CLASSWORK



STUDENT'S NAME:

BATTLE OF THE SOMME 1916

When The First World War began in August 1914 many people thought that it would be over by Christmas. Contrary to their expectations it was a long and bloody war, and for many the Battle of the Somme, fought between July and November 1916, represents the sacrifice of the First World War.

The French had faced considerable pressure from the Germans at Verdun where they had been fighting since February 1916. General Joffre, the leader of the French troops, asked General Douglas Haig, the leader of the British soldiers in France for help. Joffre asked Haig to reduce the pressure on the French by commencing an attack 17 miles to the north of the river Somme. 60,000 British troops were injured and around 20,000 were killed on the first day of the battle on July 1, 1916. Many Welsh soldiers were among those killed.

British troops fired their artillery or heavy guns and shells for five days before the first day of the battle, but the German troops had taken shelter in deep concrete dug-outs behind their trenches. British planes failed to spot German artillery because of the low cloud. This meant that thousands of British troops were shot as they crossed no man's land.

The artillery failed to cut through the German barbed wire and many British soldiers became entangled in the wire as they crossed no man's land. Soldiers felt fear and terror as they went over the top knowing that they were easy targets for the German machine gun fire. General Haig was described by many as the Butcher of the Somme because he believed that foot soldiers and cavalry could defeat the new technology of the machine gun.

Britain used tanks for the first time in the Battle of the Somme. These were armed vehicles with machine guns that moved on a continuous metal track. A tank could handle difficult conditions such as mud and rain.

When the battle ended in November 1916: Cambrian Daily Leader, November 7, 1916:

- 1 million soldiers had been killed or injured
- 125,000 British soldiers had been killed
- Britain and France had only gained 8km of land
- The attack had reduced the pressure on the French army



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1.- Tick which of the following sentences are true and untrue

	True	Untrue
Many people thought that the war would be over by Christmas		
The attack on the Somme was launched to help ease the pressure on French troops at Verdun		
The Battle of the Somme began in November 1916		
The attack started to the south of the river Somme		
Many soldiers from Wales fought on the Somme		
The Battle of Verdun started in February 1916		
By the end of the Battle of the Somme 1 million had been killed or injured		

2.- Draw a line to show which word matches each definition

General Haig	The leader of the French troops
General Joffre	Shelter behind the teacher
Tank	Heavy guns that fired shells
Artillery	The leader of the British troops
Dug - out	An armoured vehicle

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3.- How did the soldiers feel as they went over the top?

	Tick 1
happy and joyful	☐
nervous and fearful	☐
jolly and cheerful	☐
eager and confident	☐

4.- Place these events in their chronological order from 1 – 5

☐	1 million had been killed or injured by the time the battle ended in November 1916
☐	Between July 1 and November 1 more than 71,532 German soldiers were taken prisoner by Britain and France on the Somme
☐	Joffre asked Haig to relieve pressure on the French army at Verdun by launching an attack further down the Somme.
☐	The First World War was declared in 1914
☐	More than 20,000 soldiers were killed on the first day of the battle

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