

Literacy using Historical Documents

This worksheet is designed to assist students with literacy and historical thinking skills.

Directions: Read the below document and highlight any word you do not understand. After you have read and highlighted look up the words you do not understand. Then answer the questions at the bottom. The focus of the questions are on HAPPY (Historical Context, Audience, Purpose, Point of View, & Why) (Document in Delaware Archives)

Letter from George Read to President of Congress

Wilmington Jany. 16, 1778

Sir,

I have been Applied to for Commissions by the Owners of divers small Armed vessels, now fitting out within the State on a design of Cruizing within the River and Bay of Delaware to intercept such of the Enemies Vessels as may fall withing their reach or person; therefore I must Request the favous of you to inclose me by the bearer Capt. Issac Lewis, Twenty blank Commissions for private Vessels of War, and as may blank Bonds to Executed by the parties fitting out such Vessels,-agreeable to the Reselutiens of Congress of the 3rd of April 1776.

No such blanks have been sent heretofore to this State to my knowledge, but is so, they were taken with our President by the Enemy.

The present Season is very favourable to the scheme of fitting out these Armed Vessel, the Enemies Ships of War having retired to distant Harbeurs and their trading Vessels are dropping in here singly and become easy Captures, a few instances of this last have already happened, and I have this further Expectation, that by this means we shall be enabled more effectually to prevent the Enemy from receiving Supplies along the shore of Delaware, which is so extensive, to wit, more than one hundred and twenty miles including our Sea board, that it is almost impracticable to guard the whoe by land forces. I shall estemm it as a favour in you to dispatch the Messenger in this business with all the Expedition in your power as there is certain intelligence that a number of small Vessels are coming round from New York with Merchandize and provisions, and I have the honour to be your most Obedt. Servt.

Geo. Read Vice President of the Delaware State

The Honble. President of Congress

Paper of Cont. Congress

Questions

1. What was the date of the document?
2. Who wrote the document?
3. *Context is defined as the background information that surrounds and influences events, ideas, or developments in a particular time period.* What is the historical context for the above document? (Historical Context)
4. Who is the document being written to? (Who is the audience)
5. *The first paragraph is asking the Continental Congress for a Marque and Reprisal.* Define what a Letter of Marque and Reprisal is and explain whether this letter meets those requirements. (Purpose of the Document)
6. What reasons are given to in favor of the granting of these letters of Marque and Reprisal? (Point of View of the Document)
7. Where do we see letters of Marque and Reprisal today?
8. Why do you think the State of Delaware was asking for these Letters of Marque and Reprisal? Do you think they were granted?