

## TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

### Propaganda and Censorship

#### Propaganda

Propaganda is the spreading of ideas, information or rumours for the purpose of furthering a cause or goal. In wartime, governments have used propaganda to justify their war aims, encourage enlistment and urge citizens to increase production, recycle used items and buy victory bonds. Propaganda can also vilify one's enemy or exaggerate one's own accomplishments.

During the First World War, the primary means of communication was through newspapers, since televisions and radios did not yet exist. Equally effective, governments, companies and patriotic individuals employed posters to influence the public. These posters were mass produced and appeared everywhere across Canada. A Canadian, living in a major urban centre, could not walk down the streets, go shopping, or open a newspaper without seeing a poster related to the war.

Examine the four propaganda posters (attached) that appeared in Canada during the First World War. For each poster, answer the following questions:

1. What is the main message of this poster?
2. What technique is used to reinforce this message?
3. What emotions or feelings is this poster trying to evoke?
4. To what extent does this poster rely on exaggeration to convince?
5. How effective do you think this poster would be today?

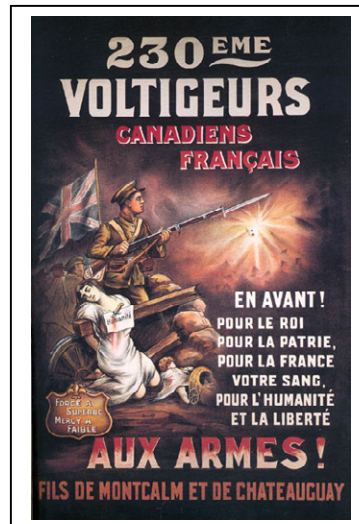
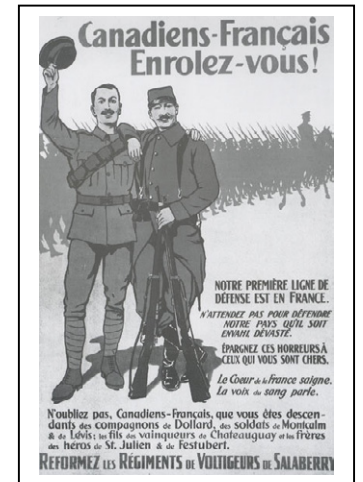
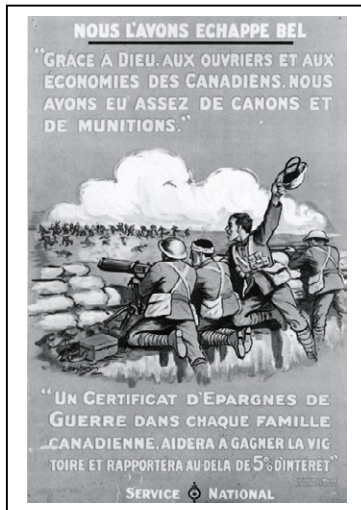
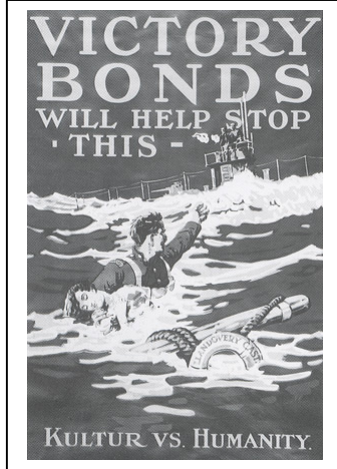


# OVER THE TOP

## An Interactive Story

[http://www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/overtop/index\\_e.html](http://www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/overtop/index_e.html)

### Propaganda Posters



## Censorship

During the First World War, soldiers at the front wrote letters to loved ones back in Canada. In order to prevent both the enemy from obtaining secret information and civilians back home from receiving distressing news, many of these letters were censored by military officials. This involved striking sensitive passages with a black marker, cutting out sections with a knife, and sometimes confiscating the entire letter.

Discuss the following:

1. Is military or state security more important than individual freedom of expression?
2. In what circumstances is censorship acceptable or unacceptable?
3. How would you feel if a letter you wrote was censored by a stranger?

In an effort to ease the job of censors during the First World War, ready-made postcards were developed for quick use. These were called “whiz-bangs”, named after artillery shells that arrived without warning. Soldiers merely checked boxes from a list of pre-selected answers before mailing the postcard.

Fill out the wartime postcard (attached) and mail it to a friend or member of your family. Later, find out how he/she reacted to the postcard. How did he/she feel about receiving information this way?



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NOTHING is to be written on this side except the date and signature of the sender. Sentences not required may be erased. If anything else is added the post card will be destroyed.

[Postage must be prepaid on any letter or post card addressed to the sender of this card.]

- I am quite well.
- I have been admitted into hospital
  - sick     and am going on well,
  - wounded     and hope to be discharged soon.
- I am being sent down to the base.
- I have received your 

{	letter dated _____
	telegram „ _____
	parcel „ _____
- Letter follows at first opportunity.
- I have received no letter from you
  - { lately
  - { for a long time.

Signature }  
only }

Date \_\_\_\_\_

The address  
only to be written  
on this side.  
If anything else  
is added the  
post card will  
be destroyed.

FIELD SERVICE  
  
POST CARD.

