

RAF quiz: answers

1. Which feature of a biplane makes it different from other types of aeroplane?

A: It has two sets of wings.

2. What three materials were aircraft made of at the time?

A: Wood, canvas and wires. (Metal in production at the time was too heavy, especially for the low-powered engines available.)

3. Name three things that the introduction of aeroplanes was used for during the war.

A: Reconnaissance missions (gathering information and taking photographs across enemy lines), communication, fighting, bombing, rescue, distributing propaganda/leaflets, preventing information being gathered by German planes.

4. What were some of the limitations of the aircraft used during World War I?

A: The weight of the fuel and their lightweight build meant they were not robust enough to carry heavy cameras or radios.

5. What developments in engineering would make them more useful?

A: More powerful engines and stronger materials.

6. The fuel tank on early planes was at the back of the aircraft instead of in the middle – why was this a problem?

A: It made the back of the plane heavier than the front, giving it an unstable centre of gravity and making it harder to fly and more likely to crash on take-off. Depending on how full the fuel tank was, the weight would also vary, making it unpredictable.

7. What was the benefit of the early planes having two wings?

A: The wood the planes were made of wasn't very strong, so having two wings reduced the stress on a single wing. By sharing the load, the wings were less likely to snap.

8. Before planes, static observation balloons were used to get an aerial view. What was the biggest limitation of using balloons?

A: They could only go up and down on a long rope. Planes could get a much wider view of the battlefield and could fly over enemy lines. Balloons were also easier to shoot down.

9. What role did women play in the RAF during World War I?

A: Women were not allowed to fly planes or be engineers at this time. Most women worked as clerks, some served as drivers and motorbike riders, metal welders, fitters or seamstresses.

10. Before planes were able to carry radios, how did pilots communicate with people on the ground?

A: Pilots were able to use message streamers or weighted bags containing messages to try and tell those on the ground about what they could see from the air.