Primary Source

The Clash of Arms

British troops from Boston, seeking secret military stores and presumably rebel leaders, clashed with colonial militiamen at Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1775, in the first battles of the American Revolution. Among the numerous conflicting accounts that exist, these two excerpts, representing American and British perspectives, are noteworthy. To this day, historians debate whether the conflict was inevitable or could have been avoided.

AMERICAN VERSION

At Lexington, a company of militiamen mustered near the meeting house. The British troops came in sight of them just before sunrise and, in a moment of confusion, fired into the crowd, killing several of the militiamen. The British then charged into the town, killing or capturing many more. In Concord, British troops burned the town's bridge and then continued on to Lexington, where they engaged in a short but bloody battle.

BRITISH VERSION

Six companies of British light infantry, under arms, on a green, fired the first shots. The militiamen, unaware of the British presence, were caught off guard. The British troops marched up to the town, where they encountered militiamen who were resisting. The Militiamen had a few rocks, but the British soon overwhelmed them.

1. Underline any words that made this reading hard to understand. In the margins, write what you think the word might mean.

Gaining Perspective

2. Define PERSPECTIVE:

3. Circle key words or phrases in each version that demonstrate the American and British perspective. In the space below, which one do you think best captures the true events of April 19, 1775?

4. Using text evidence, write a complete statement taking sides with either the American or British Perspective, in the space below:

Who do you think fired the first shot?
1. What were the first battles of the American Revolution?

2. Who was the commander of the American Army?

3. Who was the commander of the American Army?

4. What was the name of the American Army?

5. Why do you think Prescott wanted his soldiers to not fire on the British until...

6. From which country did the Americans receive help during the Revolution?

7. Name the last battle of the Revolution where Cornwallis surrendered to Washington.

8. You see the whites of their eyes...

The Shot Heard 'Round the World: The Start of the Revolution

the colonies by England?

5. What events in our nation's history are shown taking place as a result of unfair taxation of

and that's not fair...

4. The colonists who did not have a say in England cried, "No taxation without...

3. Who was the King of England in this episode of SFR?

2. The Pilgrim settlement eventually became which of the 13 colonies?

1. In what year did the Pilgrims land in America?

"No More Kings"

SCHOOL HOUSE ROCK QUESTIONS