

## New Year postcard with a photograph of Alfred Dreyfus, 1901

In the second half of the 19th century, Europe began using postcards as a means of communication, influenced by the success in the Christian world of sending illustrated greetings cards for Christmas and Easter, this custom gradually took hold in Jewish society as well, and was expressed by sending letters of greeting for the New Year. The photographs, illustrations and greetings in these letters combined national, political and social ideas – and as such they expressed the spirit of the times.

On the National Library's [website](https://tinyurl.com/y95vdbj3) you can read about the custom of letters of greeting. (<https://tinyurl.com/y95vdbj3>)

Have a look at the [greetings card](https://tinyurl.com/y778wnxe) (<https://tinyurl.com/y778wnxe>) with the illustration of **Alfred Dreyfus** at the center, and answer the questions which follow:



1. On the postcard there are a number of greetings and wishes for the New Year in Hebrew.

a. What are they?

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b. In which other languages do greetings appear on the card?

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c. Choose one of the other languages that you know and compare the greeting in Hebrew and the translation. What does the comparison show?

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d. Why, do you think, are there greetings in these languages on the postcard?

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e. Are most of the greetings on the postcard in Hebrew? What can you understand from this about the worldview of the illustrator?

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2. In the centre of the postcard is a picture of Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish officer in the French army who was accused of spying for Germany and stood trial in 1894, found guilty and was sentenced to life imprisonment and revocation of his military rank. In this link you can read more about Alfred Dreyfus:  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfred\\_Dreyfus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfred_Dreyfus):

a. What is Dreyfus wearing in the picture? What is the illustrator saying by choosing these clothes?

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b. In the picture's caption, the illustrator notes Dreyfus' military rank. Why does he do this after his rank had been revoked in a public ceremony?

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3. In 1899 Dreyfus was re-tried and convicted for a second time. Why did the illustrator choose to display his picture on a letter of greeting in 1901?

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4. How does this New Year postcard express the spirit of the time?

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5. Who do you think would be the type of people to send this kind of letter of greeting to their acquaintances?

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6. In your opinion, why is this source important?

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7. What can you infer from this source about the work of the historian?

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