

Sample: completed

Data collection sheet: Why is this battle historically significant?

Event being studied: The Second Battle of Ypres

Source/reference used: <http://www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/exhibitions/guerre/second-ypres-e.aspx>

Basic facts from source

Name of the battle

The Second Battle of Ypres

Basic facts – the who, what, when, where, why, and how of the battle

Sample response:

- It took place in Belgium from April 22 to May 25, 1915.
- Ypres was the last major Belgian town still in Allied hands; it was important because it provided a good position to protect French ports on the English Channel.
- The Germans decided to test a new weapon – chlorine gas.
- On April 22, the Germans released gas against the French 45th Algerian division who were stationed beside two Canadian brigades.
- The 45th division broke and ran and Canada's left flank was exposed.

What did the Canadian forces accomplish?

Sample response:

- Canadians fought hard to keep the Germans from breaking through.
- On April 24, the Canadians were gassed, but they held on until British reinforcements arrived.

What is the significance of this battle?

To assess significance, look at the impact of this battle in terms of:

Quantity

Were many people's lives affected by this event/battle? Were people deeply affected?

Sample response:

Yes, people were deeply affected. Most obviously, the 6000 men who died and their families were affected. However, many others were affected as well and suffered from injuries and the effects of gas.

Change

Did something change as a result of this battle?

Sample response:

The leadership of the Allied army in Europe came to realize, during this battle, that they could count on Canadian troops to hold on and prevail in difficult situations.
Also, the Allies realized they had to develop gear to protect men against gas attacks.

Durability

Were the changes long lasting?

Sample response:

The changes were long lasting because once Canada gained this reputation, they started to be assigned battles that were seen as very tough or impossible to win, like Vimy Ridge and Passchendaele, for example. This, in turn, made Canada feel like an independent nation, not just a colony of Great Britain.

Profundity

How profound (deep/wide-ranging) were the effects of this battle? What was the impact?

Sample response:

Later, the world would set clear and firm rules against the use of poison gas in warfare.

Revealing

Does the event/development shed light on questions that are important for us today?

Sample response:

Chemical weapons and gases were first used in World War I. Their use resulted in so many casualties that many considered them to be unacceptable. However, they have been used in many conflicts since (World War II and the Iran–Iraq War, for example). In 1997, the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), banning the production, stockpiling, and use of chemical weapons, was signed, and, by October 2013, about 188 had joined the CWC. However, Syria didn't sign up; that is why reported use of poison gas in the recent Syrian conflict caused international outrage.

Overall significance

Sample response:

This battle showed that Canadian forces could be depended upon to hold their ground, and it gave them a solid reputation as capable and reliable troops. This battle also shed light on the ruthlessness of the enemy with their surprise use of chemical weapons. It proved that people could survive gas attacks, but that better protection against such weapons was needed.