

*THE BOSTON  
MASSACRE-  
WAS IT FAKE  
NEWS?*


# *IN EVERY SITUATION THERE ARE THREE SIDES: YOUR SIDE, MY SIDE, AND THE TRUTH*

*Today we are looking at examining multiple perspectives of the Boston Massacre. Using both primary and secondary sources from American Colonists and British Military perspectives, upper elementary and middle school students will analyze images and written accounts alike in order to determine what is the **truth**, and what is simply **fake news**.*

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*Who  
instigated  
the events  
on March  
5<sup>th</sup>, 1770?*

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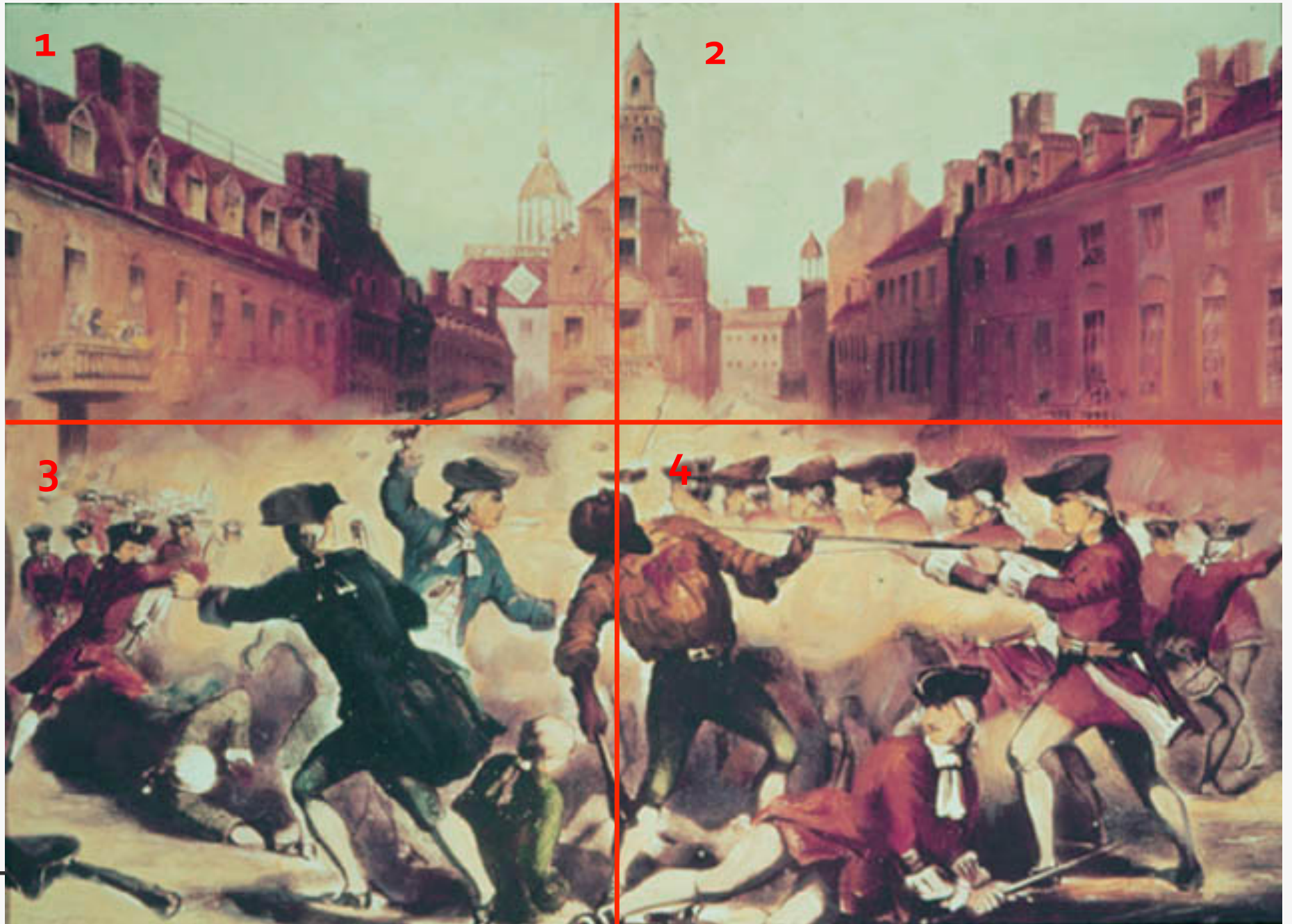
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m2QNZf\\_8V\\_w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m2QNZf_8V_w)
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oo5rNWygHF4>
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KMHGag2BI8s>
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# Image Analysis 1



# Image Analysis

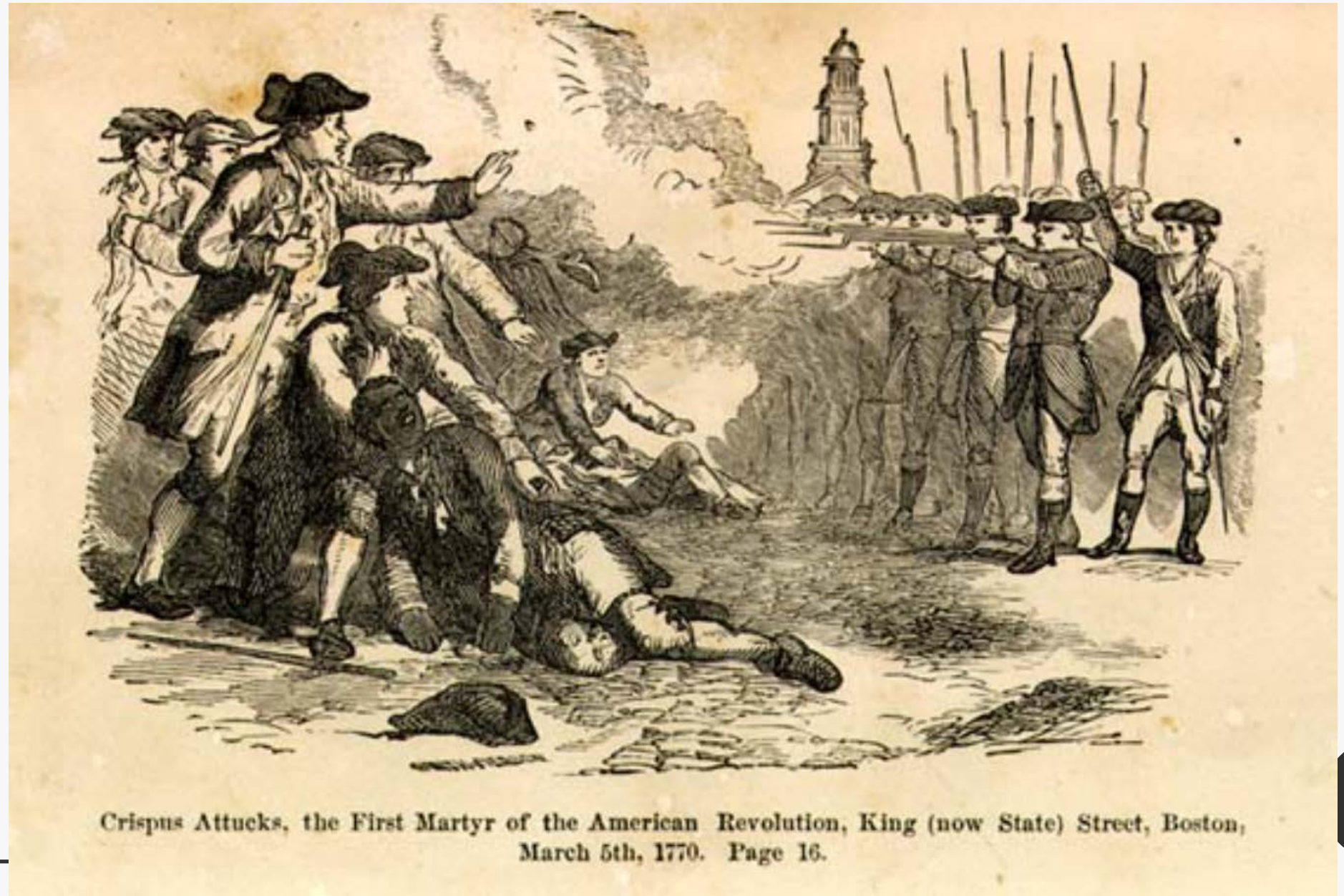
1



# Image Analysis 2



# Image Analysis 3



# Image Analysis 4





# Image Analysis



1

2

3

4

# *Written Accounts from Multiple Perspectives*

*\*These accounts are edited for understanding and appropriate content from a primary source account from Captain Thomas Preston*

In my way there I saw the colonists in great commotion, and heard them use the most cruel and horrid threats against the troops. In a few minutes after I reached the guard, about 100 people passed it and went towards the custom house where the king's money is lodged. They immediately surrounded the soldier posted there, and with clubs and other weapons threatened to execute their vengeance on him. I was soon informed by a townsman their intention was to carry off the soldier from his post and probably murder him... I immediately sent another officer with 12 men to protect both the sentry and the king's money. I very soon followed them myself to prevent more disorder. I feared the officer and soldiers, would be provoked by the insults of the rioting colonists, and would commit some thoughtless or violent act. They soon rushed through the people, and by charging their bayonets in half-circles, kept them at a little distance. ..The mob still increased and were more outrageous, striking their clubs or bludgeons one against another, and calling out, "Come on you rascals, you bloody backs, you lobster scoundrels, fire if you dare! We know you dare not!" At this time I was between the soldiers and the mob, trying with all my power to persuade them to leave and retire peaceably, but they would not. Instead, they advanced to the points of the bayonets, struck some of them and even the muzzles of the weapons, and seemed to be endeavoring closer, still threatening the soldiers. At this time some well-behaved persons asked me if the guns were loaded. I replied yes. They then asked me if I intended to order the men to fire. I answered no, by no means, answering to them that I was advanced in front of the muzzles of the men's pieces, and would be sacrificing my own life if they fired ...While I was thus speaking, one of the soldiers, who had just received a severe blow with a stick, stepped a little on one side and instantly fired. At this, I turned to him and shouted, asking him why he fired without orders?! I was then struck by a colonist with a club on my arm, which for some time deprived me of being able to use of it, and had the blow been placed on my head, it most probably would have destroyed me. An attack was made on the soldiers by a great number of heavy clubs and snowballs being thrown at them, by which all our lives were in imminent danger. Instantly three or four of the soldiers fired, one after another, and then three more in the same mass of confusion and hurry. The mob of colonists then ran away, except three unhappy men who instantly expired; one more is since dead, three others are dangerously, and four slightly wounded. The entire unfortunate affair took place in about 20 minutes. When I asked the soldiers why they fired without orders, they said they heard the word fire and supposed it came from me. This might be the case as many of the mob called out "Fire, fire!", but I assured the men that I gave no such order; that my words were, "Don't fire!" and "Stop your firing!" In short; it was scarcely possible for the soldiers to know who said fire, or don't fire, or stop your firing. It wasn't their fault.

**-Captain Thomas Preston**


# *Written Accounts from Multiple Perspectives*

\*These accounts are edited for understanding and appropriate content from a primary source account from Daniel Usher

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"I saw several persons, mostly young folks, gathered between the Town House and Coffee House, some of whom were talking to the soldiers posted at the Commissioners' or Custom-house. After some time, some boys standing at a distance from the soldier began to throw light snow-balls at him. At this, he began to seem much enraged and... appeared to have loaded his gun, giving it a heavy stamp upon the doorstep, as if to force down the lead into the barrel; and provide a sound of warning before he swore to the boys if they came near him again they would surely meet their end. About ten minutes after this, I saw Captain Preston leading seven or eight more men from the Town House, and placed them all between the Custom-house door, and the soldier's post. Preston, looking angered; seemed to order the men to stand on guard, pointing their weapons towards the crowd of colonists gathering larger still, in the square. About four or five minutes after the rest of the soldiers were posted, the first set of boys who were threatened by the soldier standing guard at the customs house, came back with only armed with more snowballs now. As they approached the British brandishing their guns and bayonets, I heard the Captain as he shouted and commanded them to fire. Upon this, one gun quickly went off; and afterwards he turned back to his loyal soldiers and said "Fire by all means!" Other soldiers continued to follow the orders, firing over and over again as you could hear screams of "Fire! Fire!" and "Why don't you fire?!" amidst all the commotion. I myself, was utterly unarmed and fearful for my own life at the scene of this massacre. So to avoid further danger, I went up round the Town House till the fray was over. When I approached the scene once more when the dust had settled, there were so many colonists lying dead or wounded. What a senseless act of violence we saw take place in our fair town that night."

-Daniel Usher, Boston citizen



# *Written Accounts from Multiple Perspectives*

*\*Direct accounts and  
primary sources*

At home. I heard the Bells for fire. Went out. Came to the Town House. The People told me there was going to be a Rumpus with the Soldiers. Went to the Custom house. Saw Capt. Preston there with the Soldiers. Asked him if they were loaded. He said yes. I went with Ball. He said nothing. I saw the People throw Snow Balls at the Soldiers and saw a Stick about 3 feet long strike a Soldier upon the right. He sallied and then fired. A little time a second. Then the other soldiers fast after one another. One or two Snow balls hit the Soldier, the stick struck, before firing. I know not whether he sallied on account of the Stick or step'd back to make ready. I did not hear any Order given by the Capt. to fire. I stood so near him I think I must have heard him if he had given an order to fire before the first firing. I never knew Capt. Preston before. I can't say whether he had a Surtout on, he was dressed in red. I know him to be the Man I took to be the Officer. The Man that fired first stood next to the Exchange lane. I saw none of the People press upon the Soldiers before the first Gun fired. I did after. I aimed a blow at him myself but did not strike him. I am sure the Captain stood before the Men when the first Gun was fired. I had no apprehension the Capt. did give order to fire when the first Gun was fired. I thought, after the first Gun, the Capt. did order the Men to fire but do not certainly know. I heard the word fire several times but know not whether it came from the Captain, the Soldiers or People. Two of the People struck at the Soldiers after the first Gun. I don't know if they hit 'em. There were about 100 people in the Street. The muzzles of the Guns were behind him. After the first Gun the Captain went quite to the left and I to the right.

## **Deposition of Theodore Bliss**


I saw the officer after the firing and spoke to the Soldiers and told 'em it was a Cowardly action to kill men at the end of their Bayonets. They were pushing at the People who seemed to be trying to come into the Street. The Captain came up and stamped and said Damn their bloods fire again and let 'em take the consequence. I was within four feet of him. He had no surtout but a red Coat with a Rose on his shoulder. The people were quarrelling at the head of Royal Exchange lane. The Soldiers were pushing and striking with the Guns. I saw the People's Arms moving but no Sticks.

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## **Deposition of John Cole**

# *Text Coding Primary Sources*


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- Underline when you see a clearly stated point of view in the accounts
  - Write a **B** next to any evidence supporting the British
  - Write an **A** next to any evidence supporting the American Colonists
  - Place a question mark ? Next to any items in the accounts you still have questions about
  - Place an exclamation point ! Next to any items in the accounts that surprised you
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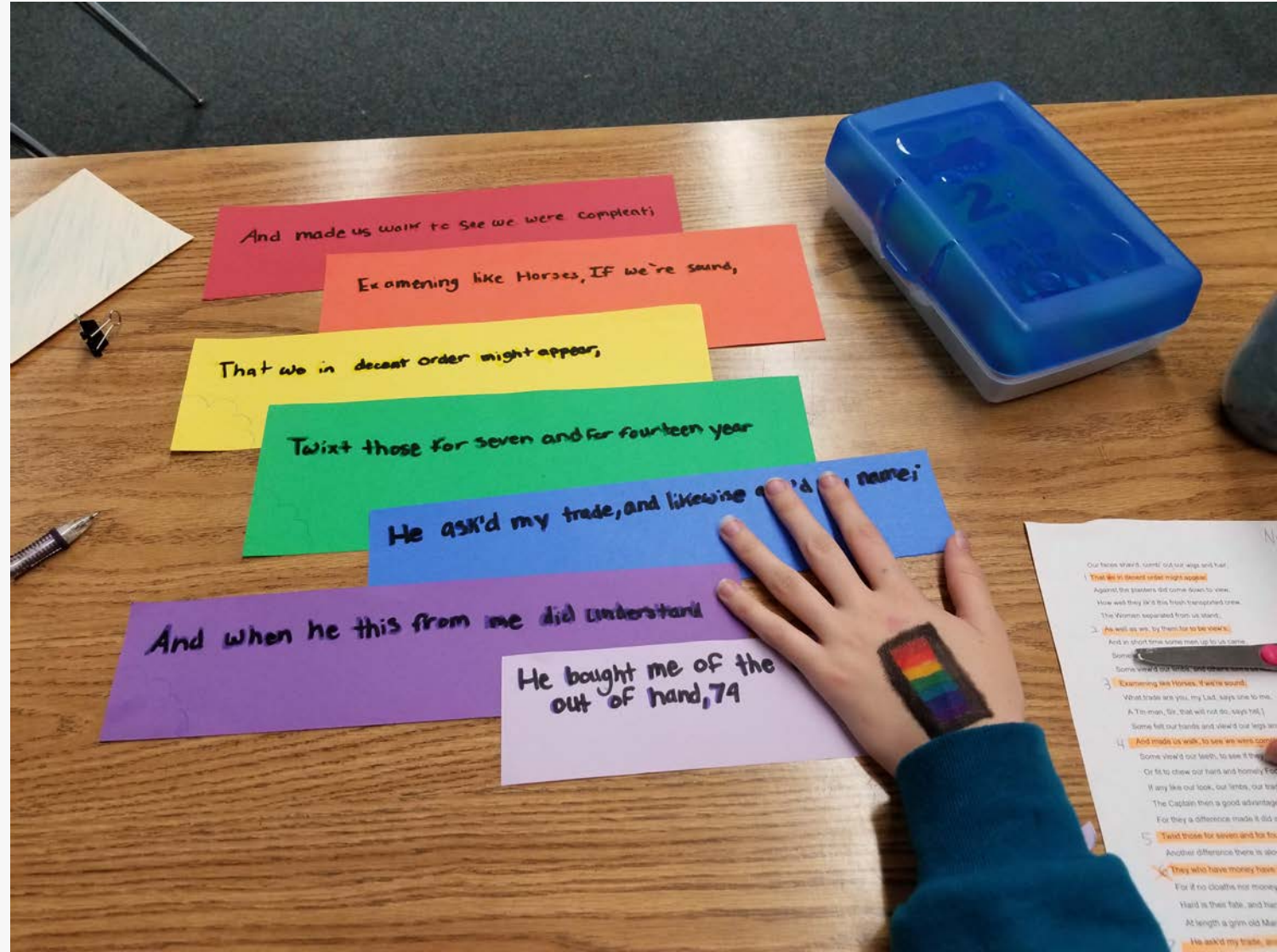
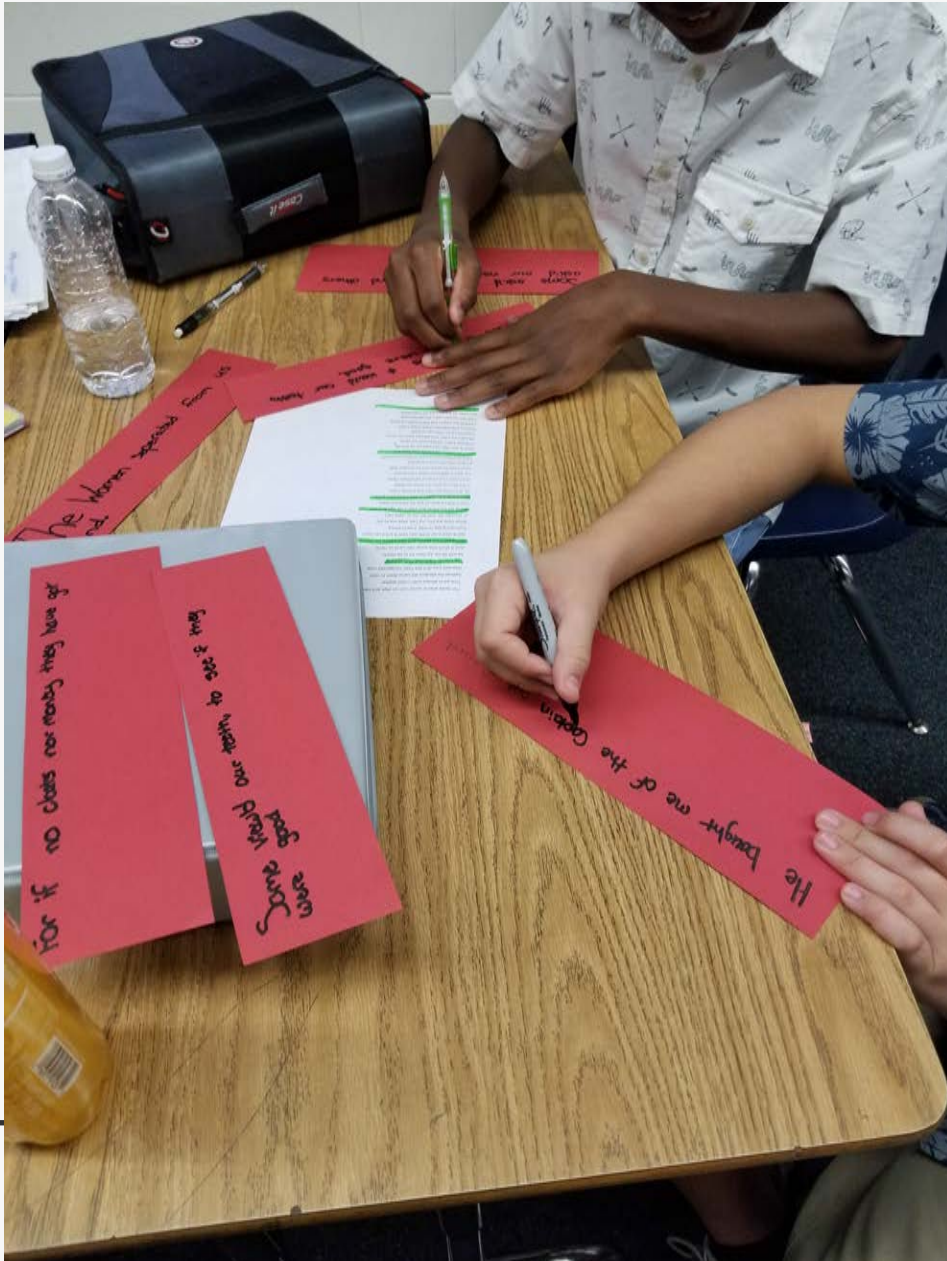
# *Comparing Multiple Perspectives*

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Various strategies can be used when comparing witness accounts and analyzing images from multiple perspectives. Students can provide evidence of their learning in a variety of ways:

- Think-pair-share or think-ink-share
  - Carousel/Jigsaw with the image(s)
  - Image analysis utilizing the graphic organizer
  - Text coding
  - **Composing a written analysis** (Colonist journal entries, newspaper articles)
  - COATS (Captions. Objects. Action. Time period. Second round.
  - **Found poetry**
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# Found poetry



Link to found poetry step by step lesson and handout  
<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching->

SO, WAS THE  
BOSTON  
MASSACRE  
*REALLY* A  
MASSACRE?

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# *Resources*

- <http://loc.gov/?q=boston+massacre> (primary written accounts, images)
  - <http://chnm.gmu.edu/tah-loudoun/blog/lessons/the-boston-massacre-you-be-the-judge/> (witness accounts, images, image analysis, newspaper articles)
  - <http://betterlesson.com/lesson/516011/boston-massacre> (image analysis graphic organizer, images)
  - <https://www.colonialwilliamsburg.com/blog/blog-post-archive/exploring-perceptions-of-the-boston-massacre> (primary written accounts)
  - <https://sheg.Stanford.edu> (Historical inquiry/primary and secondary sources)
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# *Standards Addressed*

## **Applicable Middle School Benchmarks:**

- SS.8.A.1.6 Compare interpretations of key events and issues throughout American History.
- SS.8.A.1.7 View historic events through the eyes of those who were there as shown in their art, writings, music, and artifacts.
- SS.8.A.1.5 Identify, within both primary and secondary sources, the author, audience, format, and purpose of significant historical documents.

## **Applicable Elementary Standards:**

- SS.5.A.5.1 Identify and explain significant events leading up to the American Revolution
  - SS.5.A.5.3 Explain the significance of historical documents including key political concepts, origins of these concepts, and their role in American independence.
  - SS.5.A.1.1 Use primary and secondary sources to understand history
  - LAFS.5.RI.2.6 Analyze multiple accounts of the same event or topic, noting important similarities and differences in the point of view they represent.
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*Thank you  
for  
attending!*

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