

Baron von Steuben Reading Comprehension for Grades 4-6

Baron Von Steuben was born on November 15, 1730 in Germany. From an early age, he was familiar with the military. His father was an engineer lieutenant in the Prussian army. Von Steuben himself joined the army when he was only 17 years old. He served in the army under Frederick the Great in the Seven Years War. In 1763, however, he was discharged from the army as a captain. No one knows why.

Baron Von Steuben worked for the German courts after his military service. He then tried unsuccessfully to join the ranks of the French and Austrian armies. When he heard that Benjamin Franklin was in France, he traveled there in hopes of offering his services to the Patriot cause. Franklin met with Von Steuben and took an immediate liking to him. He wrote Von Steuben a letter of recommendation and sent it to George Washington. Washington assigned Von Steuben to his winter quarters at Valley Forge.

At Valley Forge, Von Steuben's value to the Patriot cause was realized. He transformed the raw recruits and militia men into a well-disciplined fighting force. He taught badly needed military tactics, drill formations, command structure and line movements. The soldiers loved his style and broken English. Von Steuben was instrumental in raising the army's morale at the horrible conditions of Valley Forge. While his main contributions to the Patriot cause were at Valley Forge, he also served with Nathaniel Greene and the southern army, and was a divisional commander under George Washington at the Yorktown campaign. He served in the American army until 1784. He died November 28, 1794.

1. What happened in 1763?

- A. Von Steuben fought in the Seven Years War
- B. Von Steuben joined the army
- C. Von Steuben was removed from the army
- D. Von Steuben traveled to America

2. What is not true about Baron von Steuben?

- A. He joined the army at the age of 17
- B. He tried to join both the French and British armies
- C. His father was an engineer lieutenant in the Prussian army
- D. He impressed Benjamin Franklin

- 3. How did Baron von Steuben prove valuable to the Patriot cause?**
- A. He taught George Washington how to be a better general
 - B. He taught the Continental Army military tactics
 - C. He was a spy for the Continental Army
 - D. His main contribution to the Continental Army was as a divisional commander at Yorktown
- 4. The definition of "endear" is to "cause to be loved or liked." Which of the following sentences in the passage reflects the fact that von Steuben "endeared" himself to the soldiers?**
- A. The soldiers loved his style and broken English.
 - B. He served in the American army until 1784.
 - C. He transformed the raw recruits and militia men into a well-disciplined fighting force
 - D. At Valley Forge, Von Steuben's value to the Patriot cause was realized.
- 5. Apart from Valley Forge...**
- A. Von Steuben contributed little to the Patriot cause.
 - B. Von Steuben joined the Prussian army.
 - C. Von Steuben participated in other battles for the Patriot cause.
 - D. Von Steuben joined the French military.
- 6. Which of the following best describes Baron von Steuben?**
- A. An American soldier who helped George Washington at Yorktown
 - B. A former German captain who helped George Washington at Yorktown
 - C. A former German captain who was important in the Revolutionary War
 - D. A former German captain who was important in training the Continental Army
- 7. What is another way to write the following sentence without losing its meaning?**

Von Steuben was instrumental in raising the army's morale at the horrible conditions of Valley Forge.

- A. Von Steuben was successful in helping to defeat the British at Valley Forge
- B. Von Steuben was an important reason the army felt confident at Valley Forge
- C. Von Steuben was successful in helping to keep many sick soldiers from dying at Valley Forge
- D. Von Steuben played an important role in helping the Continental Army defend Valley Forge in the winter of 1777-1778