particularly interesting? When you finish, have a cup of tea!

A CHILD DIES. Think about what you already know about the death of Christopher Seider. Now imagine this similar, contemporary situation: a group of adults go to protest a dealership that sells imported cars in your neighborhood. The protesters feel that when imports are made available, fewer American cars will be sold, and so fewer American workers will have jobs. A group of boys you know from school passes by. It looks like fun, so they join the protest. An angry man appears on the scene and yells at everyone to go home. The protesters hoot and boo and ignore him, but some of the boys laugh and throw rocks at the man. His wife, who is with him, gets hit. This angers him. He goes into a building. The boys throw rocks at the windows and break them. Suddenly, the man appears at one of the windows, points a shotgun at the crowd and fires. One of your schoolmates is shot, and he later dies.

- a. Think about this for a few minutes: Whose fault is it? The owner of the dealership? The protesters? The group of boys? The angry man? The man's wife? The boy who got shot? Explain your reasoning. If you feel more than one person is at fault, explain your thinking about that.
- b. Do you feel that a crime has been committed, or that this was just a terrible accident? Explain why.
- c. If the person who died had been an adult, would this seem as sad? If it was a girl? If it was a man in his nineties? Explain your reasoning.