

The Shot Heard 'Round the World

It was April 19, 1775. Tensions between the British and American colonists were at a high point. Americans were already preparing for war. British soldiers were looking to stop a rebellion.

In Lexington, a town on the road to Concord, 80 American militiamen lined up in formation. They had their guns with them, but they were not planning to fire on the British redcoats. After all, a war had not been declared. Still, they knew there was a chance fighting might break out, and they wanted to be ready if it did.

As the British approached, John Parker, the leader of the Lexington militia, told his men, "Stand your ground; don't fire unless fired upon, but if they mean to have a war, let it begin here."

A British officer told the armed men to go home. According to one report, he shouted, "Lay down your arms, you rebels!" However, as the militiamen were turning to go, a shot rang out.

Who fired that shot? Even today nobody knows for sure. The British soldiers thought the militiamen fired it. However, Parker and his men said later that they did not. The shot may have been fired by someone who was not part of Parker's militia. He may have been firing into the air to sound an alarm. In any case, the soldiers thought they were under attack. They fired a volley and-in a matter of seconds-guns were flashing and smoking on both sides.

Seven members of the militia were killed in Lexington that day, and nine more were wounded. On the other side, only one British soldier was wounded.

Next, the British soldiers marched on to Concord. They searched Concord and found a few cannons and some musket balls. By this time, word of the fighting was spreading rapidly. Hundreds of men made their way to Concord, ready to fight. One troop of militiamen met the British on the outskirts of Concord at North Bridge. The British fired. The militiamen fired back.

Soon the British commander decided to march his troops back to Boston. However, as the British soldiers made their way back, militiamen shot at them. The militiamen hid behind trees and stone walls. They fired on the British soldiers, one or two at a time. By the time the British made it back to Boston that night, 73 soldiers had been killed and another 174 had been wounded. As for the colonists, 49 had died and 39 had been wounded. The colonists had stood up to the British, and the British had failed to capture the rebellious patriots Samuel Adams and John Hancock, which had been their initial goal. There was no going back-the Revolutionary War had begun!

1. Where were seven members of the American militia killed by British soldiers in April 1775?
 - A. Lexington
 - B. Concord
 - C. Boston
 - D. Britain



2. This text describes a sequence of events. What happened right after British soldiers and American militiamen fought in Lexington?
 - A. The American militiamen lined up on the side of the road.
 - B. The British troops decided to march to Boston.
 - C. The British soldiers marched to Concord
 - D. The Revolutionary War began.
3. Who fired the shot?
 - A. Parker fired the first shot
 - B. One of the militiamen eager for war
 - C. Nobody knows
 - D. Someone from the crowd
4. What was the initial goal of the British at Lexington?
 - A. To burn the town and force colonists out
 - B. To capture Samuel Adams and John Hancock
 - C. To crush the militiamen
 - D. To create a peace agreement
5. Which side was winning at Lexington?
 - A. Redcoats (British)
 - B. Militiamen (Rebels/Patriots)
 - C. France

6. What are arms?

- A. Extra soldiers
- B. Horses
- C. Guns
- D. Machetes

7. The American militia were successful in their fight against the British at Concord. What evidence from the text supports this conclusion?

- A. 49 colonists died and 39 were wounded during the fighting that happened as the British marched from Concord to Boston.
- B. After militiamen and British soldiers fired at each other in Concord, decided to march back to Boston.
- C. When the British reached the outskirts of Concord, a group of American militia men met them there.
- D. When the British marched to Concord, they searched the area and found a few cannons and some musket balls.

8. What does the “shot heard ‘round the world” most likely refer to?

- A. The first shot that rang out at Lexington
- B. The shots fired on the British by American militiamen in Concord
- C. The shots fired on the Americans by the British at Lexington
- D. A shot fired by an American militiamen who was wounded in battle

9. What is the main idea of this text?

- A. While American militiamen were outnumbered at Lexington, they fought the British soldiers bravely.
- B. Many more Americans died at Lexington than British soldiers, while many more British soldiers died at Concord than American militiamen.
- C. The British’s goal in marching to Concord had been to capture John Hancock and Samuel Adams, but they failed to achieve their goal.
- D. Battles between American militiamen and British soldiers at Lexington and Concord marked the start of the Revolutionary War.

10. **Based on this text**, how were the militiamen able to kill and wound so many soldiers?

- A. They had the advantage because they knew the land
- B. They were expert marksmen.
- C. They hid behind trees and stone walls.
- D. They wore camouflage.