



WORLD BOOK WEB

Primary Source Scavenger Hunt: *Britain Fails at Gallipoli*

Read the primary source, *Britain Fails at Gallipoli* in World Book Advanced and answer the following questions.

1. What is the source?
2. From which perspective is this source written from?
3. What is the purpose of this document?
4. What does this source tell us about the terrain and conditions the soldiers were fighting in during the Gallipoli campaign.
5. What does this source tell us about how the efforts of the Anzacs were regarded by Kitchener and Hamilton?
6. What does this source tell us about the type of fighting soldiers were engaged in during the battles of the Gallipoli campaign?
7. How reliable is this source when studying the Gallipoli campaign?
8. How useful is this source to a historian studying the Gallipoli campaign?

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World Book Advanced

Suggested answers:

1. This source is a description of the main British assault by Lord Kitchener, then Minister of War, and by General Hamilton, commander-in-chief of the expedition.
2. The source is written from the perspective of the British. It describes how the British, despite the efforts of the soldiers engaged in the offensive, were close to, but unable to break the Ottoman defences.
3. This source is a Field Report from General Sir Ian Hamilton, an official document of the British forces.
4. This source gives the reader a detailed description of what the terrain was like for the men who were fighting. General Sir Ian Hamilton describes the “cliff-climbing”, “density of scrub”, crawling on “hands and knees” and the “physical fatigue” and “exhaustion” experienced by the men as they escaped from the “hail of random bullets”.
5. The source frequently refers to the bravery of the men fighting in the offensive. For instance, Lord Kitchener makes note of Hamilton’s regard when he stated “...the gallantry and resourcefulness of the Australian and New Zealand troops, frequently formed the subject of eulogy in General Hamilton’s reports.” Furthermore, Hamilton refers to the Maoris who fought in the New Zealand forces and how they “showed themselves to be worthy descendants of the warriors of the Gate Pah Thus...”.
6. This source describes the difficult terrain that the soldiers had to negotiate as well as the barrage of enemy counterattacks. The source describes the use of bayonets indicating hand-to-hand fighting as well as the use of bombs and shelling. The difficulties the soldiers faced in fighting is highlighted by Kitchener who stated “It is not easy to appreciate at their full value the enormous difficulties which attended the operations in the Dardanelles or the fine temper with which our troops met them.”
7. The source is the summary of events from the perspective of General Sir Ian Hamilton, who was the commander-in-chief of the expedition at Gallipoli. As a high-ranking officer who was responsible for the expedition, the reliability of this source needs to take into account a degree of bias. For instance, we know that the campaign was ultimately a failure and Hamilton may have felt the need to divert blame from himself, as commander-in-chief of the expedition. Examples of this appears through the language used by Hamilton in the source. For example, there are several times in the source where it is indicated that it was through a series of unfortunate events that the campaign did not end in a victory. For example, when Baldwin and his troops lost their way through country when trying to reach the line at Chunuk Bair, this was “through no fault of his own”, despite the precautions taken to keep the track clear for the troops. Hamilton, for example, uses the term “mischance” to describe why Baldwin lost his way. This indicates that Hamilton felt fate was not on the British side. This is further reflected in the statement “...the fortune of war was against us”, when describing the barrage of heavy shelling that came from the British warships and resulted in the counterattack by the

Ottoman forces and retreat of British and Anzac forces. When reading more deeply it is evident that there were a series of mistakes made by the British forces that resulted in the failure of the offensive, which was very close to victory.

Other points:

- As commander-in-chief of the expedition, General Sir Ian Hamilton would not have been on the field, therefore his knowledge of the campaign is through second-hand accounts.
- However, as commander-in-chief of the expedition, he would be well versed in the events on the battle field during this offensive, despite not being present on the field of action.

8. Despite being bias, this source could be considered useful to a historian because:

- The source is a contemporary view.
- It provides a detailed account from the perspective of the British on the events of the August offensive during the Gallipoli campaign.
- It gives an insight into the tactics employed by the British and Anzac forces to break the defensive lines of the Ottomans on the Gallipoli Peninsula.
- Provides historians with an insight into how the British regarded the efforts of the Anzac troops.
- It gives an understanding of the conditions and terrain that the Anzac and British forces fought in.