

Unit 1: The German-American Experience During WWI
Lesson 5: German-American Letters to the Editor During WWI

Bell Ringer

Question: What is a letter to the editor? Even if you seemingly have no idea, give your best educated guess in complete sentences.



Image: <https://pixabay.com/p-1248088/>

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Answer: A letter to the Editor is a letter written by any person to a newspaper or some other periodical about an issue that they are passionate or concerned about. Often these letters are published by the periodical receiving it.



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Sample Letter to the Editor

P.O. Box 2831
Daytona Beach, FL 32120-2831

February 22, 2013

Letters to the Editor
The News-Journal
P.O. Box 2831
Daytona Beach, FL 32120-2831

To the Editor:

I like the comic section of the Bloomington News very much, but lately I have become upset with the comic strip "Street Smart." In the last few days, "Street Smart" has been making fun of homeless people.

I don't think being homeless is funny. In fact, it's a human rights violation. Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights says, "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care..."

I think the cartoonist, Marcia Chapman, is very inconsiderate to make fun of homeless people. I don't find it the least bit amusing or entertaining. The problem of the homeless is serious and these people have a right to be helped.

John Doe
9th Grade
University High School
Orange City, FL

Bell Ringer

Read an historical example of a Letter to the Editor in this article:

<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88077067/1918-05-10/ed-1/seq-4/>

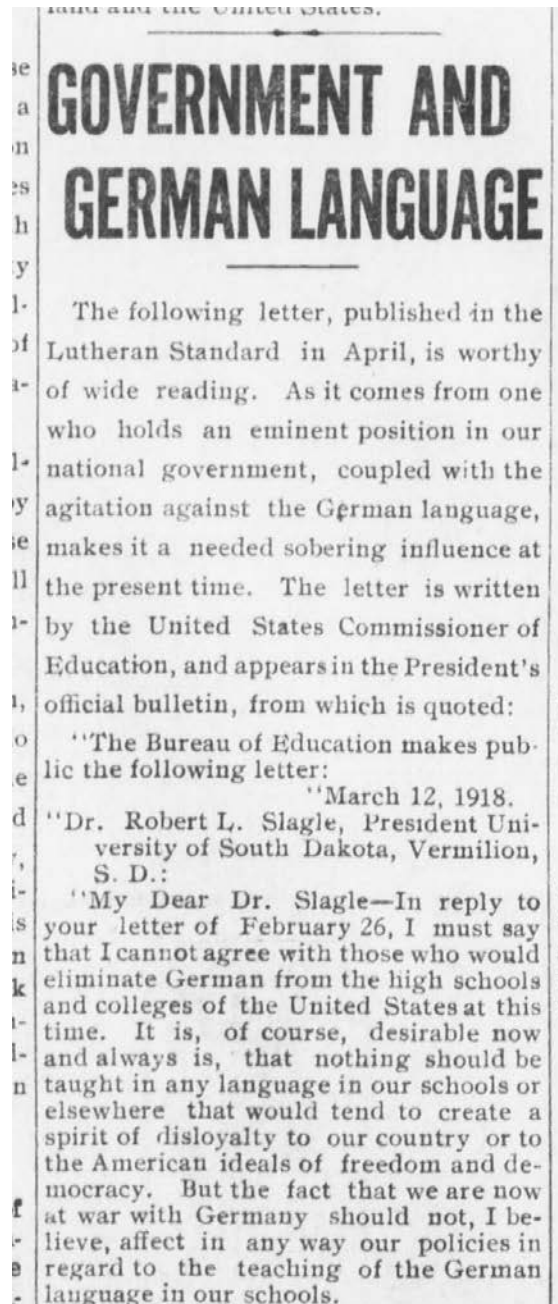


Image: <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88077067/1918-05-10/ed-1/seq-4/>

Letter to the Editor – Rough Draft

Imagine you are a German-American living in Ohio during the WWI years and you are frustrated with a particular article that promoted anti-German views. Write a letter to the editor that expresses your views and defends your German-American heritage. Use this rough draft outline to help create a well-written letter to the editor.

Letter to the Editor Outline

1. Start with a historical date that fits the WWI period.
2. Next, provide a fitting greeting.
3. For your introductory paragraph, start by referencing the article (include the title and date it was written) that motivated you to write and briefly stating what that article argued. Next, express your feelings about that article and then clearly state your position on that same topic. This paragraph should be at least four sentences.
4. For your body paragraph, use relevant personal stories, evidence, or rationales to support the position you clearly stated in your introductory paragraph. This paragraph should be at least five sentences.
5. For your conclusion paragraph, clearly re-state your position first. Finally, propose a solution and encourage readers to act in accordance with this solution. This paragraph should be at least three sentences.
6. Finish with your historical name and address.

Letter to the Editor – Student Model Example

June 27, 2017

To the Editor of the Sacramento Bee:

Hopefully like many of your newspaper’s readers, I was deeply troubled by the article entitled “Officials Investigate Possible Hate Crimes at Islamic Centers in Sacramento, Davis” that was published this week on June 24th. It seems that a few misguided citizens in our community think that offending a minority group’s religious beliefs—burning a Quran filled with bacon—will result in some sort of stand-off between Christians and Muslims in our city. I know I speak for many in the Sacramento Islamic community when I say this: local Muslims only seek peace, freedom to practice their religion without threat, and the equal opportunities afforded to every American. It’s time that these senseless acts of hate stop and an era of healing and understanding begin.

The Southern Poverty Law Center has reported a marked increase in hate crimes recently. Unfortunately, I believe a number of factors have played a role in this uptick of anti-Muslim behavior. Certainly continuous wars in the Middle East and terrorist attacks overseas have heightened concerns, but there is also still a dark legacy left by 9/11 that hinders many Americans’ views of Muslims. After more than 15 years of suspicion and downright prejudice, it’s time that American society embraces the Islamic community in its midst. Beyond the fact that the overwhelming majority of Muslims harbor adore America and what it stands for, Muslim-Americans serve with distinction in the military, operate free health clinics like the one in inner city Los Angeles, give to many charities, and, as a whole, contribute distinct cultural traditions to an already diverse American society.

Ignorant acts of hatred hurled at the Islamic community must cease and peaceful relationships predicated on tolerance and kindness should be encouraged. As a member of the Sacramento Muslim community, I recommend attending one of our religious services, annual festivals, or simply strike up a conversation with a Muslim neighbor. Not only will you be glad you took the initiative, but you will be acting on the right side of history, nurturing the enduring ideal of a diverse and free America.

Sincerely,

Amaar Bagheri
3930 W. Land Park Dr.
Sacramento, CA 98522

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Letter to the Editor – Assessment Rubric

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Excellent 3	Average 2	Below Average 1	Not Completed 0
References a specific article researched from the unit that serves as the motivation for writing the letter.			
Clearly states purpose of letter and overall position in the introductory paragraph. (X2)			
Body paragraph includes reasonable rationales, pertinent personal stories and/or quality evidence to support your opinions/arguments. (X2)			
Conclusion paragraph should re-state your position, include a proposed solution to the problem and finish with a sentence that also encourages action. (X2)			
The entire letter to the editor fits the time period, historical issues of the era, and how a German-American would have felt during WWI. (X2) X2			
Letter to the Editor includes a historically accurate date to begin, a proper greeting and ends with name and address that fits the person you are representing. (X2)			
Thoroughly completes letter in at least twelve grammatically correct sentences. (X2)			
<p>Rough Draft Overall Comments: _____/4 pts.</p> <p>Total Points _____/40 pts</p>			

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Additional Resources on German-American Experiences in WWI

Documentary about German Village in Columbus:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hrRgPFbEAkg>

Short Video Clip about German Village in Columbus:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GSfmSejfv8s&t=475s>

Short Video Clip about German Breweries in Columbus:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= xtThPybwkA>

Anti-German Sentiments in Cincinnati:

<http://www.cincinnati.com/story/news/2017/03/11/anti-german-hysteria-city-during-wwi/98895422/>

Audio Recording about German Terrorist Cell:

<http://www.npr.org/2014/02/25/282439233/during-world-war-i-germany-unleashed-terrorist-cell-in-america>