Battle of Newport Reading Comprehension
Name_____

Howe Controls Newport, Rhode Island

Despite being a strategic victory for the British, the Battle of Newport represented several milestones for the Continental Army in its fight against the British. The city of Newport, in Rhode Island, was the fourth-largest city in the thirteen colonies. It was located on an island, making it easy to defend. Newport also had a good harbor, making it possible for fleets of ships to remain there in the winter without the water freezing. In late 1776, British general Sir William Howe concocted a plan to take the city of Newport, hoping to end the war by 1777. In December 1776, Howe took control of Newport and Rhode Island.

The First Rhode Island Regiment

After the British took the city of Newport, legislators from Rhode Island voted to mobilize three regiments of soldiers to take the city back. Rhode Island simply didn't have enough landowners to establish more armies with the groups that had already been created. Thus, the government passed an act allowing non-white men to fight in the war, including slaves. The slaves would be given their freedom and paid for their service. The First Rhode Island Regiment was composed of 100 soldiers and included Black men and Indians. The regiment was led by white colonel Christopher Greene.

Rhode Island Remains in British Control

On August 29, 1778, the First Rhode Island Regiment fought for the first time. Until that date, forces from the Continental Army led by John Sullivan were attacking the British forces at Newport, trying to take the city back. However, they finally abandoned their cause and were preparing to retreat back to northern Rhode Island. At that time, reinforcements from the British Royal Navy arrived on the scene, and they attacked the Americans as they made their retreat. Eventually, the Americans made it back to the mainland, and British forces maintained their control of Rhode Island.

Growing Pains for the French and Americans

The Battle of Newport was significant for one other reason: it was the first time that French and American forces worked together to fight the British after France entered the Revolutionary War to fight on the side of the Americans. The Battle of Newport, however, proved that the two sides had work to do concerning communication and execution, before their combined forces could be successful.

1. **Which statement about the First Rhode Island Regiment is false?**
   a. They fought for the first time at the Battle of Newport.
   b. It was composed mostly of Black men and Indians.
   c. It was led by a Black commander.
   d. The slaves who fought were freed after the war.

2. **Why is the Battle of Newport significant?**
   a. Because it included a regiment of non-white men and featured the first American-French partnership.
   b. Because it resulted in permanent British control of Rhode Island for the next 50 years.
   c. Because it was a crippling defeat for the Continental Army that they almost didn't come back from.
   d. Because it was fought entirely on sea by John Sullivan and William Howe.

3. **Put the following events in order**.
   I.   The First Rhode Island Regiment is formed.
   II.   France joins the Revolutionary War on the side of the Americans.
   III. The British attack the Americans as they retreat from Newport.
   IV.   The Americans make it back to the mainland, and the British retain control of Newport.

   a. I, II, III, IV
   b. III, IV, I, II
   c. II, I, III, IV
   d. I, II, IV, II

4. **Which of the following is not a reason why Newport was an important colonial city?**
   a. It was one of the largest cities in the colonies.
   b. It had an easily defensible harbor.
   c. Its weapons industry was particularly profitable.
   d. Its harbors stayed liquid in the winter.

5. **Which statement is false?**
   a. General Howe succeeded in his mission to end the war by 1777.
   b. The British still had control of Rhode Island in August 1778.
   c. The British Royal Navy fought in the Battle of Newport.
   d. The British took control of Newport in late 1776.

6. **Which statement about French involvement in the Revolutionary War is true?**
   a. The French immediately began collaborating successfully with the Americans.
   b. The French initially had trouble working with the Americans, but the relationship improved with time.
   c. The French ended involvement with the Americans after the Battle of Newport.
   d. The French fought in the Revolutionary War on the side of the British.

7. **Which can be inferred from the passage?**
   a. The Americans eventually won the Revolutionary War.
   b. The Battle of Newport was an American victory.
   c. John Sullivan was an inept general.
   d. The Americans never regained control of Newport again.

Answers:

1. C
2. A
3. C
4. C
5. A
6. B
7. A