

LIST III HT

HIU33122 - Postcards from Paris: Visitors Write the City of Light



Vintage Postcard of Paris, image from the Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris

Assessment: One Essay

Paris has been one of the world's most visited cities since the early nineteenth century. And for as long as visitors have flocked to the "city of light," they have recorded their experiences and interpretations of the French capital. This module invites you to explore a selection of English-language sources—including travelogues, guidebooks, and letters from (and about) nineteenth-century Paris. We will follow well-known authors, such as Mark Twain, George Sand, and Oscar Wilde, putting them into conversation with lesser-known critics, travel writers, and essayists. Students will work closely with this eclectic set of cultural texts to trace how visitors defined the French capital during a century of dramatic upheaval and change. Moreover, as we examine accounts from around the world and across the century, we will pay close attention to recurring themes as well as striking departures, seeking to understand both through close reading and contextual analysis.

By the end of the module, students will have developed confidence in working with these distinctive primary sources and gained a clearer understanding of how a coherent image of "Paris" emerged in the nineteenth-century imagination.