
MISSION US: “For Crown or Colony?”
Part 3: March of the Apprentices (February 23-26, 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.

BROADSIDE. In the 18th Century, people created broadsides, like the one that Nat posted on the Liberty Tree, to communicate important information to community members. Think of a message that you would like to share with others in your school and create a one-sided poster with that information on it (similar to a “Wanted” poster or a poster about a missing pet). Include a heading at the top of the poster and a small drawing to show what the poster is about.

DESTROYING A MESSAGE. If you see a message posted in public and you don’t like it, is it okay to destroy it? Would your answer change depending on the content of the message? What would you do in the following situations? (Explain your reasoning.)

- a. You see a sign saying that a sports team that you really don’t like is the best team ever.
- b. You see a message or symbol (such as a swastika or a racial or ethnic slur) that is offensive to you or others.
- c. You see a poster for a political candidate whose views you oppose.
- d. You see a sign posted in a public space that has mean things written specifically about you.

SPREADING THE WORD. In Nat’s time, people shared ideas and political views through discussion, as well as through written messages that were hand-delivered or displayed in public places. Think about how people share ideas and political views today. What are some similarities and differences between the ways that we share information today and the ways that information was shared in Nat’s time?

A POEM TO REMEMBER. Phyllis writes a poem about a march and funeral. Think about something that has happened recently in your home, school or community. Write a poem to help others better understand what happened.

DELIVERING A MESSAGE. Nat is asked to deliver a message to Paul Revere, but is stopped by a redcoat who wants the message. What would you do if someone wanted to take a message away from you? What would you do in the following situations?:

- a. Your mom has given you a note asking your teacher for permission for you to miss school tomorrow so that you can go to an amusement park to celebrate your birthday. Another student stops you and asks you to give her your note. What do you do? Explain why.
- b. A student passes you a note and the teacher comes over and asks for you to give him the note. What do you do? Explain your reasoning
- c. You have written a love letter to another student. On the way to give the note to the student, a bully stops you in the hall and asks for the note. What do you do? Explain why.

DEAR NAT. Imagine you are Nat's brother, Samuel, back in Uxbridge. Your parents just received Nat's letter (see the Day 3 vocabulary activity), and shared it with you. 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 3 vocabulary as you can and each time you use a word or term, underline it.

PAMPHLET. In Nat's time, people created pamphlets with political, philosophical or religious arguments and essays about current events. Conduct research to see what different pamphlets look like (today and in the past) and see what type of information they contain. Think about a current or recent issue and create a pamphlet containing photographs, drawings, original poems, song lyrics, essays and/or other writings about that issue.

POLITICS. In the game, Nat encounters Phillis and others with strong political views. Identify one issue that people are passionate about today. Conduct research to find out different views that people have about this issue. Write an essay presenting the different sides of the issue and the reasons behind those views.