

# Boston Massacre



On March 5, Edward Gerrish, a young apprentice, hurled insults at a British soldier, standing in the square by the Boston Customs House. Private Hugh White, a British soldier posted at the Customs House, hit Gerrish from behind. A crowd began to form. Private White held his ground with his bayonet fixed, the other soldier left. The crowd turned into a mob. The mob taunted and pelted White with ice and snowballs. Captain Thomas Preston, from a nearby British guard post marched seven soldiers, a corporal and six privates, to the Customs House to restore order. The soldiers fixed their bayonets and formed a line in front of the Customs House. There was a great deal of confusion and the events that followed are unclear. Someone threw ice and a soldier slipped. While regaining his footing, the soldier's gun discharged—the other soldiers took aim at the angry mob and fired. Three men in the mob were killed instantly, another man died within hours and another died a few days later.

Carefully look at Paul Revere's engraving and answer the questions below.

1. According to the account of the massacre given in the handout, who is the soldier with his sword risen?
2. How many British soldiers has Revere pictured in the engraving?
3. Why would Revere use the term *Butcher's Hall*?

## Questions for Further Discussion

1. A trial took place. The British soldiers were tried for murder, defended by attorneys John Adams and Josiah Quincy. Do you think the soldiers were found guilty or not guilty?
2. Loaded words are words that are emotionally charged. Which words in the title above Revere's engraving are loaded? Why would Revere use loaded words?
3. Does Revere depict a point of view that is favorable to the British soldiers or to the colonists? Why?
4. If a British artist illustrated the Boston Massacre, how might it look different?