
MISSION 1: “For Crown or Colony?”
Epilogue (April, 1770-July 4, 1776)
Writing Prompts

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 ask students to write about events in their own lives. Since students remember the content of their own lives, they can more easily respond to these types of questions and 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.

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.

BOSTON TEA PARTY. Britain forced colonists to pay taxes on their tea and forced them to purchase all of their tea from the British East India Company. As a protest, the Sons of Liberty dumped good tea in the water. What do you think about their act of throwing tea in the water? Do you think that they should have done that? (Why or Why not?) What would you do if a law was passed that you disagreed with? (Explain.)

DEAR NEW APPRENTICE. Imagine you are Nat and have been asked to write a letter to a boy, also from Uxbridge, who is about to start working as an apprentice for Benjamin Edes. Write a letter to the new apprentice to inform him about some of the things that have happened in Boston since you started working for Master Edes. Describe some of the things you have learned about the printing business and Boston. Explain some of the vocabulary words from the Mission to him, so that he knows what they mean before he comes to Boston.

MY VIEW. “Common Sense,” written by Thomas Paine, was a 48-page pamphlet that promoted independence from Britain. It was written in very clear language that the general public could understand and clearly outlined reasons why it was important to pursue freedom from British rule. Choose a topic that is important to you and about which you have an opinion. Create a pamphlet to promote your point of view and present a compelling argument to convey your opinion. (For example, the importance of recycling, why dogs make the best pets, why it is important to wear seatbelts, etc.). Feel free to include photographs, drawings, original poems, song lyrics, essays and/or other writings about that issue.

NEWSPAPER. Every newspaper must make tough decisions about what stories to print and which ones should take up the most space and which should be featured on the front page and which on the inside pages. In Nat’s time, some people in Boston enjoyed reading the Boston Gazette, while others thought that it was “slanderous.” Create your own newspaper, highlighting important events in your family, school and/or community. Include at least 4 of the following: An interview, a letter to the editor, a news article, a sports article, a word puzzle, a cartoon, a photograph or drawing, an advertisement, an announcement (wedding, birth, etc.), as well as other features that you would like to include.

A PICTURE PAINTS A THOUSAND WORDS. Sometimes a story can be told very well through an image. Paul Revere's print of the Boston Massacre presents one view about what happened at the Boston Massacre and promotes a strong anti-British sentiment. Think about an event that has happened recently in your life or in the news and draw/ paint an image of it. In the image, feel free to exaggerate your depiction of what happened in order to promote a particular point of view. Write an accompanying description with details about what is happening in the image.



POINTS OF VIEW. People who witnessed the Boston Massacre and who participated in the subsequent trial of the redcoats differed in their views about what happened. Select two characters from the Mission, with differing perspectives about the Massacre and write up a discussion between them, during which the two voice their opinions about what happened. (Possible people could include: Constance Lillie, Royce Dillingham and Solomon Fortune, etc.)

Note to teacher- Here is an idea for an extension activity to conduct with your class:

MOCK TRIAL. Create a mock Boston Massacre trial with your students. Assign each student a specific person (judge, lawyer, witnesses, etc.) to portray in the trial. Ask students to conduct research to find out as much as possible about that person and the person's perspective about what happened at the Massacre. Ask students to write down their findings and to use their notes to help them portray their characters during the mock trial.