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| <b>ACTIVITY/TASK TITLE</b>                 | Letter to Mine Owner   |
| <b>Cross-Curricular Skill</b>              | Communication  |
| <b>Communication Mode (if appropriate)</b> | Writing  |
| <b>Activity Description</b>                | <p>As part of the World Around Us topic of Victorians, pupils wanted to research the topic of Child Workers in the Victorian era. They researched work on the BBC History website and read various accounts of children working in coal mines from a selection of school library books.</p> <p>They discussed the issues, dangers and hardships around doing that type of work as a child and then individually planned a letter to a rich mine owner outlining why they were not happy with the working conditions. They had to include detail that they had gathered from the various sources that they had used.</p> <p>They discussed their work with the teacher and other pupils and did a final draft including any amendments.</p> |
| <b>Prior Learning/Experience</b>           | Pupils had written letters before and one was modelled to remind the class. They had reviewed the use of paragraphs and persuasive language.   |

18 G  
BT. 622  
Co. Antrim

3/11/1832

Dear Mr Knox,

I am writing to complain about the awful working conditions of your coal mines.

The mines are so dangerous that we have to bring poor birds down and when the bird dies, we have to get out. Half the time most of the children die anyway because they are starving as you don't even pay us good wages. On top of this there are gas explosions, collapsing caves and floods! The mines are worse than prison. Cold, dark, wet and dirty. We have to crawl along the ground, pushing carts. But most of the time you use poor pit ponies!

We trappers have to sit in the dark with only a candle for light. For lunch we have maybe a bit of stale bread and a flask of cold tea. That's only if we can afford it.

We get woken up by the knocker-up at 2 am. Not only do we have to crawl or sit hunched up in a corner for 18 hours but we have to do it knowing that the cave could be about to collapse or flood. We could even be breathing in poisonous gas. Loads of people die every day and most of them aren't even 10 yet. I think you should raise the age limit to at least 18 years old. It's so cruel. If you want coal so badly, get it yourself.

How would you feel if you had to slave in a filthy mine for 18 hours knowing that your family could be dead? When I started this job I expected a clean, safe working environment. Not even close!

I hope after reading this letter you will take everything into consideration. I hope you will put in proper pit-posts and have the tunnels inspected. Please pay us proper wages. Everyone would like that.  
Thank you very much,

Yours sincerely

Chris Wainwright