

Voices of Boston

Compare sources to build a supported explanation of the Boston Massacre.

SS.8.A.1 "Use research and inquiry skills to analyze American History using primary and secondary sources."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the names of sources in the passage. Circle words or phrases that show a source's point of view, purpose, or possible limit.

Investigating the Boston Massacre

- ① On March 5, 1770, a tense crowd gathered near the Customs House in Boston. British soldiers fired into the crowd, killing five colonists. Soon afterward, witnesses gave sworn depositions describing what they saw. These statements are primary sources because the witnesses lived through the event. Yet their accounts do not match perfectly. Some witnesses said colonists threw snowballs and clubs. Others focused on the soldiers' firing and the people who fell. Researchers must consider each witness's location and point of view.
- ② Paul Revere published an engraving of the event later that month. It shows British soldiers standing in a neat line and firing at colonists, while an officer appears to order them to fire. Revere based his print on a drawing by Henry Pelham. Because it was made in 1770, it is also a primary source. However, the engraving strongly supports the Patriot cause. It presents the soldiers as deliberate attackers, so it is useful evidence of Patriot opinion, not a neutral picture of every action.
- ③ At the soldiers' trials, lawyers questioned witnesses under oath. Captain Thomas Preston and six soldiers were acquitted, while two soldiers were convicted of manslaughter. John Adams, who defended the soldiers, argued that they acted in self-defense. Later historians use trial records, depositions, and the engraving together. They ask who created each source, why it was made, and which details appear in more than one source. This comparison can produce a better-supported explanation, even when no single source tells the whole story.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 Name two primary sources from the passage. What makes each one a primary source?

2 What disagreement appears in the witness depositions? Explain why this disagreement matters to a historian.

3 What point of view does Revere's engraving support? Give one detail from the passage that supports your answer.

4 According to the passage, what two kinds of questions do historians ask when they compare sources?

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Write exactly three sentences explaining what historians can conclude about the shooting and why they must compare sources. Use the witness depositions and Revere's engraving, and explain how each source helps or limits the investigation.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the names of sources in the passage. Circle words or phrases that show a source's point of view, purpose, or possible limit. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Name two primary sources from the passage. What makes each one a primary source?	The sworn witness depositions are primary sources because witnesses lived through the event. Revere's engraving is a primary source because it was created in 1770, close to the event.
2	What disagreement appears in the witness depositions? Explain why this disagreement matters to a historian.	Some witnesses said colonists threw snowballs and clubs, while others emphasized the soldiers firing and people falling. The disagreement means a historian should not depend on only one witness account.
3	What point of view does Revere's engraving support? Give one detail from the passage that supports your answer.	It supports the Patriot point of view. It shows soldiers in a neat line firing and an officer who appears to order them to fire.
4	According to the passage, what two kinds of questions do historians ask when they compare sources?	They ask who created each source and why it was made. They also check which details appear in more than one source.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Historians can conclude that the shooting happened, but they should be careful about deciding who caused it. The sworn depositions offer eyewitness details, although witnesses remembered different actions and may have stood in different places. Revere's engraving shows the Patriot view, so it helps explain that viewpoint but cannot provide a neutral account of every action.

Accept equivalent source-based explanations that identify each source's perspective, purpose, or limitation. For the open response, look for a cautious claim and accurate use of both required sources.