



**A2Z Learning: 11+**  
**English**  
**Reading Comprehension**  
**World War I (NF)**

These comprehensions will help you to experience the type of texts that are usually used in 11+ exams or independent school entrance exams.

The number of marks next to each question will give you an idea about how detailed your answer will need to be. Therefore, if a question is worth 3 marks then the answer will need at least 3 separate points/pieces of evidence from the text.

School selection tests are usually timed, so working within a time limit is something you will need to practise.

A reading comprehension of this length (just over a page) will be expected to be completed in 25-30 minutes.

Make sure you **read the questions carefully**. If it asks you to write a sentence make sure you do!

Good luck! You can do this!



## Extract from History Book about World War I

Read the following passage then answer all the questions that follow.

**The extract is from a history book about World War 1.**

1) World War 1 (1914 - 1918) was a turning point in world history. No previous conflict could match its scale of destruction. Millions of people died, often in battles that seemed to have no winners or losers - only dead and wounded. World War 1 was the first conflict to use modern technology on a wide scale. Armies and navies kept contact with radio and telegraph, while cars and trucks linked up with trains to move troops around. Modern industrial methods produced big guns that could send shells more than 15 km (9 miles). Submarines, aeroplanes, airships and tanks also made their first appearance in combat during the war. Hand grenades and barbed wire - all used for the first time as weapons during World War 1 - added to these deadly developments.

2) The most striking image of World War 1 is that of the trenches. On the great battlefields, huge armies lay in waiting, unable to advance against each other. Soldiers on each side dug long trenches. There, in the damp, muddy soil, they were forced to live with the constant noise of gunfire.

3) Private Donald Fraser's Journal describes his first experience of life in the trenches. The soldiers gave nicknames to many of the 'landmarks' in these enclosed quarters: "September 1915. Our loads were becoming troublesome. We had to rest frequently, but not for long. Dead Cow Corner was passed and at Beaver Hat we entered the skeleton remains of a belt of wood. Bullets were cracking in the trees. Strong Point II was soon passed. From here, the trench began to wind up the base of Wytshaete Ridge. On our right, the support line branched off.

4) "A hundred and fifty yards further on. We file into a trench near a couple of crosses marking the graves of former occupants. We are now only a few hundred yards away from the enemy so we move quietly. There is a perfect hiss of bullets overhead and a peculiar hum from those that ricochet. Our own men are firing in return and every bay gives forth a crack, crack. It is the custom as soon as darkness sets in for both sides to keep up more or less continuous fire at each other's trenches, to keep one another from attacking and also, to keep patrols from No Man's Land. It also shows that one is awake and there is not the same chance of being taken by surprise. The tendency, when firing in the dark, is to fire high, with the result that most of the bullets go flying over the trenches, maybe to find a victim 2000 yards behind; many men get killed in this fashion."



*Answer the following questions in full sentences. Refer to the extract about World War I for your answers. The mark will guide you by indicating how many points you should make.*

1. When did World War I happen? Remember to write this in a sentence.

(1)

2. Read paragraph 1 again. List three things from this part of the text about the use of modern technology in World War I.

- a.
- b.
- c.

(3)

3. Think about paragraph 1 again.

- a) State whether the following statement is **true** or **false**.
- b) When you have made your decision, pick a quotation that proves your point.

**Hand grenades had been used in previous wars.**

- a.
- b. Quotation:

(2)

4. a) Where were the trenches dug? b) Because of this, what were the conditions of the trenches like for the soldiers? Focus on paragraph 2 for your answer.

- a.
- b.

(1)

(3)

5. We learn that soldiers gave nicknames to places of significance. What does it mean by a "nickname"?

(1)

6. Why do you think one place was called "Dead Cow Corner" by the soldiers?

(1)



7. One stretch or "belt" of wood was described as "the skeleton remains". What does the writer want us to picture about the wood *with those words*?

(2)

8. The soldier describes the sounds around them as they advance along the trench. List **three** of the sounds described. For each, try choosing a word that suggests the noise itself.

- a.
- b.
- c.

(3)

9. Give three reasons why the soldiers keep firing at each other's trenches at night.

- a.
- b.
- c.

(3)

10. Why do many soldiers, who are far behind the trenches, get killed at night?

(2)

11. What do the following words from the passage mean?

- |                                |       |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| a) "conflict" (paragraph 1)    | (1/2) |
| b) "destruction" (paragraph 1) | (1/2) |
| c) "troublesome" (paragraph 3) | (1/2) |
| d) "ricochet" (paragraph 4)    | (1/2) |
| e) "tendency" (paragraph 4)    | (1/2) |
| f) "fashion" (paragraph 4)     | (1/2) |

