



# Major Battles



## Battle of Verdun

February 21 to December 19, 1916

The Battle of Verdun was a major battle between Germany and France. It was also one of the longest and deadliest battles of the First World War. It took place in northeastern France. The Battle of Verdun started when the German army started to attack the **fortress** of Verdun in France. The Germans wanted to weaken the French army and decrease the number of French soldiers. Several French forts near Verdun fell to the Germans, but the French fought hard to hold on to Verdun. The French soldiers had a battle cry of "They shall not pass." The Battle of the Somme began in July 1916 and took some soldiers away from the Battle of Verdun. By December 1916 the French army had regained control of the area around Verdun and some of the other forts. At the end of the Battle of Verdun, close to 350,000 French soldiers and 350,000 German soldiers died.

2. Give two reasons why you think the Battle of Verdun is considered a major battle of World War One.

1 \_\_\_\_\_  
2 \_\_\_\_\_



## Battle of the Somme

July 1 to November 13, 1916

The Battle of the Somme used an allied offensive. This means that **allies**, or friends, worked together to help each other against the enemy. In this battle the British and the French were against the Germans. The British and French armies attacked the German army along the Somme River in France. Over 20,000 British troops were killed and 40,000 were injured on the first day alone! That was the bloodiest day in the history of the British army. In October 1916 the battlefields became too difficult to use because of heavy rain. The battle was **abandoned**. When it was over the British and French had gained only five miles (eight kilometers). In total, 650,000 German soldiers were killed or injured, along with 420,000 British soldiers and 195,000 French soldiers. Later on, the Battle of the Somme was called "futile".

3. Some historians have called the Battle of the Somme a complete failure. Do you agree or disagree? Be sure to give a reason for your opinion.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

