

Prelude of Gettysburg Reading Comprehension

Name: _____

Read the passage and answer the questions.

Lee Intends to Invade Pennsylvania

Buoyed by confidence in his army after its decisive victory at Chancellorsville, Virginia, in May of 1863, Confederate Commander Robert E. Lee decided to make a second invasion in the North. Lee believed he could threaten the major cities of Harrisburg, Philadelphia, and even Washington, further eroding the dwindling support for the War in the North. Furthermore, Lee wanted to move hostilities to the North because Virginia had been ravaged by hundreds of battles. The land in the North was still unspoiled and Lee believed Confederate soldiers could subsist from the products from the pristine farms of Maryland and Pennsylvania.

The Forces

On June 3, 1863, Lee directed his Army of Northern Virginia to move north from Fredericksburg. He also organized his army into three corps, Corps I led by General James Longstreet, Corps II led by Richard Ewell, and Corps III led by A.P. Hill. Cavalry would be led by J.E.B. Stuart. Confederate manpower totaled about 72,000 soldiers, whereas Union forces totaled over 94,000 soldiers.

Where is Stuart? Meade Takes Command for the Army of the Potomac

On June 26, Major General Jubal Early's division from Ewell's Corps had reached the town of Gettysburg. Ewell's men burned railroad cars and a covered bridge, but at this point, there was no indication the largest battle in recorded history in the Western Hemisphere would occur in Gettysburg. In what would become a pivotal moment in Lee's campaign, he gave vague orders to Cavalry Commander J.E.B. Stuart to ride around the right flank of Union forces to determine exact locations and numbers. Stuart, who was indispensable to Lee in previous battles with his cavalry raids and intelligence gathering, failed to report back until the third and last day of the battle. Meanwhile, on the Union side, President Lincoln accepted the resignation of General Joseph Hooker, and replaced him with General George Meade, who would now be in charge of Union forces (the Army of the Potomac) at Gettysburg.

The Shoes Determine the Location of an Epic Battle

As Confederate forces concentrated in Cashtown, PA, about eight miles south of Gettysburg, Confederate Brigadier General Joseph Pettigrew was sent to Gettysburg to commandeer supplies, especially shoes, for the Confederate Army. Finding an enemy force at Gettysburg, Pettigrew withdrew to Cashtown, and Confederate forces began their advance.

1. Which statement is false?

- a) Corps I was led by James Longstreet.
- b) The Confederates had more manpower than the Union army as of June 1963.
- c) Lee led the Union army north on June 3, 1963.
- d) Lee divided his army into three groups.

2. Which of the following is not a reason why Lee wanted to advance battles into the North?

- a) He was more confident due to previous Southern victories.
- b) He wanted to decrease Northern morale and support for the war.
- c) Many battles had already destroyed the Southern lands, and Lee wanted to take the fight to the mostly intact Northern ones.
- d) Lee felt less sure leading the army during a battle on Confederate lands.

3. Which event happened first?

- a) Confederate forces gather in Cashtown, PA.
- b) Lincoln appoints General George Meade commander of Union forces.
- c) General Early's division reaches Gettysburg
- d) Confederate forces begin their advance on Gettysburg after Pettigrew retreats to Cashtown.

4. What inference can be made from the fact that Commander Stuart did not report back to Lee until the third day of the Battle of Gettysburg?

- a) Stuart's failure to report exact numbers of Union forces was disadvantageous to Confederate forces in battle.
- b) Stuart reported back to Lee just in time for the beginning of the Battle of Gettysburg.
- c) Stuart's failure to report exact numbers of Union forces meant that he was betraying the Confederate forces as a Union spy.
- d) Stuart had a history of being unreliable, so Lee was not waiting for Stuart's report anyway.

5. Which statement about the prelude to Gettysburg is true?

- a) The South chose to mobilize at Gettysburg as a last-ditch attempt to make its first victory of the war.
- b) The Union made a change in army leadership prior to the battle.
- c) Gettysburg, PA, was Confederate territory.
- d) Cashtown, PA, is north of Gettysburg.

6. What did General Joseph Pettigrew find when he was sent to Gettysburg?

- a) Confederate forces mobilizing.
- b) Union forces mobilizing.
- c) Union forces mobilizing, led by Joseph Hooker.
- d) A storage unit of supplies and shoes, open for the taking

7. Infer why shoes were an important commodity desired for soldiers fighting in the war.

- a) Soldiers did a lot of marching and marching in different terrains, which wore out their shoes frequently.
- b) Soldiers fought most of their battles barefoot, hence, they did not need shoes very often.
- c) Shoes were sold in the Northern states, but not the Southern ones
- d) The material from shoes could be used to make ammunition.

-----Key-----

1. (c)
2. (d)
3. (c)
4. (a)
5. (b)
6. (b)
7. (a)