

Before You Read

Paul Revere's Ride

Connect to the Poem

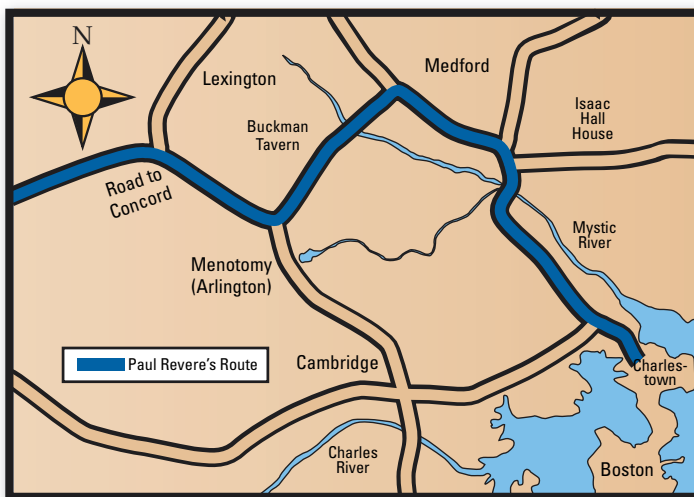
Paul Revere's fellow colonists counted on him to warn them when British soldiers marched toward their villages. Think of a time when people depended on you to do an important task.

Quickwrite Freewrite for a few minutes about the important task. Describe the job and your feelings about doing it.

Build Background

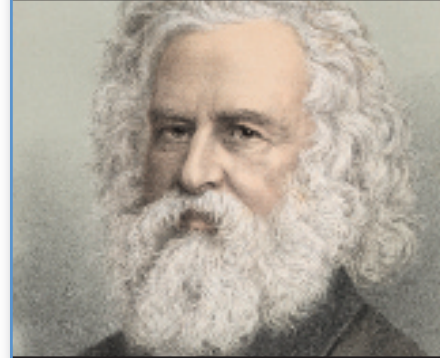
"Paul Revere's Ride" celebrates the patriotism of Paul Revere (1735–1818), a colonist who supported American independence from Great Britain. On April 18, 1775, Revere rode from Boston to Lexington, Massachusetts, to warn local leaders that British soldiers were preparing to advance. He was arrested before he could reach his final destination.

- Revere was not the only one who rode through the countryside sounding the alert that night. He is best remembered, however, because of the popularity of Longfellow's narrative poem.
- "Paul Revere's Ride" was published in 1861, when the nation was beginning the Civil War. In those dark days, some Americans looked to the past for heroes that both Northerners and Southerners admired. Revere was just such a man.



A map showing Paul Revere's historic ride.

Meet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow



"We judge ourselves by what we feel capable of doing, while others judge us by what we have already done."

—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

A Popular Poet Using his knowledge of European writing traditions, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow created poems that are distinctly American. Many of his poems focused on people and events in American history. His gentle, romantic vision of the world made him the most popular American poet of his time.

Literary Works Longfellow's historical poems include *The Song of Hiawatha*. "Paul Revere's Ride" was published in *Tales of a Wayside Inn*, in 1863.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was born in 1807 and died in 1882.



Literature Online

Author Search For more about Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, go to glencoe.com and enter QuickPass code GL39770u3.

Set Purposes for Reading

BQ BIG Question

As you read “Paul Revere’s Ride,” think about the journey Paul Revere takes. What makes his route a difficult path?

Literary Elements Rhyme and Rhyme Scheme

Rhyme is the repetition of the ending sounds in words that are near each other in a poem. The most common form of rhyme in poetry is **end rhyme**, where the rhyming words appear at the ends of lines.

The pattern of rhyme formed by the end rhyme is called **rhyme scheme**. A rhyme scheme can be shown by using letters to represent the end rhymes. Lines that rhyme share the same letter. For example, if you look at the first five lines of “Paul Revere’s Ride,” you will see that the rhyme scheme is *aabba*.

Rhyme and rhyme scheme are important because they make a poem pleasing to hear and easier to remember.

As you read, think about the rhyme and rhyme scheme of Longfellow’s poem. Do rhyme and rhyme scheme make the poem more enjoyable for you to hear and easier for you to remember?

Reading Strategy Monitor Comprehension

When you monitor your **comprehension**, you check to see whether you understand what you are reading *as you are reading it*.

It’s especially important to monitor your comprehension when you read poetry. Poems may present familiar ideas in new ways or use figurative language to tell a story.

When you monitor comprehension, you

- stop and summarize what you’ve read
- paraphrase difficult passages in simpler language
- ask yourself questions about the passage and try to answer them
- clarify, or go back and reread a confusing section more slowly

As you read the narrative poem “Paul Revere’s Ride,” monitor your comprehension by making sure that you can identify the main character and setting and that you can summarize the main plot events. You may find it helpful to use a graphic organizer like the one below to summarize each stanza.

First Stanza

Second Stanza



Learning Objectives

For pages 338–346

In studying this text, you will focus on the following objectives:

Literary Study: Analyzing rhyme and rhyme scheme.

Reading: Monitoring comprehension.

TRY IT

Monitor Comprehension

Read the excerpt from “The Drummer Boy of Shiloh.” What questions might you ask to understand the text? What words would you look up? Try to paraphrase the paragraph.

*[F]orty thousand men,
exhausted by nervous
expectation, unable to sleep
for romantic dreams of battles
yet unfought, lay crazily askew
in their uniforms. A mile yet
farther on, another army was
strewn helter-skelter, turning
slow, basting themselves with
the thought of what they would
do when the time came: a leap,
a yell, a blind plunge their
strategy, raw youth their
protection and benediction.*

Paul Revere's Ride



Reading Strategy

Monitor Comprehension

Underline the signal that the friend is to use.

Where will Paul Revere be waiting to see the signal?

Listen, my children, and you shall hear
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,
On the eighteenth of April, in Seventy-five;¹
Hardly a man is now alive
5 Who remembers that famous day and year.
He said to his friend, "If the British march
By land or sea from the town to-night,
Hang a lantern aloft in the belfry arch
Of the North Church tower as a signal light,—
10 One, if by land, and two, if by sea;
And I on the opposite shore will be,
Ready to ride and spread the alarm
Through every Middlesex² village and farm,
For the country folk to be up and to arm."

15 Then he said, "Good night!" and with muffled oar
Silently rowed to the Charlestown shore,
Just as the moon rose over the bay,
Where swinging wide at her moorings³ lay
The Somerset, British man-of-war;
20 A phantom ship, with each mast and spar
Across the moon like a prison bar,
And a huge black hulk, that was magnified
By its own reflection in the tide.

1. **Seventy-five** refers to 1775, the year of Paul Revere's ride.

2. **Middlesex** refers to the county of Middlesex in Massachusetts. The Revolutionary War began here.

3. The place where a ship is docked is called its **moorings**.



grenadier

Meanwhile, his friend, through alley and street,

Wanders and watches with eager ears,
Till in the silence around him he hears

The muster of men at the barrack door,
The sound of arms, and the tramp of feet,

And the measured tread of the grenadiers,⁴
Marching down to their boats on the shore.

Then he climbed the tower of the Old North Church,
By the wooden stairs, with stealthy tread,

To the belfry-chamber overhead,

And startled the pigeons from their perch
On the somber⁵ rafters, that round him made
Masses and moving shapes of shade,—

By the trembling ladder, steep and tall,

To the highest window in the wall,
Where he paused to listen and look down
A moment on the roofs of the town,
And the moonlight flowing over all.

Beneath, in the churchyard, lay the dead,
In their night-encampment on the hill,

Wrapped in silence so deep and still
That he could hear, like a sentinel's⁶ tread,

The watchful night-wind, as it went
Creeping along from tent to tent,
And seeming to whisper, "All is well!"

A moment only he feels the spell
Of the place and the hour, and the secret dread
Of the lonely belfry and the dead;
For suddenly all his thoughts are bent
On a shadowy something far away,

4. A **measured tread** is a steady beat of footsteps. In the British army, **grenadiers** were foot soldiers.

5. **Somber** means "gloomy."

6. A **sentinel** is a guard.

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Literary Element

Rhyme and Rhyme Scheme

Reread lines 25–30. Underline the word or words that rhyme with *ears*. Why do you think the poet uses end rhymes?



Reading Strategy

Monitor Comprehension

Reread lines 74–81. What idea does Longfellow express with “And the spark struck out by that steed, in his flight / Kindled the land into flame with its heat”?

55 Where the river widens to meet the bay,—
A line of black that bends and floats
On the rising tide, like a bridge of boats.

Meanwhile, impatient to mount and ride,
Booted and spurred, with a heavy stride
60 On the opposite shore walked Paul Revere.
Now he patted his horse's side,
Now gazed at the landscape far and near,
Then, impetuous,⁷ stamped the earth,
And turned and tightened his saddlegirth;
65 But mostly he watched with eager search
The belfry-tower of the Old North Church,
As it rose above the graves on the hill,
Lonely and spectral⁸ and somber and still.
And lo! as he looks, on the belfry's height
70 A glimmer, and then a gleam of light!
He springs to the saddle, the bridle he turns,
But lingers and gazes, till full on his sight
A second lamp in the belfry burns!

A hurry of hoofs in a village street,
75 A shape in the moonlight, a bulk in the dark,
And beneath, from the pebbles, in passing, a spark
Struck out by a steed flying fearless and fleet:⁹
That was all! And yet, through the gloom and the
light,
The fate of a nation was riding that night;
80 And the spark struck out by that steed, in his flight,
Kindled the land into flame with its heat.

He has left the village and mounted the steep,¹⁰

7. Here, **Impetuous** means “acting suddenly.” When Revere **tightened his saddlegirth**, he tightened the belt that holds the saddle on a horse.

8. Something **spectral** is “ghost-like.”

9. **Fleet** means “very fast.”

10. A **Steep** is a steep hill.

And beneath him, tranquil and broad and deep,
 Is the Mystic,¹¹ meeting the ocean tides;
 And under the alders¹² that skirt its edge,
 Now soft on the sand, now loud on the ledge,
 Is heard the tramp of his steed as he rides.

85

It was twelve by the village clock,
 When he crossed the bridge into Medford town.
 He heard the crowing of the cock,
 And the barking of the farmer's dog,
 And felt the damp of the river fog,
 That rises after the sun goes down.

90

It was one by the village clock,
 When he galloped into Lexington.
 He saw the gilded¹³ weathercock
 Swim in the moonlight as he passed,
 And the meeting-house windows, blank and bare,
 Gaze at him with a spectral glare,
 As if they already stood aghast

95

100

11. The **Mystic** is a river that flows into the Boston harbor.
 12. **Alders** is a kind of tree.
 13. A **gilded** object has or looks like it has a thin coating of gold.

MY NOTES



Literary Element

Rhyme and Rhyme Scheme

Reread lines 84–87. What is the rhyme scheme of these lines? Check the correct answer.

- aabb*
 abab
 abba



Reading Strategy

Monitor Comprehension

What does the speaker mean in line 112 when he says, "You know the rest"?

At the bloody work they would look upon.

It was two by the village clock,
When he came to the bridge in Concord town.

105 He heard the bleating of the flock,
And the twitter of birds among the trees,
And felt the breath of the morning breeze
Blowing over the meadows brown.

And one was safe and asleep in his bed
Who at the bridge would be first to fall,
110 Who that day would be lying dead,
Pierced by a British musket-ball.

You know the rest. In the books you have read,
How the British Regulars¹⁴ fired and fled,—
How the farmers gave them ball for ball,
115 From behind each fence and farm-yard wall,
Chasing the red-coats down the lane,
Then crossing the fields to emerge again
Under the trees at the turn of the road,
And only pausing to fire and load.

120 So through the night rode Paul Revere;
And so through the night went his cry of alarm
To every Middlesex village and farm,—
A cry of defiance and not of fear,
A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door,
125 And a word that shall echo forevermore!
For, borne on the night-wind of the Past,
Through all our history, to the last,
In the hour of darkness and peril¹⁵ and need,
The people will waken and listen to hear
130 The hurrying hoof-beats of that steed,
And the midnight message of Paul Revere.

14. **Regulars** are professional soldiers.

15. **Peril** means "danger."

After You Read

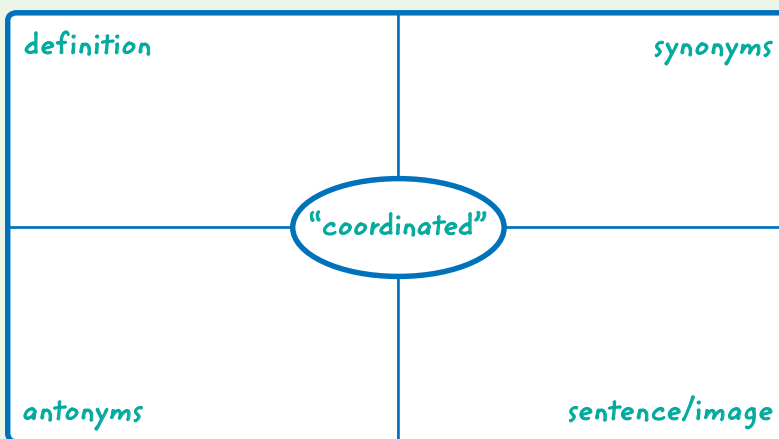
Respond and Think Critically

1. In a few sentences, sum up the story of Paul Revere's ride as it is described in the narrative poem. [Summarize]
2. What did hanging two lanterns in the church represent? Why do you think it mattered if the British came by land or by sea? [Recall and Interpret]
3. In line 78, what does the speaker mean by "the fate of a nation was riding that night"? [Infer]
4. If Paul Revere's ride had failed, in what way might our country be different today? [Draw Conclusions]
5. The poem says that Revere rode into Concord. In reality, he was arrested before he could get there. What might be the effect of a completely factual ending to the poem? [Synthesize]
6. **BQ** **BIG Question** Do you think that being alone while riding on his difficult path makes Paul Revere more or less heroic? Explain your opinion. [Evaluate]

Academic Vocabulary

"Paul Revere's Ride" describes how the people of Middlesex, Massachusetts, **coordinated** a plan of attack against the British on the night of April 18, 1775. In the preceding sentence, *coordinated* means "worked together in a common effort."

To become more familiar with the word *coordinated*, draw and fill out a graphic organizer like the one below. Use a dictionary or thesaurus if necessary.



TIP

Inferring

Here are some tips to help you infer. Remember that when you infer, you use your reason and experience to guess at what the author does not come right out and say.

- Skim the selection for clues that may help explain the meaning of the line.
- Identify what descriptions, events, or relationships might tell you something the author wants you to know.
- Check to see if your inference makes sense in the context of the selection.
- Compare the events to your own experiences and then think about what the author is really saying.



Keep track of your ideas about the **BIG Question** in your unit Foldable.



Literature Online

Selection Resources

For Selection Quizzes, eFlashcards, and Reading-Writing Connection activities, go to glencoe.com and enter QuickPass code GL39770u3.