



*Two Lights for*  
**TOMORROW**

**ONE IF BY LAND  
TWO IF BY SEA**

what is

# *two lights for tomorrow?*

Two Lights for Tomorrow is a nationwide initiative to commence the celebration of the 250th birthday of the United States of America. The famous ride of Paul Revere occurred overnight on April 18 - 19, 1775. Two Lights for Tomorrow commemorates that famous ride and uses the imagery of that shining light today as a uniting call to action for our citizens to celebrate and serve.

On April 18, 2025, we're calling for two lights to be displayed in every statehouse in the nation. They will be a reminder that the visual of a light shining out in the darkness on Revere's ride is not just something that mattered then; it's something that matters today and for our collective tomorrow.

Some commissions are planning a public program as two lights are lit at the statehouse. This is an opportunity to not only raise public awareness of the upcoming 250th and how that visibly will be marked, but also to communicate the meaning of Revere's ride as history and remind our citizens of their part in the perpetual building of a "more perfect union."

We invite you to join us in our celebration by putting lanterns in the windows or your home or business.



# what's the history of

# *"one if by land, two if by sea!"*

Before Paul Revere's famous midnight ride, there was a plan formulated to warn the Patriots of the movement of the British.

The rumors that were swirling around Boston told stories of the British planning to move on two nearby towns, Lexington and Concord. The first part of the plan was for the British to visit to Lexington in order to arrest John Hancock and Samuel Adams. Both were considered to be trouble makers by the British, but to the Patriots, they were leaders for the cause of liberty. The second part of the plan was to confiscate weapons, ammunition, and canon from military stores in Concord. Many believe that Margaret Gage, the wife of the British General Thomas Gage, was the one to tip off the Sons of Liberty.

Dr. Joseph Warren took the information and called upon Revere to make the ride into Lexington and Concord and let Patriots know what was happening.

Revere formulated a plan that involved someone, most likely Robert Newman or John Pulling, hanging lanterns in the Old North Church that communicated whether the British troops were to move by land or by sea - "One if by land, two if by sea." The lanterns were to be lit in the steeple and blown out after just a few minutes so that no one would be suspicious.

Once two lanterns were lit, Revere made his way across the river and began his midnight ride. Many say he is known for saying, "The British are coming." Instead, he probably said "The Regulars are coming!" Everyone in the colonies would have been British subjects so "The British are coming" wouldn't have made much sense!

Revere made it to Lexington and was able to warn Hancock and Adams. William Dawes and Samuel Prescott took a different route. Dawes ran into British soldiers on his way out as they were closing off the routes. The British allowed him through because they recognized him. Dawes often left Boston for business. All three men were stopped on the way to Concord. Revere was captured and the other two escaped to complete the route.

While Paul Revere receives most of the credit for the warning, there were two other riders that evening, William Dawes and Samuel Prescott. Revere was caught during his ride and Prescott and Dawes were the ones to finish it. Sybil Luddington and Israel Bissell also made warning rides at different times. Bissell made his ride after Lexington and Concord. Luddington made her ride in 1777.

Paul Revere's name did not gain fame until after the writing of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's "Paul Revere's Ride" was published in 1860.





# 9TH-12TH ACTIVITIES

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# TWO IF BY SEA

## Lesson Objectives:

- Students will look at the events surrounding Paul Revere's ride and understand the role that it played in American history.
- Students will look at some primary sources related to Paul Revere's ride to better understand historical perspectives.

## Materials Needed:

- Excerpts from Longfellow's poem, Paul Revere's Ride
- Primary sources (letters, engravings, newspaper clippings) related to Paul Revere's ride and the events of April 18, 1775
- Whiteboard and markers
- Handouts with primary source excerpts (optional)
- Projector

## Lesson Outline:

- **Bell Ringer:**
  - Begin by showing your class an image of Paul Revere's ride. Then, ask your students, "What do you know about Paul Revere's ride and why is it important in American history?"
  - Discuss briefly the idea of primary sources and how they help us understand history from multiple perspectives.
- **Context of the Event:**
  - Provide an overview of the events leading up to the American Revolution and Paul Revere's ride, specifically the tension that existed in Mass. in April of 1775. Explain the significance of the midnight ride.
- **Activity 1: Analyzing Paul Revere's Ride by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow**
  - Read and Analyze the Poem:
    - Distribute a copy of Paul Revere's Ride by Longfellow. Here is a copy from the Paul Revere House
    - <https://www.paulreverehouse.org/longfellows-poem/>
    - Read through the first few stanzas of the poem as a class.
    - Discuss the poem's description of the ride: What details does Longfellow emphasize? How does he portray Revere and the events of the ride?
  - **Discussion:**
    - How accurate is Longfellow's poem in its portrayal of the events from what you know?
    - How does Longfellow's purpose (to inspire patriotism and remember the Founding Generation) shape the way the event is described, in your opinion?
    - Compare Longfellow's poem with the reality of what happened (which we will discuss).

# TWO IF BY SEA

- **Activity 2: Examining Primary Sources**

- **Group Activity:**

- Divide the class into small groups.
- Assign each group a primary source to find related to Paul Revere's ride. Possible examples include...
- A letter from Paul Revere (e.g., Revere's own account of his ride, written later)
- An engraving of Revere's ride (e.g., an image by Henry Sargent or another artist depicting the moment)
- The newspaper coverage of the ride (e.g., an article published in a 1775 newspaper)
- Others accounts of the ride that night
- The British perspective: A letter or statement from a British official or soldier about the ride or the events of April 19th.

- **Analysis:**

- Have students read the primary sources and answer the following questions in their groups:
- What does this source tell us about the events of the ride?
- Who created this source, and what might their perspective or bias be?
- How does this source differ from Longfellow's poem?

- **Activity 3: Group Presentations**

- **Presentation**

- Each group will present their primary source and summarize its key points.
- Encourage students to explain how their source enhances or contradicts the portrayal in Longfellow's poem.

- **Conclusions:**

- **Discussion:**

- Discuss the different perspectives that emerged from the sources the students looked at.
- Reflect on how the myth of Paul Revere's ride was created through Longfellow's poem, and how historical evidence provides a different view of the event.

- **Closing Questions:**

- Why do you think the poem by Longfellow became so popular?
- How does analyzing primary sources give us a more complete understanding of history?
- How might events in recent history might be depicted differently than what actually happened?

# TWO IF BY SEA

- **Assessment**

- Participation in group activities and discussions.
- A short written response (exit ticket) where students answer: How did Longfellow's poem shape our understanding of Paul Revere's ride, and how did the primary sources help to provide a more accurate view?

- **Extensions**

- Students can write a short essay comparing and contrasting the myth of Paul Revere's ride with the historical facts, using primary sources and Longfellow's poem as references.
- Ask students to research another event in American history where myth and reality diverge, and prepare a short presentation on it.

**OTHER LESSON IDEAS:**  
***COURTESY OF AMERICA 250 - IDAHO***

Activities:

- Paul Revere's Ride Interactive Timeline
  - Create a large timeline on the classroom wall or at home, marking key 1775 events leading up to April 18th. Students can add illustrations and facts about Paul Revere's ride.
- Two Lights Diorama
  - Students create dioramas depicting the "Two Lights" signal from the Old North Church. Use shoe boxes, LED lights, and craft materials.
- Midnight Ride Comic Strip
  - Students design a 6-panel comic strip illustrating Paul Revere's famous ride, emphasizing the importance of communication during the American Revolution.
- Lantern Craft
  - Materials: Mason jars, battery-operated tea lights, construction paper
  - Instructions: Cut colonial-lantern-inspired designs from construction paper and glue them to the outside of the jar. Place the electric candle inside to create a "signal lantern."
- Paul Revere's Ride Scavenger Hunt
  - Create a list of items related to the midnight ride (e.g., horse, lantern, church) for students to find around their home or neighborhood.
- Family History "Ride"
  - Students interview family members about their heritage and create their own America250 story!



**OTHER LESSON IDEAS:**  
***COURTESY OF AMERICA 250 - IDAHO***

Connecting to Two Lights for Tomorrow:

- Writing Assignment
  - Have students write short essays on how they can be "lights" in their community through service projects and consider donating those essays to your local historical society.
- Service Learning
  - Organize a class service project for April 18-19, 2025, inspired by the Two Lights for Tomorrow campaign.
- Promote Awareness:
  - Create a "Two Lights for Idaho" display in the classroom, displaying student ideas for community service.
- Interdisciplinary Learning
  - Read Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem "Paul Revere's Ride" aloud in class. Compare Longfellow's poem to Paul Revere's own account of the ride. Discuss the differences between primary and secondary sources.
    - Paul Revere's recollections: [https://www.masshist.org/database/viewer.php?item\\_id=99](https://www.masshist.org/database/viewer.php?item_id=99)
    - Longfellow's poem: <https://www.paulreverehouse.org/longfellows-poem/>
  - Ask students to write poems about a modern-day hero in their community.
- Interactive Learning
  - Watch the America Battlefield Trust's educational video content documenting Revere's route.
    - Video link: <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/videos/paul-reveres-ride>