



Crispus Attucks: Critical Thinking & Discussion Questions

Why is it hard to get precise details about someone who lived in the 1700s?

What are some ways that historians use to collect information about someone from this time period?

What is a primary source? What is a secondary source? Do we have any primary sources on Attucks's life? How about secondary sources?

Can you see any connections between Crispus Attucks's career as a sailor and his involvement in the events and activities leading up to the Boston Massacre?

Was the Boston Massacre avoidable? Why or why not?

There are conflicting stories of Attucks actions during the events of the Boston Massacre. How close do you think we can come to the truth of the situation? Which account do you believe, and why?

Have you ever heard the phrase "the fog of war?" What do you think it means? Look it up if you have never heard of it before.

What are some of the reasons why tensions were so high leading up to the Massacre?

The lesson states that "British officials scrambled to control how the story of the bloody incident would be told," while The Sons of Liberty "used the incident to further incite people against British rule by falsely telling the story that the British soldiers deliberately attacked peaceful, unarmed people, massacring them." Have you ever seen an incident where different people described the same incident in different ways? Why might people do this? What, if anything, can be done to prevent it? How can you try to discern the truth in a complicated situation with different people telling different versions?

Attorney John Adams, who went on to become President of the United States, defended the British soldiers who were charged with murder after the Boston Massacre. Why did he do that?