

## Paul Revere's Apprentice: An Exercise in Persona Poems

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade



#### **Lesson Overview**

In this lesson, students will synthesize the information they learned about the American Revolution and Paul Revere to write a persona poem in the voice of Paul Revere's apprentice, an imagined character that allows students to put themselves into the story.

#### **Preliminary Activities**

- **Discuss preliminary questions about poetry:** Today we will be writing persona poems. What makes a poem a poem? How does poetry differ from prose?
- **Read Longfellow's "Midnight Ride of Paul Revere."** What are some things you noticed in that poem? Things that you can touch, smell, hear, taste, and see are called concrete images. What are some images you notice? Who is speaking in this poem? What are some sounds that you hear?

**Discussion questions:** Poems in the voice of a character are called persona poems.

How do we sense the speaker's excitement? What rhythms do you hear in this poem? Sometimes people write in the voice of a character so that they can express themselves—how they are feeling or to express how other people feel. How do you think the speaker or narrator of the poem feels?

- **Brainstorming Game:** Toss a question ball to each student. Answers may be factual or imagined, depending on the question.
- **Tableaux:** Have students take a moment from the poem and act it out or create a frozen sculpture.

**More Discussion Questions:** Notice that the poem uses rhythm to convey excitement. Ask students how they feel when they are playing hide and seek or chase. What does it feel like to be chased? Now ask students to imagine how Paul Revere felt on that ride, with the British not far behind him.

#### **Poetry techniques and/or forms taught in lesson:**

- **Persona Poem**—also known as dramatic monologue, a poem in the voice of another person, place, or thing
- **Narrative**—a poem that tells a story
- **Voice**—the person telling the story, also known as a narrator or speaker
- **Rhythm**—musical sounds in poetry, often based on repeated patterns
- Using the five senses in descriptive writing through **concrete images**—often nouns in the poem that connect to the senses—things that are felt, seen, smelled, heard, or even tasted



### Social Studies Standards

**3.5:** Explain important political, economic, and military developments leading to and during the American Revolution. (H, C)

**3.5e:** Revolutionary leaders such as Paul Revere, John Hancock, John Adams, and Samuel Adams.

**4:** Use cardinal directions map scales, legends...

**7:** Give examples of the different ways people in a community can influence their local government.

### Materials required for the poetry activity

- A ball with written questions
- Digital voice recorders
- Longfellow's poem "The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere"
- Pen, pencil, paper

### Drawing

Using the skills presented in the lesson by Visiting Artist, Richard Jenkins, students will draw the character of the apprentice (or perhaps even Paul Revere).

### Writing Procedures

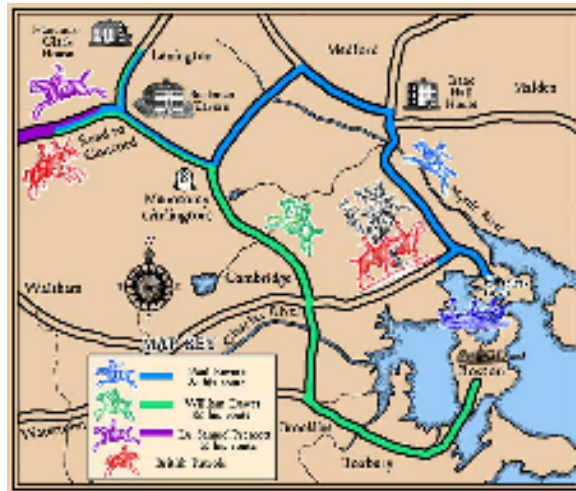
1) Draw apprentice characters, play warm-up game, and discuss Longfellow's poem before writing. Begin writing activity with this brainstorm:

**Create your own character to tell the story of Paul Revere:** Who are you? Are you a child at the start of the Revolutionary War? Are you Paul Revere's apprentice? Are you, like Paul Revere, a silversmith? What did you think the night he rode off to warn John Hancock and John Adams that the British were coming? Did he seem excited, angry, upset?

2) Write a poem in the voice of your created character—as though you are the apprentice or witness. Incorporate the words from your brainstorm into the poem. Try these helpful hints:

- ❖ Imagine you are telling the story of Paul Revere as you saw it to a friend or write your poem as a letter to that friend
- ❖ Use a color, smell, or sound in each line.
- ❖ Use the four directions: north, south, east, and west within your poem.
- ❖ Choose from the verbs we brainstormed and put them into your poem.

**Research:** Teachers may want to try this activity after the class has studied Paul Revere and the American Revolution. Teachers may ask students to explore the Paul Revere House website or they may want to try to incorporate the material found there into their lesson: [www.paulreverehouse.org](http://www.paulreverehouse.org)



### Additional Starters / Accommodation

- **Word Bowl:** Include a word bowl of vocabulary words and common descriptive words the Revolutionary War and Paul Revere. You might want to have a few mini-bowls prepared to have students incorporate these given words into their poems.
- **Recorders:** Offer digital voice recorders to help students create their poem orally. Explain that poetry is as much an oral tradition (hearing, speaking) as it is a written one.
- **Scribe:** Have students complete the warm-up exercises, and then create a class poem. Ask students to read / repeat the poem in a group oral presentation. Tell them they are connecting with the oral tradition of poetry that goes back even as far as Homer.

### Sharing

Close the exercise with group sharing. This exercise is a valuable and important piece. By sharing students gain confidence and build self esteem for their own work. Encourage students to compliment each other on images or moments that strike them. Once a safe environment has been established, encourage additional comments, such as “how else can you say or show that feeling.” Usually constructive criticism works best when couched amid praise.

- **Extension Activities:** Have students write an **Ode**, a poem praising a character, country, or ideal; have students write **Apostrophe** poems, a poem that addresses their animals or character, or an **Epistle Poem**, a poem that is a letter, but with line breaks, images, metaphor, and other conventions of poetry. Try the exercise of **perspective** by having students write different ways of seeing their character or the historical figure—see Wallace Steven’s “13 Ways of Seeing a Blackbird.”

### Objectives:

- To expose students to poetry and explore voice
- To encourage students to make personal connections with historical literature and internalize historical stories
- To encourage students to look deeply and notice details
- To apply details and the imagination to writing
- To explore narrative—writing a poem that tells a story
- To encourage students to think creatively
- To discuss character development and the conventions of voice in literature

- To make history come alive by connecting students with historical figures
- To expose students to poetry and explore voice, rhythm, and image through detail
- To incorporate research
- To improve vocabulary
- Review parts of speech—Action verbs, Adjectives, Nouns
- To discuss subjective and objective writing and merge the two to create a poem

**Sources:**

[www.paulreverehouse.org](http://www.paulreverehouse.org)

**ELA General Standards: 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, 22,**

