The Western Front and Trench Warfare
Short Text and Text Dependent Questions

Standards Alignment
Text and Images
Text Dependent Questions
Standards Alignment

California State Standards for Grade 10

- 10.5 Students analyze the causes and course of the First World War.
  - Analyze the arguments for entering into war presented by leaders from all sides of the Great War and the role of political and economic rivalries, ethnic and ideological conflicts, domestic discontent and disorder, and propaganda and nationalism in mobilizing the civilian population in support of “total war.”
  - Examine the principal theaters of battle, major turning points, and the importance of geographic factors in military decisions and outcomes (e.g., topography, waterways, distance, climate).
  - Explain how the Russian Revolution and the entry of the United States affected the course and outcome of the war.
  - Understand the nature of the war and its human costs (military and civilian) on all sides of the conflict, including how colonial peoples contributed to the war effort.

Common Core Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Science for Grades 9 & 10 Students:

- RH 1 - Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.
- RH 3 - Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.
- RH 4 - Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social studies.

Common Core Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Science for Grades 9 & 10 Students:

- WHST 2 - Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes.
  - b. Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience’s knowledge of the topic.
  - d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic and convey a style appropriate to the discipline and context as well as to the expertise of likely readers.
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**Germany’s Plan to Win the War**

Germany had to come up with a plan on how to win the war on two fronts. The plan was called the Schlieffen Plan and had two parts: a. Quickly strike and defeat France on the Western Front, b. then, rush to the Eastern Front to fight the Russians. First major battle of WWI was the First Battle of the Marne (there were two major battles called the Battles of the Marne). French troops were able to stop the Germans at Marne River. The French victory at the Marne meant that the Schlieffen Plan failed. Quick German victory in the west was not possible. Because the Schlieffen Plan failed, Germany had to split its military and send half its troops to fight on the Eastern Front.

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**Reading Questions**

Germany had to come up with a plan on how to do what?

What was the plan called?

List the two things the Schlieffen Plan called for.

Why was the Battle of the Marne a significant battle?

What were French troops able to do at the Marne River?

What did French victory at the Marne mean for the Germans?

Because the Schlieffen Plan failed, what did Germany have to do?
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**Stalemate**

After the First Battle of the Marne, there was a stalemate on the Western Front. A stalemate meant that no side was winning but still fighting. To protect themselves, soldiers dug deep trenches into the ground. Eventually, there were 500 miles of Allied trenches facing Central Power trenches. Troops lived in trenches for months at a time and had little to eat. Trenches were full of rats, dead bodies, mud, and diseases.

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**Reading Questions**

What happened after the First Battle of the Marne?

What did soldiers do to protect themselves?

How many miles of trenches were eventually created?

How long did troops live in the trenches?

Did they have a lot to eat?

List four things the trenches were full of:
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No Man’s Land

No man’s land was the stretch of land between the enemies’ trenches. When soldiers left their trenches to storm enemy lines, they were mowed down by gunfire. As a result of trench warfare, millions of soldiers died and not much land was gained by either side.

Reading Questions

What was “no man’s land?”

What would happen to soldiers who left their trenches to storm enemy lines?

List two things that resulted from trench warfare:
Aircraft can warn of the build-up of enemy troops before an attack.

Barbed wire: metres deep and an impassable obstacle for any troops able to reach it.

No Man's Land (the stretch of land between the trenches of the opposing sides) has already been churned up by shell fire. In wet weather it becomes a mass of mud, making it even harder for troops to cross.

Concrete block house for a machine-gun.

Support trench.

Front-line trench.

Reserve trench.

Communication trenches allow reserves to be brought forward without exposing them to enemy fire.

A deep dug-out. German ones could be 15 m below ground and too well constructed to be damaged by shell fire.

Long-range artillery is placed about 10 km behind the front line. These guns fire at advancing enemy troops.

Front-line dug-outs provide protection but not against a direct hit from an artillery shell.

PROBLEMS FACING ATTACKING TROOPS