

# Project-Based Learning: The Struggle for Independence

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Overview of PBL  
Storypath  
Student Work  
Examples



# Three questions:

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What is PBL Storypath and how does it facilitate learning about the struggle for independence?

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How do you address the voices heard and unheard in the struggle for independence?

?

How is student agency addressed in the Storypath approach?

# The Power of Story: A Pathway to Learning

Framing learning to:

- affirm students' assets and identities
- address issues of inequity and justice
- foster student agency
- problematize knowledge
- encourage substantive conversations
- create the lived experience
- practice literacy skills in context



# Compelling Questions:

Will you support the struggle for independence?

Whose voices will be heard?





# Episodes

Episode 1: Colonial Boston

Episode 2: The People of Boston

Episode 3: Life and Work in Colonial Boston

Episode 4: Taxes from Britain

Episode 5: Arrival of British Troops

Episode 6: The Boston Massacre

Episode 7: A Bold Protest

Episode 8: Declaring a Position



# Introducing the Storypath

## The Setting Colonial Boston

Homes and wharves fringe the waterfront of this bustling colonial town. Shops—nestled against each other—are located on the wharves or in the ground-floor rooms of the houses. Families live on the second and third floors above their shops. The houses are made of wood or brick with chimneys at either end for fireplaces.

Wooden frames divide windows into small square panes. Shutters keep out winter's cold and summer's heat. Pitched roofs keep the snow from piling up in the winter.

On the front of the houses, swinging from brackets, are decorative signs with pictures or symbols of the goods or services the businesses provide. There are many different businesses including a printer and bookseller, a mapmaker, a silversmith, a cobbler, and a grocer selling goods that won't spoil, such as tea.

There is also a dry goods store, an apothecary shop, and a barber and wigmaker shop. A pub on the corner serves as a local gathering place in the community....

# The Learning Process and Practical Considerations

Student discussion based on the description:

- activates prior knowledge;
- allows the teacher to assess what students understand about this time and place;
- launches the topic of Colonial Boston—the physical and human-made features of a main street in Colonial Boston; and
- introduces the academic language associated with the unit.

A chart is created about the features to reference as students collaborate on the setting.

# Businesses



THE LAMB TAVERN (The Adams House Site)

Apothecary	sells medicines, paint, varnish, linseed oil, paintbrushes, and window glass
Barber/ Wigmaker	shaves men, makes wigs, pulls teeth, and helps cure illness
Cobbler	makes shoes and boots
Cooper	makes barrels, which are used to store goods on ships and in homes
Dry goods merchant	sells cloth, ribbons, lace, and similar materials
Grocer	sells tea, coffee beans, flour, cornmeal, dried beans, cocoa, sugar, molasses, spices, and dried fruit
Mapmaker	makes maps
Printer/Bookseller	prints pamphlets, newspapers, advertisements, proclamations of governors, legal forms, religious sermons, and schoolbooks
Pub owner	runs a place where food and drink are served
Shipwright	builds and repairs ships
Silversmith	makes coffeepots, teapots, sugar bowls, cream pitchers, bowls, utensils, and other items from silver



Here is  
what  
students  
created...



# Postcard to Families

Write informative/  
explanatory texts to  
examine and convey  
complex ideas and  
information clearly and  
accurately...

- Purposeful writing to inform and explain
- Understand the genre of postcards
- Connect with families



	Address
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# The Characters

# Who lived in Colonial Boston?

## Boston's population in 1765

Houses: 1,676

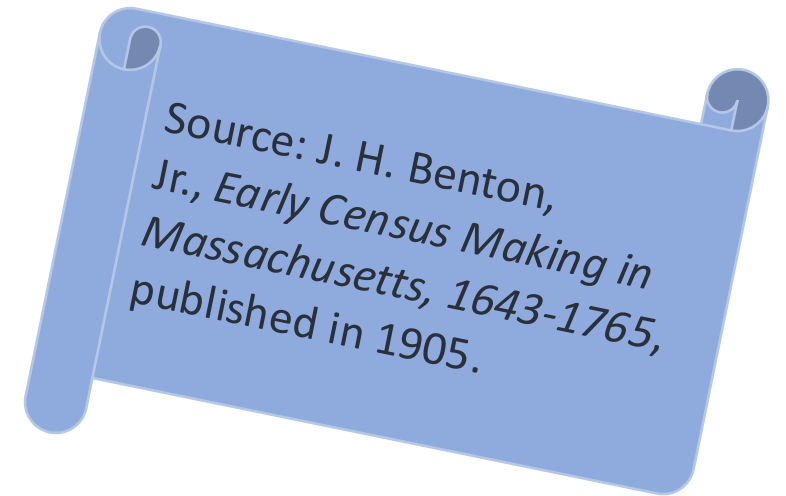
Families: 2,069

- white males under age sixteen\*: 4,109
- white females under age sixteen: 4,010
- white males above age sixteen: 2,941
- white females above age sixteen: 3,612
- negroes and mulattoes, male: 510
- negroes and mulattoes, female: 301
- male Indians: 21
- female Indians: 16

TOTAL: 15,520 people

\* 16 was the age for white males to have militia duties—potential soldiers

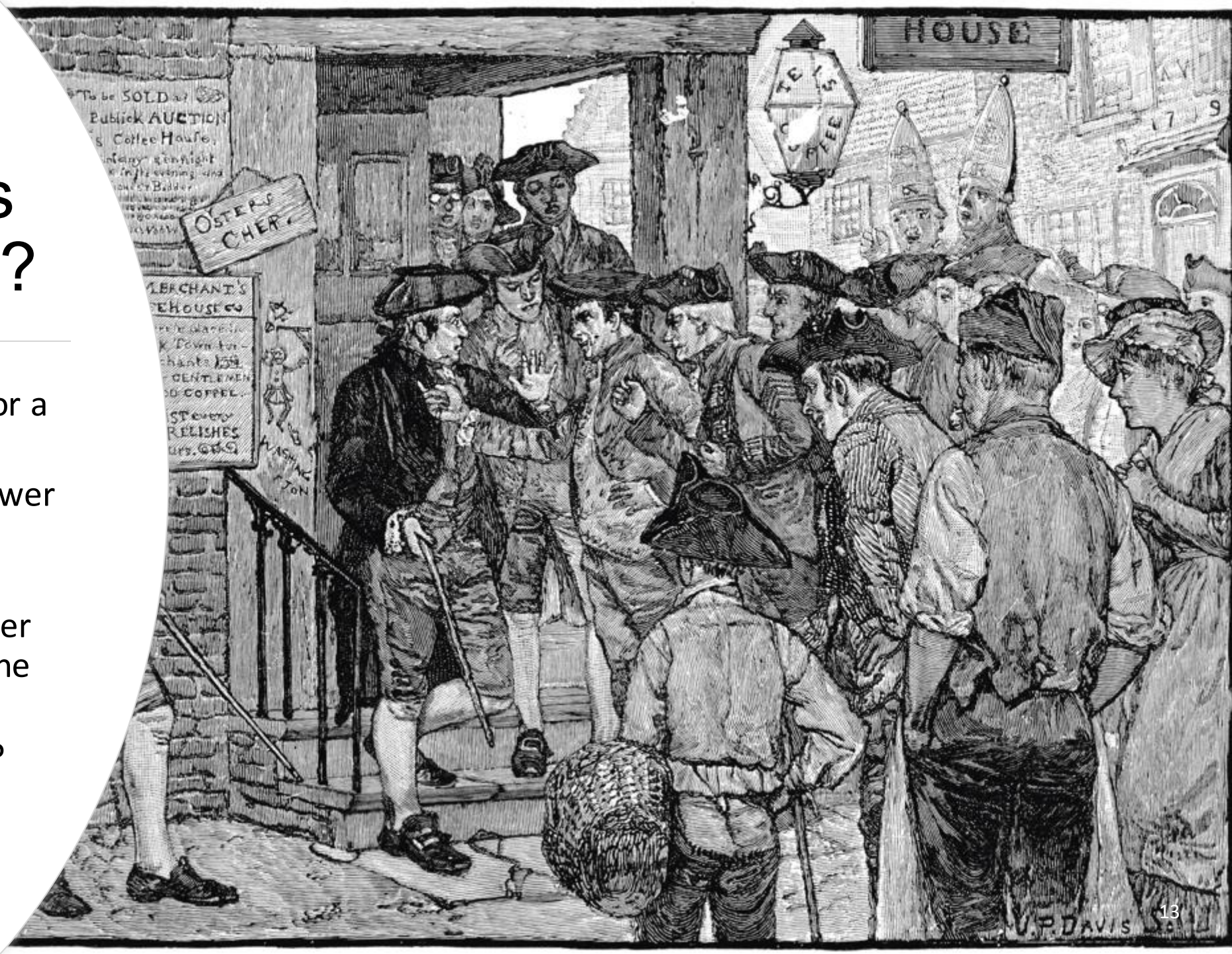
Source: <https://boston1775.blogspot.com/2006/05/bostons-population-in-1765.html>





# Whose Voices Will Be Heard?

1. Will you be a Patriot or a Loyalist?
2. Who has the most power in Colonial Boston?
3. How does your background and gender affect your voice on the issues of the day?
4. Who's seen? Unseen?





# What role will your character play in Colonial Boston?

Business:

Name

Age

Role in the business

Personality characteristics

Favorite leisure activities

Interesting life experience

Prepare to introduce your character



# Building Content Knowledge



## Life in Colonial Boston

### Research and Writing Informational Texts

#### The Cobbler

My name is Elizabeth Carpenter. My family makes furniture and other things from wood. I guess that's what made me interested in the cobbler business, because the cobbler makes our shoes. He's told me some things that I'd like to share with you.

A cobbler makes both shoes in a pair exactly the same. There is no left or right shoe. Some shoes have laces, but most are made with buckles. Most men's shoes are made from cowhide or buckskin. Wealthy women's dress shoes are made of silk and linen, but poor and middle class women wear durable, sturdy shoes. Working men wear boots called "highlow" boots and heavy, stiff riding boots called "jack boots." The tall riding boots protect their knees and legs.

The shapes of the shoes are different. Men's everyday shoes have square, rounded, or pointed toes with low heels. Wealthy men wear pumps with tiny, thin delicate soles that look like women's shoes.

Shoes can get very muddy on our dirt roads. Men put on start-ups, which are large boots they wear over their shoes to keep them from getting muddy. They also wear clogs, and so do some women.

The cobbler also pulls teeth, but I hope I just have to get my shoes from him.

# Critical Incident

Who is most affected by these two taxes?

How do these taxes affect the town?

How do these taxes affect your character?



## 1764 Sugar Act

Parliament passes the Sugar Act, which puts a tax on molasses imported into the colonies. Molasses is a common item in Boston, and now merchants have to pay a three-penny tax on every gallon of it. The law also gives customs officials the power to enter buildings to check for smuggled molasses. Colonists resent these “snoops and spies” as much as they resent the tax.



## 1765 Stamp Act

Parliament passes the Stamp Act. It requires colonists to buy stamps that must be attached to documents such as diplomas, contracts, wills, and bills of sale as well as to such common items as newspapers, playing cards, and books called almanacs. This tax affects almost every colonist.





# Public Notice:

## Taxes from Britain

By an act of Parliament, a tax must be paid to the customs official for any transactions involving the following items:

### Stamp Act (passed 1765)

Item	Tax
Legal document submitted in a court of law	1 penny
College diploma	2 pence
Bill of sale	4 pence
Liquor license	20 shillings
Will	5 shillings
Land purchase under 100 acres	3 shillings
Contract	2 shillings and 6 pence
Pack of playing cards	1 shilling
Pair of dice	10 shillings
Newspaper	1 penny
Advertisement in a newspaper	3 shillings
Almanac or calendar	2 pence
Any document listed above that is written in a language other than English	Double the tax listed above

### Townshend Acts (passed 1767)

Item	Tax
For every 100 pounds of glass	4 shillings and 6 pence
For every 100 pounds of lead	2 shillings
For every 100 pounds of paint	2 shillings
For every pound of tea	3 pence
For every 100 sheets of paper	12 shillings

# Critical Incident

## Arrival of British Troops

Quartering the Troops  
Will I support the troops  
or not?

March, 6, 1770

Dear Col. Dalrymple and Gov. Hutchinson,

We really need you to know that the soldiers in our homes are causing riots and killings. They are taunting the heck out of us colonists! They are invading our homes and we deeply feel a wrath about all of this fighting and nonsense! We seriously need Britian to take them back or have them live on the island and out of our homes.

Sincerely yours,  
The Citizens of  
Boston



# Critical Incident

## The Boston Massacre

Paul Revere's Engraving



Engraving Based on a Painting by Alonzo Chappel



The Boston Massacre, engraving based on a painting by Alonzo Chappel, 1868, National Archives, ARC 513326  
This site was updated on 11-Nov-13.

Retrieved: November 11, 2013  
[http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/learning\\_history/revolution/image2.cfm](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/learning_history/revolution/image2.cfm)

# Witnessing the Event

How does my character react to this event?

March 7, 1770

Dear Stephanie,

How are you doing? It's not that great here in Boston because something tragic happened on King Street. Some people call it a massacre.

It all happened a couple of days ago, March 5, 1770. I wasn't part of the massacre, but witnessed. It started when angry mobs went to King Street and were throwing snowballs and little pieces of wood, shouting, and taunting the soldiers. The shouting from the townspeople and soldiers were so loud, I had to go out and see what was happening. The soldiers were 17 and 18 years and were very nervous whether to shoot or stay calm because they couldn't hear Captain Preston's order above all the shouting. Then a terrible thing happened. Everybody heard someone fire a gun shot and say fire, then that's when the big fighting or massacre started. I was very startled. No one knew who



# A Bold Protest

What is your character's position on the colonists' response to the Tea Act?





## Concluding Event: Declaring a Position

- Taking a Stand
- Will I be a Patriot or Loyalist?
- Will I stay neutral to the cause?
- Will I have a voice?
- How will my life change?



# Write to Persuade

Dec. 18, 1773

Dear Beth and John,

I've finally come to a decision, and I want to be a loyalist. I know this is rather shocking news but feel no urge to have my grandson or my son-in-law go fight. I am highly against treason and having my family go die for a few pence. We must remember Britain has the strongest army on the face of the earth and we stand no chance against them. I know you feel differently about this war, but did you ever think about your husband having a bayonet going through him? Did you realize you could be killing family? I know this is a very difficult decision and I don't want to push you. When you've reached your decision, please write. Remember I support you no matter what.

Your cousin,

Catherine Hawkins



# Planning Inquiries

The people of Boston were faced with a decision: Do I support the Loyalist or Patriots? What position would your character take?

- Make a **claim**. A claim is a statement that answers the question.
- Find **evidence** for the claim. This is the information that supports your claim. Provide evidence from documents you read/viewed, experiences in the Storypath, and other materials.
- Provide **reasons** for the evidence. Reasoning explains how and why evidence supports a claim. Using your experience in the Storypath and the resources you examined, explain why you selected the specific evidences.
- **Rebuttal**. Explain the opposing viewpoint.



# Final Thoughts

- The founding of the nation is complex, and materials of all kinds are plentiful.
- The Storypath approach offers students a developmentally appropriate approach to learning about this event.
- Storypath places students at the center of the learning endeavor where there is space for them to bring their assets and identities as they examine the events in Colonial Boston. See Pillar 1: Powerful social studies places learners at the center of the learning endeavor. ([NCSS Position Statement on Powerful, Purposeful Teaching and Learning in Elementary Social Studies](#))

## **Applying Learning Beyond the Schoolhouse Walls**

Engaging students in collaboration and discourse are skills that are important for a thriving democracy. Having them share their work in the Storypath with others affirms their learning and thoughtfulness as they explore this complex topic.