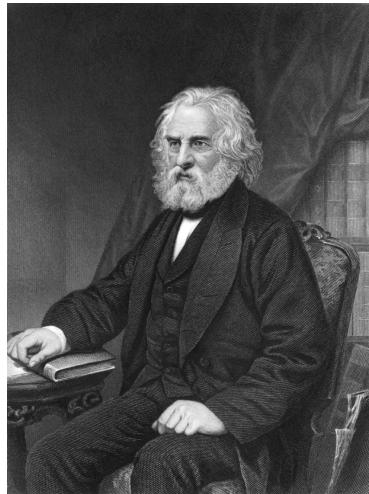


# Celebrating Henry Wadsworth Longfellow



Did you know that on February 27, 1807 the famous American poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, was born? Longfellow was an educator while writing poems, many of which are based on real events in history. Below is one of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's famous poems, "The Ride of Paul Revere".

## Suggestions for Use: Best for 5<sup>th</sup> Grade-High School

- Read this poem with your child or class, pointing out the literary devices shown on the second copy of the poem below
- Discuss the historical perspective of the midnight ride of Paul Revere
- Do a close reading of this poem, by reading it once for enjoyment, a second time looking at literary devices, and a final time discussing the historical events in the poem

## Extension Ideas:

- Do a research project on Paul Revere's midnight ride
- Write an opinion piece on who deserved to get the credit for alerting Boston that the British were coming, Paul Revere or William Dawes
- Write a poem based on a different historical event
- Create a timeline of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's life
- Do an author study of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow



## The Ride of Paul Revere

by, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow



Listen, my children, and you shall hear  
    Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,  
On the eighteenth of April, in Seventy-Five:  
    Hardly a man is now alive  
Who remembers that famous day and year.

He said to his friend, “If the British march  
    By land or sea from the town to-night,  
    Hang a lantern aloft in the belfry-arch  
Of the North-Church-tower, as a signal-light,—  
    One if by land, and two if by sea;  
    And I on the opposite shore will be,  
    Ready to ride and spread the alarm  
Through every Middlesex village and farm,  
    For the country-folk to be up and to arm.”

Then he said “Good night!” and with muffled oar  
    Silently rowed to the Charlestown shore,  
    Just as the moon rose over the bay,  
Where swinging wide at her moorings lay  
    The Somerset, British man-of-war:  
    A phantom ship, with each mast and spar  
    Across the moon, like a prison-bar,  
And a huge black hulk, that was magnified  
    By its own reflection in the tide.

Meanwhile, his friend, through alley and street  
    Wanders and watches with eager ears,  
    Till in the silence around him he hears  
    The muster of men at the barrack door,  
    The sound of arms, and the tramp of feet,  
    And the measured tread of the grenadiers  
    Marching down to their boats on the shore.

Then he climbed to the tower of the church,  
Up the wooden stairs, with stealthy tread,  
    To the belfry-chamber overhead,  
And startled the pigeons from their perch  
On the somber rafters, that round him made  
    Masses and moving shapes of shade,—  
By the trembling ladder, steep and tall,  
    To the highest window in the wall,  
Where he paused to listen and look down  
    A moment on the roofs of the town,  
        And the moonlight flowing over all.

Beneath, in the churchyard, lay the dead,  
In their night-encampment on the hill,  
    Wrapped in silence so deep and still  
That he could hear, like a sentinel's tread,  
    The watchful night-wind, as it went  
        Creeping along from tent to tent,  
        And seeming to whisper, "All is well!"  
    A moment only he feels the spell  
Of the place and the hour, and the secret dread  
    Of the lonely belfry and the dead;  
For suddenly all his thoughts are bent  
    On a shadowy something far away,  
        Where the river widens to meet the bay, —  
        A line of black, that bends and floats  
        On the rising tide, like a bridge of boats.

Meanwhile, impatient to mount and ride,  
Booted and spurred, with a heavy stride,  
On the opposite shore walked Paul Revere.  
    Now he patted his horse's side,  
Now gazed on the landscape far and near,  
    Then impetuous stamped the earth,  
And turned and tightened his saddle-girth;  
But mostly he watched with eager search  
The belfry-tower of the old North Church,  
    As it rose above the graves on the hill,  
        Lonely and spectral and somber and still.  
        And lo! as he looks, on the belfry's height,  
        A glimmer, and then a gleam of light!  
He springs to the saddle, the bridle he turns,  
    But lingers and gazes, till full on his sight  
        A second lamp in the belfry burns!

A hurry of hoofs in a village-street,  
A shape in the moonlight, a bulk in the dark,  
And beneath from the pebbles, in passing, a spark  
Struck out by a steed that flies fearless and fleet:  
That was all! And yet, through the gloom and the light,  
    The fate of a nation was riding that night;

And the spark struck out by that steed, in his flight,  
Kindled the land into flame with its heat.

He has left the village and mounted the steep,  
And beneath him, tranquil and broad and deep,  
Is the Mystic, meeting the ocean tides;  
And under the alders, that skirt its edge,  
Now soft on the sand, now loud on the ledge,  
Is heard the tramp of his steed as he rides.

It was twelve by the village clock  
When he crossed the bridge into Medford town.  
He heard the crowing of the cock,  
And the barking of the farmer's dog,  
And felt the damp of the river-fog,  
That rises when the sun goes down.

It was one by the village clock,  
When he galloped into Lexington.  
He saw the gilded weathercock  
Swim in the moonlight as he passed,  
And the meeting-house windows, blank and bare,  
Gaze at him with a spectral glare,  
As if they already stood aghast  
At the bloody work they would look upon.

It was two by the village clock,  
When he came to the bridge in Concord town.  
He heard the bleating of the flock,  
And the twitter of birds among the trees,  
And felt the breath of the morning breeze  
Blowing over the meadows brown.  
And one was safe and asleep in his bed  
Who at the bridge would be first to fall,  
Who that day would be lying dead,  
Pierced by a British musket-ball.

You know the rest. In the books you have read,  
How the British Regulars fired and fled,—  
How the farmers gave them ball for ball,  
From behind each fence and farmyard-wall,  
Chasing the red-coats down the lane,  
Then crossing the fields to emerge again  
Under the trees at the turn of the road,  
And only pausing to fire and load.

So through the night rode Paul Revere;  
And so through the night went his cry of alarm  
To every Middlesex village and farm,—  
A cry of defiance, and not of fear,

A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door,  
And a word that shall echo forevermore!  
For, borne on the night-wind of the Past,  
    Through all our history, to the last,  
In the hour of darkness and peril and need,  
    The people will waken and listen to hear  
        The hurrying hoof-beats of that steed,  
And the midnight message of Paul Revere.

**The Ride of Paul Revere**  
**(with added literary devices)**  
by, **Henry Wadsworth Longfellow**



**Narrator:  
Landlord**

Listen, my children, and you shall hear  
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,  
On the eighteenth of April, in Seventy-Five:  
    Hardly a man is now alive  
Who remembers that famous day and year.

**Tone of  
Poem:  
Hushed**

He said to his friend, “If the British march  
    By land or sea from the town to-night,  
Hang a lantern aloft in the belfry-arch  
Of the North-Church-tower, as a signal-light,—  
    One if by land, and two if by sea;  
    And I on the opposite shore will be,  
    Ready to ride and spread the alarm  
Through every Middlesex village and farm,  
    For the country-folk to be up and to arm.”

**Protagonist: Paul  
Revere and friend  
Antagonist: British**

Then he said “Good night!” and with muffled oar  
Silently rowed to the Charlestown shore,  
    Just as the moon rose over the bay,  
Where swinging wide at her moorings lay  
    The Somerset, British man-of-war:  
A phantom ship, with each mast and spar  
    Across the moon, like a prison-bar,  
And a huge black hulk, that was magnified  
    By its own reflection in the tide.

**Mood: The beginning of  
the poem suggests a  
suspenseful and gloomy  
mood as seen in this  
example, “Just as the  
moon rose over the bay”**

**Alliteration**

Meanwhile, his friend, through alley and street  
Wanders and watches with eager ears,  
Till in the silence around him he hears  
The muster of men at the barrack door,  
The sound of arms, and the tramp of feet,  
And the measured tread of the grenadiers  
Marching down to their boats on the shore.

Then he climbed to the tower of the church,  
Up the wooden stairs, with stealthy tread,  
To the belfry-chamber overhead,  
And startled the pigeons from their perch  
On the somber rafters, that round him made  
**Alliteration**  
Masses and moving shapes of shade,—  
By the trembling ladder, steep and tall,  
To the highest window in the wall,  
Where he paused to listen and look down  
A moment on the roofs of the town,  
And the moonlight flowing over all.

Beneath, in the churchyard, lay the dead,  
In their night-encampment on the hill,  
**Simile**  
Wrapped in silence so deep and still  
That he could hear, like a sentinel's tread,  
The watchful night-wind, as it went  
Creeping along from tent to tent,  
And seeming to whisper, "All is well!"

A moment only he feels the spell  
Of the place and the hour, and the secret dread  
Of the lonely belfry and the dead;  
For suddenly all his thoughts are bent  
On a shadowy something far away,  
Where the river widens to meet the bay, —  
A line of black, that bends and floats  
On the rising tide, like a bridge of boats.

Meanwhile, impatient to mount and ride,  
Booted and spurred, with a heavy stride,  
On the opposite shore walked Paul Revere.  
Now he patted his horse's side,  
Now gazed on the landscape far and near,  
Then impetuous stamped the earth,  
And turned and tightened his saddle-girth;  
But mostly he watched with eager search  
The belfry-tower of the old North Church,  
As it rose above the graves on the hill,  
Lonely and spectral and somber and still.  
And lo! as he looks, on the belfry's height,  
A glimmer, and then a gleam of light!  
He springs to the saddle, the bridle he turns,  
**Personification**  
But lingers and gazes, till full on his sight  
A second lamp in the belfry burns!

**Climax of the poem**

**Alliteration**  
A hurry of hoofs in a village-street,  
A shape in the moonlight, a bulk in the dark,  
And beneath from the pebbles, in passing, a spark  
Struck out by a steed that flies fearless and fleet:  
That was all! And yet, through the gloom and the light,  
The fate of a nation was riding that night:

**Alliteration**

**Alliteration**

**Hyperbole**

Metaphor of "spark being struck" and "kindled the land into flame" shows Paul Revere's quick action and the colonists fast response.

And the **spark struck out by that steed**, in his flight,  
**Kindled the land into flame** with its heat.

He has left the village and mounted the steep,  
And beneath him, tranquil and broad and deep,  
Is the Mystic, meeting the ocean tides;  
And under the alders, that skirt its edge,  
Now soft on the sand, now loud on the ledge,  
Is heard the tramp of his steed as he rides.

**Poem's Major  
Conflict: Whether or  
not Paul Revere will  
be able to warn the  
villages in time that  
the British are  
coming**

It was twelve by the village clock  
When he crossed the bridge into Medford town.

He heard the crowing of the cock,  
And the barking of the farmer's dog,  
And felt the damp of the river-fog,  
That rises when the sun goes down.

It was one by the village clock,  
When he galloped into Lexington.  
He saw the gilded weathercock  
Swim in the moonlight as he passed,  
And the meeting-house windows, blank and bare,  
Gaze at him with a spectral glare,  
As if they already stood aghast  
At the bloody work they would look upon.

It was two by the village clock,  
When he came to the bridge in Concord town.

He heard the bleating of the flock,  
And the twitter of birds among the trees,  
And felt the breath of the morning breeze  
Blowing over the meadows brown.  
And one was safe and asleep in his bed  
Who at the bridge would be first to fall,  
Who that day would be lying dead,  
Pierced by a British musket-ball.

You know the rest. In the books you have read,  
**How the British Regulars fired and fled,—**  
**How the farmers gave them ball for ball,**  
From behind each fence and farmyard-wall,  
Chasing the red-coats down the lane,  
Then crossing the fields to emerge again  
Under the trees at the turn of the road,  
And only pausing to fire and load.

So through the night rode Paul Revere;  
And so through the night went his cry of alarm  
To every Middlesex village and farm,—  
A cry of defiance, and not of fear,

**Mood: Here the  
mood suggests action  
and adventure**

**Mood: In this last  
stanza, the mood is  
patriotic and proud**

A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door,  
And a word that shall echo forevermore!  
For, borne on the night-wind of the Past,  
    Through all our history, to the last,  
In the hour of darkness and peril and need,  
    The people will waken and listen to hear  
        The hurrying hoof-beats of that steed,  
And the **midnight message** of Paul Revere.