

Grade 9 Answer

Interpretation Differences

4/4
Marks

Question:

How does Interpretation B differ from Interpretation A about the Battle of Little Bighorn?

Explain your answer based on what it says in Interpretations A and B. (4 marks)

Answer:

Interpretation A criticizes the Battle of Little Bighorn and focuses on how 'Custer was ignorant and unprepared'. This suggests that the battle was a disaster, and that the troops failed due to poor leadership. Whereas Interpretation B focuses on how the public took pity on Custer and his troops and felt grief for them after they were defeated, calling the event a 'massacre'. This suggests that the actions of Custer should not be criticised, and he should be celebrated as a war hero.

Feedback:

This answer would get 4/4 marks because it recognises a difference between the interpretations, and gives a developed analysis of these differences using content from the interpretations.

Interpretation A

An excerpt from a book on the Battle of Little Bighorn written by Bruce A. Rosenberg and published in 1974. Rosenberg was a Professor of American Civilization at Brown University.

All during June 1876, events and Custer's own mistakes conspired against him. Experience in the plains wars indicated that the problem in fighting the Indians was not so much defeating them as it was getting them to stand and fight at all. This was one of Custer's major worries. ... Finally, he was not aware that many of his future foes were armed with Winchester repeating carbines, whereas his own men were equipped with single-shot Springfields. Thus of the three major aspects of military intelligence - the number of the enemy, their willingness to fight, and their armament - Custer was ignorant and unprepared.

Interpretation B

An excerpt from Nelson Miles' memoirs: 'Personal Recollections and Observations'. Miles was a US army officer and published his memoirs in 1896, 5 years after he won the Medal of Honour.

On the top of the first page of the morning papers of July 5, 1876, in large black letters, was the one word, "Horrible." The journals announced that a good part of General Custer's command of the Seventh Cavalry had been annihilated on the Little Big Horn in Montana. Custer's command was very popular with the citizens of that region. The news of this massacre, as it was called, created intense excitement and sympathy. In fact, there had been no such demonstration of sorrow since the appalling tragedy of April 12, 1865. Buildings were draped in mourning.