EMERSON DESCRIBES THE STAND AT CONCORD BRIDGE

1775, 19 April. This morning, between I and 2 o'clock, we were alarmed by the ringing of the bell, and upon examination found that the troops, to the number of 800, had stole their march from Boston, in boats and barges, from the bottom of the Common over to a point in Cambridge, near to Inman's farm, and were at Lexington Meeting-house, half an hour before sunrise, where they had fired upon a body of our men, and (as we afterward heard) had killed several.

This intelligence was brought us at first by Dr. Samuel Prescott, who narrowly escaped the guard that were sent before on horses, purposely to prevent all posts and messengers from giving us timely information. He, by the help of a very fleet horse, crossing several walls and fences, arrived at Concord at the time above mentioned; when several posts were immediately dispatched, that returning confirmed the account of the regulars' arrival at Lexington, and that they were on their way to Concord.

Upon this, a number of our minute men belonging to this town, and Acton and Lyncoln, with several others that were in readiness, marched out to meet them, while the alarm company were preparing to receive them in the town. Capt. Minot, who commanded them, thought it proper to take possession of the hill above the meeting house, as the most advantageous situation. No sooner had our men gained it than we were met by the companies that were sent out to meet the troops, who informed us that they were just upon us, and that we must retreat, as their number was more than treble ours.

We then retreated from the hill near the Liberty Pole and took a new post back of the town upon an eminence, where we formed into two battalions and waited the arrival of the enemy. Scarcely had we formed before we saw the British troops at the distance of a quarter of a mile, glittering in arms, advancing towards us with the greatest celerity. Some were for making a stand, notwithstanding the superiority of their number; but others more prudent thought best to retreat till our strength should be equal to the enemy's by recruits from neighboring towns that were continually coming to our assistance.

In the meantime, the guard set by the enemy to secure the pass at the North Bridge were alarmed by the approach of our people, who had retreated, as mentioned before, and were now advancing with special orders not to fire upon the troops unless fired upon. These orders were so punctually observed that we received the fire of the enemy in three several and separate discharges of their pieces before it was returned by our commanding officer; the firing then soon became general for several minutes, in which skirmish two were killed on each side, and several of the enemy wounded.

It may here be observed, by the way, that we were the more cautious to prevent beginning a rupture with the King's troops, as we were then uncertain what had happened at Lexington, and knew not that they had begun the quarrel there by first firing upon our people and killing eight men upon the spot.

**British Account of the Battle**

Account presumably by Lieutenant John Barker of the King's Own.  
  
1775, April 9 th. Last night between l0 and 1 l o'clock all the Grenadiers and Light Infantry of the army, making about 600 men (under the command of Lt. Col. Smith of the l0 th and Major Pitcairn of the Marines), embarked and were landed upon the opposite shore on Cambridge Marsh; few but the commanding officers knew what expedition we were going upon. After getting over the marsh, where we were wet up to the knees, we were halted in a dirty road and stood there till two o'clock in the morning, waiting for provisions to be brought from the boats and to be divided, and which most of the men threw away, having carried some with 'em. At 2 o'clock we began our march by wading through a very long ford up to our middles. After going a few miles we took 3 or 4 people who were going off to give intelligence.  
  
About 5 miles on this side of a town called Lexington, which lay in our road, we heard there were some hundreds of people collected together intending to oppose us and stop our going on. At 5 o'clock we arrived there and saw a number of people, I believe between 200 and 300, formed in a common in the middle of the town. We still continued advancing, keeping prepared against an attack tho' without intending to attack them; but on our coming near them they fired one or two shots, upon which our men without any orders rushed in upon them, fired and put 'em to flight. Several of them were killed, we could not tell how many because they were got behind walls and into the woods. We had a man of the l0th Light Infantry wounded, nobody else hurt. We then formed on the common, but with some difficulty, the men were so wild they could hear no orders.  
  
We waited a considerable time there, and at length proceeded on our way to Concord, which we then learnt was our destination, in order to destroy a magazine of stores collected there. We met with no interruption till within a mile or two of the town, where the country people had occupied a hill which commanded the road. The Light Infantry were ordered away to the right and ascended the height in one line, upon which the Yankies quitted it without firing, which they did likewise for one or two more successively. They then crossed the river beyond the town, and we marched into the town after taking possession of a hill with a Liberty Pole on it and a flag~flying, which was cut down. The Yankies had the hill but left it to us. We expected they would have made a stand there, but they did not choose it.

**Battle on Lexington Green, April 1775**

American spies learned of the plan and set up a system to warn their countrymen. If the **redcoats**under the command of **Lieutenant Colonel Francis Smith**, departed Boston along the isthmus that linked it to the mainland, one lantern would be hung in the steeple of Boston's [Old North Church](http://www.newenglandtravelplanner.com/go/ma/boston/sights/old_n_church.html). If the troops instead boarded boats to row across the water and march on a different route, **two lanterns** would be hung.

As the British filled the boats, two lanterns appeared in the steeple, easily visible from the far shore where [Paul Revere](http://www.newenglandtravelplanner.com/people/revere_p.html)**, William Dawes**, and **Dr Samuel Prescott** waited on horseback. These messengers rode into the dark hinterland, sounding the alarm in each village. The American intelligence network was so good that the citizens of [Lexington](http://www.newenglandtravelplanner.com/go/ma/boston_west/lexington/index.html) and [Concord](http://www.newenglandtravelplanner.com/go/ma/boston_west/concord/index.html) leapt from their beds long before the British advance force, commanded by **Major John Pitcairn**, was anywhere near.

We don't know what went through the minds of the [Minutemen](http://www.newenglandtravelplanner.com/go/ma/boston_west/minutemen.html), the colonial militia, as they waited in the chilly dawn to hear the crunch of the redcoats' boots in the streets of [Lexington](http://www.newenglandtravelplanner.com/go/ma/boston_west/lexington/index.html) and [Concord](http://www.newenglandtravelplanner.com/go/ma/boston_west/concord/index.html). Whatever their thoughts, they had every right to be frightened, since they, small untrained bands of farmers and tradesmen, were about to face 700 of the world's best professional soldiers.

As dawn broke on **April 19, 1775**, seventy Lexington Minutemen, **outnumbered ten to one**, faced Pitcairn's regiments on Lexington's town green.

The [Minutemen](http://www.newenglandtravelplanner.com/go/ma/boston_west/minutemen.html) were ordered by Major Pitcairn to **disperse**. They stood their ground. Taunts were exchanged. **A shot was fired**, and that triggered a battle.

When the smoke cleared, **eight Minutemen were dead**, and the British troops went on a rampage that was stopped only with difficulty by their commanders, who immediately marched them in the direction of [Concord](http://www.newenglandtravelplanner.com/go/ma/boston_west/concord/index.html).

The following writing prompt is modeled after the Research Simulation Task from the PARCC Performance Based Assessment.  The suggestion is to give students about 30-345 minutes to write to the prompt.  This is under the understanding that students have previously read and discussed both texts.  Giving them 30-45 minutes to write to the prompt was the suggestion from a PARCC presenter.  She estimated that this is about how long they should have left when they reach this point in the assessment.

Prompt:  
*Your class has been studying the Battle of Lexington and Concord. Compare and contrast the tone and information given from both the first- and second-hand accounts. Use information from “Emerson Describes the Stand at Concord Bridge” and “Battle on Lexington Green, April 1775” to support your answer.*

Teachers could use this prompt to assess the following standards:

* RI.4.6 Compare and Contrast a firsthand and secondhand account of the same event or topic; describe the differences in focus and the information in a text or part of a text.RI.4.9 Integrate information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably
* W.4.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly (and/or sub standards)
* W.4.9 Draw evidence from literary or **informational texts** to support analysis, reflection, and research.