

Fort Sumter Reading Comprehension

The Battle of Fort Sumter marked the first exchange of fire in the Civil War. After seven Southern states ratified their declarations of succession, the state of South Carolina demanded that federal (United States) troops stationed at Fort Moultrie (in Charleston Harbor) abandon the fort. On December 26, 1860, however, Union Major General Richard Anderson moved his troops from Fort Moultrie to Fort Sumter because he thought Fort Sumter was more easily defended. South Carolina subsequently seized all other federal forts in South Carolina except for Fort Sumter. About two weeks later, US president at the time James Buchanan authorized the delivery of reinforcements to Fort Sumter. The ship carrying the reinforcements was fired upon by batteries from the South Carolina shore, and the reinforcements never made it.

Over the course of the next few months, Confederate forces strengthened batteries around Fort Sumter. Furthermore, the new president of the Confederacy, Jefferson Davis, appointed his first military officer, P.G. T. Beauregard, to command forces in Charleston. Ironically, Anderson and Beauregard were close friends, and Beauregard even served as Anderson's assistant after graduation from West Point.

Inside the fort, Anderson and his troops were running short on food and supplies as a siege began to form. New president Abraham Lincoln again tried to resupply the fort and notified South Carolina Governor Francis Pickens that he was sending in ships. In response, Confederate forces demanded the immediate surrender of the fort. After General Anderson refused the demand, Confederate forces began bombarding Fort Sumter at 4:30 in the morning on April 12, 1861.

Confederate forces firing on Fort Sumter quickly took their toll. Badly outgunned and outmanned, Anderson's forces inside the fort initially returned fire but were soon overwhelmed. After 34 hours, Major General Anderson agreed to evacuate the fort. No Union or Confederate soldiers were killed during the battle, though two Union soldiers would die as a result of a gun explosion during the surrender ceremonies on April 14.

Both the North and the South became galvanized in their war efforts after Fort Sumter. President Lincoln's request for the mobilization of 75,000 additional troops prompted the secession of four other states.

1.) Fort Sumter...

- a.) marked the last exchange of fire in the war.
- b.) marked the first exchange of fire in the war.
- c.) resulted in major loss of life for the Union.
- d.) resulted in major loss of life for the Confederacy.

2.) Why did Major General Anderson move his troops to Fort Sumter?

- a.) Fort Sumter was in a better position to attack the Confederates.
- b.) Fort Sumter was in better condition than Fort Moultrie.
- c.) Fort Moultrie was harder to defend than Fort Sumter.
- d.) He was ordered to move by President Buchanan.

3.) Who was Jefferson Davis?

- a.) President before Buchanan
- b.) President before Lincoln
- c.) The first military officer of the Confederacy.
- d.) President of the Confederacy

4.) Why could no reinforcements make it to Fort Sumter?

- a.) Ships carrying reinforcements were fired upon by Confederate forces.
- b.) The waters around the fort were too dangerous.
- c.) The Union did not have the resources to send reinforcements.
- d.) Confederate forces sunk any ships attempting to supply Fort Sumter.

5.) Which of the following was true about the relationship between Beauregard and Anderson?

- a.) Anderson worked for Beauregard.
- b.) Beauregard worked for Anderson.
- c.) They were archenemies.
- d.) They had never met.

6.) Why is the following sentence ironic?

Ironically, Anderson and Beauregard were close friends, and Beauregard even served as Anderson's assistant after graduation from West Point.

- a.) Because Beauregard would become the Confederacy's first military officer.
- b.) Because West Point was located in Union territory.
- c.) Because these two friends were battling each other in the war's first battle.
- d.) Because no one died at Fort Sumter.

7.) What was the most likely reaction Francis Pickens had to Lincoln's notification that he was sending reinforcements?

- a.) anger
- b.) indifference
- c.) joy
- d.) sadness

8.) Who won the Battle of Fort Sumter?

- a.) The Confederacy
- b.) The Union
- c.) Neither side
- d.) The battle was inconclusive.

9.) What did the North and the South have in common after Fort Sumter?

- a.) They both wanted to stop the war from escalating.
- b.) They wanted peace.
- c.) They expected no additional battles.
- d.) Both sides resolved to take steps to win the war.

10.) What does the word "mobilization" mean in the following sentence:

President Lincoln's request for the **mobilization** of 75,000 additional troops prompted the secession of four other states.

- a.) transport
- b.) transfer
- c.) preparation for action
- d.) military action