

Weapons Reshape War

Trace how new technology changed strategy and increased casualties.

8.4c "New military technologies changed military strategy in World War I and resulted in an unprecedented number of casualties."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each military technology, circle the strategy it changed, and number details that show why casualties were so high.

A Battlefield Transformed

- ① Before World War I, many military leaders expected soldiers to move quickly across open land and defeat an enemy in short battles. New weapons made that plan deadly. Machine guns fired bullets rapidly, so a small group could defend a position against a much larger force. Artillery fired explosive shells over long distances. To avoid this fire, armies dug long trenches, which became protected fighting positions rather than temporary shelters for soldiers under attack.
- ② Trench systems often faced each other across a narrow area called no man's land. Commanders ordered attacks across this exposed ground, but machine-gun and artillery fire cut down many attackers. Poison gas added another danger. Wind could carry a gas cloud toward enemy trenches, yet a shifting wind could send it back. Gas masks offered some protection, and soldiers changed tactics by watching the wind and keeping masks ready during an attack or alarm nearby.
- ③ Aircraft first gave commanders a view above the battlefield. Pilots observed trench lines and reported enemy movements, helping artillery crews aim shells more accurately. Later, planes fought each other and attacked ground targets, so armies had to defend against threats from the air. These technologies did not guarantee victory, but they made fighting more destructive and difficult to escape. World War I caused millions of military and civilian deaths, with millions more people wounded.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How did machine guns help cause trench warfare?

2 Why were attacks across no man's land likely to cause many casualties?

3 What problem did wind create when poison gas was used, and how did soldiers respond?

4 How did aircraft change military strategy, and what does the passage say about the overall human cost of World War I?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose one technology from the passage. Write 3 or 4 sentences explaining a decision a commander would need to make because of that technology and how the technology could increase casualties. Use at least two details from the passage.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each military technology, circle the strategy it changed, and number details that show why casualties were so high. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did machine guns help cause trench warfare?	Machine guns made attacks across open ground deadly, so armies used trenches for protection.
2	Why were attacks across no man's land likely to cause many casualties?	Soldiers crossing exposed ground could be hit by machine-gun and artillery fire.
3	What problem did wind create when poison gas was used, and how did soldiers respond?	Wind could blow gas back toward the side that released it. Soldiers watched the wind and kept gas masks ready.
4	How did aircraft change military strategy, and what does the passage say about the overall human cost of World War I?	Aircraft helped commanders observe enemy movements and aim artillery, and they created threats from the air. The war caused millions of military and civilian deaths, with millions more people wounded.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Because machine guns could fire bullets rapidly, a commander would avoid sending soldiers directly over open ground. The commander might keep troops in trenches and use artillery before an attack. Even then, artillery and machine-gun fire could kill many soldiers, making casualties extremely high.

Accept accurate cause-and-effect explanations that connect a technology to a change in strategy and to increased danger or casualties. For the open response, accept any passage-based technology and a logical commander decision supported by at least two accurate details.