

# Old North Foundation

## LOOK & LISTEN: BOSTON THEN & NOW *Pre-visit Lesson Plan*

### Learning Goal

The goal of this activity is to *orient* students in time and place to consider how the geography, architecture, and living conditions of 1770s Boston shaped the events of the Revolution at the Old North.

### Resources

The following resources are needed to complete this lesson. All starred handouts, worksheets, images, etc. are available as a separate PDF file “Then & Now Resources” on the Old North Foundation education website.

**\*Worksheet 1:** Boston Then & Now T-Chart

**\*Handout 1:** The Sounds of Revolutionary Boston

**\*Image 1:** Old North Church

**\*Image 2:** Boston Skyline, 2008

**\*Image 3:** Boston Skyline, 1768

**\*Image 4:** Old North Bells

**Sound File 1:** Old North Bells (*available at the Old North Foundation education website*)

### Time

30 minutes to 1 hour, depending on how long you choose to spend on class discussion.

### Procedure

- ① Before class, decide if you would like students to work on their own, with a partner, or in small groups and make one photocopy of **Worksheet 1** and **Handout 1** for each student or group. Determine how you will display or share **Images 1–4** with the class, as overhead images, print outs, or projected with an LCD projector, and how to play **Sound File 1**. If possible, make an overhead image of **Worksheet 1** or plan to project it onto a whiteboard in order to fill it in with the students as they complete the activity.
- ② Begin the lesson by reminding the class that they will be going on a fieldtrip to the Old North Church in Boston. Display **Image 1**. Ask students if they remember why the Old North is famous and why they might be going there on a fieldtrip. Tell them that during this lesson they will be using their eyes and ears to discover the city of Boston in the late seventeen hundreds, in preparation for their fieldtrip.
- ③ Divide students into their groups (if you planned to) and distribute copies of **Handout 1** and **Worksheet 1** to each. Have students fill in the blank spaces next to “then” and “now” in the top row with the specific year each references: *then* is 1768, *now* is the current year.
- ④ Display **Image 2** of the Boston skyline in 2008. Have students describe and discuss what they see in the picture as they take notes in the box in the “Now” column and the “See” row of **Worksheet 1**.

- ⑤ Ask if any students have ever been to visit Boston, or a big city like Boston. What did they do during their visit? What sounds and noises did they hear as they traveled about the city? Have students describe and discuss the sounds they might hear in a city today as they take notes in the box in the “Now” column and the “Hear” row.
- ⑥ Display **Image 3** of the Boston skyline in 1768. Explain that this is a picture of Boston that was made by Paul Revere in 1768, a few years before the start of the America Revolution. Have students describe and discuss what they see in the picture as they take notes in the box in the “Then” column and the “See” row. It is important to note that the tallest buildings in this engraving are all church steeples. Ask students what this might suggest about Boston in the late seventeen hundreds. What are the tallest buildings in Image 2 of Boston’s modern skyline? What does this suggest about Boston today?
- ⑦ Ask the students to identify the tallest building in the picture (the second church steeple from the right side of the image). This is the Old North Church. In 1768—and 1775—the Old North Church was the tallest building in Boston. Why might this be important when thinking about the events of the night of April 18, 1775?
- ⑧ Either ask a volunteer to or you read aloud the excerpt from Edith Forbes’ book *Paul Revere and the World He Lived In* featured on **Handout 1**. This is not a primary source from the Revolutionary period, but Ms. Forbes does a nice job of describing the sounds one would hear in colonial Boston. Ask students to look at Image 3 as they listen to the excerpt. Discuss the passage as a class and have them take notes in the box in the “Then” column and the “Hear” row. Students can refer to the handout as they complete their worksheet.
- ⑨ Forbes’ passage mentions, “everyone knew Christ’s ‘royal peal.’” She is referring to the eight bells hung in the Old North steeple. “Old North” is a nickname; the church’s official name is Christ Church. Play **Sound File 1** for the class to hear and display **Image 4** of Old North’s bells. These are the bells hung in the steeple of the Old North. They are a special type of bell called change ringing bells. They were made in England and installed in the Old North in 1744\*.
- ⑩ Conclude the lesson by discussing the difference and similarities of Boston “then & now.” You may also want to include the other senses and have students brainstorm what they might smell, taste or feel in Boston of 1768 and today. Tell students to remember the steeple of the Old North and its bells; they will come up again during their field trip.

\*Note: the *Bell Ringer’s Agreement* Pre-visit Lesson Plan available on the Old North Foundation’s education website addresses Paul Revere’s involvement as a bell ringer at the Old North Church when he was a teenager, directly linking him to the Old North steeple and the clear view of Charlestown from the top.

### **Resource Credits**

The Sounds of Revolutionary Boston, *handout*: from *Paul Revere and the World He Lived In* by Edith Forbes (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1942).

Old North Church, *image*: courtesy of Ann Beha Architects.

Boston Skyline, 2008, *image*: courtesy of commons.wikimedia.org.

Boston Skyline, 1768, *image*: *A view of part of the Town of Boston in New England and British ships of war landing their troops, 1768*, 1898 reproduction of engraving by Paul Revere, 1768.

Old North Bells, *image*: courtesy of Ann Beha Architects.

Old North Bells, *sound file*: recorded by Henry Brugsch, courtesy of the MIT Guild of Bellringers.