



LESSON 3

1700

1725

1750

1770 1780

1800

THE REVOLUTION BEGINS

READ ALOUD

"The colonies must either submit or triumph," spoke King George III. The King was sure that the colonies would "submit," or surrender, to the British government. However, many colonists agreed that now was the time to stand up to Britain and to unite the colonies.

THE BIG PICTURE

On September 5, 1774, delegates from every colony except Georgia met in Philadelphia. At this **First Continental Congress**, delegates wrote a **petition** to send to the the King asking for repeal of the Intolerable Acts. A petition is a written request signed by many people. The delegates said that the Intolerable Acts were illegal and unfair. They said they had the right to make their own laws.

To fight the Intolerable Acts, the delegates agreed to stop trade with Britain. They also asked the colonists to gather **minutemen** to defend the cities. Minutemen were soldiers who had to be ready for battle at a minute's notice.

The colonists felt that the problems between themselves and Britain might explode into war. Within a year the colonists and the British were in a war called the **American Revolution**. A revolution is a sudden, violent, or very great change.

Focus Activity

READ TO LEARN

What happened in the first battles of the American Revolution?

VOCABULARY

First Continental
Congress
petition

minutemen

American Revolution

Battle of Bunker Hill

PLACES

Lexington, Massachusetts

Concord, Massachusetts

Fort Ticonderoga

Charlestown

PEOPLE

John Hancock

Paul Revere

William Dawes

John Parker

Patrick Henry

Ethan Allen

Israel Putnam

Peter Salem

PREPARING FOR WAR

By 1775 every able man had to join the militia. Most of the militia were farmers, craftworkers, business owners, and wealthy men. Early in the Revolution some militias allowed both free and enslaved African Americans to join.

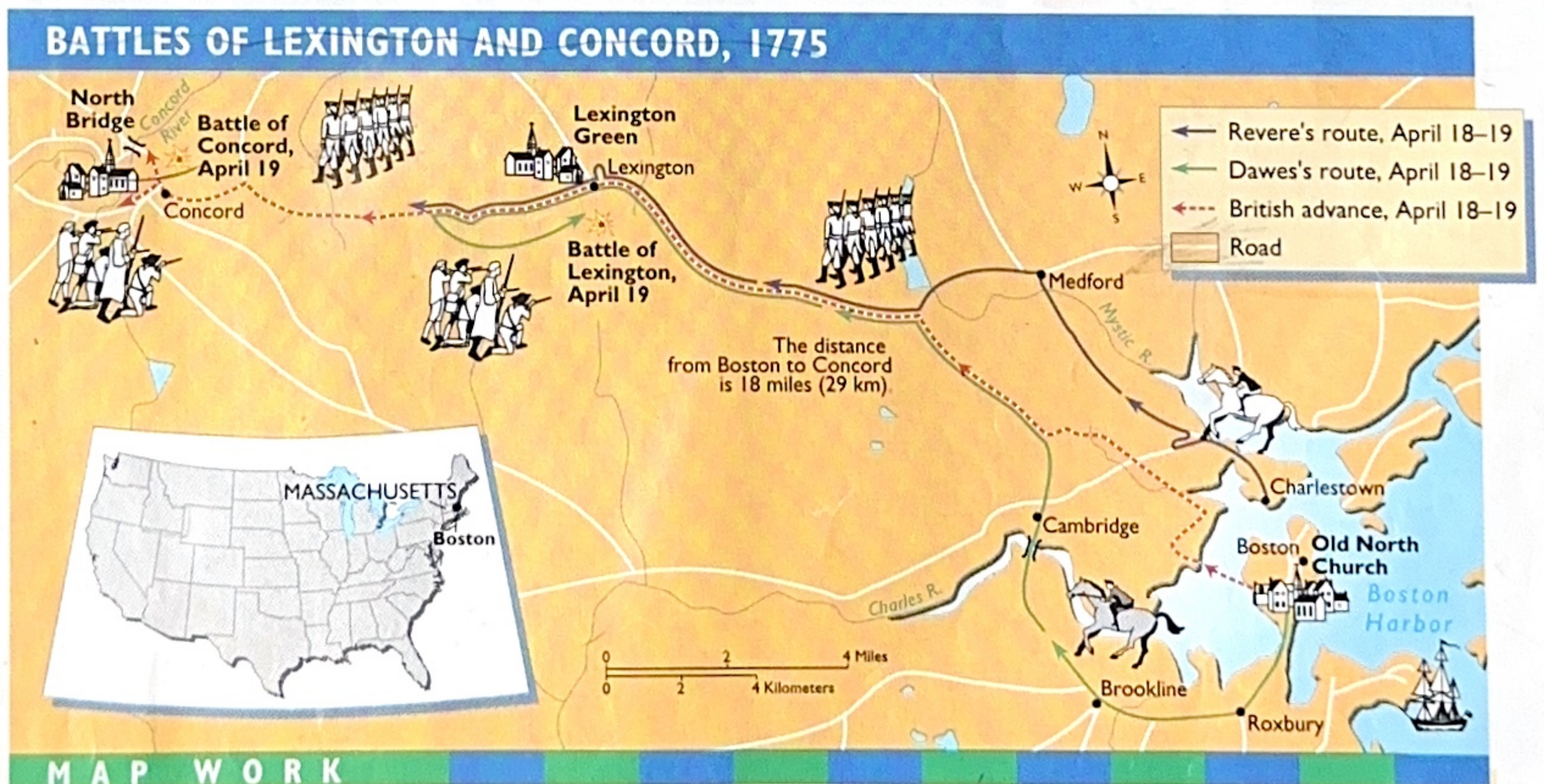
The militias near **Lexington, Massachusetts** were given orders "to be ready at the beat of the drum." The rumor was that the British soldiers were going to find and arrest Sam Adams and **John Hancock**, a leading Boston patriot. Then the British soldiers would march to **Concord, Massachusetts** to capture guns that the militia had stored there.

Paul Revere

On the night of April 18, a silver-smith named **Paul Revere** learned that the British were leaving Boston and heading for Concord. Revere rode to Lexington to warn Adams and Hancock. Revere's friend, **William Dawes**, joined him on the way to Concord. Trace the routes of Revere and Dawes on the map.

They were joined by a doctor named Samuel Prescott, who was returning home to Concord. A British patrol caught up with the men. The patrol took Revere's horse, but Dawes escaped. Prescott was the only one to reach Concord.

Revere's cry, "The British are coming!" is remembered today.



Lexington and Concord were the first big battles of the **American Revolution**. The colonists were able to move the guns they had stored at Concord.

1. Through which cities did Revere ride? Dawes?
2. In which direction did the British travel?
3. About how far is Lexington from Concord?



THE FIRST SHOTS ARE FIRED

After Prescott's ride minutemen galloped from their farms to Lexington. About 700 of the British red-coats marched toward the town. On April 19, the first shots of the American Revolution were fired.

Lexington and Concord

With the British troops in view, the militia captain **John Parker** assembled about 70 men on the Lexington Common. "Stand your ground!" he ordered them. The British advanced, and someone fired his musket.

In the battle, 8 militia men were killed, and 10 were wounded. Only one British soldier was hurt.

The British marched 5 miles to Concord. Knowing that they were outnumbered, the 250 militia men waited for other militias as the British searched the town. The

A farmer at the Battle of Lexington (above) said, "We always had governed ourselves, and we always meant to."

British destroyed a cannon and a small amount of ammunition. The women of Concord hid the rest of the supplies under straw in barns and in freshly plowed fields.

The minutemen came upon British soldiers blocking the bridge west of Concord. The militia fired and that forced the British to retreat.

As the Boston poet Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote years later:

*Here once the embattled farmers
stood,
And fired the shot heard round
the world.*

Hiding behind trees and buildings, the minutemen shot at the British soldiers who were retreating back toward Boston. More than 90 British soldiers were killed, and 174 were wounded.

“Liberty or Death”

In Virginia the fiery speeches of **Patrick Henry** convinced many in the House of Burgesses that a final break with Great Britain was near.

On March 23, 1775, Henry gave one of the most famous speeches in our country’s history. He argued that the British troops were in Boston to take away the colonists’ rights. Read the following excerpt from Henry’s speech. What action did he suggest the colonies take?



The Granger Collection

MANY VOICES PRIMARY SOURCE

Excerpt from a speech by Patrick Henry before a meeting at St. John’s Church, Richmond, Virginia, 1775.

There is no retreat but in submission and slavery! Our chains are forged. Their clanking may be heard on the plains of Boston! The war is **inevitable**—and let it come!! I repeat it, sir, let it come!!!

It is vain, sir, to **extenuate** the matter. Gentlemen may cry, peace, peace; but there is no peace. The war is actually begun! The next **gale** that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of **resounding** arms! Our **brethren** are already in the field! Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery?

Forbid it, Almighty God—I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty, or give me death!

inevitable: not to be avoided

extenuate: excuse

gale: strong wind

resounding: echoing

brethren: brothers

Patrick Henry’s speeches inspired colonists to take action against the British. As a result of the speech he gave in 1775, the Virginia House of Burgesses voted to organize a militia for Virginia’s defense.