Grades: 8th Grade  
Subjects: Social Studies & English Language Arts  
Time required: 2 to 3 class periods  
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OVERVIEW
In this lesson, the students will use contemporary points of views of the incidents of the Boston Massacre and construct a non-positioned news article about the event. They will be tasked to tell the story from a non-opinionated point of view as best as possible that will be published in a colonial newspaper that is neither loyalist or patriot in standing.

Ideally, this lesson should occur following the Townsend Acts and the heating up of tensions with riots and protests beginning in Boston. However, it should also occur prior to the students learning about the Boston Massacre. This will help to ensure that the students do not use any prior knowledge of the event to influence their writing.

UNDERSTANDING GOAL
The purpose is to work with students on various points of view of history from multiple primary sources, while also looking for accuracy in that source material. The secondary purpose of this lesson is to help teach the students that the reliability of sources should always be questioned. Whether they be primary or secondary sources, from reliable or questionable sources, or even if it is a photograph or physical object.

OBJECTIVES
- Students will analyze the causes of the American Revolution.
- Students will identify contradicting views of a single historical event using primary sources.
- Students will evaluate the trustworthiness of historical documents.
- Students will create a news article covering the American Revolution.

INVESTIGATIVE QUESTION
How does bias in reporting affect our view of events and history, from the perspective of the Boston Massacre, March 5, 1776?

CURRICULUM STANDARDS
8th Grade Social Studies
8.15 Analyze the social, political, and economic causes of the events and groups of the American Revolution, including: ...The Boston Massacre, 1770

8th Grade English Language Arts
- 8.RI.KID.1 Analyze what a text says explicitly and draw logical inferences; support an interpretation of a text by citing relevant textual evidence.
- 8.RI.IKI.8 Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the claims and the reasoning is sound.

Four Coffins of the Men Killed in the Boston Massacre [1770]
Resources:
- The Trial of the British Solders of the 29th regiment of foot
- An Account of A late Military Massacre at Boston, or the Conse-
queness of Quartering Troops in a populous Town: Author un-
known, Boston, March 12, 1770
- The Boston Massacre, 1770: The British Perspective
- Anonymous Account of the Boston Massacre
- Boston Gazette March 12, 1770
- Four Coffins of the Men Killed in the Boston Massacre by Paul Re-
verre
- The bloody massacre perpetrated in King Street Boston on March 5th
  1770 by a party of the 29th Regt
- Various Eyewitness Accounts of the Boston Massacre

Materials:
- Pyramid Journalism Graphic Organizer
- HIPPO Analysis Worksheet
- Boston Massacre Sources *Note: Pages 15-16 are used in day two
  of the lesson plan.

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<th>DAY 1</th>
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| Step 1 | Introduce the project to the students referencing preceding lessons on the causes of discontent be-
|        | tween the American colonies and England. |
| Step 2 | Hand each student a copy of the HIPPO primary source analysis sheet. Divide students into groups of |
|        | three or more and pass out copies of primary source material. Each group will receive one primary |
|        | source. |
| Step 4 | Introduce the documents to the students explaining that they are from contemporary sources from the |
|        | time period and are either loyalist, patriot, or neutral in nature. The sources are either court docu-
|        | ments, prints, newspaper articles, or printed pamphlet accounts of the event. |
| Step 5 | Give the students the investigative question: “What has been the role of the media in America’s histo-
|        | ry and how does bias and poorly researched news affect our view of events and history, from the per-
|        | spective of the Boston Massacre March 5, 1776?” Instruct students that they will be required to discuss |
|        | the events that took place in Boston on March 5, 1776. |
| Step 6 | Allow ample time for student research and completion of the HIPPO analysis sheet. |
| Step 7 | After students have completed their analysis, conduct a classroom discussion comparing the different |
|        | viewpoints and biases existing within the primary material. |
| Step 8 | If enough classroom time is available, jigsaw your groups. Each student in the group will present their |
|        | source and their analysis of the source with a particular emphasis on what perspective and bias is evi-
|        | dent in their source. Then have the groups discuss the investigative question based on the their analy-
|        | sis of all the sources. |

Boston, Mass., Boston Massacre Monu-
ment, 1890-1906.
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<tr>
<th>DAY 2</th>
<th>Day 2 will consist of student-led activities and a creative writing assignment. The last activity of Day 2 may be carried over into Day 3.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td>Allow students time to finish discussions from the previous day’s analysis. What conclusions can we draw about the role of perspective and bias in shaping how reports on the Boston Massacre were written?</td>
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<td>Step 2</td>
<td>Have students read examples aloud from the various texts and prompt the rest of class to determine if the author is a loyalist, patriot, or neutral.</td>
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<td>Step 3</td>
<td>Have students return to their groups from the previous day. Hand each student a copy of the Pyramid Journalism Graphic Organizer. Each group will be given one entry from the Various Eyewitness Accounts of the Boston Massacre. <em>Note: This source is also available on in the source packet pages 15-16.</em></td>
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<td>Step 4</td>
<td>Have the students’ select one member out of their group to be the read-aloud person. Then instruct the remaining members that they are all newspaper reporters who are interviewing a witness to the event.</td>
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<td>Step 5</td>
<td>The students will be instructed to read each quote with their groups and take notes on their graphic organizer. Like a real news scene, they will only read the quote once. To make it more realistic, the student reading should do their account in a fake or silly accent.</td>
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<td>Step 6</td>
<td>Once each group has finished, the groups will separate with each of the students who took notes joining another group. When they have reorganized, there should be a student from each quote in every group. Now the instructor will have the students compose a newspaper account of the event based on all the notes at their table. Allow approximately fifteen minutes for this step.</td>
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<td>Step 7</td>
<td>Ask each group to read their articles to the class. Student will need to take notes during the readings. Discuss the similarities and differences in the articles presented by the groups. Students will also be asked to decide whether the article was written by a patriot of loyalist newspaper.</td>
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<td>Step 8</td>
<td>Have each student read the original quote they started the activity with. Now armed with that quote, their peer written-articles, and notes, the students will write an evaluative piece on the accuracy of their articles. What impact would these various articles have on readers concerning their understanding of the events of the Boston Massacre?</td>
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<td>Step 9 (Optional: Day 3)</td>
<td>Students will present their reports to the class individually. During the presentations, students will note differences in their peer’s reports. Looking for accuracy and contradictions in their writings, but also keeping an eye out to see if their reports lean to the patriot or loyalist side. Ideally, this will be the first lesson in a unit on writing and thinking like a historian using primary sources. The purpose would be to work with students on various points of view from various sources, while also looking for accuracy in the source material. The secondary purpose of this lesson is to help teach the students that the reliability of sources should always be questioned. Whether they be primary or secondary sources, from reliable or questionable sources, or even if it is a photograph or physical object. As such, the student should also walk away from the lesson with a different perspective on media sources. They should question the intentions of the author, the author’s sources, and accuracy of the author’s summary of the information to be presented in their respective form of media. The purpose of this option is to not only show the students the difficulties and confusion that can be faced by the media when reporting an event based on eyewitness accounts, and the dangers that inaccurate information could have on the public reading this information for themselves to be informed of the event.</td>
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This lesson provides a great opportunity for creative extension ideas. For example, this lesson could be applied to almost any historical event where eyewitness accounts through all eras. Here are some examples: Ancient History – Eruption of Mt. Vesuvius, Colonial America – The Salem Witch Trials, US history – Assination of President Lincoln, Bombing of Pearl Harbor, Kennedy Assassination, 9/11 etc. The beauty of this lesson is its adaptability to other events.

- Have students read a poem covering the assassination of President Lincoln and locate various uses of imagery and writing styles. How is the United States and Lincoln represented in this poem? Is this a fair or accurate depiction of America during this time?
- Students can investigate excerpts from Carl Sagan’s “The Demon-Haunted World” to analyze the Salem Witch Trials. Students can use Sagan’s work to evaluate the importance of critical thinking and questioning group think.
- Have students research the attack on Pearl Harbor and America’s decision to join the war effort by navigating through a blog featuring oral histories. Prompt students to discuss the roles of the media and the public in America’s decision to join World War II.

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**EVALUATION**

**TOTAL POINTS: 100**

- Notes and graphic organizers: 25%
- Presentation/Participation: 25%
- Written assignment: 50%

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*The Boston Gazette, and Country Journal. Monday, March 12, 1770*

[1770]