



Crispus Attucks: Part 1

First Man to Fall in the American Revolution

Overview:

Crispus Attucks, a multiracial man who had escaped slavery, is known as the first American colonist killed in the American Revolution. Learn what is known about his life and the interesting story of his death associated with the Boston Massacre. This lesson is the first part of a two-part series.

Lesson Prompt:

When you think about the American Revolution and the events leading up to it, what comes to mind? Which famous names and events do you associate with it? In this lesson, we're going to learn more about a person who might not be familiar to you, but who was the first to give his life fighting for freedom from Britain.

Share the prepared PowerPoint slide deck with students.

Select from the list of critical thinking and discussion questions to stimulate classroom discussion. There are accompanying recommended short videos for classroom viewing, and original primary source letters from soldiers for students to read and analyze. There are also some suggested activities, along with some multiple-choice questions to test understanding and retention of key concepts.

Vocabulary:

Martyr, Colonial, Pseudonym, Maritime, Motley, Patriot, Sons of Liberty, Massacre, Smuggling, Tories, Civilians, Bayonets, Instigator, Fomented, Iconic

Recommended Resources:

Summary of the Boston Massacre "Soldiers' Trial": <http://www.bostonmassacre.net/trial/trial-summary1.htm>

Interview with historian Serena Zabin: <https://www.americanrevolutioninstitute.org/video/boston-massacre/>

Perspectives on the Boston Massacre: <https://masshist.org/features/massacre>

Boston 1775 (Blog on history of the colonial and revolutionary era): <https://boston1775.blogspot.com/>

Ben Franklin's World (Podcast on Early American History):

Episode 296: Serena Zabin, [The Boston Massacre: A Family History](#)

Episode 230: Mitch Kachun, [First Martyr of Liberty](#)

Episode 228: Eric Hinderaker, [Boston's Massacre](#)

Kachun, Mitch (2017). *First Martyr of Liberty: Crispus Attucks in American Memory*. Oxford University Press.

Hinderaker, Eric (2017). *Boston's Massacre*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Zabin, Serena, (2020). *The Boston Massacre: A Family History*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.