

Battle of Gettysburg Day 2 Reading Comprehension

Name: _____

Read the passage and answer the questions.

The Fishhook

During the night of July 1st, most of the remaining Union and Confederate forces arrived in Gettysburg. The Union army was able to establish a strong line in the shape of a fishhook running over two miles from Cemetery Hill, along Cemetery Ridge and terminating at Culp's Hill. Confederate lines ran the length of Seminary Ridge, through the town of Gettysburg and terminated at a location opposite of Culp's Hill. In all, Confederate lines stretched for more than five miles. The stage was set for a massive battle.

Missing Intelligence

Without intelligence from J.E.B. Stuart's cavalry, however, Lee could not be certain of the exact positioning of Union forces, thus, his battle strategy for the second day of Gettysburg was somewhat flawed. Lee planned to launch a series of successive attacks with Longstreet's Corps on the Union left flank. The series of attacks and the diagonal formation of the attackers, would, theoretically, prevent the shifting of Union troops to reinforce the left flank. Meanwhile, other divisions would attack Union positions at Culp's Hill and Cemetery Hill. Lee did not know, however, that Union Major General Daniel Sickles and his troops were positioned in between Confederate forces and the Union left flank.

Attacks on Devil's Den and Little Round Top

On the sweltering afternoon of July 2nd, General Longstreet's soldiers engaged Sickles' III Union Corps, driving them back and forcing Union Commander Meade to send 20,000 reinforcements. Confederate Major General John Bell Hood launched attacks on Union divisions positioned at a location known as Devil's Den and a hill called Little Round Top. Sickles' III Corps was driven into a nearby wheatfield by Confederate forces under Lafayette McClaws before being thoroughly routed in a peach orchard. Pennsylvania Reserve soldiers eventually repulsed McClaws' assaults on Little Round Top, an important hill on the extreme Union left flank. Meanwhile, a division of McClaws' Army under the command of Richard Anderson led an assault on Cemetery Ridge that would have been successful if not for a desperate bayonet charge by the 1st Minnesota Regiment. The assaults on Little Round Top, however, were far from over. Positioned at the extreme left flank of the Union line, it represented

a major prize for the Confederacy if it could gain control of the hill. If Little Round Top could be occupied, Rebel forces could outflank the Union and attack the line from two directions.

Chamberlain's Stand

The Union position at Little Round Top was precarious, but their small forces fought valiantly and repulsed numerous assaults by Confederate divisions. Just before Rebel soldiers under the command of John Bell Hood arrived at Little Round Top, Union reinforcements reached the scene and repulsed additional assaults. In the battle, the 20th Maine Regiment under the Command of Colonel Joshua Chamberlain, ran out of ammunition after fighting for four hours. Facing yet another Rebel charge from up the hill, the soldiers responded with a vicious bayonet charge, scattering the exhausted Confederates, and ending the assault on Little Round Top, preventing the Confederates from flanking the Union Army.

Attacks on Culp's Hill

Attacks on the Union right flank began around 7:00 P.M. Because the majority of Union defenders on Culp's Hill had been moved to reinforce the left flank, Confederate forces under Edward Johnson attempted to exploit the vulnerability there. Union forces remaining on the hill, however, had constructed strong defensive works and were able to repulse most of the attacks. The Rebels did succeed in gaining control of a portion of the lower slope of Culp's Hill. By the end of the second day of fighting, it was still unclear who would ultimately prevail.

1. Which statement about the second day of fighting at Gettysburg is supported by the passage?

- a) The Union and Confederate forces were positioned in differently-shaped arrangements prior to the second day of fighting.
- b) Prior to the battle, Robert E. Lee had gained intelligence regarding the size and distribution of the Union forces.
- c) There were far more Union troops in Gettysburg than Confederate troops.
- d) Confederate battle lines stretched for eight miles prior to the second day of fighting.

2. Which of the following was not part of Lee's strategy going into the second day of fighting?

- a) Multiple attacks one after the other
- b) A slanted attack formation
- c) Use of different types of weaponry
- d) Besieging the enemy

3. Which inference can be made from the passage?

- a) The 1st Minnesota Regiment did nothing to stop the assault on Cemetery Ridge.
- b) The Union forces retained control of Little Round Top without needing to call for any reinforcements.
- c) If the Confederate forces took control of Little Round Top, they could have outnumbered and conquered the Union soldiers.
- d) Ulysses S. Grant led the Union troops fighting to secure control of Little Round Top.

4. Which event happened first?

- a) John Bell Hood attacks Little Round Top and Devil's Den.
- b) Richard Anderson leads an assault on Cemetery Ridge.
- c) Sickles' III Corps is driven into a wheatfield during battle.
- d) Commander Meade sends reinforcements to the III Union Corps.

5. Which was not an advantage experienced by the Union during the battle?

- a) Reinforcements arriving at Little Round Top
- b) A bayonet charge from the 1st Minnesota Regiment
- c) The sudden death of a prominent Confederate general
- d) Lee's lack of knowledge of the Union force positioning

6. Where were Confederate forces stationed prior to the second day of fighting?

- a) Seminary Ridge
- b) Cemetery Hill
- c) Both of the above
- d) None of the above

7. Which statement about the end of the second day is true?

- a) It was clear the Union would win the overall battle.
- b) The Union retained control of most of its ground.
- c) The Confederacy was unable to gain control of any of major Union positions.
- d) The Confederacy easily broke through the Union's feeble defenses.

-----Key-----

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