

Massacre Source Check

Examine how source details shape historical conclusions.

7.20.F "evaluate a variety of historical and contemporary sources for validity, credibility, bias, and accuracy."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline details that identify a source's creator, audience, or purpose. Circle details that could strengthen or limit the source's credibility or accuracy.

Looking at the Boston Massacre

- ① On March 5, 1770, British soldiers fired into a crowd on King Street in Boston, killing five colonists. People disagreed about what caused the shooting. To understand the event, historians compare sources instead of trusting one account. They ask who created each source, when it was made, what evidence supports it, and whether the creator had a reason to persuade readers. Sources close to an event can be useful, but they can still leave out details or show bias.
- ② One widely shared source was Paul Revere's colored engraving, published soon after the shooting. It shows a line of British soldiers firing at civilians while their commander stands behind them. Above the scene, the title calls the event "The Bloody Massacre." The engraving also labels a nearby building "Butcher's Hall." Revere based his print partly on a drawing by Henry Pelham, and he sold copies to colonists. The print reached colonists during a tense period, when many people in Boston opposed the presence of British troops. Readers can compare its details with other accounts.
- ③ Another source is Captain Thomas Preston's sworn account, written soon after the event. Preston commanded the soldiers and said that townspeople surrounded them, shouted insults, and threw objects. At the time, Preston faced trial for his actions that night. His account was sworn, meaning he formally declared it was true under oath. Witnesses gave differing accounts about whether someone ordered the soldiers to fire. A careful historian compares Preston's account, the engraving, witness statements, and physical evidence before deciding which details are accurate.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What two features of Revere's engraving could make a reader view the British soldiers negatively?

2 Why should a historian consider the time and audience for Revere's engraving when judging its bias?

3 Give one reason Preston's sworn account could be useful and one reason it could have a limitation.

4 Why is it important to compare sources before deciding whether someone ordered the soldiers to fire?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Imagine an anonymous social media post says that every person at a school board protest damaged property. The post includes a short video clip. In 4 to 6 sentences, evaluate the post's credibility, possible bias, and accuracy, then explain what evidence you would check before accepting its claim.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline details that identify a source's creator, audience, or purpose. Circle details that could strengthen or limit the source's credibility or accuracy. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What two features of Revere's engraving could make a reader view the British soldiers negatively?	The title "The Bloody Massacre" and the label "Butcher's Hall" could make the British seem brutal. The image of soldiers firing at civilians could also create that view.
2	Why should a historian consider the time and audience for Revere's engraving when judging its bias?	The print reached colonists during a tense time when many Bostonians opposed British troops. Revere also sold copies to colonists, so the print may have been designed to persuade that audience.
3	Give one reason Preston's sworn account could be useful and one reason it could have a limitation.	It could be useful because Preston commanded the soldiers and was present during the event. It could have a limitation because he faced trial for his actions and had a reason to defend himself.
4	Why is it important to compare sources before deciding whether someone ordered the soldiers to fire?	Witnesses gave different accounts about whether an order was given. Comparing several sources and physical evidence can help a historian judge which claim is most accurate.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The anonymous post has low credibility because readers cannot identify the writer or that person's connection to the protest. The short video may show one moment, but it does not prove that every protester damaged property. The post may be biased if it tries to make the protest look violent. I would check the full video, reports from several witnesses, and reliable local news before accepting its claim.

Accept equivalent evidence-based explanations for Questions 1 through 4. For the Your Turn task, accept responses that identify the anonymous author and limited clip as concerns, consider possible bias, and name reasonable ways to verify the claim.