

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key themes of this lesson: **Racism** and **Point of View** are essential concepts to create a full understanding of historical documents.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 1-page letter or journal entry. You are writing as an enemy alien living in Fort William during World War 1, and must cover the following topics: An explanation of your personal situation regarding racism, your response or feelings about it, and your arguments for a solution. 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.