

Level: A2

Task 1 – Quiz about letter writing in the First World War

Work with a partner and guess the answers to these multiple choice questions.

1. During the First World War, how long did letters normally take to get from London to the British soldiers in France?

- a. 2 to 4 days
- b. 2 to 4 weeks
- c. 2 to 4 months

2. In the middle of the War, how many letters did British soldiers read every week?

- a. 11 thousand
- b. 1 million
- c. 11 million

3. What did people at home never send to the soldiers in France?

- a. bananas
- b. warm socks
- c. cans of fizzy drinks

4. How often did someone else check a soldier's letter home?

- a. always
- b. sometimes
- c. never

5. When they wrote home, soldiers could not write about

- a. religion
- b. love
- c. information useful to the enemy

6. When a soldier wrote home, he was not allowed to write

- a. his name
- b. his address
- c. the date

7. When a soldier wrote home, he was not allowed to

- a. worry or upset his family.
- b. make jokes.
- c. ask about the weather.

Task 2 – Life in a trench

The photograph shows a German soldier cleaning his feet in a trench. His socks are hanging up to dry. During the First World War, soldiers dug trenches to live and sleep in.

Which adjectives do you think describe life in a trench?

quiet	noisy	safe
dry	comfortable	uncomfortable
dirty	clean	dangerous
safe	crowded	empty



How easy would it be to write a letter in a trench?

Task 3 – ‘Dear Albert’: present tense grammar practice

Read the letter from a soldier called Tom to his brother Albert. Do you think that Tom’s life is hard?

Dear Albert,

I hope you’re well. Are you working hard at school? I’m fine. Living in a trench is difficult, but I’m making friends. It’s very noisy here. We don’t sleep much at night. We wake up early every morning. After breakfast we dig new trenches. After lunch we repair the road. Right now we’re having a rest. Some of the soldiers are playing football. I’m not playing today. I feel too tired. Other soldiers are smoking, or cleaning their boots. My friend Sandy is mending his jacket.

From your brother Tom

Grammar

In his letter Tom uses two present tenses:

Present Simple to describe a routine, fact or feeling.

We sleep very little at night.

Present Continuous to describe an activity happening now.

Right now we’re having a rest.

Read the letter again and find two sentences using present simple and two using present continuous. Write them here.

Present simple

Example: We wake up early every morning.

Present Continuous

Are you working hard at school?

1.....

1.....

2.....

2.....

Task 4 – Missing words

To censor: to change or delete something

Here is another letter from Tom. Tom's officer read it and decided that some words might upset Tom's family, so he crossed them out. *Work with a partner and decide where the missing verbs go.*

Dear Albert

Thank you for your letter. Just to let you know I am well. However there isn't enough food here. Every day we [REDACTED] hungry. Also, there's a lot of snow now.

Our boots [REDACTED] our feet. Every night our water [REDACTED] and we can't drink it. Some soldiers [REDACTED] of cold. We all [REDACTED] home.

One of the soldiers is very young. Right now he [REDACTED] for his family. Please can you ask mother to send me some more socks.

Love from Tom

Missing words: is crying, don't protect, feel, are dying, miss, freezes

Task 5 – Censoring a letter

Now join with another pair to make a group of four. This time it is your turn to censor a letter, but you have to work as a group and you can only cross out five words. What will you choose? When you have all agreed, tell the rest of the class about your decision.

My dear brother Albert,

The socks have arrived and are lovely and warm. Please thank mother. At the moment we are building a big trench 10 miles South of Ypres. We have to finish the trench and then attack the enemy next month. We are waiting for B Company to come and help us. They will arrive on 15 November. How are you? Please send news. Also please send some food, as the food here is terrible and we still don't have enough to eat.

We are all feeling tired and weak.

All the best

Tom