

The midnight riders

April 18, 1775 | Grade 4 · Explain with evidence

Words to know

warn — tell someone about possible danger

message — information sent to someone

network — connected people, places, or machines

Look closely



An old rectangular iron lantern with glass sides, a pierced metal top, and a hanging ring, in the Concord Museum.

Read the story

Paul Revere and William Dawes carried warnings from Boston. Samuel Prescott joined later. Many people helped spread the alarm. British troops were moving into the countryside. No one rider did all the work.

Revere was detained while Prescott carried the warning onward to Concord. Longfellow's later poem changed details for its story. Compare the poem with historical accounts and communication networks.

Think, talk, and show evidence

1. State the main idea. Support it with two details from the reading.
2. Explain a change or challenge described in the text. Which words support your answer?
3. Use one vocabulary word in a new sentence about this event.
4. What can the image and caption help explain? What can they not tell you?

Follow-up reading: Lexington and Concord

April 19, 1775

British troops and colonial militia fought in Lexington and Concord. Fighting continued along the road back toward Boston. These battles began the Revolutionary War. People still ask questions about the first shot.

Witnesses disagreed about the opening gunfire at Lexington. Historians should preserve that uncertainty. Landscape, military orders, and local warning networks help explain the day's events.

Compare the two readings. Explain one similarity or difference using a detail from each. Their order does not prove that one caused the other.

Teacher guide & source trail

Original classroom adaptation. Suggested reading levels are instructional choices, not standardized readability certifications. Use professional judgment and learner feedback.

ELA practice: RI.4.1: refer to details; RI.4.2: main idea and summary; RI.4.3: explain events; RI.4.7: interpret visual information; W.4.2 and SL.4.1: explain and discuss.

These tasks support selected skills in the [Massachusetts 2017 ELA framework](#); they do not establish mastery of an entire standard.

Answer guidance

Factual anchor: Paul Revere and William Dawes carried warnings from Boston. Samuel Prescott joined later. Many people helped spread the alarm. British troops were moving into the countryside. No one rider did all the work. Revere was detained while Prescott carried the warning onward to Concord. Longfellow's later poem changed details for its story. Compare the poem with historical accounts and communication networks.

Accept accurate main ideas and explanations supported by the text. Vocabulary meanings are in the opening word bank. For picture questions, use the caption and credit below; distinguish what is visible from what is inferred. For comparison, accept a specific connection supported by both readings. Do not require personal accounts of trauma.

Continue the inquiry

[Research source for this event ↗](#)

[Research source for follow-up ↗](#)

[Event page, accessible HTML reading, and vocabulary game ↗](#)

Image: Daderot (photographer); lantern maker unknown. CCO 1.0 Universal

[Image source and rights record ↗](#)

The PDF contains selectable English text and embedded fonts. For adjustable text and browser reading tools, use the event's [HTML page](#). External sources may need adult guidance.