



GCSE HISTORY

Paper 1 Section A/A: America, 1840–1895: Expansion and consolidation

Interpretations Booklet

Interpretations **A** and **B** for use in answering Questions 01, 02 and 03

Interpretation A Adapted from an account given by two of Custer's Indian scouts who watched the Battle of the Little Big Horn but did not take part.

This account was given to US General Hugh Scott, an expert on Indian life, in 1919.

The Indian scouts claimed that Custer was reckless. He had only seen the Indian village from a distance. Custer said that he would finish the Sioux problem and teach them a lesson. Custer should not have split his troops. Instead of attacking at the same time, Custer held back until he saw Reno fighting. The Indian scouts said they had worked with other army officers who would have attacked differently. A night attack would have surprised the Indians.

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Interpretation B Adapted from 'Custer's Last Battle' by Edward S. Godfrey, 1908.

Godfrey was a friend of Custer but was an officer under Benteen's command at the Battle of the Little Big Horn. His account of the battle included evidence from Indians who had fought against Custer.

Custer's defeat was caused, firstly, by the overwhelming number of Indians who had left the reservation to join forces against the US troops. Secondly, Reno's panic retreat allowed the Indians to concentrate their attack on Custer.

Custer had successfully divided his troops in the past and so Reno should have followed his orders and kept the Indians fighting. Custer's surprise attack would then have worked and broken the Indians' morale.

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END OF INTERPRETATIONS

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