

Sources at the Scene

Compare evidence to investigate a past event.

SS.5.A.1 "Historical Inquiry and Analysis"

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two claims made by a source, and circle two details that show why people may have described the event differently. This will help you compare sources instead of trusting only one.

Investigating the Boston Massacre

- ① On March 5, 1770, a crowd gathered near the Custom House in Boston. British soldiers were there. Shots were fired, and five colonists died. People later called the event the Boston Massacre. To investigate, historians examine sources created at the time, including testimony from witnesses, a court record, and an engraving made soon after the shooting. Each source offers clues, but none tells every detail.
- ② One witness, merchant Richard Palmes, testified that he saw a soldier fire after being struck with a club. Another witness gave a different account. Captain Thomas Preston, who commanded the soldiers, gave an account saying he did not order the men to fire. Because each person stood in a different place and had different loyalties, historians compare their claims carefully.
- ③ An engraving by Paul Revere showed neat rows of soldiers firing together at unarmed townspeople. It was copied from an earlier image and used to build anger against British rule. At the soldiers' trial, lawyers questioned many witnesses. Preston and six soldiers were found not guilty, while two soldiers were convicted of manslaughter. The trial record helps historians check Revere's message against other evidence.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Why should historians compare Palmes's testimony with another witness's account?

2 What detail suggests that Revere's engraving had a purpose beyond simply recording the event?

3 Which source can historians use to check Revere's message, and how does it help?

4 Which source gives Captain Preston's point of view, and what does his account claim?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write exactly three sentences about one source in the passage that you would use to investigate the shooting. Name the source, explain what it can tell you, and explain one reason to compare it with another source.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline two claims made by a source, and circle two details that show why people may have described the event differently. This will help you compare sources instead of trusting only one. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why should historians compare Palmes's testimony with another witness's account?	Witnesses may have stood in different places and had different loyalties, so they could describe the shooting differently.
2	What detail suggests that Revere's engraving had a purpose beyond simply recording the event?	It was used to build anger against British rule, and it showed soldiers firing at unarmed townspeople.
3	Which source can historians use to check Revere's message, and how does it help?	The trial record can help because lawyers questioned many witnesses and the verdicts provide other evidence to compare with the engraving.
4	Which source gives Captain Preston's point of view, and what does his account claim?	Preston's account gives his point of view. It claims that he did not order the soldiers to fire.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would use the trial record to learn how many soldiers were convicted. It is useful because lawyers questioned many witnesses during the trial. I would still compare it with witness accounts, since people saw the shooting from different places.

Accept equivalent evidence-based explanations that identify a source's point of view, purpose, or limits. For the open response, accept any passage source if the student names what it can show and gives a reasonable reason to compare it with another source.