

## Quiz 2019 Solutions

1	Name six members of the Maheu family, from six different generations.	e.g. Guillaume → Nicolas → Vincent → Toussaint → Zacharie → Achille
2	Name three places in or near Montsou where you might enjoy a cheap beer after your shift at the Voreux, including one where you could get some dancing as well.	l'Avantage, <b>Bon-Joyeux (dancing)</b> , Casimir, Volcan etc. etc.
3	What was Sir Humphrey Davy's contribution to the operations at the Voreux?	The safety lamp which protected against fire damp explosions was his invention.
4	Who/what was Souvarine's favourite creature chez Rasseneur?	Pologne (Poland), the rabbit
5	In the context of the Montsou Mining Company what is a denier?	A share in the mining company was reckoned in deniers, worth 10k francs.
6	Name two mines which did not originally belong to the Montsou mining company.	Jean-Bart and Gaston-Marie
7	What was Mouquette's claim to fidelity despite her many lovers?	She never strayed outside the mining community!
8	What was the cause of Hennebeau's envy of the miners?	Their uninhibited enjoyment of sex, in stark contrast with his domestic situation.
9	What was the speed of descent of the cage down the mine shaft? 1 m/sec (b) 10 m/sec (c) 100 m/sec	10 m/sec
10	Pair the following into 'items' (there may be wild cards!): Catherine, La Levaque, Mouquette, Zacharie, Lydie, Dansaert, Bouteloup, Philomène, Bébert, Etienne, Pierronne, Chaval	Catherine-Chaval, Bouteloup-La Levaque, Zacharie-Philomène, Dansaert-Pierronne, Lydie-Bébert, Mouquette-Etienne
11	In addition to providing safe lighting, the miners' lamps served another important function. What was it?	Each lamp had a number and was always issued to a specific miner. In case of accidents, this could be used to identify the missing men.
12	What is the connection between Germinal and the Zodiacal sign Aries?	Germinal is the 7 <sup>th</sup> . month of the French revolutionary calendar, from 21 March to 20 April; roughly coincides with Aries
13	The winding engine was a powerful beast. How powerful? (a) 40 HP, 400 HP or (c) 2000 HP? Note: HP = Horse Power AND the answer is in the book!	400 HP (which works out to about 300 KW – equivalent to 3000 bulbs of 100W)
14	What was the cause of the death of Zacharie?	Fire damp explosion – he opened the safety lamp
15	What triggered the strike at the Montsou Mining Company?	Separate payment for the timbering and less per wagon of coal. The miners would lose about 2 centimes per wagon.
16	What was the silver lining to the miners' strike as far as M Hennebeau was concerned?	The company acquired Jean-Bart and Gaston-Marie at a knock-down price; Hennebeau was awarded the Légion d'Honneur.

Notes and references:

Q3: <https://www.rigb.org/our-history/iconic-objects/iconic-objects-list/davy-lamp>

Created in 1815, it was designed to be safe for miners to use – the wire gauze ‘chimney’ surrounding the flame absorbed the heat and prevented the firedamp (e.g. methane gas present in deep mines) from catching fire and exploding.

Q5:

The Montsou Mining Company was formed 1760, the novel starts in 1866 (106 years after). When formed, the company’s value was estimated at 24 sous or 288 deniers, 1 denier = 10K F; Desrumaux’s share was 75 deniers; Honoré Grégoire put in 10K F for 1 Denier. His grandson Félicien bought Piolaine cheaply; shares in the mine increased in value; when Leon Gregoire inherited it in 1820 it was worth 20K F; it continued to appreciate; in 1844 to 30K F, 1850 to 50K F, 1860 1 million F (x 100 in a century). It then fell to 600,000 F, but still produced an income of 40-50K F pa for the Grégoires. (paraphrased from the text of a translation)

La Compagnie des mines de Montsou était créée, telle qu'elle existe encore aujourd'hui. Pour la répartition, on avait divisé, d'après l'étalon de la monnaie du temps, la propriété totale en vingt-quatre sous, dont chacun se subdivisait en douze deniers, ce qui faisait deux cent quatre-vingt-huit deniers; et, comme le denier était de dix mille francs, le capital représentait une somme de près de trois millions.

Émile Zola. *Germinal* (Kindle Locations 999-1001).

Q 12: <https://www.britannica.com/science/French-republican-calendar>

The French republican calendar was based on a secular calendar first presented in 1788. The 12 months of the calendar each contained three *décades* (instead of weeks) of 10 days each; at the end of the year were grouped five (six in leap years) supplementary days. The months in order—beginning with one corresponding to the Gregorian months of September and October—were Vendémiaire (meaning “vintage”), Brumaire (“mist”), Frimaire (“frost”), Nivôse (“snow”), Pluviôse (“rain”), Ventôse (“wind”), Germinal (“seedtime”), Floréal (“blossom”), Prairial (“meadow”), Messidor (“harvest”), Thermidor (“heat”), and Fructidor (“fruits”). The names of the 360 days in the year was named for a seasonal feature, seed, tree, flower, fruit, animal, or tool, replacing the saints’-day names and Christian festivals. Germinal was the first month of the spring quarter (*mois de printemps*). It started March 21 or March 22, and ended April 19 or April 20.