

**Student Worksheet: Letters from the Great Depression**  
**Reading Comprehension**

**Letter:**

**WHO** is writing the letters? Who are they writing it to?

**WHAT** is the purpose for the letter? What does the letter writer want or need?

**WHEN** is the letter writer writing? Is it after a specific event in their life?

**WHERE** is the letter coming from?

**WHY** would letter writing be an effective or ineffective way to communicate their circumstances? Do you think they would have been successful in their request? Why or why not?

**HOW** does this letter make you feel about the letter writer's circumstances?

**Student Worksheet: Letters from the Great Depression**  
**Primary Source Overview**

*Use this worksheet to take notes about the other three letters your group members read.*

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Letter</b><br>Who<br>What<br>When<br>Where<br>Why<br>How |  |
| <b>Letter</b><br>Who<br>What<br>When<br>Where<br>Why<br>How |  |
| <b>Letter</b><br>Who<br>What<br>When<br>Where<br>Why<br>How |  |

**Primary Source 1**  
**Letter: Schomburg, ON January 1933**

Schomburg Jan 13/33.

POST OFFICE  
JAN 14 1933  
TORONTO

Dear Mr. Henry.

Just a line to say that I have some money from the Bank. I paid them \$140 on principal and Int. and paid the interest all along and still they are not satisfied. They think I should sell my stocks and pay it all. You know those manager's know nothing about farming and they would put you on the road. I have a good tested herd of cows which if sold now would bring nothing to what they should and it would leave me without

a cent. and I do not think they should have this power, when a man is doing all he can as things in a year or so, may be a lot better. I hope you can do something to help out for awhile. please do not overlook this for I am in need.

Yours Truly,  
  
Schomburg  
Ont.

Schomburg, Jan 13/33

Dear Mr. Henry.

Just a line to say that I have some money from the Bank. I paid them \$140 on principal and int. and paid the interest all along and still they are not satisfied. They think I should I should sell my stock and pay it all. You know those manager's (sic) know nothing about farming and they would put you on the road. I have a good tested herd of cows which if sold now would bring nothing to what they should and it would leave me without a cent and I do not think they should have this power, when a man is doing all he can as things in a year or so may be a lot better. I hope you can do something to help me out for awhile, please do not overlook this for I am in need.

Yours Truly,  
[Name Omitted for the Protection of Privacy]  
Schomburg, Ont.

\*note: "sic" means what the person has written is either spelled wrong or grammatically incorrect

Letter to the Premier, January 13, 1933  
Premier George S. Henry correspondence  
Reference Code: RG 3-9-0-391  
Archives of Ontario

**Primary Source 2**  
**Letter: Toronto, ON January 1933**

Toronto,  
Jan 18, 1933.

Hon. G.S. Henry  
Prime Minister,  
Toronto, Ont.

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE  
JAN 20 1933 - PUBLIC  
TORONTO

Dear Prime Minister: I am a young married man, and a Canadian, greatly in need of help. The House of Industry, of Toronto, is supplying me with food, but as you know it is not the ambition of any red-blooded human being to spend his best years living on charity. I prefer to work. While I am staying here I have not much chance of getting it for some time. I know that you are doing a lot for people out of work, so I am turning to you for assistance.

My wife is a Maltese girl and I have been assured by her family in Malta, of getting work there, because I have a working knowledge of a few trades and some education in English. Now the problem is how to get there. I have no money or decent clothing. If you could help me

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to get passage to Malta we would be greatly indebted to you and appreciate it as long as we live. Trusting you will give our case a little of your valuable attention, I remain,

Very sincerely yours,  
  
Toronto.

Jan 18, 1933

Hon. G.S. Henry  
Prime Minister  
Toronto, Ont.

Dear Prime Minister,

I am a young married man, and a Canadian, greatly in need of help. The House of Industry, at Toronto, is supplying me with food, but as you know it is not the ambition of any red-blooded human being to spend his best years living on charity. I prefer to work. While I am staying here I have not much chance of getting it for some time. I know that you are doing a lot for people out of work, so I am turning to you for assistance.

My wife is a Maltese girl and I have been assured by her family in Malta, of getting work there, because I have a working knowledge of a few trades and some education in English. Now the problem is how to get there. I have no money or decent clothing. If you could help us to get passage to Malta we would be greatly indebted to you and appreciate it as long as we live. Trusting you will give our case a little of your valuable attention, I remain,

Very sincerely yours,

[Name Omitted for Protection of Privacy]

Toronto

Letter to the Premier, January 18, 1933  
Premier George S. Henry correspondence  
Reference Code: RG 3-9-0-391  
Archives of Ontario



**Primary Source 3**  
**Letter: Toronto, ON February 1933**

Toronto  
February 14<sup>th</sup> 1933.

Hon George S. Henry  
Premier of Ontario  
Toronto.

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE  
FEB 15 1933  
TORONTO

Dear Mr. Henry:

I take the liberty of writing you to appeal to you to do something for my father. I am the oldest of the family + am the only one working + we have only \$8. coming into the house per week. My Mother + Father are greatly worried and are getting into debt and we can scarcely get the necessities of life and my brothers + sisters need things shoes etc. and we have not the money to get them with. Father has always been good in doing what he could for anyone + has done much for the Conservative Party

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+ mother has told me that he left her many nights to help you and entertain the North Toronto Conservative Association. He has tried and tried to get a job and met with no success, and is just wearing himself out + looking old with worry. He has been a good father to us + if he cannot get anything to do it means the breaking up of our home + we all have been so happy until things became bad with Dad.

I appeal to you to do some thing for him as he has always spoken highly of you. Trusting you will for my sake + for my sisters + brothers.

Yours Faithfully

Toronto  
February 14, 1933

Dear Mr. Henry:

I take the liberty of writing you to appeal to you to do something for my father.

I am the oldest of the family + am the only one working + we have only \$8 coming into the house per week. My Mother + Father are greatly worried and are getting into debt and we can scarcely get the necessities of life and my brothers + sisters need things shoes etc. and we have not the money to get them with. Father has always been good in doing what he could for anyone + has done much for the Conservative Party + mother has told me that he left her many nights to help you and entertain the North Toronto Conservative Association. He has tried and tried to get a job and met with no success and is just wearing himself out + looking old with worry. He has been a good father to us + if he cannot get anything to do it means the breaking up of our home + we all have been so happy until things became bad with Dad.

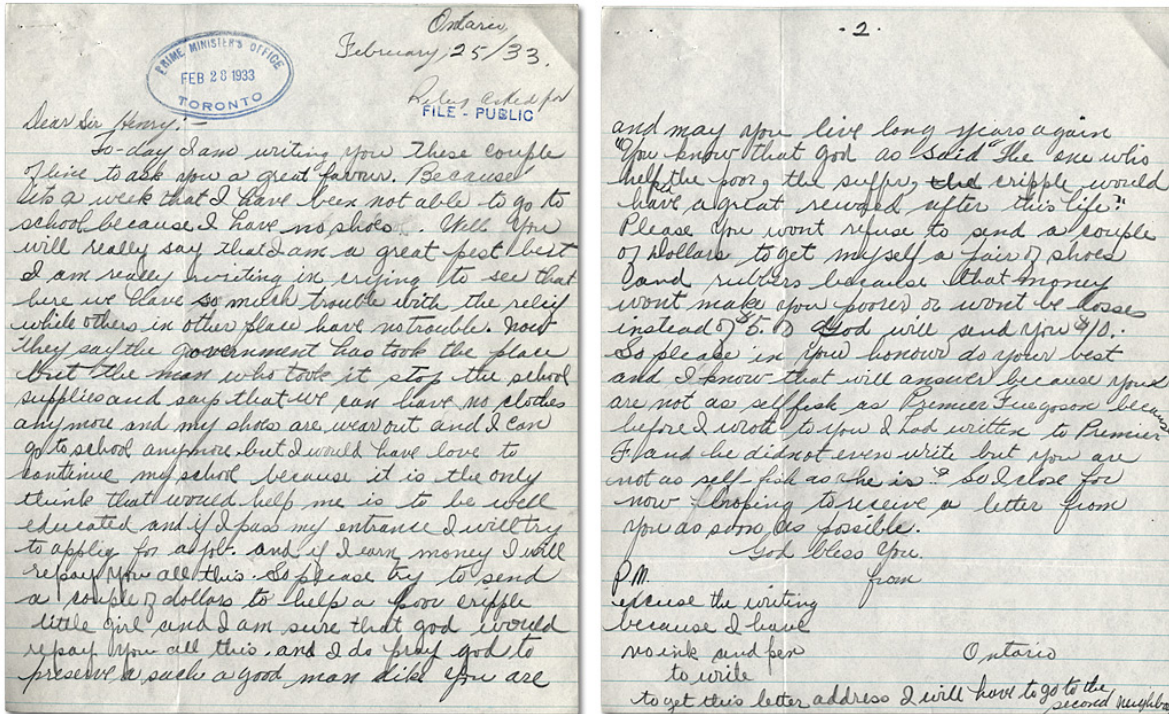
I appeal to you to do something for him as he has always spoken highly of you. Trusting you will for my sake + for my sisters + brothers.

Yours Faithfully

[Name Omitted for Protection of Privacy]

Letter to the Premier, February 14, 1933  
Premier George S. Henry correspondence  
Reference Code: RG 3-9-0-391  
Archives of Ontario

**Primary Source 4**  
**Letter: Cache Bay, ON February 1933**



Cache Bay, Ontario

February 25/33

Dear Sir Henry-

To-day I am writing you these couple of line (sic) to ask you a great favour. Because it's a week that I have been not able to go to school because I have no shoes. Will you will really say that I am a great pest but I am really writing in crying to see that here we have so much trouble with relief while other in other place (sic) have no trouble. Now they say the government has took (sic) the place but the man who tooke (sic) stop the school supplies and says that we can have no clothes anymore but I would have love to sometime (sic) my school because it is the only think (sic) that would help me is to be well educated and if I pass my entrance I will try to apply for a job. And if I earn money I will repay you all this. So please try to send a couple of dollars to help a poor cripple little girl and I am sure that god would repay you all this. And I do pray god to preserve such a man like you are and may you live long years again. You know that god as said "The one who helped the poor, the suffer, the cripple would have a great reward after life." Please you wont refuse to send a couple of Dollars to get myself a pair of shoes and rubbers because that money wont make you poorer or wont be lost instead of \$5.00 God will send you \$10. So please in your honour do your best and I know that will answer because you are not as selfish as Premier Ferguson because before I wrote to you I had written to Premier F and he did not even write but you are not as self-fish as he is. So I close for now hoping to receive a letter from you as soon as possible.

God bless you

P.S.

Excuse the writing because I have no ink and pen to write

To get this letter address I will have to go to the second neighbour

Letter to the Premier, February 25, 1933  
Premier George S. Henry correspondence  
Reference Code: RG 3-9-0-391  
Archives of Ontario



After you have read all four letters and recorded notes for each....

## **Assignment Sheet: Reporting from the Great Depression**

**Imagine you are a reporter in 1934.** Write an article about how the stock market crash of 1929 continues to have an affect on Canadians in the 1930s.

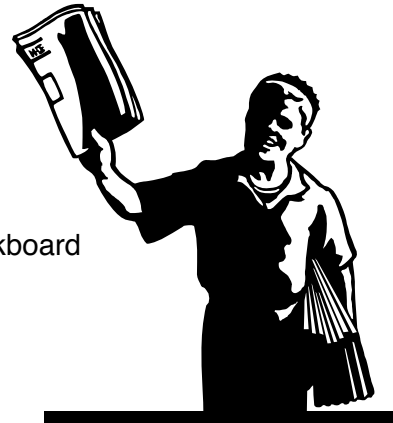
Use the primary source letters as inspiration and reference for this article.

Use secondary sources to fill in details about the economic situation in whole.

Ex: a history textbook from the shelves beneath the chalkboard

Your article should include:

- ✍ The date
- ✍ A headline
- ✍ A by-line
- ✍ An opening paragraph of 25-40 words that provides the most important and interesting news first and answers the who, what, where, when of the main topic.
- ✍ 3-5 short paragraphs of 30-40 words each with a different idea and fact. This is where you can include quotes and personal details.
- ✍ Details are given in order of importance, with the least important details at the end of the article, this allows reader's to skim over the start of the article to gain the essential facts before deciding to read on.
- ✍ At the end of a newspaper article the facts and opinions are summarised, detailing the issue or event.



Your article should be about 250 words long. (~ 1 page)

Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Marking Rubric

| <b>Criteria</b>   | <b>Level 1</b>  | <b>Level 2</b>   | <b>Level 3</b>  | <b>Level 4</b>  |
|---|---|--|---|---|
| <p><i>Knowledge and Understanding</i></p> <p>Student demonstrates understanding of social and economic conditions experienced during the Depression</p> | Limited understanding of the source materials as they relate to various experiences of Depression in Canada | Some understanding though lacking in completeness, clarity and integration of the source materials as they relate to various experiences of the Depression in Canada | Clear and comprehensive understanding of the source materials as they relate to various experiences of the Depression in Canada | A clear, comprehensive, balanced and well integrated understanding of the source materials as they relate to various experiences of the Depression          |
| <p><i>Thinking/Inquiry</i></p> <p>Student demonstrates an ability to analyze critically pieces of evidence presented within the letters.</p>            | Unclear perspective and very limited understanding of the social and economic context of the Depression     | Some limited understanding of the source materials and a moderately effective organization of the analysis.  | A clear critical position evident in all aspects of the work, with effective presentation of the analysis.                      | A critical analysis presented with a high degree of insight and clarity and resulting in a precise and persuasive interpretation                            |
| <p><i>Communication</i></p> <p>Student writes effectively for the purpose (specifically, analyzing and critiquing the letters)</p>                      | Language and organization of data that demonstrates lack of sensitivity to the social and economic context. | Somewhat effective use of language and organization of the analysis but with limitation.   | Consistent and effective use of language and clear organization of the analysis.  | Precise use of language, clarity of organization and good stylistic control, illustrating a good understanding of the conventions of written communication. |
| <p><i>Application</i></p> <p>Student makes personal imaginative connections with people who lived through the Depression</p>                            | Little personal or imaginative identification with the hardships that people faced during the Depression.   | Some awareness of personal or imaginative connections with people living during the Depression.  | Effective, personalized understanding of what people suffered during the Depression.  | High degree of identification with people living during the Depression and full imaginative connection with that time and place.                            |