

## LIFE IN THE TRENCHES - World War One Assignment

Now that you have learned something about WWI, it is time to respond. In class or elsewhere, you have heard or read some "letters from the front." You've taken notes on WWI, watched clips, reviewed posters and other primary sources, and hopefully gained a sense of what life in the trenches was like.

Now, take about 20-30 minutes to explore the following sites to get a new feel for some of the details of the front lines in Europe as experienced by Canadian soldiers, then begin the assignment:



A Canadian trench on the Western Front of WWI <http://www.firstworldwar.com/photos/trenches.htm>

Canadian Letters & Images Project  
<http://www.canadianletters.ca/>

Letters from the front  
<http://www.canadiangreatwarproject.com/transcripts/transcriptMain.asp>

First World War Project  
<http://www.firstworldwar.com/photos/trenches.htm>

Historica's Canada at War  
<http://canada1914-1945.ca/resources/>

Calgary Highlanders  
<http://www.calgaryhighlanders.com/photos/1914-18/10th.htm>

Interactive Trench Game  
[http://www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/games/overtop/index\\_e.shtml](http://www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/games/overtop/index_e.shtml)

Canada's War Museum on WWI  
<http://www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/exhibitions/guerre/home-e.aspx>

Artwork of World War One  
<http://www.warmuseum.ca/firstworldwar/objects-and-photos/art-and-culture/official-art/>

## Assignment:

### Option 1

Write fictional letter home from a Canadian man on the front lines or a Canadian woman actively involved at or near the front lines. Assume the person has served at least one of the Battles of Ypres, the Somme, Vimy Ridge, and Passchendaele, and perhaps knows about the other three or maybe different battles that Canada participated in, like the 100 Days Offensive.

Your interview or letter should aim to inform your Canadian audience at home about the conditions of war and include details about a minimum of 5 of the following:

- trench warfare
- life in the front lines
- the roles of technology in the war
- the quality of military leadership
- morale of Canadian soldiers
- the effectiveness of Canadian troops
- the impact of war on civilians and towns
- hospitals and medical treatment
- the roles of women in the war

Write your rough draft on a word file -- save it to your home folder when you start to avoid grief later. This is a detailed account, not just a quick note to tell your folks that "war is hell." Weave in some personal research on Canada & WWI from your classwork, the Canadiana Scrapbooks, and the weblinks above (or other websites).

Optional: if you have a relative or person your family knew that served in WWI, you may wish to consider them as a "test subject" for this assignment -- e.g. write the letter from his/her voice or construct an interview with this person. This may require additional research on your part. You could also write this letter as an exchange between a reported and a soldier if that helps you with the writing -- maybe the question and answer format appeals to you. Poetry is also an option.

### Option 2

Instead of a letter home informing your audience about the conditions of war, maybe you'd like to make a work of art instead. This could include: sketches, painting, sculpture, or carving. It should directly relate to some aspect of the Canadian experience in WWI and be done in a style that is (arguably) believable for the time period.