

LESSON PLAN 3: OFFICERS

Description:

In this activity, students will develop an understanding of officers in the Canadian Expeditionary Force during the First World War by examining the correspondence of officers in the 118th Battalion.

Recommended Grade Range:

All provinces and territories except Quebec: Grades 10 to 12. Quebec: Secondary 4 and 5

Prerequisites:

This lesson should follow previous discussions and lessons on the First World War.

Objectives:

- Students will develop their skills in using letters as primary sources.
- Students will learn about why some Canadians may have been officers in the Canadian military during the First World War while others were not.
- Students will learn how social class affected lived experience

Estimated Time:

1 class period (2-3 if using extension activities).

Materials Required:

- Computer lab with internet access.

Lesson:

Direct students to the *Waterloo at War* to read the article on officers in the 118th Battalion. Have them read the article to establish the context surrounding the social class of officers. Instruct students to read the [PDF 55A Officers](#). The following are pages that are suitable starting points:

- 914, 26-28, 435.

Ask students to answer questions about who officers were in civilian life: What jobs do these men leave to enter the war? What kind of language do they use? How eager are they to be officers? What did the officers think of the enlisted men under them? How do the commanding officers talk about the potential officers? Have the students discuss how the officers in the correspondence reflect their social class. Ask students how these individuals are indicative of the larger social forces in Canada during this period.

Extension Activities:

- Discuss with students what letters as primary sources can tell us about people in the past.
- Have students research and give a presentation on the different social classes in Canada during this period, and how they affected the makeup of the Canadian army.