The Battle of Britain Begins by Gillian Clements

Things were going just as Adolf Hitler, Germany's leader, had planned. Hitler wanted Germany to rule Europe. He had built up its army, navy and air force (the Luftwaffe) and, in 1939, the Germans attacked. No one seemed able to stop them. Czechoslovakia, Poland, Holland, France and Belgium had fallen. Britain, Hitler declared, would be next.

Britain had prepared for an attack. The RAF (Royal Air Force) had built new and faster planes – Hurricanes, Spitfires, Defiants. British scientists had developed radar, too. Amazingly, it could detect things in the air long before you could see them. Radar stations built along the British coast could warn the RAF when German planes were on their way.

On 10th July 1940, Dover radar warned: "Mass of German fighters and bombers over French coast!"
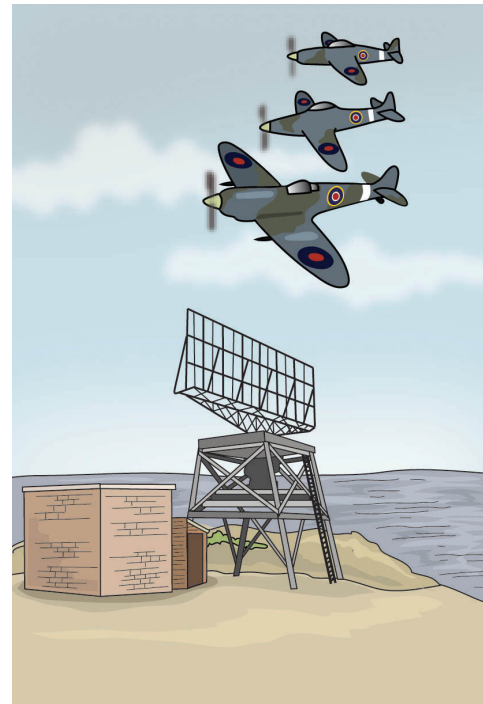
"SCRAMBLE! SCRAMBLE!" The order came through for British fighters to take to the air. They flew towards the German planes. "*Ratatat!*" Guns fired as the battle for the skies began.

On this first attack, the Germans came off worse, losing many more planes than the British. Yet Prime Minister Winston Churchill prepared the country for the struggle ahead.

On 16th July, Hitler announced his plans: "I have decided to begin to prepare for an invasion." "When German planes have control of the skies, the German army will take Britain in weeks!"

Hitler's Luftwaffe started to bomb British ships and aircraft factories.

Across the Channel, Germany's huge airfleets were ready to attack ... The Germans were confident, but knew the British would not give up easily.

Name:	Class:	Date:

1 What was the name of:

(a) Germany's leader?

_____

(b) the German air force?

_____

<div style="text-align:right">2b
□
1 mark</div>

2 Look at the first paragraph.
Which of the options is the word "*fallen*" closest in meaning to?
Choose **one**.

been invaded ☐

been reduced ☐

broken down ☐

tripped over ☐

<div style="text-align:right">2a
□
1 mark</div>

3 The development of radar was important to the British during the war.
Find and **copy** a sentence that explains why.

_____

<div style="text-align:right">2d
□
1 mark</div>

4 "*Ratatat!*"
Why is this word written italics?

_____

<div style="text-align:right">2f
□
1 mark</div>

5 Give **two** ways in which the British had prepared for a German attack.

_____

<div style="text-align:right">2b
□
1 mark</div>

6 Number the events to show the order in which they are mentioned in the text.

Radar stations were built along the British coast.

The Luftwaffe started to bomb British ships.

Hitler decided to prepare for an invasion.

Radar detected a mass of German fighters and bombers.

<div style="text-align:right">2c
□
1 mark</div>