

# Free Dreyfus!

## Framing this unit

Alfred Dreyfus was a French-Jewish army officer who was wrongly accused of treason and espionage. The Dreyfus Affair split the French public into two opposing sides: the Dreyfusards, who believed in Dreyfus' innocence, and the anti-Dreyfusards, who believed that he was guilty. Both the Dreyfusards and the anti-Dreyfusards published articles and posters to prove their point.

In this activity, we will first research the Dreyfus Affair in groups and analyze the propaganda material of both sides. We will then create a "Free Dreyfus" campaign that could have been used by the Dreyfusards. Finally, the groups will present their campaigns, and the class will choose which campaign would have been the most effective in Alfred Dreyfus' release.

## Group Activity

### 1. Learning about the Dreyfus Affair

Each group will learn about the Dreyfus Affair using primary sources from the [Alfred Dreyfus resource pack](#) and [the worksheet](#). Then the class will re-group to share their new knowledge and thoughts.

### 2. Join the Dreyfusard Campaign Meeting

Back in their groups, students will simulate a (present-day) Dreyfusard campaign meeting. Each group has to:

- Write a slogan for their Free Dreyfus campaign.
- Write four sentences summarizing why Dreyfus should be released.
- Write a paragraph that can be sent to the press explaining the Dreyfusard views.
- Collect four photographs for use in their campaign.
- Design a logo for their campaign.
- Decide on the best way to reach the public: posters, stickers, Facebook campaign, newspaper articles, TV programs, interviews, online banners, demonstrations.

### 3. Running the Campaign

Each group will create their own promotional material for use in their Free Dreyfus campaign:

- Create a poster using canva.com including the slogan, logo, images, and sentences that you wrote in the previous stage. Students may also use arts and crafts materials to create their poster instead of online tools.
- Each group will write or record an imaginary interview with a leading Dreyfusard, Dreyfus' family members, or Dreyfus himself.
- Students should prepare any additional material for the campaign.

#### **4. Presenting the campaign to the Dreyfusards**

Now it is the time to choose which campaign will be the most effective in Dreyfus' release!

- Each group will present to the class their poster, interview, and any other material they have prepared.
- The class will vote on which campaign they think would be the most successful.

The vote can be held using the traditional show of hands method or an online survey tool such as Google Forms.

#### **Primary sources in this lesson**

- [Alfred Dreyfus Resource Pack](#)
- [Information page - Who was Alfred Dreyfus](#)
- [Timeline](#)