JA: Soldier, I am here to defend your honor. What say ye?

Soldier: Mr. Adams, sir, I was doing only what was ordered. I was commanded to “fire” upon the attacking colonists. At the time, they were tossing about these deadly balls formed of frozen ice. This was causing quite the danger for us.

JA: You say the colonists were causing danger. In what sense of the word do you mean?

Soldier: As I said, sir, they were tossing these deadly balls toward us. Moments later, I heard the command, “Fire”. I was merely doing as I was told, attempting to protect the rest of the troops as we stood united for Britain.

JA: So say ye. Who was it that gave this order to fire?

Soldier: Sir, I cannot be unequivocally certain, but I am sure with every grain of my harvest, that it was our captain. As previously ordered in training, I quickly commenced to action, ready to protect my men at all costs.

JA: Will you stand in a court and confess these same actions?

Soldier: If, thee recommends it, I will so do.

This writing came about as a result of taking on the role of a British soldier stationed in Boston who fired on the colonists and is now awaiting trial. The task was to write a script of my first meeting with my lawyer, John Adams.

Reflection: This activity asked me to demonstrate my knowledge of the Boston Massacre; however, it asked me to do so in an unfamiliar way. It required me to step outside of my perspective as a reviewer of history and enter the persona of a person who actually experienced the event. This activity was effective because not only did it focus on my knowledge of the event, but I had to take into consideration the viewpoints of both the soldier as well as John Adams. Without stepping into this writing task, my knowledge would have been mostly superficial and lower order thinking. This forced me to use higher order thinking skills, synthesizing the provided reading material, evaluating my position as a soldier, and creating a test I felt may have happened. This type of writing could be used in a variety of teaching situations across grade levels and curriculums, incorporating different points of view and different writing formats, while allowing choice and ownership of a student’s own work.