

NAME: _____

PERIOD: _____

It's Now or Never! The Meuse Argonne Offensive
Student Answers - KEY

THE "BATTLEFIELD"

Q1 – What was the area (in square miles) of the Meuse Argonne "battlefield"?

700 – 800 square miles

DAY ONE

Q2 - Describe the geography and landscapes of **Day One** using the map and the pictures provided.

Answers will vary. Possible answers – the land was full of craters, barbed wire, destroyed towns, and it shattered trees, and German defense systems.

Q3 – Look at the advancement lines and describe any patterns you see. Are they close together and/or spread out? Many lines together suggest that the area met lots of resistance/fighting. Which areas appear most contested during **day one**?

PATTERNS	Day one essentially shows two lines the jumping off line and the area where the Americans met serious resistance from the Germans.
CONTESTED AREAS	Difficult to tell with this stage of the battle. Americans met lots resistance along the northern advancement line. Notice the "bulge in the line around Montfaucon.

Q4– What feature(s) on the map appear to have been the American Expeditionary Force's (AEF) objective on **Day One**? **Montfaucon was the objective of Day 1. Notice the bulge in the line near this "important heights area"**

Q5 – How much ground did the AEF gain control of during **Day One**?

100 – 120 square miles.

PHASE ONE

Q6 - Describe the geography and landscapes of Phase One using the map and the pictures provided.

Cratered land, destroyed villages and farms, shattered trees in the Argonne forest,

Q7 - Look at the advancement lines and describe any patterns you see. Are they close together and/or spread out? Many lines together suggest that the area met lots of resistance/fighting. Which areas appear most contested during Phase One?

PATTERNS	Lines along the southern Argonne forest, around Montfaucon, and along the Meuse River.
CONTESTED AREAS	Areas approaching Montfaucon from the Northeast.

Q8 – What features on the map appear to have been the American Expeditionary Force’s (AEF) objective during **Phase One**? The Argonne Forest, Montfaucon, and the Meuse River in the west.

Q9 – How much ground did the AEF gain control of during **Phase One**? This will be difficult to measure. Encourage your kids to do the best they can. The amount of area is about 50 – 70 miles depending on how you measure it. The key take away is that the AEF spent over a week fighting to capture Montfaucon and about ½ of the area they captured during Day one.

PHASE TWO

Q10 - Describe the geography and landscapes of **Phase Two** using the map and the pictures provided. Farmland, destroyed villages, fortified farms, tanks, destroyed wooded areas, and many hills.

Q11- Look at the advancement lines and describe any patterns you see. Are they close together and/or spread out? Many lines together suggest that the area met lots of resistance/fighting. Which areas appear most contested during **Phase Two**?

PATTERNS	Advancement lines in the Argonne Forest and along the south edge of Romagne Heights, and continued protection of the Meuse River in the west.
CONTESTED AREAS	Lost Battalion area in the Argonne Forest, and the southern portion of Romagne Heights.

Q12– What features on the map appear to have been the American Expeditionary Force’s (AEF) objective during **Phase Two**? The Argonne Forest, Romagne Heights, and protecting land already gained.

Q13 – How much ground did the AEF gain control of during **Phase Two**? This will be difficult to measure. Encourage your kids to do the best they can. The amount of area is about 30 – 50 square miles depending on how you measure it. The key take away is that the AEF spent nearly two weeks to capture the same amount of area as day 1. After these two weeks they controlled Montfaucon and were at the edge of Romagne Heights and the Argonne Forest.

PHASE THREE

Q14 - Describe the geography and landscapes of **Phase Three** using the map and the pictures provided. Phase Three sees the fighting become extremely intense. Features to note: reinforcements moving in, tanks, machine guns, destroyed tanks, and lots of contested ground.

Q15- Look at the advancement lines and describe any patterns you see. Are they close together and/or spread out? Many lines together suggest that the area met lots of resistance/fighting. Which areas appear most contested during **Phase Three**?

PATTERNS	Lots of lines close together suggesting intense fighting along Romagne Heights, the Argonne Forest and along the foothills and woods along the base of the Heights of the Meuse (in the west)
CONTESTED AREAS	Romagne Heights, Argonne Forest, lots of woods, hills, farms and towns, and approaching the Heights of the Meuse. The fighting crosses the Hindenburg Line.

Q16 – What features on the map appear to have been the American Expeditionary Force’s (AEF) objective during **Phase Three**? Romagne Heights, Argonne Forest, and the Rail lines running east/west and north/south.

Q17 – How much ground did the AEF gain control of during **Phase Three**?

This will be difficult to measure but worthwhile. Encourage your kids to do the best they can. The amount of area is about 100 - 120 square miles depending on how you measure it. The key take away is that the AEF spent nearly three weeks to fighting to capture Romagne Heights and the Argonne Forest. It’s been nearly 5 weeks since Day One and the AEF has finally crossed the Hindenburg Line.

PHASE FOUR

Q18 - Describe the geography and landscapes of **Phase Four** using the map and the pictures provided. Flooded Rivers, soldiers marching through towns celebrating, Americans controlling observation towers, open space that is less rugged than phases 1-3.

Q19- Look at the advancement lines and describe any patterns you see. Are they close together, spread out? Many lines together suggest that the area met lots of resistance/fighting. Which areas appear most contested during **Phase Four**?

PATTERNS	Lines far apart and stretching for miles all the way to Sedan.
CONTESTED AREAS	Heights of the Meuse and some of the railway junctions are the contested area during this Phase. After this the Americans had the Germans on the run and gained tremendous amounts of land.

Q20– What features on the map appear to have been the American Expeditionary Force’s (AEF) objective during **Phase Four**? Capturing Barricourt Heights, the Heights of the Meuse, and liberating towns and pushing the German forces out the Meuse Argonne region.

Q21– How much ground did the AEF gain control of during **Phase Four**?

400 – 500 miles depending on how you measure. The key take away is that once the Americans broke through the Romagne Heights, the Argonne Forest, and the Hindenburg Line the last line of defense for the Germans were the Heights of the Meuse and Barricourt Heights. They capture ½ of the battlefield in a little less than 10 days.

Q22 – What were the options of the German Army during **Phase Four**?

Very few options remain. Try to mount a counter-offensive (unlikely) or surrender/retreat to the Ardennes along the Belgium/France border.

Q23 - What were the options of the American Army during **Phase Four**?

Pursue the Germans and hold the Meuse Argonne Area. The battle will end with signing of the World War I armistice on November 11, 1918 at 11 AM. Some believe the loss of the Meuse Argonne compelled the Germans to agree to this cease fire.

PRIMARY FOCUS

Q24– *What does General Pershing note about the weather during this battle? Why do you think he chose to make note of this when reflecting on this battle?*

This was a battle of more than the armies and fortifications. The AEF also had to fight elements of cold rain, mud, and cold ground.

Q25 – *Pershing’s remarks includes the following statements:*

“The Meuse Argonne Battle presented numerous difficulties seemingly insurmountable.”

“one of the greatest achievements in the history of American Arms?”

*From what you have seen in the maps and images from this battle **identify and explain 3-5 reasons** Pershing would make these bold statements about the Meuse Argonne Offensive’s place in American history.*

Answers will vary. Look for your students to make connections with Pershing’s statements and the images and landscapes of WWI they witnessed. The offensive took over 6 weeks in which the AEF captured many German fortifications, five heights, and over 700 square miles of land. This was possibly the most highly fortified area of the Western Front.
