



Mosswood Connections

The Secret of Sarah Revere by Anne Rinaldi. Lessons and Activities

Page | 1

Plot

This story is about Sarah Revere, the thirteen year old daughter of the famous Paul Revere. She has to cope with the family tension when her father is riding to other towns to warn them or spread news. She knew more than most about the revolution, and she was very scared of the power of the secrets she had. It starts out in Watertown then Sarah, the narrator, flashes back to Boston then returns back to Watertown at the end. She tells about all the drama and rumors in Boston and in her family. With thoughts of her step mother too involved with a family friend she didn't know what to believe.

Learning and Performance Standards

What *specific* literacy skills will this unit focus on?

Reading non-fiction, note taking, presenting and/or evaluating persuasive arguments for or against war.

- Present information clearly in a variety of oral, written, and project-based forms that may include summaries, brief reports, primary documents, illustrations, posters, charts, points of view, persuasive essays, and oral and written presentations.
- Use details, examples, anecdotes, or personal experiences to clarify and support your point of view.
- Use the process of pre-writing, drafting, revising, and proofreading (the “writing process”) to produce well-constructed informational texts.
- Observe basic writing conventions, such as correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization, as well as sentence and paragraph structures appropriate to written forms.



Mosswood Connections

- Express opinions (in such forms as oral and written reviews, letters to the editor, essays, or persuasive speeches) about events, books, issues, and experiences, supporting their opinions with some evidence.
- Present arguments for certain views or actions with reference to specific criteria that support the argument; work to understand multiple perspectives.
- Use effective and descriptive vocabulary; follow the rules of grammar and usage; read and discuss published letters, diaries, and journals.
- Gather and interpret information from reference books, magazines, textbooks, Web sites, electronic bulletin boards, audio and media presentations, oral interviews, and from such sources such as charts, graphs, maps, and diagrams.
- Select information appropriate to the purpose of the investigation and relate ideas from one text to another; gather information from multiple sources.
- Select and use strategies that have been taught for note-taking, organizing, and categorizing information.
- Support inferences about information and ideas with reference to text features, such as vocabulary and organizational patterns.

Focusing Questions

- What challenges did the colonists face?
- Why did the American colonists rebel against England?
- Should the American colonists have rebelled against England?
- What were the turning points of the Revolution?
- How did different people/groups contribute to the American Revolution?
- What were the different gender and class roles at this time?
- How did war change the daily lives of the colonists?
- Why was the Revolution such an important event in world history?



Mosswood Connections

Research.

- 1) The Boston Massacre
- 2) Make a time-line of the events leading up to the American Revolution

Writing Prompts.

- 1) If you were a leader today what changes would you like to make for our country? Why?
- 2) Which leader from the American Revolution most inspires you? Why?
- 3) If you could trade places with any character in the novel with whom would you trade places?
- 4) You are an American Colonist, your cousin is thinking about moving to the Americas. Write them a letter telling them whether you think that they should move or stay where they are.
- 5) There is a lot of gossip in the book. Is it helpful or harmful? Have you ever had an experience with gossip? What was the result of the gossiping?
- 6) You are a Tory. Explain why you think America should remain under British rule.

Themes.

- 1) Explore the theme of leadership. Who makes a good leader? Why?
- 2) Explore the theme of patriotism.
- 3) Explore the themes of secrets and gossip.
- 4) Explore the theme of courage.

Examples of possible responses:

Theme of Truth verses Gossip.

- Gossip is one of the important themes that gives the book some of the flavor and history we value in it. Some of the gossip is about Margaret Gage, the wife of General Gage who is a Tory. Debby, who is Sarah's elder sister, spread a rumor around Boston that Mrs. Gage is a Tory and a spy. Although the rumor was meant to be negative gossip perhaps it covered for



Mosswood Connections

Mrs. Gage since it is possible she was a spy for the Whigs. Perhaps she was pretending to be a Tory by marrying her husband and pretending to have severe headaches to see Dr. Warren so she could give him information about the British. The author weaved gossip into the pages of the book to tell us that gossip was one of the keys to the American Revolution. The British and the Americans spread disgraceful rumors about each other that destroyed any hope of peace between them.

Theme of Courage.

- Courage is also an extremely important theme in the book as well because many of the vivid characters are brave such as Sarah herself, Debby, Grandmother who could fight the British alone, Paul Revere, Dr. Warren, and Rachel. Sarah was brave when she went out with Paul to deliver a message. There were lots of dangerous people out in the streets but she wanted to be part of the rebellion and so she chose to help her brother. Rachel was brave for keeping the household together during the war. She was always fearful for the safety of her family but she tried to act calm and keep them in order. Debby was brave for sneaking out and supporting Amos with his mission to fight the British. Courage is a strong theme in this book.

Theme of Secrets.

- Obviously secrets are a big theme in this book because it is part of the title. Keeping secrets is very hard to do; I know this because I have kept some very private secrets myself. Sarah, Paul Revere and Dr. Warren have to keep secrets to keep safe. The Revere family has many secrets. Secrets about the war. Secrets about where people are and where they are going. Secrets about their relationships. They even have secrets about what they believe in. The secrets can be helpful because they help the Americans be more successful in the revolution. Secrets can also cause confusion like when Rachel kept secretly talking to Dr. Warren making people think that they were having an affair. Secrets are sometimes painful but they can be useful if they are used to help or protect others.



Mosswood Connections

Explore the Boston Massacre.



A Behind-the-Scenes Look at Paul Revere's Most Famous Engraving



Mosswood Connections

When Paul Revere first began selling his color prints of "The Bloody Massacre perpetrated in King Street" in Boston, he was doing what any like-minded patriot with his talents in 1770 would have done. Only, Paul Revere did it faster and more expeditiously than anyone else, including two other artist-engravers who also issued prints of the Massacre that year.

Page | 6

Twenty-one days before — on the night of March 5, 1770 — five men had been shot to death in Boston town by British soldiers. Precipitating the event known as the Boston Massacre was a mob of men and boys taunting a sentry standing guard at the city's customs house. When other British soldiers came to the sentry's support, a free-for-all ensued and shots were fired into the crowd. Four died on the spot and a fifth died after four days. Six others were wounded.

The presence of British troops in Boston had long been a sore point among Boston's radical politicians. Paul Revere wasted no time in capitalizing on the Massacre to highlight British tyranny and stir up anti-British sentiment among his fellow colonists. As you will see, Revere's historic engraving is long on political propaganda and short on accuracy or aesthetics.

Notice how the British Grenadiers are shown standing in a straight line shooting their rifles in a regular volley, whereas when the disturbance actually erupted both sides were belligerent and riotous.

Notice also that Revere's engraving shows a blue sky. Only a wisp of a moon suggests that the riot occurred after nine o'clock on a cold winter night.

Notice, too, the absence of snow and ice on the street, while Crispus Attucks — a black man lying on the ground closest to the British soldiers — is shown to be white. As an aside, it should be noted that as a result of his death in the Boston Massacre, Crispus Attucks would emerge as the most famous of all the black men to fight in the cause of the Revolution, and become its first martyr.

Documentation has come to light over the years revealing details on the other Boston Massacre paintings. Revere copied engraver Henry Pelham's drawings of the Massacre, produced his own engraving, and three weeks after the occurrence was advertising his prints for sale in Boston's



Mosswood Connections

newspapers. By the time Pelham's prints hit the street, Revere's print had flooded the market. A third engraving was executed by Jonathan Mulliken, who also issued prints depicting the event. Except for a number of minor differences, all three prints appear alike.

In his rush to produce his engraving Revere employed the talents of Christian Remick to colorize the print. Remick's choice of colors is simple yet effective. Notice the use of red for the British uniforms and the blood. The other colors — blue, green, brown and black — all contribute to make this print what is arguably the most famous in America.

Few historians would deny that the Boston Massacre proved to be a milestone in America's road to independence. By popularizing the tragic event, Paul Revere's print became "the first powerful influence in forming an outspoken anti-British public opinion," one which the revolutionary leaders had almost lost hope of achieving.

Fast Facts

1. The American Revolution, also known as the Revolutionary War, began in 1775.
2. British soldiers and American patriots started the war with battles at Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts.
3. Colonists in America wanted independence from England.
4. The British government attempted to pass some laws, enforce several taxes, and increase more control over the colonies. The colonies strongly objected to these laws and taxes. They wanted England to have no control over them.
5. For ten years before the war actually started, there was a lot of tension between England and the colonies.
6. The colonies had no central government at the beginning of the war, so delegates from all the colonies were sent to form the first Continental Congress.
7. George Washington, a former military officer and wealthy Virginian, was appointed Commander in Chief of the Continental Army.
8. Members of the Continental Congress wrote a letter to King George of England outlining their complaints and declaring their independence from England.
9. On July 4, 1776, the Continental Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence, in which the colonies declared their independence from England.
10. The war ended in 1783, and the United States of America was born



Mosswood Connections

Final Project

- *Town Hall Meeting. Should we join the Revolution?*
- *In this project, students will engage in a mock “Town Hall” meeting where Loyalists and Patriots will attempt to convince each other and the neutral townspeople to join their cause. Students will work in pairs to research a character (a Loyalist, Patriot, or neutral party) and prepare arguments for or against joining the Revolutionary War.*
- At the start of the unit, assign a character to each student pair (neutral characters will be “composites” representing average colonists such as a farmer, a seamstress, a printer, etc.) and have them begin research.
- Student Research:
- Student pairs will research and take notes on the lives of their characters
- Next, students will research the arguments in favor of and/or in opposition to the war.
- Students representing neutral characters will need to research both the pros and cons to prepare for evaluating the two sides.
- Pairs representing the Patriots and Loyalists will craft short oral arguments (3–5 minutes for each pair) in support of their position. Arguments should include a brief introduction, several different points in support of their position, and a brief conclusion. They should also be prepared for questions they anticipate the neutral townspeople might ask.
- To avoid repetition, the two “teams” (Loyalist and Patriot) should meet prior to the Town Hall meeting to discuss who will make which points during the meeting.
- Town Hall Meeting:
- Students will play the roles of colonists living in an imaginary town (could be in any of the British colonies, but should be somewhere where such a meeting might realistically include people of different races, ages, and genders).
- Each character will present his/her argument to the assembled townspeople in 3–5 minutes.



Mosswood Connections

- After all the characters on one side have presented their arguments, the characters from the opposing side will present their arguments.
- Neutral characters may ask clarifying questions of each side, which can be answered by any character from the side being questioned.
- Neutral characters will act as judges for the arguments. This group does not have to come to consensus—individuals may choose to join one side or another.

Town Hall Meeting Evaluation.

- List all the points the characters in each group make for their position. Do not write out everything they say—just a quick note.
- When the entire group is finished speaking, put a check on the second chart next to each item they did well during their presentation.
- Add up the number of arguments they made and the checks you marked.
- Patriot Argument Points

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

- Loyalist Argument Points

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.



Mosswood Connections

Patriot Checklist

- ___ Arguments were persuasive.
- ___ Convincing role-play of characters.
- ___ Made eye contact with the audience at least some of the time.
- ___ Used a visual display.
- ___ Engaging or interesting style.

Loyalist Checklist

- ___ Arguments were persuasive.
- ___ Convincing role-play of characters.
- ___ Made eye contact with the audience at least some of the time.
- ___ Used a visual display.
- ___ Engaging or interesting style.

Total Patriot Score _____

Total Loyalist Score _____



Mosswood Connections