

# World War I Quiz

## Air Warfare

**Air Warfare tests your knowledge of aeroplanes.**

The First World War saw many new weapons, from poison gas to tanks. Also new to the field of war was the aeroplane. First used for scouting and later for bombing and fighting, this new weapon would help to change the face of war. As American General Billy Mitchell said at the end of the war, *"The day has passed when armies on the ground or navies on the sea can be the arbiter of a nation's destiny in war. The main power of defence and the power of initiative against an enemy has passed to the air."*



**1. Aeroplanes were a new technological advance at the beginning of the war and so there were few of them. Of the combatants listed, which brought the fewest aeroplanes to the conflict?**

- United States of America
- Germany
- Great Britain
- France

**2. The main role of aircraft at the start of the war was that of reconnaissance. Aeroplanes shared this role with balloons who reported enemy positions to artillery units on the ground. How did men in balloons communicate with their ground units?**

- By semaphore
- By telephone
- By morse code
- By carrier pigeon

**3. The aeroplanes at the start of the war were designed for reconnaissance rather than fighting and so were not fitted with weapons. Pilots from both sides are reported to have smiled and waved at one another. How long into the war was it before one plane was brought down by another?**

- 3 weeks
- 6 weeks
- 3 months
- 6 months

**4. The problem of fitting a machine gun to an aircraft was that of the propeller: how could a gun fire past it? There were some solutions to the problem. Which of the list below was NOT used?**

- Firing bullets between the rotating propeller blades
- Putting the propeller at the rear of the aeroplane
- Having a man stand up to fire over the propeller
- Fitting a gun to the bottom of the aeroplane

**5. The newly developed synchronisation gear in German planes gave them a period of air superiority until the Allies could match this new technology. What is this period called?**

- The Luftwaffe Torment
- The German Curse
- The Fokker Scourge
- The Huns' Terror

**6. In 1916 the Germans lost their air superiority, prompting them to create specialised fighter squadrons called the Jagdstaffeln. What does Jagdstaffeln translate to in English?**

- Fighting squadrons
- Jaguar squadrons
- Hunting squadrons
- Jumping squadrons

**7. During the Battle of Arras in April 1917, the British provided air support for their troops on the ground. The German air force responded and battle ensued. What is this air battle called?**

- Bloody April
- The Battle of Thunder
- The Sky Duel
- April Lightning

**8. Anti-aircraft guns were developed which fired shells that would fragment in the air and cause a hazard to aircraft. By what nickname did the British refer to this anti-air fire?**

- Andy
- Sharp clouds
- Archie
- Deadly dust

**9. Pilots competed to gain the most kills and those who achieved a certain number gained the title of 'Ace'. The most notorious of the aces was 'The Red Baron' of Germany with 80 confirmed victories. How many victories were required in order to claim the title of ace?**

- 20 victories
- 15 victories
- 10 victories
- 5 victories

**10. Observation balloons were included in the list of victories for pilots. Belgium's leading fighter ace was Willy Coppens and he holds the record for bringing down the most balloons. Of his 37 recognised victories, how many planes did Coppens bring down?**

- He brought down no planes
- He brought down 2 planes
- He brought down 4 planes
- He brought down 8 planes

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**1. Aeroplanes were a new technological advance at the beginning of the war and so there were few of them. Of the combatants listed, which brought the fewest aeroplanes to the conflict?**

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Germany

Great Britain

France

*When they entered the war the Germans had approximately 230 aeroplanes, Great Britain had roughly 30 and France about 84. The production of aeroplanes increased over the course of the war but when the Americans joined the fighting three years later, they were reliant on British or French aircraft, having brought almost none of their own*

**2. The main role of aircraft at the start of the war was that of reconnaissance. Aeroplanes shared this role with balloons who reported enemy positions to artillery units on the ground. How did men in balloons communicate with their ground units?**

By semaphore

By telephone

By Morse code

By carrier pigeon

*The balloons were tethered to the ground and fitted with telephones for direct communication with their assigned artillery unit. Aeroplanes had no such luxury but were much more versatile, being used to take photographs of enemy trench networks. Later in the war aeroplanes were fitted with radio transmitters which allowed them to communicate via Morse code, but they had no receivers so ground units had to use visual signals to communicate with the airmen*

**3. The aeroplanes at the start of the war were designed for reconnaissance rather than fighting and so were not fitted with weapons. Pilots from both sides are reported to have smiled and waved at one another. How long into the war was it before one plane was brought down by another?**

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6 weeks

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*On 8th September 1914 a Russian pilot rammed his plane into an Austrian one. Both planes crashed and both pilots were killed. Other means of fighting between aeroplanes at the time included throwing grenades at one another, swinging grappling hooks at the enemy or firing a pistol*

**4. The problem of fitting a machine gun to an aircraft was that of the propeller: how could a gun fire past it? There were some solutions to the problem. Which of the list below was NOT used?**

Firing bullets between the rotating propeller blades

Putting the propeller at the rear of the aeroplane

Having a man stand up to fire over the propeller

Fitting a gun to the bottom of the aeroplane

*All of the solutions presented their own problems. Having a standing gunner as well as a pilot added weight to the aircraft and slowed it down, whilst rear mounted propellers created extra drag which also slowed the aeroplane down. It was not until 1915 that synchronised gears, which allowed bullets to pass between the rotating blades, were developed. These were not wholly reliable though as the speed of a propeller's rotation can vary and bullets would often hit the blades, either disintegrating them or ricocheting dangerously back at the aircraft or its pilot*

**5. The newly-developed synchronisation gear in German planes gave them a period of air superiority until the Allies could match this new technology. What is this period called?**

The Luftwaffe Torment

The German Curse

The Fokker Scourge

The Huns' Terror

*It was also known as the Fokker Scare and lasted from the summer of 1915 until the beginning of 1916 when Allied fighters also equipped with synchronised gears arrived on the battlefields. For those six months the German Fokker Eindecker fighters enjoyed a dominance over the skies of the Western Front*

**6. In 1916 the Germans lost their air superiority, prompting them to create specialised fighter squadrons called the Jagdstaffeln. What does Jagdstaffeln translate to in English?**

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*Squadrons in the German Army had previously been mixed with fighters providing escort to bombers and reconnaissance planes. After losing their air superiority, the Germans reorganised their air corps into more specialised units for close support, fighting or strategic bombing*

**7. During the Battle of Arras in April 1917, the British provided air support for their troops on the ground. The German air force responded and battle ensued. What is this air battle called?**

- Bloody April
- The Battle of Thunder
- The Sky Duel
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*The British deployed 365 aircraft of which roughly 120 were fighters and faced 80 German fighters. The British lost 245 aircraft and 319 men during the course of the month whilst the Germans lost 66 of their planes. Nevertheless, it is considered a victory for the British as they were successful in their air support duties, helping their comrades on the ground to achieve victory*

**8. Anti-aircraft guns were developed which fired shells that would fragment in the air and cause a hazard to aircraft. By what nickname did the British refer to this anti-air fire?**

- Andy
- Sharp clouds
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*The origin of the term is not known for certain. It may be that the word 'anti-air' bears a passing resemblance to 'Archibald.' Another explanation is that a pilot, when fired on, had quoted a popular music hall song of the time about a henpecked husband, entitled 'Archibald, certainly not!'*

**9. Pilots competed to gain the most kills and those who achieved a certain number gained the title of 'Ace'. The most notorious of the aces was 'The Red Baron' of Germany with 80 confirmed victories. How many victories were required in order to claim the title of ace?**

20 victories

15 victories

10 victories

5 victories

*Only 5 victories, confirmed by one's superiors, were enough to gain the title. By the end of the war more than 1,800 men had become aces*

**10. Observation balloons were included in the list of victories for pilots. Belgium's leading fighter ace was Willy Coppens and he holds the record for bringing down the most balloons. Of his 37 recognised victories, how many planes did Coppens bring down?**

He brought down no planes

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He brought down 4 planes

He brought down 8 planes

*Though less of a threat than aeroplanes, balloons were a danger to an army as they could give away both position and strength. For this reason they were included in a pilot's list of victories to encourage him to attack*