

Grandpa's Gift  
COMPREHENSION / INFERENCE (CRITICAL THINKING)  
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS:

Questions (# 1 - 8) are factual questions that outline the "causes" of the First World War and the countries that were involved. Questions (# 9 - ) answers may vary. Be sure to have the children give reasons for their opinions/thoughts. Choose questions suited to the ages of the children, but realize (and be sensitive to the fact) that many children may know a lot about warfare in general from news or movies, others may have family in the Canadian military, and many immigrant children may have experienced war first-hand. Yet for other children this may all be outside their knowledge or experience.

(Question - page #)

(#1 - p 15) Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary, and his wife, Sophie, were assassinated in Sarajevo, Bosnia, in June 1914, by a Serbian from the Black Hand secret society. What was it about this event that started Europe moving toward the First World War?

(Answer) Austria-Hungary gave Serbia ten demands in an ultimatum. If Serbia gave in to the demands, Austria-Hungary would be able to take over Serbia. If Serbia refused, Austria-Hungary planned to go to war against Serbia and take over anyway.

(#2 -p 17) Which country did Serbia have ties with? (Russia) Which country was Austria-Hungary allied with? (Germany) What happened when Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia in July 1914?

(Answer) Russia was tied to Serbia by a treaty, and declared war on Austria-Hungary. Then Germany, tied to Austria-Hungary by a treaty, declared war on Russia.

(#3 - p 18) In August 1914, Germany declared war on France. France and Russia were bound by a treaty, so what happened next?

(Answer) Russia declared war on Germany.

(#4 - p 19, 32) Why did Britain then declare war on Germany? Give two reasons

(Answer) Because Britain was allied to France by a treaty. Also, Germany wanted to get to France, so invaded Belgium, a neutral country between Germany and France, and the Belgian King asked their ally, Britain, to defend Belgium.

(#5 -p 19-20, 32) How did Canada and other countries, like Australia, New Zealand, India and South Africa and more, come to be involved in the war?

(Answer) Canada and these other countries were allied with Britain because they were colonies or dominions of Britain. Also the families of many Canadians had emigrated from England, so they considered Britain their motherland, and wanted to help defend it.

(#6 - p 20) Three years later, the United States, which had been neutral, became involved in World War I in 1917. Why did that happen?

(Answer) German submarines threatened American commercial shipping lanes, so they joined the war against Germany.

(#7 -p 23) One of the treaties was called "The Triple Alliance." It was between Austria-Hungary, Germany, and a third country. What country was that? (Italy) How did Italy managed to stay neutral?

(Answer) There was a clause in the treaty they were able to use to stay out of the war.

(#8 - p 23) Was was the name of the treaty between Britain, France, and Russia?

(Answer) The Triple Entente

(# 9 - p 24) How did Japan get into the war on the side of Britain in August 1914?

(Answer) Japan had a military agreement with Britain, so it declared war on Germany. Then Germany's ally, Austria-Hungary, declared war on Japan.

(#10 - p 54) What anniversary celebration does Canada celebrate on in April, 2017?

(Answer) In the pre-dawn of April 9, 1917, Easter Monday, to be exact, the battle to take Vimy Ridge begins - on that date in 2017, Canada celebrates the 100th. year anniversary of the battle.

(# 11 - p 31) Although Austria-Hungary was the first country to declare war, Germany became far more important in the war. It had its own agenda. What does that mean? Do you think countries today might have hidden agendas when they go to war, or do they always tell the truth about their reasons for war? Can you give any examples you know of?

(Variations on Answers) To have an agenda means to have a motive to do something. Often, the person or country with the agenda tries to keep it hidden because they know others won't like it or agree with it. For example, Germany wanted to expand its territory by taking over other countries, and wanted to become the most powerful country in Europe.

N.B. (Answers about modern wars will have a variety of responses).

(#12 - p 32-33) Why did many young men, as young as 15 or 16, lie about their age so they could go to war?

(Answer) The minimum age was 18 and later 19, and the young men thought it would be a great adventure, and they thought that the war wouldn't last long and would be over before Christmas.

(#13 - p 33) What were some problems for these young men who enlisted to go to war? How many Canadian soldier died in the war?

(Answer) They had not been trained as soldiers, and they found themselves fighting against a seasoned, well-trained enemy. Instead of just having an adventure, many of them died. The war lasted for years. Over 61,000 Canadian soldiers died.

(#14 -p 33-34, 36) Do you think it is fun to play video war games, or watching war movies? What is the difference between war games and real war? Do you think children should spend their time playing war games or watching war movies? Do you think that being good at playing video war games would prepare you well to be a soldier? Do you think war games and movies encourage people to go to war? Why or why not?

(Various answers--be sure to have the children give reasons for their

answers)

(#15 - p 34) When a soldier dies, it is not sad just for the soldier. Who else is affected? How are they affected?

(Answer will vary) Parents, grandparents, sisters and brothers, children, friends, cities, countries, etc. are affected. They are sad to lose someone they love, and for the countries, it is a loss of someone who could have been an important citizen, worker, leader, etc.

(#16 -p 35) What reasons were the Canadian young men given to encourage them to join the war? Do you think these are good reasons to go to war? Why or why not?

(Answers will vary, depending on the students own thoughts about reasons to go to war) Canadian soldiers were told that they would be taking a stand against a country that was trying to force its will on another country--the country their own ancestors had come from. They were told that joining the war was a chance to show how brave and bold they were. They were also promised daily pay that was more than many of them had ever earned.

(#17 - p 40) Jackson, and his dad and mom and Grandpa, think that war is "horrible" and "crazy" and "sad." Do you agree or disagree? Why?

(Answers will vary. Be sure to have the children explain their answers).

(#18 - p 43) Do you agree that battles, like the Battle of Vimy Ridge or the Battles of Ypres, were "awesome" or "cool," as some children would say? Why or why not?

(Answers will vary. Be sure to have the children explain their answers).

(#19 - p 45, 47) Vimy Ridge was only 80 kilometers from Paris, the Germans' goal. Also, it had strategic advantages, so the Germans were determined to hold it. What does it mean to have a strategic advantage? What strategic advantages did Vimy Ridge have for the Germans?

(Answer) A strategic advantage is something that enables one group to have control over another group. In the case of Vimy Ridge, it had good look-out positions over the entire area, so they could easily see the Allied nations

trying to advance from any direction and could stop them; and it was close to Paris which they wanted to control.

(#20 - p 47-48) Why were the Germans not afraid of the Canadians at Vimy Ridge in 1917? Give at least 2 reasons. Do you think they were wise to be so sure the Canadians would lose? Why or why not?

(Answer) Germany had held the position for so long they were sure no one could take it. They had strong fortifications and could see in every direction. They thought the Canadians were untrained soldiers, but they did not realize that the Canadians had become well-trained, seasoned soldiers in the 2 1/2 years since the war started.

N.B. (Answers will vary about the wisdom of the German's assumptions).

(#21 - p 48-49-50) What were some of the difficulties Canadian soldiers faced in the First World War and especially at Vimy Ridge? Do soldiers still have these kinds of difficulties? How has war changed for Canadian soldiers today, and how is it the same as during the First World War?

(Answers re the difficulties faced will vary--being so far away from family and home for so long; the many deaths; the terrible wet, cold conditions in the trenches and the rats; the enemy making fun of them; using buckets for toilets, etc.)

(Answers regarding modern warfare difficulties will also vary--and will depend on the children's knowledge of modern wars Canada has been/is involved in. Children are exposed to much information via TV, news reports, films, etc. so they may know quite a lot, and this could lead to some very interesting discussion).

(#22 - p 50-53) What were some of the methods the British and Canadians used as they prepared for the Battle of Vimy Ridge? How did those preparations help in the battle?

(Answer) They built trenches; tunnels; railway tracks to move dirt, artillery and supplies. They also trained the soldiers very well, and told them every detail of how the battle would be fought and the plan of attack. They carried out 55 night raids on the German trenches ahead of the battle.

(Variation on answer) When it was time for the battle, they placed

explosives in the tunnels underneath the German trenches and bunkers. The explosives killed many of the Germans. By telling the Canadian soldiers all the plans and training them so well, the soldiers were very prepared for the battle. The night raids gave the soldiers practice in fighting and helped them gain information from the Germans.

(#23 - p 54) What horrific method did the Germans use to fight back the Canadians on their first attack at Vimy Ridge, which only 600 of the 1700 Canadians survived? Why did the Germans' method also harm their own soldiers? Do you think this is a fair way to fight a war? Does this method ever happen in modern wars?

(Answer) The method was the use of poison gas against the Canadians. Some Germans also died from the gas, as the wind brought some of the gas back to the German lines.

(Answers will vary re the fairness of the use of poison gas in warfare. Some students may have heard news reports about poison gas being used in the Syrian conflict, and possibly also in the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts).

(#24 - p 55) Why do you think many of the soldiers wrote letters home to their families on the night before the Battle of Vimy Ridge began? What kind of things do you think they might have said in those letters?

(Answers will vary)

(#25 - p 56-67) After you have read the account of the battle, what do you think are the most important reasons the Canadians' won the Battle of Vimy Ridge? Why do you think that?

(Answers will vary. Some will point to the good planning, others to the bravery and heroism of the soldiers, some to the German's being surprised that the Canadians would not give up, etc.)

(#26 - p 67) What is an armistice? Why do we celebrate Remembrance Day on November 11?

(Answer) An armistice is a truce that stops war. We celebrate Remembrance day on November 11, because the armistice of the First World War was signed on that day in 1918.

(#27 - p 67) Why do many people think that the Battle of Vimy Ridge is so important for Canadians? What do you think about that? Do you agree? Why or why not?

(Answer) People think that battle was the day that Canada became a nation in the eyes of the world. (Answers will vary on the students' thoughts about that).

(#28 - p 68) Jackson thought he understood why the war happened. But he felt sad, and kind of angry, about all the soldiers killed in the battles, though he was proud of them. Jackson said he thought that it seemed so senseless. Now that you have learned about the First World War and about the Battle of Vimy Ridge, what do you think? Do you agree with Jackson, or do you have different feelings? Why? Do you think there are sometimes reasons why wars must be fought? What might those reasons be? (Answers will vary).

(#29 - p 70) Many of the soldiers who returned home after the First World War, and after other wars before and since, do not talk about their experiences in the wars. Grandpa said he thought it is because war is so awful. Do you agree with Grandpa or not? Why? What kinds of things about war would make people not want to talk about it? (Answers will vary).

(#30 - p 71) Grandpa and Jackson think there have to be better ways for countries to solve disagreements than by having wars. Do you agree with them, or not? Why? What other ways could countries resolve their differences? (Answers will vary).

(#31 - p 72, 80) Grandpa was proud of how Jackson had grasped the true horrors of wars. Do you think it is important that children should learn about wars, not just the facts from history books, but true stories from the viewpoints and experiences passed down by people who were there? Why or why not? Why do children need to learn about the reality of wars? How can children help tell these important stories of our Canadian history and keep the memory alive? Why is it important? (Answers will vary).