



I Do: Love and Marriage in 19th Century Canada

Education Resource

Activity 2—Writing Your Own Letter

Purpose: In order for students to better understand the language and situations associated with love and marriage in the 19th century, students will compose their own letter of courtship. This can be done from either a male or female perspective. Students may also be paired up in order to conduct a period-sensitive letter exchange, although this will depend on the maturity of the class involved. Also, the findings from Activity 1 could be incorporated into this activity.

Procedure:

1. Students should study the letters from the section entitled Private Words www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/love-and-marriage/031001-7000-e.html of the *I Do: Love and Marriage in 19th-Century Canada* website and take note of the way language is used. Ask students to choose 10 words or short expressions from the letters that they have read that they feel best convey the feelings, difficulties, conventions and rituals of love. These can then be shared and discussed with the class.
2. Students can now start writing their letter. Remind students that they should incorporate the words singled out in the activity above. Students may also use the information collected during Activity 1 in order to add a sense of realism to their letter.
3. If an exchange of letters has been chosen, the teacher should ensure that each student is using the same information source.