A Victory Heard

How the fighting at Lexington and Concord became a turning point

8.C.1.3.F "Explain why the Battles of Lexington and Concord were perceived as major military victories, known as the "shot heard 'round the world.""

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two actions that made colonists see a military victory, circle one detail that complicates that claim, and write 1 beside a sentence that explains the fighting's wider importance.

A March That Changed Its Meaning

1 Before dawn on April 19, 1775, British regulars marched from Boston toward Concord, Massachusetts. Their commanders wanted to seize colonial military supplies stored there. Riders had warned local communities, so militia members gathered along the route. At Lexington, a small group of militiamen faced the larger British force. Shots rang out, although no one knows who fired first. Several colonists were killed, and the militia scattered. If someone judged only this first clash, the British seemed to have won. But the march was far from over.

2 In Concord, the British searched for supplies and destroyed some of them. Nearby, hundreds of militiamen assembled at the North Bridge. When fighting broke out there, the colonial force drove British soldiers back across the bridge. The regulars then began the long return to Boston. Militia companies fired from positions along the road, and British troops fought back. The retreat became a costly struggle for the regulars, who suffered many casualties. The British had reached Concord, but they had not broken the growing colonial resistance.

3 News of the fighting spread through the colonies and across the Atlantic. Many colonists saw a major military victory in the fact that ordinary militia had stood against trained troops, pushed them back at Concord, and punished them on the return march. The British army remained powerful, and Lexington had been a loss for the militia. Still, the clashes showed that armed resistance could challenge British authority. Decades later, poet Ralph Waldo Emerson described the fighting at Concord's North Bridge as the "shot heard 'round the world," pointing to its lasting international significance.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why would judging the day only by what happened at Lexington give a misleading picture of the military outcome?

2. How did the clash at the North Bridge give colonists a reason to call the fighting a military victory?

3. Why did the return march strengthen the claim of a colonial victory, even though the British had reached Concord?

4. Why did Emerson's phrase “shot heard ‘round the world” fit the importance of these battles?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you edit a colonial newspaper just after April 19, 1775. Write a four- or five-sentence note to a reader who says, “The British reached Concord, so they won.” Use at least two events from the passage to explain the military result and why the fighting could matter beyond Massachusetts.

ANSWER KEY

A Victory Heard

GRADE 8 · 8.C.1.3.F

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two actions that made colonists see a military victory, circle one detail that complicates that claim, and write 1 beside a sentence that explains the fighting's wider importance. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why would judging the day only by what happened at Lexington give a misleading picture of the military outcome?	**The militia scattered at Lexington, but colonial fighters later drove British troops back at Concord and made their return to Boston costly.**
2	How did the clash at the North Bridge give colonists a reason to call the fighting a military victory?	**Militiamen drove trained British soldiers back across the bridge.**
3	Why did the return march strengthen the claim of a colonial victory, even though the British had reached Concord?	**Militia companies attacked along the road, and British troops suffered many casualties without breaking colonial resistance.**
4	Why did Emerson's phrase “shot heard ‘round the world” fit the importance of these battles?	**The fighting showed that colonists could challenge British authority, and news of it spread beyond the colonies. Its importance reached beyond the immediate battlefield.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

You are right that British troops reached Concord, and the militia scattered at Lexington. But at the North Bridge, colonists forced British soldiers back, and militia attacks made the return to Boston costly. Reaching a town did not mean the regulars had crushed resistance. These clashes showed that local fighters could stand against a powerful army. News of their resistance could change how people beyond Massachusetts viewed the dispute with Britain.

Accept responses that acknowledge the British advance or the militia's loss at Lexington while using specific events at Concord or on the return march to support the colonial claim of victory. For the open task, look for a plausible explanation of the fighting's significance beyond Massachusetts.