**Spartacus Educational Classroom Activity**

# Military Tactics in the English Civil War (Questions & Answers)

<http://spartacus-educational.com/EXAManswerECW1.htm>

This commentary is based on the classroom activity: [Military Tactics in the English Civil War](http://spartacus-educational.com/ExamECW1.htm)

Question 1: Read the introduction and study sources 3, 5 and 8. Describe the dangers faced by musketeers on the battlefield during the English Civil War.

Answer 2: The main danger to the musketeer was the cavalry. He was very vulnerable to the cavalry charging straight at him. As it took time to reload his gun, the musketeer was particularly vulnerable after he had fired his shot. Where possible, the musketeers sheltered behind and between the pikemen during a cavalry attack.

Question 2: Use the sources in this unit to explain the weapons and tactics used during the English Civil War.

Answer 2: Sources 2 and 4 both provide information on how the cavalry charged the enemy infantry. As Sir Richard Bulstrode pointed out it was very important for the cavalry to only fire their pistols when they were close to the enemy. The cannon could do a lot of damage during a battle and one of the first objectives of the cavalry was to try and capture the enemy's cannon: source 8 provides information on the musket used during the English Civil War. The rest was used to hold the musket steady when it was fired. Source 5 reveals that on his shoulder-belt the musketeer is carrying the charges that enabled him to fire the musket. In source 9 the man is carrying a pike. This was an important defensive weapon against the cavalry.

Question 3: One of these sources contains information that is probably inaccurate. Find the source and explain why you think it is inaccurate.

Answer 3: Dr. William Harvey (source 6) claims that Sir Adrian Scrope kept warm after being wounded on the battlefield by holding onto a dead body. As bodies get very cold after death it is unlikely that this strategy would have been successful.

Question 4: Describe the traditional battle formation used during the English Civil War. Explain why they used these tactics.

Answer 4: The traditional battle formation during the English Civil War involved the musketeers and pikeman in the middle. On their outsides were the cavalry. The main defensive role of the cavalry was to protect the musketeers and pikeman from the attacks of the opposing cavalry. The pikeman were also used to protect the musketeers from the enemy cavalry. When on attack, the cavalry tried to make the opposing side turn and run. The musketeer and pikeman were only effective if they held their ground. If they ran away they were easy targets for the cavalry. One of the main reasons why Oliver Cromwell was such a successful commander was that he trained his men to hold their ground when they were being charged by the Royalist cavalry.

Question 5: Use the information in source 8 to describe the objects that the musketeer is carrying in source 3.

Answer 5: The musketeer is carrying: (i) a musket; (ii) a rest (heavier types of muskets had to be placed on a rest while they were being fired); (iii) measured charges (small bottle-shaped containers); (iv) a bag of bullets; (v) a sword.

Question 6: (a) Describe what is taking place in source 7. (b) Do you think these events actually happened like this? (c) Why is it important for historians to study visual sources produced by both sides in the English Civil War?

Answer 6: (a) Source 7 shows soldiers killing women and children.

(b) The soldiers in source 7 are members of the Royalist army. The main way they can be identified is by their long hair. This woodcut was produced by the Roundheads and was an attempt to show the cruel way the Royalist army behaved when they took control of a town that supported Parliament. The woodcut was an attempt to make people hate the Royalists.

(c) Both Roundheads and Cavaliers accused each other of committing atrocities when they captured enemy territory. These woodcuts were part of this propaganda campaign. There is no evidence that the Royalists army ever committed the acts illustrated in source 7. However, woodcuts such as this were effective in making Roundheads hate the Cavaliers. The people who produced the woodcut believed that this would make the Roundhead army more anxious to fight and kill the Royalist army.