

Enemy Aliens in Fort William: Journal and Letter Activity

Every Historian needs to be able to read a document carefully and closely to understand its contents. Today we are going to be learning about the racial prejudice faced by “enemy aliens” in Canada by reading a number of letters sent by citizens living in Fort William during World War 1. You will select **3** different documents from the options provided and read them carefully and critically. Remember to focus on the key themes of this lesson: **Racism** and **Point of View** are essential concepts to create a full understanding of historical documents. Once you have completed Section 1, find a partner who analyzed **1** of the documents you did in Section 1, and proceed to Section 2.

Section 1: Analyzing the Documents

Document 1 Name: _____

Author: _____ Recipient: _____ Topic: _____

1) What stance does the author take in the document? _____

2) What reasons do they give to support their argument? _____

3) What question would you ask the author or a historian? Would you challenge their views?

Document 2 Name: _____

Author: _____ Recipient: _____ Topic: _____

1) What stance does the author take in the document? _____

2) What reasons do they give to support their argument? _____

3) What question would you ask the author or a historian? Would you challenge their views?

Document 3 Name: _____

Author: _____ Recipient: _____ Topic: _____

1) What stance does the author take in the document? _____

2) What reasons do they give to support their argument? _____

3) What question would you ask the author or a historian? Would you challenge their views?

Section 2: Comparing Questions on the Documents

Share your answers for question 3 and work together to complete the following tasks.

1) Write down your partner's question: _____

2) Is the question relevant to the document? In what ways? _____

3) Do you need to do research to answer the question? How might you do this? _____

4) Does the question deal with a central theme? Is it personally interesting to you? How so?

Section 3: Writing a Journal or Letter

Now that you have developed an understanding of the issues surrounding local racism, you will write a double-spaced 2-paragraph letter or journal entry. You are writing as an enemy alien living in Fort William during World War 1, and must answer the following questions: Who are you and what is your personal situation regarding racism? How has your life been affected by racism, and how do you feel? Be creative about who you are writing as: it can be a student, parent, or member of any other group that you can justify as being historically present during World War 1.