

## Inquiry Question

Pretend you are living in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and attend a human zoo exhibition. What kind of letter would you write to a family member describing what you have seen and what you think and feel about it?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



### Background

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, people from Africa and Asia were brought to countries in Europe and put into human zoos where Europeans could observe them as if they were wild animals. Pretend you are living in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and attend a human zoo exhibition. Write a letter to a family member describing what you have seen and what you think and feel about it. Remember you need to write as if you are from that time period, and thus take on the historical perspective of the time.

Taking historical perspective means understanding the social, cultural, intellectual, and emotional settings that shaped people's lives and actions in the past. At any one point, different historical actors may have acted on the basis of conflicting beliefs and ideologies, so understanding diverse perspectives is also a key to historical perspective-taking. Though it is sometimes called "historical empathy," historical perspective is very different from the common-sense notion of identification with another person. Indeed, taking historical perspective demands comprehension of the vast differences between us in the present and those in the past (from: <https://historicalthinking.ca/historical-perspectives>)

### Instructions

1. It would be a good idea to research how to write a good historical letter before getting started.

2. Gather up details about these human zoos that you can write about in your letter. You want lots of historically accurate details in your letter!
3. Write your letter! See the “Assessment” notes below so you know what is expected of you before you start.
4. Remember that unit projects make up the bulk of your assessment and should be the place you reveal your best work based on the knowledge and insights you have learned in this unit. These are big projects, not little assignments, and should show a depth of understanding and knowledge.
5. *Remember to include a list of your sources.*

**Assessment**

In addition to the usual rubric below, when writing a historical letter there are addition things you will assessed on:

- How well did you take on the persona of a person from that time period, including their attitudes and beliefs. In other words, if we found your letter in some dusty attic, would it look and sound like it was from that time period?
- You did NOT bring anything from the future into your letter. You kept your historical details accurate. In other words, you did not text anyone a picture from the zoo. You also did not use the word “racism” as it was not in popular use during that time period.
- How many accurate historical details did you weave into your letter?
- Did you create word pictures for your reader so they could see, hear, smell and feel what you did when you were at the human zoo?

Criteria	Applying Up to C	Developing C+ to B	Proficient B+ to -A	Extending A+
<b>Quality of Ideas</b>	Exhibits minimal ability to engage in analysis/criticism Displays some variety and precision Has limited insight into the issues Works with ongoing support	Exhibits adequate ability to engage in some analysis/criticism Displays adequate variety and precision Shows adequate insight into the issues Works with some support	Exhibits very good ability to engage in analysis/criticism Displays variety, precision &/or originality of thought Avoids irrelevance Shows proficient insight into the issues Works with increasing independence	Exhibits excellent, independent analysis/criticism Displays consistent variety, precision &/or originality Consistently relevant Shows deep insight into the issues Works independently
<b>Knowledge and Understanding of Content</b>	Limited knowledge and understanding of the content Demonstrates a partial understanding	Adequate knowledge and understanding of the content Demonstrates a partial understanding	Proficient knowledge and understanding of the content Demonstrates an accurate understanding	Excellent knowledge and understanding of the content Demonstrates with new insights a thorough integrated understanding

	A very limited coverage of the essential information Works with ongoing support	A limited or partial coverage of the essential information Works with some support	A full coverage of the essential information but missing some key pieces of information or analysis Works with increasing independence	of the essential information An extensive coverage of the essential information with minimal holes in analysis Works independently
<b>Presentation and Communication of Learning</b>	It is very difficult to understand this project. Grammar, spelling and punctuation errors interfere with understanding. The presentation format is so messy and/or unorganized that it interferes with understanding and/or it does not suit the assignment.	Grammar, spelling and punctuation errors exist but only occasionally interfere with understanding. The format chosen fits well for the project and is set up so that the student's thinking can be followed	Grammar, spelling and punctuation errors are few and do not interfere with understanding. The chosen format shows the student's thinking very well and makes their thinking very easy to follow; it is well organized and neat.	There are no grammar, spelling and punctuation errors. The chosen format shows the student's thinking very well and makes their thinking very easy to follow; it is very well organized, neat and creative.

**Note that most of the assessment is weighted according to how well you present your knowledge and thinking; the presentation and communication of thinking has less weight over all. Communication and presentation is simply a vehicle to show your ideas and knowledge.**