

Warmer – Discussing the First World War recruitment posters

Look at the recruitment posters from the First World War below and discuss in your group:

- Who are they mainly appealing to, men or women?
- What kind of person is each poster appealing to?
- How are they appealing to them (promise of fun, intimidation, making people feel guilty, frightening people)?
- Which of these posters do you find the most persuasive? Why?

Poster A



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Poster B



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Poster C



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Poster D



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Task 1 – A recruit’s letter to his mother: Reading for gist

Read the text quickly and choose the correct answer to the questions below.

1. How does Frederick expect his mother to feel about him joining up?
a) angry b) worried c) delighted
2. What job has the man been doing for a living?
a) miner b) sailor c) soldier
3. How does the soldier feel about joining up?
a) frightened b) determined c) pessimistic

January 20th 1915

Dear Mother,

The news I’m going to tell you will probably upset you at first, but afterwards I hope you will get used to it. I’m really going to the front this time and what is more I’m going to London to join the army there. Please, Mother dear, don’t take this to heart too much and worry over it because it won’t do any good. I know you will be thinking only of the dark side of the undertaking but really, when you weigh up the hazards I face here in the mines with those of a campaign, there is very little difference.

Mother dear, I’ve been very unsettled since the war started. I’ve had to sit still and watch most of my pals go off. Nelson, Tom and dozens of boys we know have left and up here there is hardly a fellow left. Just think what a shame it will be to meet them on their return!

In my case I think the spirit of adventure is more the lure than patriotism. We will have a nice sea voyage, I hope, lasting about a fortnight, then once in Turkey we will go about a bit and see things. And looking at this trip from a practical standpoint, it’s a chance of a lifetime to get to the Middle East. It would normally take me years and years to save up enough to have a proper trip there. Now, all I have to do is to pay my fare home and then join up and be kept at Government’s expense. Lord Kitchener gives all his recruits six months’ training first, so we shall have the best part of the summer in London. I know perfectly well we will have to work very hard during those six months, but that I’m prepared to do. It will harden my muscles and make a man of me.

Well, Mother dear, I hope that by the time you have read as far as this you will have become convinced about my idea. I hope you’ll be really proud to have a son as a volunteer in the British army!

Yours,

Frederick

Task 2 – A recruit’s letter to his mother: Intensive reading

A) Read the text again. Tick Frederick’s reasons for joining the army.

- 1) He wants to change his job.
- 2) He feels under pressure from his peers.
- 3) His colleagues asked him to join the army.
- 4) He feels patriotic about his country.
- 5) He’s attracted by the promise of adventure.
- 6) He’s already saved up money for his trip to the Middle East.
- 7) He hopes the training will make him a strong man.

B) Look at the underlined words in the text. In pairs, work out their meanings.

hazards

adventure

patriotism

recruits

volunteer

Task 3 – Vocabulary: Word building

Complete the table with the missing words. You can use a dictionary.

| noun (thing) | noun (person) | verb | adjective | adverb |
|--------------|---------------|-------|-----------|--------|
| hazard | ----- | | | |
| adventure | | ----- | | |
| patriotism | | ----- | | |
| | recruit | | ----- | ----- |
| ----- | volunteer | | | |

