

Battle of Trenton - Lexile 800

Name _____

In 1776, the Patriots were having a very tough time. The Continental Army, led by General George Washington, had lost many battles around New York City and suffered heavy losses. The soldiers were tired, and their spirits were low. They had to retreat through New Jersey and across the Delaware River into Pennsylvania. On the other side of the river, in Trenton, New Jersey, there were about 1,400 Hessian soldiers (German soldiers) who worked for the British.

General Washington planned to attack the Hessians on December 26, 1776, the day after Christmas. He wanted to attack from three different directions. The weather made things difficult because it was snowing and sleeting, which slowed down the crossing of the river. The army had to use special boats to cross, and some men even fell into the river, but they were okay. By 4:00 a.m., the army was ready to march nine miles to Trenton. Along the way, Washington encouraged his soldiers, many of whom had no shoes and were hurt from walking in the snow.

The first shots of the battle were fired about a mile from Trenton, and the Hessians started to retreat. Washington made sure the Hessians couldn't escape to Princeton. Soon, more American soldiers joined the fight, and they set up cannons in the streets, causing a lot of damage to the Hessians. The Hessians were pushed back, and many of them were surrounded and forced to give up. Some tried to escape, but many were captured.

In the battle, only two American soldiers were killed, and five were hurt. However, many others got sick from the cold. The Hessians had 83 casualties, including 22 who died. The Americans captured 896 Hessians, although some managed to escape. All four Hessian leaders were killed. Even though the battle wasn't a huge victory in terms of strategy, it gave the Patriots a big boost and helped raise the soldiers' spirits, who had been losing hope.

1. Why was 1776 a difficult year for the Continental Army?

- A) They suffered heavy losses and had to retreat
- B) They were abandoned by their leaders.
- C) They received support from France
- D) They captured New York City

2. What made the crossing of the Delaware River difficult for Washington's army?

- A) The river was too wide to cross
- B) The weather, including sleet and snow, delayed the crossing
- C) They ran out of boats
- D) The army was too tired to cross

3. How did Washington's army fight the Hessians when they reached Trenton?

- A) They attacked from one direction and surrounded the Hessians
- B) They waited for reinforcements before attacking
- C) They tried to negotiate a peace treaty
- D) They used only hand-to-hand combat

4. What was the outcome of the Battle of Trenton for the Continental Army?

- A) They lost the battle but managed to escape
- B) Only two Americans were killed, and many Hessians were captured
- C) The Americans had to retreat back to Pennsylvania
- D) The Hessians successfully pushed the Americans out of Trenton

5. What effect did the Battle of Trenton have on the Continental Army?

- A) It made them lose confidence and morale
- B) It caused many soldiers to desert
- C) It led to the end of the war
- D) It helped raise their spirits and gave them hope for the future

Answers

1. A
2. B
3. A
4. B
5. D

Answers:

- 1.) D
- 2.) D
- 3.) C
- 4.) B
- 5.) B