

# Before You Read

## Johnny Tremain Chapters 1–5

### FOCUS ACTIVITY

What personal qualities or accomplishments are you proud of? What are some of the positive effects of pride? What are some of the negative effects of pride?

#### Chart It!

Jot down memories of situations in which you or someone else felt proud. Think about the positive and negative effects of that pride. Then create a two-column chart listing those effects. Share and discuss your chart with a partner.

#### Setting a Purpose

Read to find out how pride affects Johnny Tremain's life.

### BACKGROUND

#### Time and Place

In the 1770s, the city of Boston was almost an island. It projected out into Boston Harbor, connected to the mainland by a thin strip of land called "the Neck." This was both good and bad for Bostonians. It was good because it provided easy access to Boston Harbor, while the Neck's guarded gates helped protect the city from attack. It was bad because it meant that the city could be easily isolated from communities on the mainland.

The city itself was a fairly typical eighteenth-century British-style town. A main feature was the Common, which still exists today. This land was shared by all and was used for pastureland, military training, horse-riding, and general recreation. People gathered at the Common to exchange news, as they did at the many water pumps scattered throughout the city.

#### Did You Know?

Johnny Tremain, like many poor boys of his time, was apprenticed to a master craftsman to learn his trade: silversmithing. Apprentices worked and usually lived with their masters for a period of about seven years. In exchange for the boy's efforts, the master would train, house, and feed him.

Paul Revere, whom Johnny consults for advice on a difficult smithing task, was a very talented and well-regarded silversmith in Boston. He learned the trade during an apprenticeship with his own father. Revere was particularly famous for his ability to keep the basic beauty of a design, while adding many decorative frills that were popular at the time.

### VOCABULARY PREVIEW

**belligerent** [bə lij'ər ənt] *adj.* likely to argue or fight

**chagrin** [shə grin'] *v.* to distress by disappointment or humiliation

**enigmatical** [en'ig mat'ik kəl] *adj.* puzzling

**exuberant** [ig zōō'bər ənt] *adj.* enthusiastic

**fatuous** [fach'ōō əs] *adj.* silly; foolish

**flaccid** [flak'sid] *adj.* without energy; limp

**nonchalantly** [non'shə lānt'lē] *adv.* in a way that shows casual indifference

**unobtrusively** [un'əb trōō'siv lē] *adv.* without being noticed

**venerable** [ven'ər ə bəl] *adj.* worthy of respect or awe

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### ***Johnny Tremain Chapters 1-5***

Before

After

proud

humiliated

# Responding

## *Johnny Tremain* Chapters 1–5

### Personal Response

What is your opinion of Johnny before the accident? Does your opinion of Johnny change after the accident? If so, how?

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How do you think you might react in Johnny's situation? What advice would you give to him?

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### Analyzing Literature

#### Recall and Interpret

1. Describe Johnny's position and his behavior in the Lapham household at the beginning of the novel. What does his behavior reveal about his character?

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2. What happens to change Johnny's position in the family? What role does Dove play in this event? How does Johnny react to his new status?

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3. What obstacles does Johnny face as he tries to redirect his life? How does Johnny's friend Rab help him? How does their friendship change Johnny?

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# Responding

## *Johnny Tremain* Chapters 1–5

### Analyzing Literature (*continued*)

#### Evaluate and Connect

4. Compare and contrast the daily lives of teenagers in Johnny's world with the lives of teenagers in your own community.

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5. Evaluate the tactics that the Sons of Liberty use to further their cause. Do you think such tactics are justified? Why or why not?

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### Literature and Writing

#### Writing an Essay

In the **Focus Activity** on page 12, you created a chart listing positive and negative effects of pride. Refer to your chart as you write an essay evaluating the positive and negative effects of Johnny Tremain's pride. In what ways does Johnny's pride benefit him and other people? In what ways does it harm Johnny and others? How does his pride affect how others view and treat him? What role does pride play in Johnny's accident? Support your ideas and opinions using details from the novel.

#### Extending Your Response

##### Literature Groups

Esther Forbes vividly brings eighteenth-century Boston to life. In your group, divide up the five chapters. Then skim to find historical details that describe Boston and the daily lives of its residents, including such historical figures as Paul Revere, John Hancock, and Sam Adams. Exchange information within your group in order to better understand the novel's setting. If you wish, have one or more group members sketch scenes from Boston in the 1770s. Share your insights and your sketches with the members of another group.

##### Making an Apology

Everyone, no matter what his or her age or position, makes mistakes. Apologizing for mistakes is often difficult, but it is necessary to maintain good relations with others. Both Johnny and Dove have a great deal to feel sorry about. Each boy has broken rules of good behavior and caused harm to others. Put yourself in the place of either character and write an apology for your behavior. Read your apology aloud to the class.



**Save your work for your portfolio.**

# Before You Read

## *Johnny Tremain* Chapters 6–8

### FOCUS ACTIVITY

Do you think it is fair to expect people to pay taxes when they cannot vote for those who impose the taxes? Give reasons for your answer.

#### Discuss

Discuss and debate the question above with your classmates. Challenge them to support their opinions with valid reasons. Does everyone agree that “taxation without representation” is unfair? Why or why not?

#### Setting a Purpose

Read to find out how Sam Adams, Johnny, Rab, and other Bostonians respond to “taxation without representation.”

### BACKGROUND

#### Time and Place

As early as 1767, the British were taxing the tea that was shipped to the American colonies. Some colonists began boycotting British tea; as a result, tea exporters such as The East India Company lost a great deal of money. To help this important business, the British government gave it exclusive rights to sell tea in the American Colonies, under The Tea Act of 1773. In September of that year, the East India Company filled seven ships with tea bound for the colonies. These ships, carrying hundreds of thousands of pounds of tea, were headed for Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Charleston. Protests broke out in all these cities, and several of the ships turned back to England. The ships bound for Boston reached their destination in November 1773. The Patriots responded with a dramatic protest that you will read about in the next section of the novel.

#### Did You Know?

In the 1770s, Boston was a key American shipping port, both because of the fine ships built there and the many different products traded on the Boston wharves. Most Bostonians were somehow connected to the shipping trade or to the fishing industry: a variety of craftspeople built ships; unskilled workers loaded and unloaded merchandise from ships and warehouses; other Bostonians made a living catching and selling fish and oysters. Many of Boston’s wealthy families had made their money through shipping and trade.

### VOCABULARY PREVIEW

**commandeer** [kom’ən dēr’] v. to take for military purposes

**divulge** [di vulj’] v. to reveal

**dun** [dun] v. to pester for payment

**gesticulate** [jes tik’yə lāt’] v. to make gestures with the hands, usually while speaking

**inflammatory** [in flam’ə tōr’ē] adj. likely to excite or upset

**inundate** [in’ən dāt] v. to overwhelm

**lamentably** [lam’ən tə blē] adv. regrettably

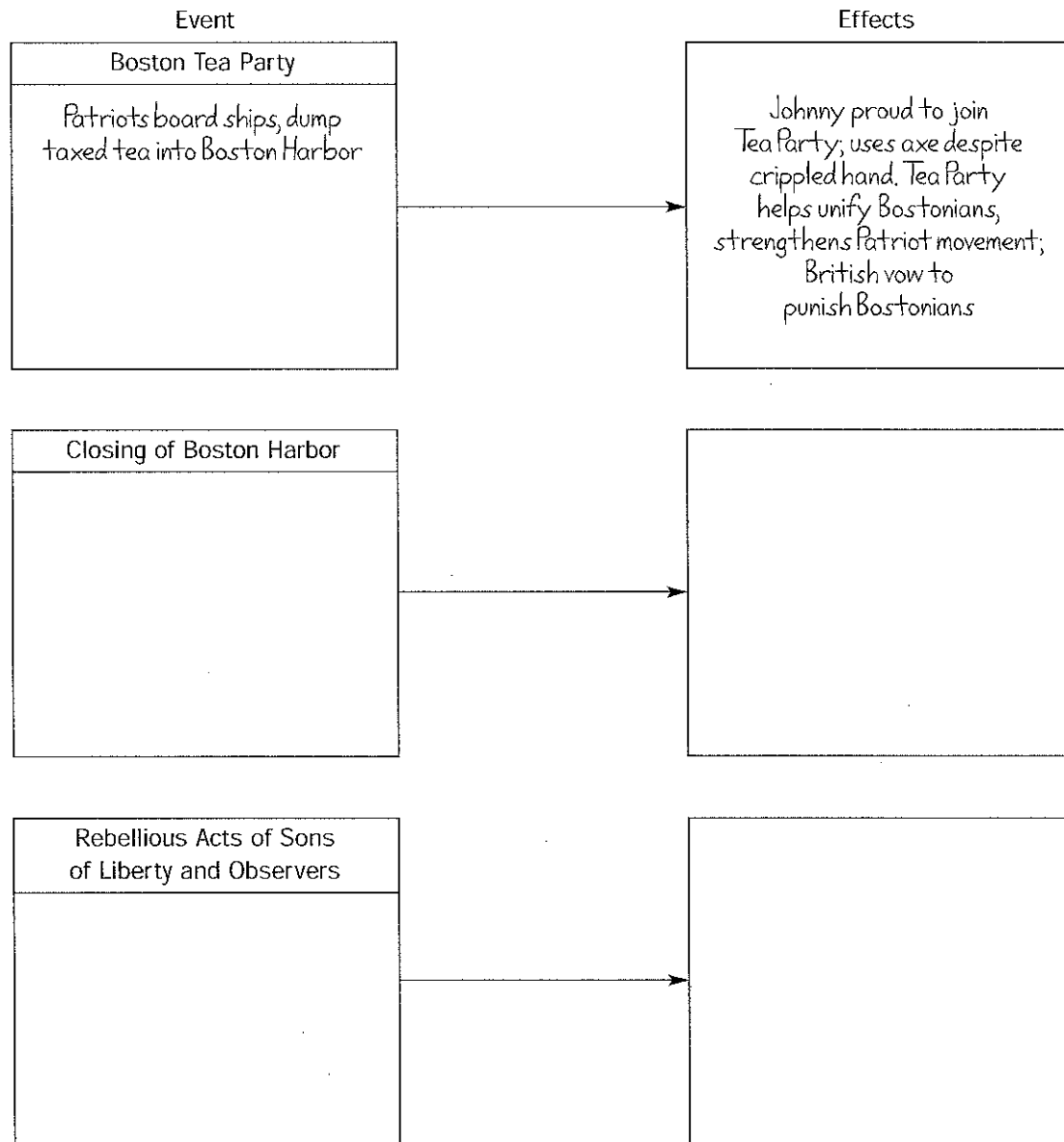
**paroxysm** [par’ək siz’əm] n. emotional fit

**proximity** [prok sim’ə tē] n. near location

# Active Reading

## *Johnny Tremain* Chapters 6–8

Esther Forbes combines fact and fiction as she tells the story of the events leading up to the American Revolution. The major events Forbes describes, such as the Boston Tea Party and the closing of Boston Harbor, actually occurred. As you read, summarize the major events listed in the boxes on the left. In the right-hand boxes, note how each event affects Johnny on a personal level, and the Patriot movement on a political level.



# Responding

## *Johnny Tremain* Chapters 6–8

### Personal Response

In these chapters, Johnny becomes involved in some important historical events. What aspect of his involvement made the strongest impression on you? Explain your choice.

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Does the idea of playing a personal role in historical events appeal to you? Why or why not?

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### Analyzing Literature

#### Recall and Interpret

1. Explain the British tax on colonial tea. What response is planned by Sam Adams and the other Observers? How does Johnny help implement these plans?

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2. Describe Johnny's relationships with Cilla, Lavinia Lyte, and Dove now that Johnny is living with Rab and his family. What do these relationships reveal about Johnny and his personal growth?

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3. What positions in favor of revolution are argued by Sam Adams and James Otis? How does Johnny react to Otis's words?

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# Responding

## Johnny Tremain Chapters 6–8

### Analyzing Literature (*continued*)

#### Evaluate and Connect

4. Do you think the Bostonians are justified in their reaction to the tax on tea? Why or why not? Do you think Britain's response is fair? Explain. You may wish to recall your response to the **Focus Activity** on page 16.

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5. In your opinion, is Rab a good friend to Johnny? Give reasons for your answer.

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### Literature and Writing

#### Writing a Letter

Choose a character from Chapters 6–8, such as Johnny, Lavinia Lyte, Sam Adams, or Paul Revere. Write a letter from your character to a friend living outside Boston. Describe the situation in Boston and the state of political debate there. Draw on details from the novel as you describe your view of recent events and your reactions to them.

### Extending Your Response

#### Literature Groups

After the Boston Tea Party, Boston moves closer to war. At the same time, Whigs and Tories, colonists and British soldiers, still interact and often appear even friendly with each other. As a group, look for evidence in the novel of growing tensions and contrasting gestures of goodwill. Discuss and debate why you think hostility and civility were able to coexist in Boston in the early 1770s. Does this state of affairs surprise you? Why or why not? Share your ideas and insights with the members of another group.

#### Mathematics Connection

Use these facts as you calculate some of the economic costs of the Boston Tea Party. *British tax on imported tea*: threepence per pound of tea; *ships bound for Boston in 1773*: *Dartmouth*, 114 chests; *Eleanor*, 114; *Beaver*, 114; *William*, 58. If each chest holds 400 pounds of tea and all chests were full, how much tea was headed to Boston? What was the total tax due on all the tea? If a pound of tea was worth nine British pounds sterling, what was the value of the tea destroyed at the Boston Tea Party?



Save your work for your portfolio.



# Before You Read

## *Johnny Tremain* Chapters 9–12

### FOCUS ACTIVITY

Do you think that an individual can play an important role in historical events? Do you think that a small number of people who are deeply committed to a cause have the power to change the course of history? Why or why not?

#### Share Ideas

In a small group, discuss the questions listed above. Challenge group members to support their ideas and opinions with specific examples from history or from the real events and characters described in the novel. Share your group's ideas with the rest of the class.

#### Setting a Purpose

Read to find out how Johnny and other characters play important roles in historical events.

### BACKGROUND

#### Time and Place

Bostonians responded with outrage to the closing of their port and the arrival of British soldiers and warships. The Committees of Correspondence that Sam Adams began in the early 1770s evolved to play an even more active role. In September 1774, all the colonies except Georgia sent representatives to the First Continental Congress in Philadelphia. The Congress decided on a boycott of British goods and promised to stand together in defense of Boston. One result of this promise was the forming, arming, and training of colonial militias. The Congress also prepared a summary of its complaints for King George. The king, however, was not interested in reviewing these complaints and sent more soldiers and ships to Boston.

#### Did You Know?

Colonial militiamen had no uniforms and had to supply their own guns and ammunition, as well as food and other accessories. Many had learned to shoot while hunting for food or fighting Native Americans in the countryside. They were hardly prepared for the organized and almost polite method of warfare practiced by the British army, in which soldiers lined up on opposite sides of the battlefield and advanced toward the enemy, shooting. Though the militiamen's rifles were accurate, they held only one shot and often lacked the bayonets (knives) attached to British guns. This meant that while the militiamen were reloading, they were defenseless. On the other hand, the British soldiers' bright-red uniforms made them easy targets.

### VOCABULARY PREVIEW

**converge** [kən vʊrj] v. to come together in a single point or focus

**dilapidated** [dɪ ləp'ə də'tɪd] adj. in poor condition

**dilatory** [dɪl'ə tɔr'ē] adj. causing delay

**disconsolately** [dɪs kɒn'sə lit lē] adv. in a downcast or cheerless manner

**inebriated** [ɪ nē'brē ə'tɪd] adj. drunk

**lassitude** [lɑs'ə tōd'ɪ] n. fatigue; lack of energy

**maudlin** [mɔd'lin] adj. sentimental

**punctilious** [pʊŋk til'ē əs] adj. with great attention to detail

**sedition** [sɪ dɪʃ'ən] n. rebellion against the government

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

# Active Reading

## ***Johnny Tremain* Chapters 9–12**

The final chapters of the novel describe events that occur beginning in the fall of 1774 and ending in the spring of 1775. These events lead the British and the Patriots ever closer to war. As you read, follow the progress of events by noting the main actions of the characters listed below.

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Paul Revere   | Sam Adams and John Hancock  |
|               | Continue as leaders of Patriot movement;<br>in March, leave Boston for Concord<br>to attend Provincial Congress |
| Johnny        | Rab   |
|               |   |
| Dove          | Dr. Warren  |
|               |   |
| Colonel Smith | General Gage  |
|               |   |

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# Responding

## *Johnny Tremain* Chapters 9–12

### Personal Response

Think about Esther Forbes's statement that she "wanted to give Johnny room enough to change and grow." Do you think she succeeded? Why or why not?

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### Analyzing Literature

#### Recall and Interpret

1. What are some ways that the Patriots prepare for war? How would you describe the mood between Bostonians and the British troops occupying their city?

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2. Explain how the Minute Men learn of the British army's actual battle plans. What do these efforts reveal about the Patriots' commitment to independence?

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3. Summarize what happens after Johnny finds Rab at Lexington. At the end of the novel, what decision does Johnny make about his future? What does this decision reveal about his values and character?

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# Responding

## *Johnny Tremain* Chapters 9–12

### Analyzing Literature (*continued*)

#### Evaluate and Connect

4. How does the author create suspense during the final chapters of the novel?

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5. According to Johnny, at sixteen he is “A boy in time of peace and a man in time of war.” Do you agree with this statement? Do you think more is expected of young people when a country is at war? Explain.

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### Literature and Writing

#### Battlefield Report

Imagine you are a reporter for either the *Observer* or for a British newspaper. Write a news report about the Battles of Lexington and Concord. Remember to cover the facts by answering these questions: *Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?* Though a news report should be unbiased, you will want to consider your audience. For example, a London audience would be more interested in the brave deeds of its own troops than in those of colonial troops. Share and compare your report with those of your classmates.

#### Extending Your Response

##### Literature Groups

Though the Battles of Lexington and Concord are historical events, in the novel you learn of them largely through Johnny’s personal experience. With your group, review the text. Try to distinguish between Johnny’s experience of events and the objective events themselves. How might the events in the novel’s final chapters be different without Johnny’s presence? Review your response to the **Focus Activity** on page 20 as you discuss these questions. Share your ideas and conclusions with the members of another group.

##### Performing: Impersonation

When Billy Dawes impersonates a drunk and sneaks out of Boston, he succeeds on the strength of his acting ability. Try your hand at impersonation. Choose a character and a passage of dialogue from the book. Using minimal props, try to re-create your character’s personality with body language and tone of voice. Share your impersonation with class members. Can they tell who you are?



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