

How does the structure of the poem, “Paul Revere’s Ride,” reflect Revere’s journey?

In this lesson you will learn how to determine the meaning of a text by identifying how its structure relates to key events.

Let's Review

- Lines
- Stanzas

How do the stanzas help tell the story?

"Paul Revere's Ride"

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,

What is the significance behind the shifts from stanza to stanza?

Core Lesson

- 1** Reread the first line of each stanza and identify key details and events.
- 2** Ask yourself, “What shifts occur from stanza to stanza?”
- 3** Then, ask, “How does that structure relate to the meaning of the poem?”

Core Lesson

How does the structure of “Paul Revere’s Ride” reflect Revere’s journey?

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 after the sun goes down.

- Reread the first line of each stanza
- Notice key events and details

Core Lesson

- Reread the first line of each stanza
- Notice key events and details

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.

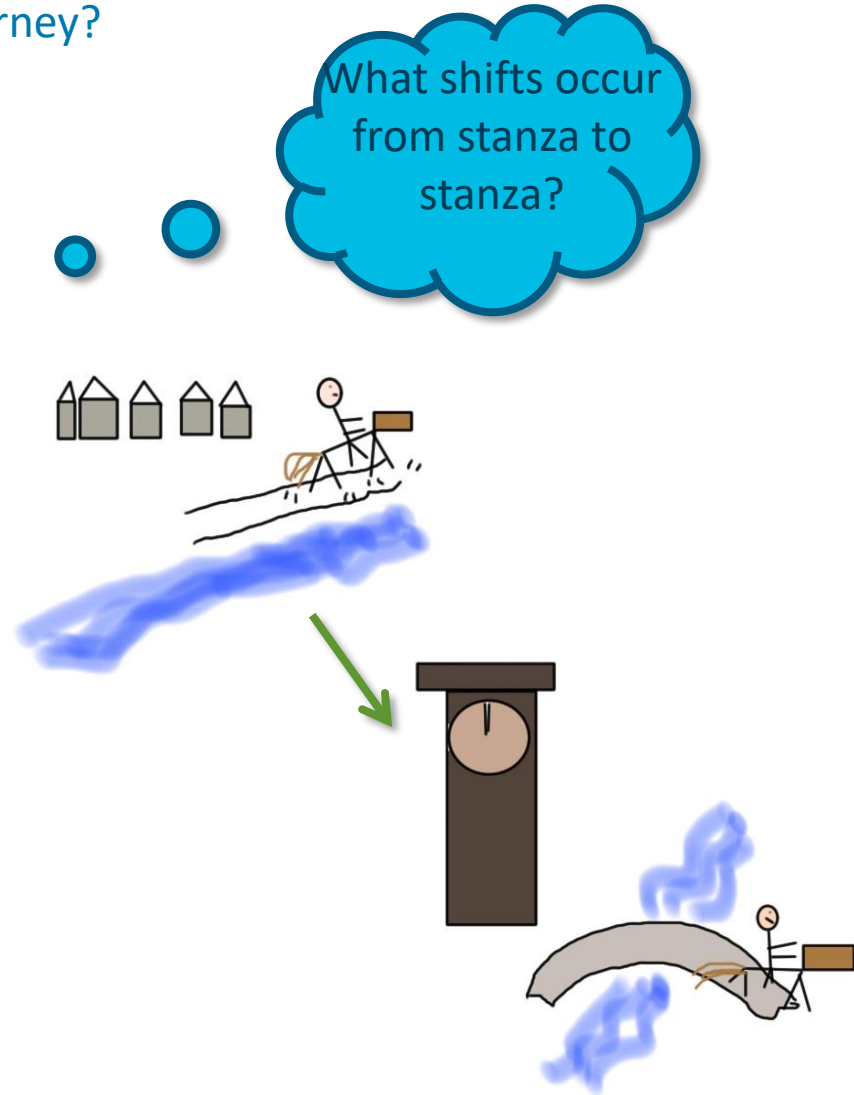
It was two by the village clock,
When he came to the bridge in Concord town.
He heard the bleating of the flock,
And the twitter of birds among the trees,
And felt the breath of the morning breeze
Blowing over the meadows brown.
And one was safe and asleep in his bed
Who at the bridge would be first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

Core Lesson

How does the structure of “Paul Revere’s Ride”
Reflect Revere’s journey?

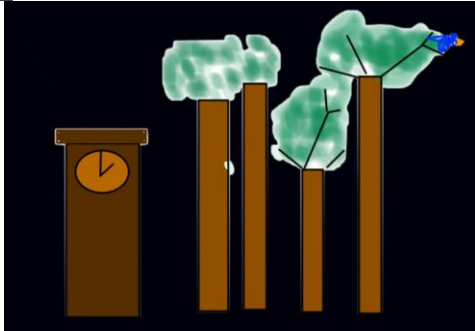
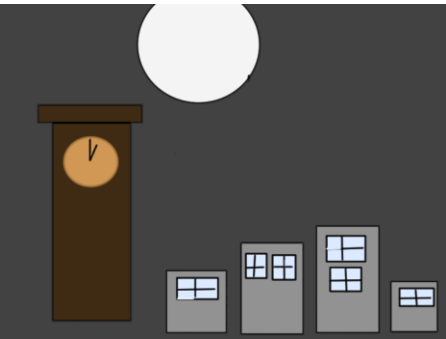
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Core Lesson

What shifts occur
from stanza to
stanza?



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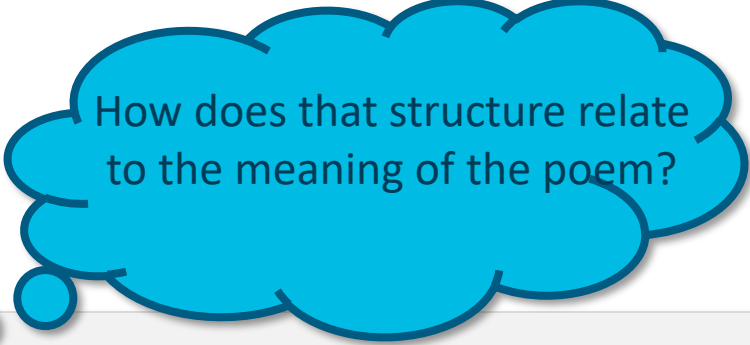
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Core Lesson



How does that structure relate to the meaning of the poem?

How does the structure of “Paul Revere’s Ride” reflect his journey?

The structure of “Paul Revere’s Ride” shows the progression of his ride, hour after hour, while also showing the changes in the mood as he rides. The ride begins with peace and stillness, and then tension mounts as he continues his ride. The dark of night is eerie while he rides on, but as he enters Concord the breeze and birds chirping lighten the mood to show hope is in the horizon.

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In this lesson you have learned how to determine the meaning of a text by identifying how its structure relates to key events.