

Module 7

World War I



Essential Question

What was the most significant impact of World War I?



About the Photograph: This photograph depicts a battle on the western front during World War I. Brutal battles like this would make the war the bloodiest in history up to that time.

In this module you will examine the causes and consequences of World War I. The conflict in Europe forced the United States to abandon its neutrality, and it spurred social, political, and economic change in the United States

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The Big Idea European leaders opposed most of Wilson's peace plan, and the U.S. Senate failed to ratify the peace treaty.	

Explore ONLINE!

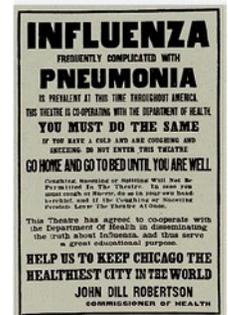
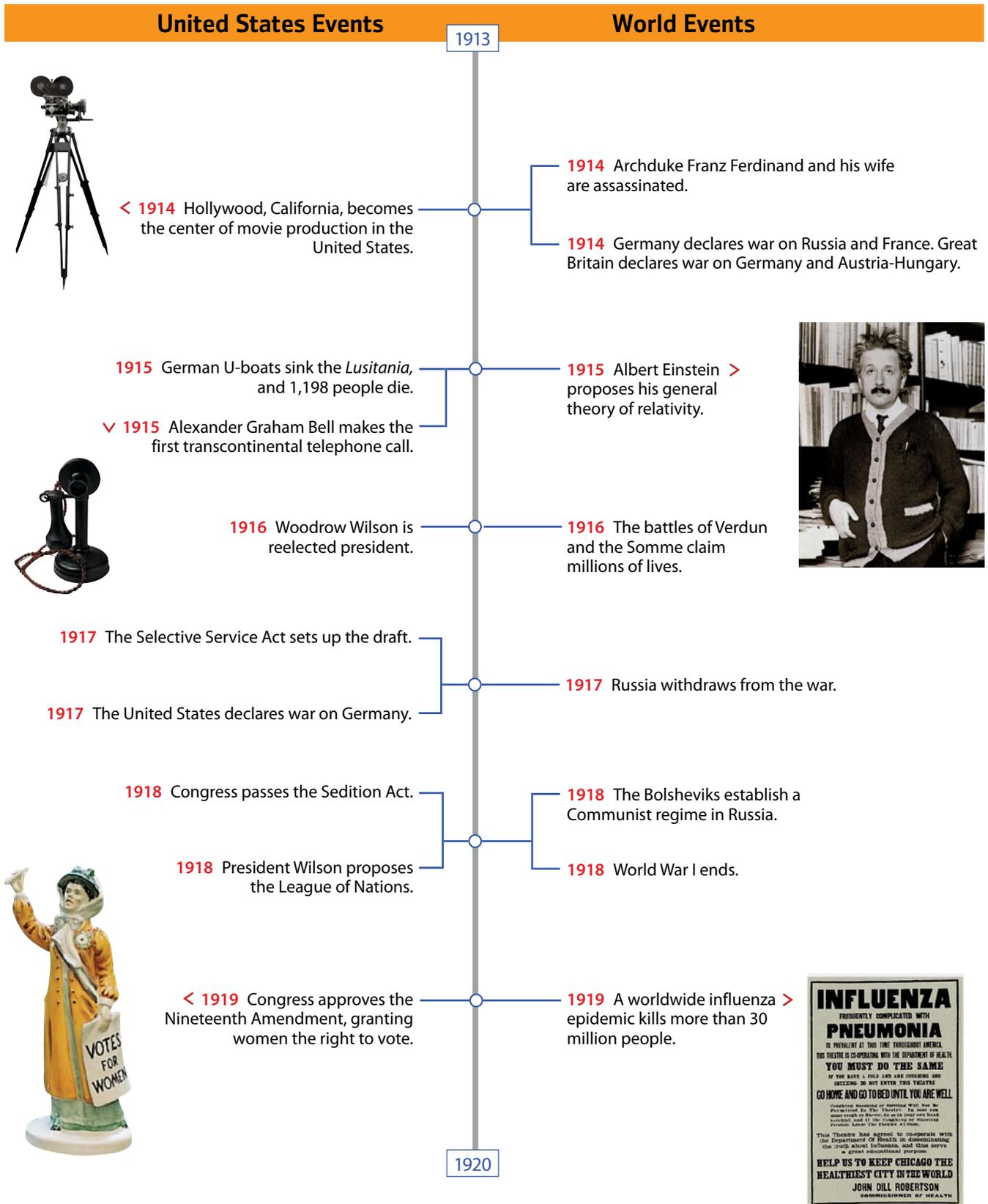


VIDEOS, including...

- Death of Glory
- A Continent Mobilizes
- The Last Day of World War I

HISTORY

- Document-Based Investigations
- Graphic Organizers
- Interactive Games
- Image with Hotspots: Trench Warfare
- Carousel: Technology at War



World War I Begins

The Big Idea

As conflict in Europe intensified, the United States was forced to abandon its neutrality.

Why It Matters Now

The United States remains involved in European and world affairs.

Key Terms and People

nationalism

militarism

Allies

Central powers

balance of power

Archduke Franz Ferdinand

trench warfare

"no man's land"

Lusitania

Sussex pledge

Zimmermann note

One American's Story

It was about 1:00 a.m. on April 6, 1917, and the members of the U.S. House of Representatives were tired. For the past 15 hours, they had been debating President Wilson's request for a declaration of war against Germany. There was a breathless hush as Jeannette Rankin of Montana, the first woman elected to Congress, stood up. Rankin declared, "I want to stand by my country but I cannot vote for war. I vote no." Later she reflected on her action.



"I believe that the first vote I cast was the most significant vote and a most significant act on the part of women, because women are going to have to stop war. I felt at the time that the first woman [in Congress] should take the first stand, that the first time the first woman had a chance to say no to war she should say it."

—Jeannette Rankin, quoted in *Jeannette Rankin: First Lady in Congress*

Jeannette Rankin was the only member of the House to vote against the United States entering both World War I and World War II.

After much debate as to whether the United States should join the fight, Congress voted in favor of U.S. entry into World War I. With this decision, the government abandoned the neutrality that America had maintained for three years. What made the United States change its policy in 1917?

Vocabulary

alliance a formal agreement or union between nations

Causes of World War I

Although many Americans wanted to stay out of the war, several factors made American neutrality difficult to maintain. As an industrial and imperial power, the United States felt many of the same pressures that had led the nations of Europe into devastating warfare. Historians generally cite four long-term causes of World War I: nationalism, imperialism, militarism, and the formation of a system of alliances.

NATIONALISM Throughout the 19th century, politics in the Western world were deeply influenced by the concept of **nationalism**—a devotion to the interests and culture of one’s nation. Often, nationalism led to competitive and antagonistic rivalries among nations. In this atmosphere of competition, many feared Germany’s growing power in Europe.

In addition, various ethnic groups resented domination by others. They longed for their nations to become independent. Many ethnic groups looked to larger nations for protection. Russia regarded itself as the protector of Europe’s Slavic peoples, no matter which government they lived under. Among these Slavic peoples were the Serbs. Serbia, located in the Balkans, was an independent nation. However, millions of ethnic Serbs lived under the rule of Austria-Hungary. As a result, Russia and Austria-Hungary were rivals for influence over Serbia.

IMPERIALISM For many centuries, European nations had been building empires. These nations had slowly extended their economic and political control over various peoples of the world. Colonies supplied the European imperial powers with raw materials and provided markets for manufactured goods. As Germany industrialized, it competed with France and Britain in the contest for colonies.

MILITARISM Empires were expensive to build and to defend. The growth of nationalism and imperialism led to increased military spending. Each nation wanted stronger armed forces than those of any potential enemy. The imperial powers followed a policy of **militarism**—the development of armed forces and their use as a tool of diplomacy.

By 1890 the strongest nation on the European continent was Germany. It had set up an army reserve system that drafted and trained young men. At first, Britain was not alarmed by Germany’s military expansion. As an island nation, Britain had always relied on its navy for defense and protection of its shipping routes. In addition, the British navy was the strongest in the world. However, in 1897 Wilhelm II, Germany’s kaiser, or emperor, decided that his nation should also become a major sea power in order to compete more successfully against the British. Soon, British and German shipyards competed to build the largest battleships and destroyers. France, Italy, Japan, and the United States quickly joined the naval arms race.

ALLIANCE SYSTEM By 1907 there were two major defense alliances in Europe. The Triple Entente, later known as the **Allies**, consisted of France, Britain, and Russia. The Triple Alliance consisted of Germany,



German emperor Wilhelm II (*center*) marches with two of his generals, Hindenburg (*left*) and Ludendorff, during World War I.

Austria-Hungary, and Italy. Germany and Austria-Hungary, together with the Ottoman Empire—an empire of mostly Middle Eastern lands controlled by the Turks—were later known as the **Central powers**.

Some European leaders believed that these alliances created a **balance of power**, in which each nation or alliance had equal strength. Many leaders thought that the alliance system would help decrease the chances of war. They hoped that no single nation would attack another out of fear that the attacked nation's allies would join the fight.

War Breaks Out

Despite their hopes, the major European powers' long history of national tensions, imperial rivalries, and military expansion proved too great for alliances to overcome. As it turned out, a single spark set off a major conflict.

AN ASSASSINATION LEADS TO WAR That spark flared in the Balkan Peninsula. This area was known as “the powder keg of Europe.” In addition to the ethnic rivalries among the Balkan peoples, Europe's leading powers had interests there. Russia wanted access to the Mediterranean Sea. Germany wanted a rail link to the Ottoman Empire. Austria-Hungary, which had taken control of Bosnia in 1878, accused Serbia of subverting its rule over Bosnia. The “powder keg” was ready to explode.

In June 1914 **Archduke Franz Ferdinand**, heir to the Austrian throne, visited the Bosnian capital, Sarajevo. As the royal entourage drove through the city, Serbian nationalist Gavrilo Princip stepped from the crowd and shot the Archduke and his wife, Sophie. Princip was a member of the Black Hand, an organization promoting Serbian nationalism. The assassinations touched off a diplomatic crisis. On July 28 Austria-Hungary declared what was expected to be a short war against Serbia.

Reading Check

Analyze Causes

How did nationalism and imperialism lead to conflict in Europe?

Crisis in the Balkans

After World War I, Bosnia became part of a country that eventually became known as Yugoslavia. Although Yugoslavia included various religious and ethnic groups, the government was dominated by Serbs.

In 1991 Yugoslavia broke apart, and Bosnia declared independence in 1992. However, Serbs wanted Bosnia to remain part of Serbian-controlled Yugoslavia.

A bloody civil war broke out. This war became notorious for the mass murder and deportation of Bosnian Muslims. This process became known as “ethnic cleansing.” In 1995 the United States helped negotiate a cease-fire.



But peace in the Balkans did not last. In the late 1990s Albanians in the province of Kosovo also tried to break away from Serbia. Serbia’s violent response, which included the “ethnic cleansing” of Albanians, prompted NATO to intervene. Kosovo declared its independence in 2008, despite Serbia’s opposition.

The alliance system pulled one nation after another into the conflict. On August 1 Germany, obligated by treaty to support Austria-Hungary, declared war on Russia. On August 3 Germany declared war on Russia’s ally France. After Germany invaded Belgium, Britain declared war on Germany and Austria-Hungary. The Great War had begun.

THE FIGHTING STARTS On August 3, 1914, Germany invaded Belgium, following a strategy known as the Schlieffen Plan. This plan called for a holding action against Russia, combined with a quick drive through Belgium to Paris. After France had fallen, the two German armies would defeat Russia. European leaders were confident of a short war. Kaiser Wilhelm II even promised German soldiers that they would be home “before the leaves had fallen.”

As German troops swept across Belgium, thousands of civilians fled in terror. In Brussels, the Belgian capital, an American war correspondent described the first major refugee crisis of the 20th century.

“[We] found the side streets blocked with their carts. Into these they had thrown mattresses, or bundles of grain, and heaped upon them were families of three generations. Old men in blue smocks, white-haired and bent, old women in caps, the daughters dressed in their one best frock and hat, and clasping in their hands all that was left to them, all that they could stuff into a pillow-case or flour-sack. . . . Heart-broken, weary, hungry, they passed in an unending caravan.”

—Richard Harding Davis, quoted in *Hooray for Peace, Hurrah for War*

Unable to save Belgium, the Allies retreated to the Marne River in France. There they halted the German advance in September 1914. After struggling to outflank each other’s armies, both sides dug in for a long siege. By the spring of 1915, two parallel systems of deep, rat-infested trenches crossed France.

Vocabulary

refugee a person who flees in search of protection or shelter, as in times of war or religious persecution

Europe at the Start of World War I



THE WESTERN FRONT, 1914-1916



- A MARNE, 1st battle, Sept. 1914**
Allies stop German advance on Paris
 - B YPRES, 2nd battle, May 1915**
Germans use chemical weapons for the first time
 - C VERDUN, Feb.-July 1916**
French hold the line in longest battle of the war
 - D SOMME, 1st battle, July-Nov. 1916**
Disastrous British offensive
- German troop movement
→ Allied troop movement

Allied Powers, 1916
 Central Powers, 1916
 Neutral countries
 German submarine activity
 Battle

0 250 500 mi
 0 250 500 km

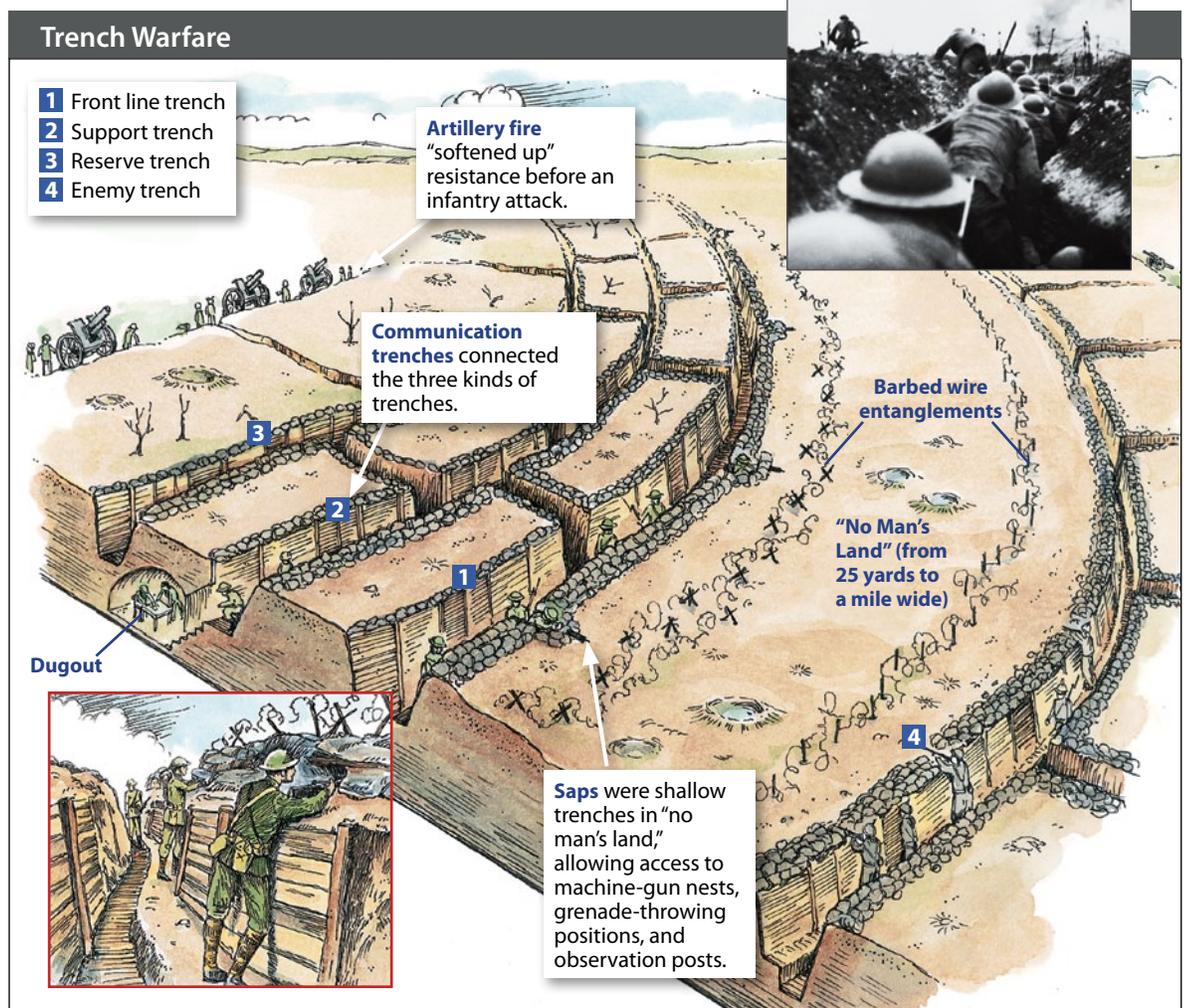
Interpret Maps

1. **Location** About how many miles separated the city of Paris from German forces at the point of their closest approach?
2. **Place** Consider the geographical location of the Allies in relation to the Central powers. What advantage might the Allies have had?

The trenches stretched from the Belgian coast to the Swiss Alps. German soldiers occupied one set of trenches, Allied soldiers the other. The scale of slaughter was horrific. During the First Battle of the Somme—which began on July 1, 1916, and lasted until mid-November—the British suffered 60,000 casualties the first day alone. Final casualties totaled about 1.2 million, yet only about seven miles of ground changed hands. This virtual stalemate lasted for more than three years. Elsewhere, the fighting was just as devastating and inconclusive.

IN THE TRENCHES The stalemate was mainly an effect of **trench warfare**, in which armies fought for mere yards of ground. On the battlefields of Europe, there were three main kinds of trenches—front line, support, and reserve. Soldiers spent a period of time in each kind of trench. Dugouts, or underground rooms, were used as officers' quarters and command posts. Between the trench complexes lay **"no man's land."** This was a barren expanse of mud pockmarked with shell craters and filled with barbed wire. Periodically, the soldiers charged enemy lines, only to be mowed down by machine-gun fire.

Life in the trenches was miserable. The soldiers were surrounded by filth, lice, rats, and polluted water that caused dysentery. Many soldiers suffered trench foot. This condition was caused by standing in cold, wet trenches for



Reading Check

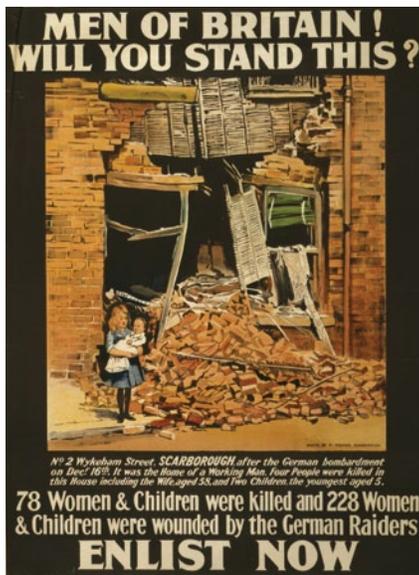
Analyze Effects
Why were so many European nations pulled into the conflict?

long periods of time without changing into dry socks or boots. First, the toes would turn red or blue. Then, they would become numb, and finally, they would start to rot. The only solution was to amputate the toes, and in some cases, the entire foot. A painful infection of the gums and throat, called trench mouth, was also common among the soldiers.

The soldiers also suffered from lack of sleep. Constant bombardments and other experiences often led to battle fatigue and “shell shock.” This term was coined during World War I to describe a complete emotional collapse from which many never recovered.

Americans Question Neutrality

Just after the fighting in Europe began, President Woodrow Wilson declared that the United States would remain neutral. His statement reflected a long-standing American commitment to isolationism. Most Americans agreed that there was no reason to join a struggle 3,000 miles away. The war did not threaten American lives or property. This did not mean, however, that certain groups and individuals in the United States were indifferent to who would win the war. Public opinion was strong—but divided.



The British spread the news of Germany's atrocious attacks on civilians through propaganda, but most Americans felt the war in Europe was not their fight.

Vocabulary

emigrate to leave one's country or region to settle in another; to move

DIVIDED LOYALTIES Socialists criticized the war as a capitalist and imperialist struggle between Germany and England to control markets and colonies in China, Africa, and the Middle East. Pacifists, such as lawyer and politician William Jennings Bryan, believed that war was evil and that the United States should set an example of peace to the world.

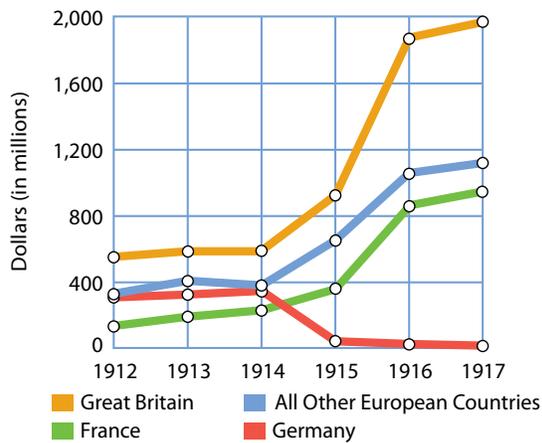
Many Americans simply did not want their sons to experience the horrors of warfare, as a hit song of 1915 conveyed.

*“I didn't raise my boy to be a soldier,
I brought him up to be my pride and joy.
Who dares to place a musket on his shoulder,
To shoot some other mother's darling boy?”*

Millions of naturalized U.S. citizens followed the war closely because they still had ties to the nations from which they had emigrated. For example, many Americans of German descent sympathized with Germany. Americans of Irish descent remembered the centuries of British oppression in Ireland. They saw the war as a chance for Ireland to gain its independence. Pressure from some of these ethnic groups in the United States contributed to American neutrality. Some immigrants created organizations to help the causes of their homelands. Some even advised the government on policies that affected the people of their homelands.

On the other hand, many Americans felt close to Britain because of a common ancestry and language as well as similar democratic institutions and legal systems. Germany's aggressive sweep through Belgium increased American sympathy for the Allies. The Germans attacked civilians, destroying villages, cathedrals, libraries, and even hospitals. Some atrocity stories—spread

U.S. Exports to Europe, 1912–1917



Interpret Graphs

1. By how much did total U.S. exports to Europe rise or fall between 1914 and 1917?
2. What trends does the graph show before the start of the war and during the war?

Reading Check

Analyze Motives

Why did the United States begin to favor Britain and France?

by British propaganda—later proved to be false. However, enough of them proved true that one American magazine referred to Germany as “the bully of Europe.”

Maintaining neutrality proved difficult for American businesses. America’s economic ties with the Allies were far stronger than its ties with the Central powers. Before the war, American trade with Britain and France was more than double its trade with Germany. With the start of the war, America’s transatlantic trade became even more lopsided. The Allies flooded American manufacturers with orders for all sorts of war supplies. These included dynamite, cannon powder, submarines, copper wire and tubing, and armored cars. The United States shipped millions of dollars of war supplies to the Allies, but requests kept coming. By 1915 American factories were producing so many supplies for the Allies that the United States was experiencing a labor shortage.

Some businesses, seeking to remain neutral, tried to continue dealing with Germany, but this trade became increasingly risky. Shipments were often stopped by the British navy. In addition, President Wilson and others spoke out against German atrocities and warned of the threat that the German empire posed to democracy. From 1914 on, trade with the Allies quadrupled, while trade with Germany fell to near zero.

Also, by 1917 American banks had loaned \$2.3 billion to the Allies, but only \$27 million to the Central powers. Many U.S. leaders, including Treasury secretary William McAdoo, felt that American prosperity depended upon an Allied victory.

The War Hits Home

Although the majority of Americans favored victory for the Allies rather than the Central powers, they did not want to join the Allies’ fight. By 1917, however, America had mobilized for war against the Central powers in order to ensure Allied repayment of debts to the United States and to prevent the Germans from threatening U.S. shipping.

THE BRITISH BLOCKADE As fighting on land continued, Britain began to make more use of its naval strength. It blockaded the German coast to prevent weapons and other military supplies from getting through. However, the British expanded the definition of *contraband* to include food. They also extended the blockade to neutral ports and mined the entire North Sea.

The results were twofold. First, American ships carrying goods for Germany refused to challenge the blockade and seldom reached their destination. Second, Germany found it increasingly difficult to import foodstuff

and fertilizers for crops. By 1917 famine stalked the country. An estimated 750,000 Germans starved to death as a result of the British blockade.

Americans had been angry at Britain's blockade. It threatened freedom of the seas and prevented American goods from reaching German ports. However, Germany's response to the blockade soon outraged Americans.

GERMAN U-BOAT RESPONSE Germany responded to the British blockade with a counterblockade by U-boats (from *Unterseeboot*, the German word for *submarine*). Any British or Allied ship found in the waters around Britain would be sunk—and it would not always be possible to warn crews and passengers of an attack.

One of the worst disasters occurred on May 7, 1915, when a U-boat sank the British liner **Lusitania** (lōō'sī-ta'nē-ə) off the Irish coast. Of the 1,198 persons lost, 128 were Americans. The Germans defended their action on the grounds that the liner carried ammunition. Despite Germany's explanation, Americans became outraged with Germany because of the loss of life. American public opinion turned against Germany and the Central powers.

Despite this provocation, President Wilson ruled out a military response in favor of a sharp protest to Germany. Three months later, in August 1915, a U-boat sank another British liner, the *Arabic*, drowning two Americans. Again the United States protested, and this time Germany agreed not to sink any more passenger ships. But in March 1916 Germany broke its promise and torpedoed an unarmed French passenger steamer, the *Sussex*. The *Sussex* sank, and about 80 passengers, including Americans, were killed or injured. After this attack, Wilson threatened to end diplomatic relations with Germany unless it stopped killing innocent civilians. German officials feared that the United States might enter the war, so Germany issued the **Sussex pledge**, which included a promise not to sink merchant vessels “without warning and without saving human lives.” But there was a condition: if the United States could not persuade Britain to lift its blockade against food and fertilizers, Germany would consider renewing unrestricted submarine warfare.



This image of a U-boat crew machine-gunning helpless survivors of the *Lusitania* was clearly meant as propaganda. In fact, U-boats seldom lingered after an attack.

"Peace Without Victory"

After the 1916 election, President Wilson tried to mediate between the warring alliances in Europe. The attempt failed. In a later speech, the president asked the Allied and Central powers to accept a "peace without victory," in which neither side would impose harsh terms on the other.

"The treaties and agreements which bring [the war] to an end must embody terms which will create a peace that is worth guaranteeing and preserving, a peace that will win the approval of mankind, not merely a peace that will serve the several interests and immediate aims of the nations engaged. . . . it must be a peace without victory. . . . Victory would mean peace forced upon the loser, a victor's terms imposed upon the vanquished. It would be accepted in humiliation, under duress, at an intolerable sacrifice, and would leave a sting, a resentment, a bitter memory upon which terms of peace would rest, not permanently, but only as upon quicksand. Only a peace between equals can last."

—President Woodrow Wilson, from an address to the Senate, January 22, 1917

Analyze Historical Sources

How does this speech reflect Wilson's ideas about equality in a postwar world?

Reading Check

Analyze Effects
How did the German
U-boat campaign
affect U.S. public
opinion?

THE 1916 ELECTION In November 1916 came the U.S. presidential election. The Democrats renominated Wilson, and the Republicans nominated Supreme Court Justice Charles Evans Hughes. Wilson campaigned on the slogan "He Kept Us Out of War." Hughes pledged to uphold America's right to freedom of the seas but also promised not to be too severe on Germany.

The election returns shifted from hour to hour. In fact, Hughes went to bed believing he had been elected. When a reporter tried to reach him with the news of Wilson's victory, an aide to Hughes said, "The president can't be disturbed." "Well," replied the reporter, "when he wakes up, tell him he's no longer president."

The United States Declares War

Despite Wilson's efforts on behalf of peace, hope seemed lost. The Allies were angered by Wilson's request for "peace without victory." They blamed the Central powers for starting the war and wanted them to pay for war-time damage and destruction. Germany, too, ignored Wilson's call for peace.

GERMAN PROVOCATION Germany's leaders hoped to defeat Britain by resuming unrestricted submarine warfare. On January 31 the kaiser announced that U-boats would sink all ships in British waters—hostile or neutral—on sight. Wilson was stunned. The German decision meant that the United States would have to go to war. However, the president held back, saying that he would wait for "actual overt acts" before declaring war.

The overt acts came. First was the **Zimmermann note**, a secret telegram from the German foreign minister to the German ambassador in Mexico that was intercepted and decoded by British agents. The telegram proposed an alliance between Mexico and Germany and promised that if war with the United States broke out, Germany would support Mexico in recovering “lost territory in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona.” The Germans hoped that an American war with Mexico would keep the United States out of the war in Europe. Excerpts of the telegram were printed in newspapers. The American public was outraged. On top of this, the Germans sank four unarmed American merchant ships, with a loss of 36 lives, further angering Americans.

Background

The Bolsheviks were led by Vladimir Ilich Lenin and Leon Trotsky.

A REVOLUTION IN RUSSIA Meanwhile, events in Russia also troubled the United States. By the end of 1915 Russia had suffered about 2.5 million casualties in the fight against the Central powers and was experiencing massive food shortages. Blaming the Russian czar for the nation’s losses, revolutionaries ousted him in March 1917 and established a provisional government. In November, a group known as the Bolsheviks overthrew the provisional government and set up a Communist state. The new government withdrew the Russian army from the eastern front and signed a peace agreement with the Central powers.

With Russia out of the conflict, Germany was free to focus on fighting in the west. It looked as if Germany had a chance of winning the war. These events removed the last significant obstacle to direct U.S. involvement in the war. Now supporters of American entry into the war could claim that this was a war of democracies against brutal monarchies.

AMERICA ACTS A light drizzle fell on Washington on April 2, 1917, as senators, representatives, ambassadors, members of the Supreme Court, and other guests crowded into the Capitol to hear President Wilson deliver his war resolution.

Alliances During World War I

Allies		Central Powers
Australia	Italy	Austria-Hungary
Belgium	Japan	Bulgaria
British Colonies	Montenegro	Germany
Canada & Newfoundland	New Zealand	Ottoman Empire
France	Portugal	
French North Africa & French Colonies	Romania	
Great Britain	Russia	
Greece	Serbia	
India	South Africa	
	United States	
Although not all of the countries listed above sent troops into the war, they all joined the war on the Allied side at various times.		

“Property can be paid for; the lives of peaceful and innocent people cannot be. The present German submarine warfare against commerce is a warfare against mankind. . . . We are glad . . . to fight . . . for the ultimate peace of the world and for the liberation of its peoples. . . . The world must be made safe for democracy. . . . We have no selfish ends to serve. We desire no conquest, no dominion. We seek no indemnities. . . . It is a fearful thing to lead this great peaceful people into war. . . . But the right is more precious than peace.”

—President Woodrow Wilson, quoted in *American Voices*

Reading Check

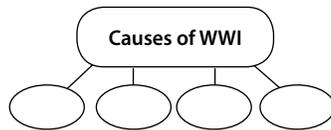
Make Inferences

Why did the Zimmermann note alarm the U.S. government?

Congress passed the resolution a few days later. With the hope of neutrality finally shattered, U.S. troops would follow the stream of American money and munitions that had been heading to the Allies throughout the war. But Wilson’s plea to make the world “safe for democracy” wasn’t just political posturing. Indeed, Wilson and many Americans truly believed that the United States had to join the war to pave the way for a future order of peace and freedom. A resolved but anxious nation held its breath as the United States prepared for war.

Lesson 1 Assessment

1. **Organize Information** Use a web diagram to list the causes for the outbreak of World War I.



Which was the most significant cause? Explain your answer.

2. **Key Terms and People** For each key term or person in the lesson, write a sentence explaining its significance.
3. **Analyze Issues** Why do you think Germany escalated its U-boat attacks in 1917?

Think About:

- Germany’s military buildup
- the effects of the British blockade
- Germany’s justification for unrestricted submarine warfare

4. **Summarize** Why were America’s ties with the Allies stronger than its ties with the Central powers?
5. **Analyze Events** How did the Russian Revolution change the course of the war?
6. **Analyze Causes** Why did the United States want to remain neutral in the conflict in Europe? What caused the shift from neutrality to involvement in the war?
7. **Form Opinions** Do you think the United States was justified to enter the war? Support your answer with details from the text.

The United States Joins the War

The Big Idea

The United States mobilized a large army and navy to help the Allies achieve victory.

Why It Matters Now

During World War I, the United States military evolved into the powerful fighting force that it remains today.

Key Terms and People

Eddie Rickenbacker
 Selective Service Act
 convoy system
 American Expeditionary Force
 John J. Pershing
 Alvin York
 conscientious objector
 armistice

One American's Story

Eddie Rickenbacker, famous fighter pilot of World War I, was well known as a racecar driver before the war. He went to France as a driver but transferred to the aviation division. He learned to fly on his own time and eventually joined the U.S. Army Air Service. Rickenbacker repeatedly fought the dreaded Flying Circus—a German air squadron led by the “Red Baron,” Manfred von Richthofen.

“I put in six or seven hours of flying time each day. . . . My narrowest escape came at a time when I was fretting over the lack of action. . . . Guns began barking behind me, and sizzling tracers zipped by my head. . . . At least two planes were on my tail. . . . They would expect me to dive. Instead I twisted upward in a corkscrew path called a ‘chandelle.’ I guessed right. As I went up, my two attackers came down, near enough for me to see their faces. I also saw the red noses on those Fokkers [German planes]. I was up against the Flying Circus again.”

—Eddie Rickenbacker, from *Rickenbacker: An Autobiography*



World War I flying ace Eddie Rickenbacker

After engaging in 134 air battles and downing 26 enemy aircraft, Rickenbacker won fame as the Allied pilot with the most victories—“American ace of aces.”

America Mobilizes

The United States was not prepared for war. Only 200,000 men were in service when war was declared, and few officers had combat experience. Drastic measures were needed to build an army large and modern enough to make an impact in Europe.

RAISING AN ARMY To meet the government's need for more fighting power, Congress passed the **Selective Service Act** in May 1917. The act required men to register with the government in order to be randomly selected for military service. By the end of 1918, 24 million men had registered under the act. Of this number, almost 3 million were called up. About 2 million troops reached Europe before the truce was signed, and three-fourths of them saw actual combat. Most of the inductees had not attended high school, and about one in five was foreign-born.

The eight-month training period took place partly in the United States and partly in Europe. During this time, the men put in 17-hour days on target practice, bayonet drill, kitchen duty, and cleaning up the grounds. Since real weapons were in short supply, soldiers often drilled with fake weapons. They used rocks instead of hand grenades or wooden poles instead of rifles.

DIVERSITY IN THE MILITARY For the United States to effectively fight the Central powers, its military needed the cooperation of its minority population. Government publications appealed to all Americans, regardless of race or ethnicity, to support the war effort. One pamphlet reminded Americans that “. . . black men, yellow men, white men, from all quarters of the globe, are fighting side by side to free the world from the Hun peril. That's the patriotism of equality!”

Document-Based Investigation Historical Source

Uncle Sam the Recruiter

Before motion pictures and television were commonplace, the poster was an important visual medium. Easily produced and displayed, posters captured the immediate attention of the public.

In an effort to increase military recruitment, the U.S. government hired artists to create posters to appeal to a sense of patriotism in young men. James Montgomery Flagg's portrayal of a stern Uncle Sam became the most famous recruiting poster in American history.

Analyze Historical Sources

1. How does the poster use patriotic symbolism?
2. How effective do you think the poster was in convincing men to fight for the Allied cause?





The 369th Infantry Regiment, also known as the Harlem Hell Fighters, served a record 191 days in the trenches.

Vocabulary

segregated
separated or isolated
from others

Many minorities hoped that by fighting for America, they would gain respect and be treated as equal citizens to whites. One lieutenant who served in the all-black 369th Infantry Regiment explained this perspective to a reporter.

“Now is the opportunity to prove what we can do. If we can’t fight and die in this war just as bravely as white men, then we do not deserve equality with white men. . . . But if we can do things at the front; if we can make ourselves felt; if we can make America really proud . . . then it will be the biggest possible step toward our equalization as citizens.”

—a U.S. Army lieutenant, from *The Crisis*,
August 1918

About 400,000 African Americans would ultimately serve in the armed

forces. They generally did not get the equal treatment they wanted, however. They served in segregated units and were excluded from the navy and marines. Many white army officers and southern politicians objected to training African American soldiers to use weapons. They feared that these black soldiers might pose a threat after the war. Most African Americans were assigned to noncombat duties, although there were exceptions. The 369th Infantry Regiment saw more continuous duty on the front lines than any other American regiment. Two soldiers of the 369th, Henry Johnson and Needham Roberts, were the first Americans to receive France’s highest military honor, the Croix de Guerre—the “cross of war.”

Native Americans were required to register for the draft, but at the time were not generally considered to be citizens. Nonetheless, an estimated 10,000 Native Americans served in the military during the war. Many did so eager to gain war honors and maintain the warrior traditions of their peoples. The army used some Choctaw Indians to transmit messages in their native language. This was a strategy that the U.S. military would use more extensively in the next world war.

Other minority groups also contributed to the war effort. Like African Americans, many Asian Americans and Hispanic Americans saw military service as a way to gain equal rights. To accommodate Hispanic soldiers who did not speak fluent English, the military established programs in New Mexico and Georgia to help them learn the language. The Jewish Welfare Board established centers for Jewish servicemen in the United States and overseas. It also led enlistment and fundraising campaigns for the war effort.

Although women were not allowed to enlist, the army reluctantly accepted women in the Army Corps of Nurses. However, it denied them army rank,

pay, and benefits. Meanwhile, some 13,000 women accepted noncombat positions in the navy and marines. There they served as nurses, secretaries, and telephone operators with full military rank. Some French-speaking American women served in the U.S. Army Signal Corps as switchboard operators. These “Hello Girls” served a crucial role by keeping communications open between the front line and the military headquarters. Some women went overseas to serve as volunteer ambulance drivers on the front lines.



Some shipyards were capable of building a war vessel in just over five days.

Reading Check
Summarize How did the United States raise an army for the war?

MASS PRODUCTION In addition to the vast army that had to be created and trained, the United States had to transport men, food, and equipment over thousands of miles of ocean. But German U-boat attacks on merchant ships in the Atlantic were a serious threat to the Allied war effort. By early 1917 German submarines had sunk twice as much ship tonnage as the Allies had built.

In response, the U.S. government took several steps to expand its fleet. First, the government exempted many shipyard workers from the draft. It gave others a “deferred” classification, delaying their participation in the draft. Second, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce joined in a public relations campaign to emphasize

the importance of shipyard work. They distributed service flags to families of shipyard workers, just like the flags given to families of soldiers and sailors. Finally, shipyards used prefabrication techniques. Instead of building an entire ship in the yard, standardized parts were built elsewhere and then assembled at the yard. This method reduced construction time substantially.

The Fight “Over There”

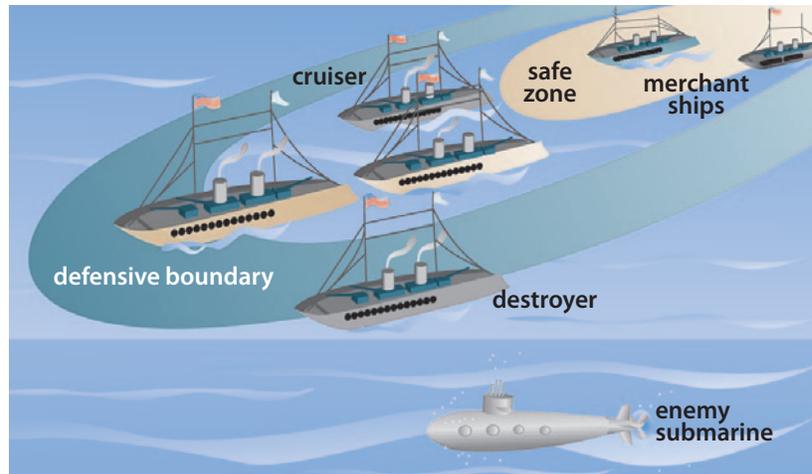
After two and a half years of fighting, the Allied forces were exhausted, demoralized, and desperate for help. The Americans were able to provide fresh troops and much-needed supplies. But first they had to turn the tide in the battle against the German U-boats.

THE CONVOY SYSTEM Mass production techniques greatly increased the number of ships hauling materials and personnel to Europe. However, those ships remained easy targets for prowling U-boats. The United States needed to figure out a way to protect its transatlantic shipping. American vice-admiral William S. Sims convinced the British to try the **convoy system**. This method involved a heavy guard of destroyers escorting merchant ships back and forth across the Atlantic in groups. By fall of 1917 shipping losses had been cut in half.

The U.S. Navy also helped lay a 230-mile barrier of mines across the North Sea from Scotland to Norway. The barrier was designed to bottle up the U-boats that sailed from German ports in order to keep them out of the Atlantic Ocean.

By early 1918 the Germans found it increasingly difficult to replace their losses and to staff their fleet with trained submariners. Of the almost 2 million Americans who sailed to Europe during the war, only 637 were lost to U-boat attacks.

World War I Convoy System



THE AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE The first U.S. troops arrived in France in late June 1917. The American soldiers who went overseas formed the **American Expeditionary Force** (AEF), which was led by General **John J. Pershing**. The AEF included soldiers from the regular army, the National Guard, and a new larger force of volunteers and draftees. The men came from all over the country. Many had never traveled much beyond the farms or small towns where they lived. These American infantrymen were nicknamed doughboys, possibly because of the white belts they wore, which they cleaned with pipe clay, or “dough.”

One of the main contributions that American troops made to the Allied war effort, besides their numbers, was their freshness and enthusiasm. They were determined to hit the Germans hard. Twenty-two-year-old Joseph Douglas Lawrence was a U.S. Army lieutenant. He remarked on the importance of the American soldier’s enthusiasm when he described his first impression of the trenches.

— BIOGRAPHY —

John J. Pershing (1860–1948)

General Pershing was the commander of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) in France. When he arrived there, he found that the Allies intended to use American troops simply as reinforcements. Pershing, however, urged that the AEF operate as an independent fighting force, under American command. He refused to have the AEF “scattered among the Allied forces where it will not be an American army at all.” Pershing also wanted to give his troops more training. He believed that sending inexperienced soldiers into battle was the same as sending them to die. As a result, Pershing sent his troops to training camps in eastern France.



Pershing believed in aggressive combat. He felt that three years of trench warfare had made the Allies too defensive. Under Pershing, American forces captured important enemy positions and helped stop the German advance. After the war, Pershing was made General of the Armies of the United States. This was the highest rank an army officer could achieve. Many of Pershing’s tactics would be used by the military in future wars.



Lieutenant Joseph D.
Lawrence

“I have never seen or heard of such an elaborate, complete line of defense as the British had built at this point. There was a trench with dugouts every three hundred yards from the front line in Ypres back four miles to and including Dirty Bucket. Everything was fronted with barbed wire and other entanglements. Artillery was concealed everywhere. Railroad tracks, narrow and standard gauge, reached from the trenches back into the zone of supply. Nothing had been neglected to hold this line, save only one important thing, enthusiasm among the troops, and that was the purpose of our presence.”

—Joseph D. Lawrence, quoted in *Fighting Soldier: The AEF in 1918*

A NEW KIND OF WAR Even the enthusiasm of the American doughboys often turned to shock upon experiencing the horrors of the European fronts. An American nurse named Florence Bullard described the deadly toll of modern warfare as she cared for soldiers in a hospital near the front in 1918.

“The Army is only twelve miles away from us and only the wounded that are too severely injured to live to be carried a little farther are brought here. . . . Side by side I have Americans, English, Scotch, Irish, and French, and apart in the corners are Boche [Germans]. They have to watch each other die side by side. I am sent for everywhere—in the . . . operating-room, the dressing-room, and back again to the rows of men. . . . The cannon goes day and night and the shells are breaking over and around us. . . . I have had to write many sad letters to American mothers. I wonder if it will ever end.”

—Florence Bullard, quoted in *Over There: The Story of America's First Great Overseas Crusade*

Not only did World War I see the use of trench warfare, but it saw the first large-scale use of weapons that would become standard in modern war. Although some of these weapons were new, others, like the machine gun, had been so refined that they changed the nature of warfare. The new guns could hit targets that were miles away. And capable of firing 600 rounds a minute, machine guns could inflict heavy casualties on the enemy. In fact, they were responsible for 90 percent of Allied casualties at the Battle of the Somme in 1916.

The two most innovative weapons were the tank and the airplane. Together, they heralded mechanized warfare, or warfare that relies on machines powered by gasoline and diesel engines. Tanks ran on caterpillar treads and were built of steel so that bullets bounced off. The British first used tanks at Somme, but not very effectively. By 1917 the British had learned how to drive large numbers of tanks through barbed-wire defenses, clearing a path for the infantry. Because tanks were not damaged by either machine-gun or rifle fire, their use would mark the eventual end of trench warfare.

When the United States entered the war, its air power was weak. Congress eventually appropriated \$675 million to build an air force. The early airplanes were so flimsy that at first both sides limited their use to scouting. After a while, the two sides used tanks to fire at enemy planes that were gathering information. Early dogfights, or individual air combats, like the one described by Eddie Rickenbacker, resembled duels. Pilots sat in their open cockpits and shot at each other with pistols. Because it was hard to fly a plane and shoot a pistol at the same time, planes began carrying mounted machine guns. But the planes' propeller blades kept getting in the way of the bullets. Then the Germans introduced an interrupter gear, which permitted the stream of bullets to avoid the whirring blades.

Meanwhile, airplanes were built to travel faster and carry heavy bomb loads. By 1918 the British had built up a strategic bomber force of 22,000 planes. This force attacked German weapons factories and army bases.

Technology at War

Both sides in World War I used new technology to attack more soldiers from greater distances than ever before. Aircraft and long-range guns were even used to fire on civilian targets. These included libraries, cathedrals, and city districts. The biggest guns could shell a city from 75 miles away.



MACHINE GUNS

Firepower increased to 600 rounds per minute.



AIRSHIPS AND AIRPLANES

The most famous World War I plane was the British Sopwith Camel. It had a front-mounted machine gun for "dogfights." Planes were also loaded with bombs, as were the floating gas-filled "airships" called zeppelins.



POISON GAS

The yellow-green fog of chlorine sickened, suffocated, burned, and blinded entrenched soldiers. Gas masks became standard issue.



TANKS

Tanks, like this French light tank, were used to "mow down" barbed wire and soldiers.



SHIPS

Even with the advantages of firepower and speed, dreadnoughts still faced threats from torpedo ships.

The Allies and the Central powers also poured valuable resources into building a new type of battleship called a dreadnought. These ships were more heavily armed than any other battleship. They also featured a revolutionary steam turbine propulsion system that gave them speed.

Observation balloons were widely used by both sides in the war in Europe. Balloons were so important strategically that they were often protected by aircraft. They became prime targets for Rickenbacker and other ace pilots.

Armies also used chemical warfare during World War I. Slow-moving clouds of poison gas could reach soldiers sheltered in the deepest of trenches. Toxic tear gas, mustard gas, chlorine, and phosgene were all used to deadly effect. This led some historians to call World War I the “chemists’ war.” Today the use of poison gas is a war crime.

Reading Check
Form Generalizations
 How did World War I change the nature of warfare?

American Troops Go on the Offensive

When Russia pulled out of the war in 1917, the Germans shifted their armies from the eastern front to the western front in France. By May they were within 50 miles of Paris. The Americans arrived just in time to help stop the German advance at Cantigny. Several weeks later, U.S. troops played a major role in throwing back German attacks at Château-Thierry and Belleau Wood.

[▶ Explore ONLINE!](#)

Allied Victories, 1917–1918



On July 15, 1918, the Germans launched a last, desperate offensive at the Second Battle of the Marne. The German army suffered some 150,000 casualties and retreated on August 3. The Allies led a counterattack in September. The AEF defeated German troops at Mihiel, near the French-German border.

The Allies continued their advance toward the French city of Sedan. The railway there was the main supply line of German forces. For more than a month, the Allies pushed northward through the rugged Argonne Forest, facing artillery fire and deadly explosions every step of the way. The Americans suffered some 120,000 casualties in the Battle of the Argonne Forest, but by November they had occupied the hills around Sedan.



Sergeant Alvin York

AMERICAN WAR HERO During the fighting in the Meuse-Argonne area, one of America's greatest war heroes, **Alvin York**, became famous. York sought exemption as a **conscientious objector**, a person who opposes warfare on moral grounds, pointing out that the Bible says, "Thou shalt not kill."

York eventually decided that it was morally acceptable to fight if the cause was just. On October 8, 1918, armed only with a rifle and a revolver, York killed 25 Germans and—with 6 other doughboys—captured 132 prisoners. General Pershing called him the outstanding soldier of the AEF, while Marshal Foch, the commander of Allied forces in Europe, described his feat as "the greatest thing accomplished by any private soldier of all the armies of Europe." For his heroic acts, York was promoted to sergeant and became a celebrity when he returned to the United States.

THE COLLAPSE OF GERMANY By late 1918 the war was crippling the German economy; many civilians lacked food and supplies. Food riots and strikes erupted in Germany, and revolution swept across Austria-Hungary. The Central powers had difficulty encouraging their soldiers to fight.

On November 3, 1918, Austria-Hungary surrendered to the Allies. That same day, German sailors mutinied against government authority. The mutiny spread quickly. Everywhere in Germany, groups of soldiers and workers organized revolutionary councils. On November 9 socialist leaders in the capital, Berlin, established a German republic. The kaiser gave up the throne.

Although there were no Allied soldiers on German territory and no truly decisive battle had been fought, the Germans were too exhausted to continue fighting. So at the 11th hour, on the 11th day, in the 11th month of 1918, Germany agreed to a cease-fire and signed the **armistice**, or truce, that ended the war.

THE FINAL TOLL World War I was the bloodiest war in history up to that time. Deaths numbered about 22 million, more than half of them civilians. In addition, 20 million people were wounded, and 10 million more became refugees. The direct economic costs of the war may have been about \$338 billion.

The United States lost 48,000 men in battle, with another 62,000 dying of disease. More than 200,000 Americans were wounded.

For the Allies, news of the armistice brought great relief. Private John Barkley described the reaction to the news.

“About 9 o’clock in the evening we heard wild commotion in the little town. The French people, old and young, were running through the streets. Old men and women we’d seen sitting around their houses too feeble to move, were out in the streets yelling, ‘Vive la France! Vive la France! Vive l’America!’ . . .

Down the street came a soldier. He was telling everybody the armistice had been signed. I said, ‘What’s an armistice?’ It sounded like some kind of machine to me. The other boys around there didn’t know what it meant either.

When the official word came through that it meant peace, we couldn’t believe it. Finally Jesse said, ‘Well kid, I guess it really does mean the war is over.’

I said, ‘I just can’t believe it’s true.’ But it was.”

—John L. Barkley, quoted in *No Hard Feelings*

Across the Atlantic, Americans also rejoiced at the news. Many now expected life to return to normal. However, people found their lives at home changed almost as much as the lives of those who had fought in Europe.

Reading Check

Draw Conclusions

How did American forces help the Allies win the war?

Lesson 2 Assessment

1. **Organize Information** Fill in a web diagram to show how Americans responded to the war.



Why was the entire population affected by America’s entry into World War I?

2. **Key Terms and People** For each key term or person in the lesson, write a sentence explaining its significance.
3. **Draw Conclusions** In what ways did World War I represent a frightening new kind of warfare?

Think About:

- the casualty figures
- the physical and psychological effects, such as shell shock, of warfare in World War I
- how new weapons and new kinds of warfare affected the outcome of the war

4. **Contrast** Describe how the experiences of some groups of Americans serving overseas, such as women, African Americans, and Native Americans, differed from those of white soldiers.
5. **Analyze Primary Sources** This World War I poster shows the role of noncombatants overseas. What is the message in this poster? How effective do you think it was in influencing public opinion?



Back our girls over there
United War Work Campaign

The War at Home

The Big Idea

World War I spurred social, political, and economic change in the United States.

Why It Matters Now

Such changes increased government powers and expanded economic opportunities.

Key Terms and People

War Industries Board

Bernard M. Baruch

propaganda

Committee on Public Information

George Creel

Espionage and Sedition Acts

Great Migration

One American's Story

The suffragist Harriot Stanton Blatch visited a munitions plant in New Jersey during World War I and proudly described women at work.

“The day I visited the place, in one of the largest shops women had only just been put on the work, but it was expected that in less than a month they would be found handling all of the twelve hundred machines under that one roof alone. The skill of the women staggers one. After a week or two they master the operations on the ‘turret,’ gauging and routing machines. The best worker on the ‘facing’ machine is a woman. She is a piece worker, as many of the women are. . . . This woman earned, the day I saw her, five dollars and forty cents. She tossed about the fuse parts, and played with that machine, as I would with a baby.”

—Harriot Stanton Blatch, quoted in *We, the American Women*



Harriot Stanton Blatch followed in the footsteps of her famous mother, Elizabeth Cady Stanton

Before World War I, women had been excluded from many jobs. However, the wartime need for labor brought over a million more women into the work force. For women, as for the rest of society, World War I brought about far-reaching changes.

Government Oversees the War Effort

Winning the war was not a job for American soldiers alone. As Secretary of War Newton Baker said, “War is no longer Samson with his shield and spear and sword, and David with his sling. It is the conflict of smokestacks now, the combat of the driving wheel and the engine.”

CONGRESS GIVES POWER TO WILSON Because World War I was such an immense conflict, the entire economy had to be refocused on the war effort. The shift from producing consumer goods to producing war supplies was too complicated and important a job for private industry to handle on its own, so business and government collaborated in the effort. In the process, the power of government was greatly expanded. Congress gave President Wilson direct control over much of the economy. It gave him the power to fix prices and to regulate—even to nationalize—certain war-related industries. One of the first industries to be nationalized was shipping. The government took over commercial and private ships and converted them for transatlantic war use.

The main regulatory body was the **War Industries Board** (WIB). It was established in 1917 and reorganized in 1918 under the leadership of **Bernard M. Baruch** (bə-rōōk'), a prosperous businessman. The board encouraged companies to use mass-production techniques to increase efficiency. It also urged them to eliminate waste by standardizing products—for instance, by making only 5 colors of typewriter ribbons instead of 150. The WIB set production quotas and allocated raw materials.

THE ECONOMY GROWS Under the WIB, industrial production in the United States increased by about 20 percent. However, the WIB applied price controls only at the wholesale level. As a result, retail prices soared. In 1918 they were almost double what they had been before the war.

Background

In 1913 Henry Ford speeded up factory production with a constantly moving assembly line. Wartime production spread this technique throughout the country.

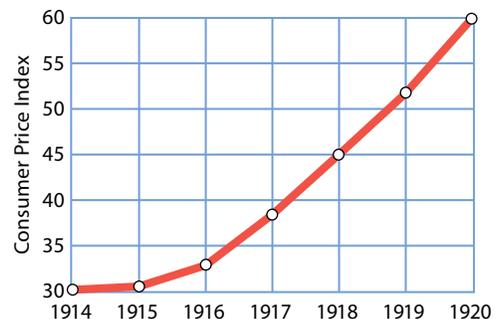
The War Economy, 1914–1920

Average Annual Income



Source: *Historical Statistics of the United States*

Consumer Price Index*



*A measure of changes in the prices of goods and services commonly bought by consumers

Interpret Graphs

1. How did the rise in average annual income compare with the rise in prices from 1914 to 1920?
2. How might the combined change in wages and prices affect a working family?

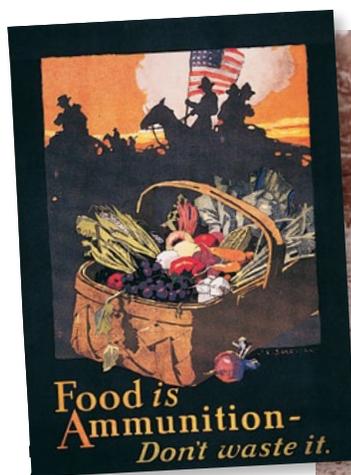
Wages in most industries rose during the war years. For example, hourly wages for blue-collar workers in the metal trades, shipbuilding, and meatpacking rose by about 20 percent. However, rising food prices and housing costs undercut household income.

By contrast, corporate profits soared. This was especially true in industries such as chemicals, meatpacking, oil, and steel. One industrial manufacturer, the DuPont Company, saw its stock multiply in value 1,600 percent between 1914 and 1918. By that time, the company was earning \$68 million in profits each year.

Unions boomed during the war years. One cause was the difference in pay between labor and management. Other causes were increasing work hours, child labor, and dangerously “sped-up” conditions. Union membership climbed from about 2.5 million in 1916 to more than 4 million in 1919. More than 6,000 strikes broke out during the war months. To deal with disputes between management and labor, President Wilson established the National War Labor Board in 1918. Workers who refused to obey board decisions could lose their draft exemptions. “Work or fight,” the board told them. However, the board also worked to improve factory conditions. It pushed for an eight-hour workday, promoted safety inspections, and enforced the child labor ban.

OTHER AGENCIES The WIB was not the only federal agency to regulate the economy during the war. The Railroad Administration controlled the railroads. The Fuel Administration monitored coal supplies and rationed gasoline and heating oil. In addition, many people adopted “gasless Sundays” and “lightless nights” to conserve fuel. In March 1918 the Fuel Administration introduced another conservation measure. This was daylight-saving time, which had first been proposed by Benjamin Franklin in the 1770s as a way to take advantage of the longer days of summer.

To help produce and conserve food, Wilson set up the Food Administration under Herbert Hoover. Instead of rationing food, he called on people to follow the “gospel of the clean plate.” He declared one day a week “meatless,”



A wartime poster encourages Americans to conserve resources.



A Japanese American family tends a victory garden in New York City in 1917.

Reading Check
Summarize What steps did the government take to manage the economy during the war?

another “sweetless,” two days “wheatless,” and two other days “porkless.” Restaurants removed sugar bowls from the table and served bread only after the first course.

Homeowners planted “victory gardens” in their yards. Schoolchildren spent their after-school hours growing tomatoes and cucumbers in public parks. As a result of these and similar efforts, American food shipments to the Allies tripled. Hoover also set a high government price on wheat and other staples. Farmers responded by putting an additional 40 million acres into production. In the process, they increased their income by almost 30 percent.

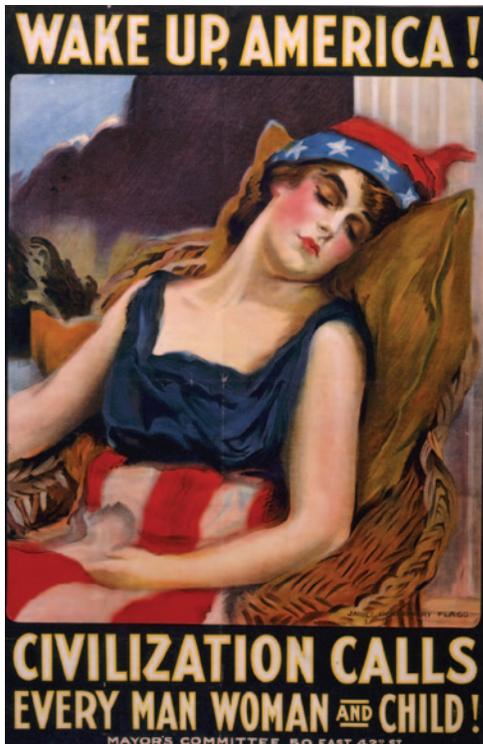
Selling the War

Once the government had extended its control over the economy, it was faced with two major undertakings: raising money and convincing the public to support the war.

WAR FINANCING The United States spent about \$35.5 billion on the war effort. The government raised about one-third of this amount through taxes. These taxes included a progressive income tax (which taxed high incomes at a higher rate than low incomes), a war-profits tax, and higher excise taxes on tobacco, liquor, and luxury goods. It raised the rest through public borrowing by selling “Liberty Loan” and “Victory Loan” bonds.

The government sold bonds through tens of thousands of volunteers. Movie stars spoke at rallies in factories, in schools, and on street corners.

As Treasury Secretary William G. McAdoo put it, only “a friend of Germany” would refuse to buy war bonds.



Propaganda posters were designed to elicit emotional responses from viewers. This poster urged Americans to get involved in the war effort for the good of civilization.

INFLUENCING PUBLIC OPINION To popularize the war, the government set up the nation’s first **propaganda** agency, the **Committee on Public Information** (CPI). Propaganda is a kind of biased communication designed to influence people’s thoughts and actions. The head of the CPI was a former muckraking journalist named **George Creel**.

Creel persuaded the nation’s artists and advertising agencies to create thousands of paintings, posters, cartoons, and sculptures promoting the war. He recruited some 75,000 men to serve as “Four-Minute Men.” They spoke about everything relating to the war: the draft, rationing, bond drives, victory gardens, and topics such as “Why We Are Fighting” and “The Meaning of America.”

Creel did not ignore the written word. He ordered a printing of almost 25 million copies of “How the War Came to America.” It included Wilson’s war message in English and other languages. He distributed some 75 million pamphlets, booklets, and leaflets, many with the enthusiastic help of the Boy Scouts. Creel’s propaganda campaign was highly effective.

Reading Check
Summarize How did the government raise money for the war effort?

U.S. newspapers, too, became agents of public opinion during the war. Once U.S. soldiers joined the fight, newspapers ran fewer photographs from the battlefields. Instead, they printed patriotic images of parades and heroic portraits of President Wilson. The *New York Times* began including daily tallies of which states had contributed the most recruits and purchased the most war bonds. This started a friendly competition among readers to support the war effort.

Attacks on Civil Liberties Increase

While the government's propaganda campaign promoted patriotism, it also inflamed hatred and violations of the civil liberties of certain ethnic groups and opponents of the war. Early in 1917 President Wilson expressed his fears about the consequences of war hysteria.

"Once lead this people into war and they'll forget there ever was such a thing as tolerance. To fight you must be brutal and ruthless, and the spirit of ruthless brutality will enter into the very fiber of our national life, infecting Congress, the courts, the policeman on the beat, the man in the street. Conformity would be the only virtue, and every man who refused to conform would have to pay the penalty."

—Woodrow Wilson, quoted in Cobb of *"The World"*

The president's prediction came true. As soon as war was declared, conformity indeed became the order of the day. Attacks on civil liberties, both unofficial and official, erupted.



During the war, conspiracy theories flourished in the United States, and foreign spies were believed to be everywhere. Cartoons like this one from 1917 revealed the hysteria that gripped the nation and helped inflame prejudice against recent immigrants.

ANTI-IMMIGRANT HYSTERIA The main targets of these attacks were Americans who had emigrated from other nations, especially those from Germany and Austria-Hungary. The most bitter attacks were directed against the nearly 2 million Americans who had been born in Germany, but other foreign-born persons and Americans of German descent suffered as well.

Many Americans with German names lost their jobs. Orchestras refused to play the music of Mozart, Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms. Some towns with German names changed them. Schools stopped teaching the German language, and librarians removed books by German authors from the shelves. People even resorted to violence against German Americans. Some were flogged or smeared with tar and feathers. A mob in Collinsville, Illinois, wrapped a German flag around a German-born miner named Robert Prager and lynched him. A jury cleared the mob's leader.

Vocabulary
sedition rebellion
against one's
government; treason

Reading Check
Analyze Effects
What impact did
the Espionage and
Sedition Acts have on
free speech?

Finally, in a burst of anti-German fervor, Americans changed the name of German measles to “liberty measles.” Hamburger—named after the German city of Hamburg—became “Salisbury steak” or “liberty sandwich,” depending on whether you were buying it in a store or eating it in a restaurant. Sauerkraut was renamed “liberty cabbage,” and dachshunds turned into “liberty pups.”

ESPIONAGE AND SEDITION ACTS In June 1917 Congress passed the Espionage Act, and in May 1918 it passed the Sedition Act. Under the **Espionage and Sedition Acts**, a person could be fined up to \$10,000 and sentenced to 20 years in jail for interfering with the war effort or for saying anything disloyal, profane, or abusive about the government or the war effort.

Like the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798, these laws clearly violated the spirit of the First Amendment. Their passage led to over 2,000 prosecutions for loosely defined antiwar activities; of these, over half resulted in convictions. Newspapers and magazines that opposed the war or criticized any of the Allies lost their mailing privileges. The House of Representatives refused to seat Victor Berger, a socialist congressman from Wisconsin, because of his antiwar views. Columbia University fired a distinguished psychologist because he opposed the war. A colleague who supported the war thereupon resigned in protest. He said, “If we have to suppress everything we don’t like to hear, this country is resting on a pretty wobbly basis.”

The Espionage and Sedition Acts targeted socialists and labor leaders. Eugene V. Debs was handed a ten-year prison sentence for speaking out against the war and the draft. The anarchist Emma Goldman received a two-year prison sentence and a \$10,000 fine for organizing the No Conscription League. When she left jail, the authorities deported her to Russia. “Big Bill” Haywood and other leaders of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) were accused of sabotaging the war effort because they urged workers to strike for better conditions and higher pay. Haywood was sentenced to a long prison term. (He later skipped bail and fled to Russia.) Under such federal pressure, the IWW faded away.

The War Encourages Social Change

Wars often unleash powerful social forces. The period of World War I was no exception. Important changes transformed the lives of African Americans, immigrants, and women.

THE GREAT MIGRATION In concrete terms, the greatest effect of the First World War on African Americans’ lives was that it accelerated the **Great Migration**, the large-scale movement of hundreds of thousands of southern blacks to cities in the North. This great population shift had already begun before the war in the late 19th century. At that time, African Americans trickled northward to escape the Jim Crow South. After the turn of the century, the trickle became a tidal wave.

Several factors contributed to the tremendous increase in black migration. First, many African Americans wanted to escape racial discrimination in the South. Discrimination made it hard for them to make a living and

African American Support of the War

Black public opinion about the war was divided. Some people—such as William Monroe Trotter, the founder of the Boston *Guardian*—believed that victims of racism should not support a racist government. Despite grievances over racial inequality in the United States, most African Americans, however, backed the war. They supported the opinions of W.E.B. Du Bois. He believed that African American support for the war would strengthen calls for racial justice. Du Bois explained his position.

“That which the German power represents today spells death to the aspirations of Negroes and all darker races for equality, freedom and democracy. . . . Let us, while this war lasts, forget our special grievances and close our ranks shoulder to shoulder with our own white fellow citizens and the allied nations that are fighting for democracy.”

—W.E.B. Du Bois, from “Close Ranks”

Analyze Historical Sources

How does Du Bois try to convince African Americans to support the war effort?

often threatened their lives. Also, a boll weevil infestation, aided by floods and droughts, had ruined much of the South’s cotton fields. In the North, there were more job opportunities. For example, Henry Ford opened his automobile assembly line to black workers in 1914. The outbreak of World War I and the drop in European immigration increased job opportunities for African Americans. There were jobs in steel mills, munitions plants, and stockyards. Northern manufacturers sent recruiting agents to distribute free railroad passes through the South. In addition, the publisher of the black-owned newspaper *Chicago Defender* bombarded southern blacks with articles contrasting Dixieland lynchings with the prosperity of African Americans in the North.

Between 1910 and 1930 hundreds of thousands of African Americans migrated to such cities as Chicago, New York, and Philadelphia. Author Richard Wright described the great exodus.

“We are bitter no more; we are leaving! We are leaving our homes, pulling up stakes to move on. We look up at the high southern sky and remember all the sunshine and all the rain and we feel a sense of loss, but we are leaving. We look out at the wide green fields which our eyes saw when we first came into the world and we feel full of regret, but we are leaving. We scan the kind black faces we have looked upon since we first saw the light of day, and, though pain is in our hearts, we are leaving. We take one last furtive look over our shoulders to the Big House—high upon a hill beyond the railroad tracks—where the Lord of the Land lives, and we feel glad, for we are leaving.”

—Richard Wright, quoted in *12 Million Black Voices*



The Migration of the Negro, Panel No. 1 by Jacob Lawrence shows three of the most common destinations for African Americans leaving the South.

For the most part, the migrants' lives changed for the better in the North. As the artist Jacob Lawrence wrote, "the children were able to go to school, and their parents gained the freedom to vote. And the migrants kept coming." However, racial prejudice against African Americans existed in the North as it had in the South.

The press of new migrants to northern cities caused overcrowding and intensified racial tensions. Some cities passed zoning laws that segregated city streets by race. Sometimes the racial prejudice in northern cities took violent forms. In July 1917 a race riot exploded in East St. Louis, Illinois. White workers were furious over the hiring of African Americans as strike-breakers at a munitions plant, so they rampaged through the streets. Forty blacks and nine whites died.

Another riot erupted in July 1919 in Chicago when a 17-year-old African American swam from the water off a "black beach" to the water off a "white beach." There, white bathers threw rocks at him until he drowned. African Americans retaliated, and several riots broke out in the city. Order was restored after several days of violence that involved about 10,000 people. Racially motivated riots occurred in some two dozen other cities in 1919.

WOMEN IN THE WAR While African Americans began new lives, women moved into jobs that had been held exclusively by men. They became railroad workers, cooks, dockworkers, and bricklayers. They mined coal and took part in shipbuilding. At the same time, women continued to fill more traditional jobs as nurses, clerks, and teachers. In all, about 1 million women entered the work force during World War I. In addition, many women worked as volunteers, serving at Red Cross facilities and encouraging the sale of bonds and the planting of victory gardens. Others, such as Jane Addams, were active in the peace movement. Addams helped found the Women's Peace Party in 1915 and remained a pacifist even after the United States entered the war.



Women worked in a variety of jobs during the war. Here, women assemble an aircraft wing.

After the war ended, however, most women left the jobs they had taken. Many women left by choice; others were forced to leave by employers who wanted to give the jobs to returning servicemen.

The contributions that women made to the war effort, however, did not go unnoticed. President Wilson stated, “The services of women during the supreme crisis have been of the most signal usefulness and distinction; it is high time that part of our debt should be acknowledged.” While

acknowledgment of that debt did not include equal pay for equal work, it did help bolster public support for woman suffrage. In 1919 Congress finally passed the Nineteenth Amendment, granting women the right to vote. In 1920 the amendment was ratified by the states.



New York City street cleaners wore masks to avoid catching influenza.

THE FLU EPIDEMIC In the fall of 1918, the United States suffered a home-front crisis. An international flu epidemic affected about one-quarter of the U.S. population. The epidemic had a devastating effect on the economy. Mines shut down, telephone service was cut in half, and factories and offices staggered working hours to avoid contagion. Cities ran short of coffins, and the corpses of poor people lay unburied for as long as a week. Death could come in a matter of days. Doctors did not know what to do, other than to recommend cleanliness and quarantine. One epidemic survivor recalled that “so many people died from the flu they just rang the bells; they didn’t dare take [corpses] into the church.”

In the army, living conditions allowed contagious illnesses to spread rapidly. More than a quarter of the soldiers caught the disease. In some AEF units, one-third of the troops died. Germans fell victim in even larger numbers than the Allies. The illness may have been spread around the world by soldiers. The epidemic killed about 500,000 Americans before it disappeared in 1919. Historians believe that the influenza virus killed as many as 30 million people worldwide.

World War I brought death and disease to millions, but like the flu epidemic, the war also came to a sudden end. After four years of slaughter and destruction, the time had come to forge a peace settlement. Americans hoped that this “war to end all wars” would do just that. Leaders of the victorious nations gathered at Versailles outside Paris to work out the terms of peace, and President Wilson traveled to Europe to ensure it.

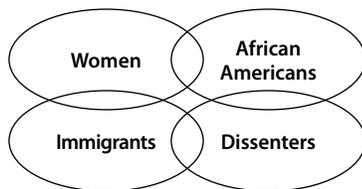
Reading Check

Make Inferences

How did the war open opportunities for African Americans and women?

Lesson 3 Assessment

- 1. Organize Information** Use a graphic organizer to compare the impact of World War I on women, African Americans, immigrants, and dissenters in the United States.



Explain how each group benefited from or was disadvantaged by changes brought about by the war.

- 2. Key Terms and People** For each key term or person in the lesson, write a sentence explaining its significance.
- 3. Evaluate** Do you think that the war had a positive or a negative effect on American society?

Think About:

- how the propaganda campaign influenced people's behavior
- the new job opportunities for African Americans and women
- how the government controlled industry
- how the war affected individuals' civil liberties

- 4. Make Inferences** Why would labor disputes affect the war effort?
- 5. Draw Conclusions** How did the war affect government power? Do you think government actions such as creating the War Industries Board, the Food Administration, and the Fuel Administration, and passing the Espionage and Sedition Acts were necessary in wartime? Explain why or why not.
- 6. Analyze Events** Why did many African Americans move to the North during the war? What effect did the Great Migration have on the North? What factors led to racial tension in northern cities?

Schenck v. United States (1919)

ORIGINS OF THE CASE

Charles Schenck, an official of the U.S. Socialist Party, distributed leaflets that called the draft a “deed against humanity” and compared conscription to slavery, urging conscripts to “assert your rights.” Schenck was convicted of sedition and sentenced to prison, but he argued that the conviction, punishment, and even the law itself violated his right to free speech. The Supreme Court agreed to hear his appeal.

THE RULING

A unanimous court upheld Schenck’s conviction, stating that under wartime conditions, the words in the leaflets were not protected by the right to free speech.

LEGAL REASONING

The Supreme Court’s opinion in the *Schenck* case, written by Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., has become famous as a guide for how the First Amendment defines the right of free speech. Holmes wrote:

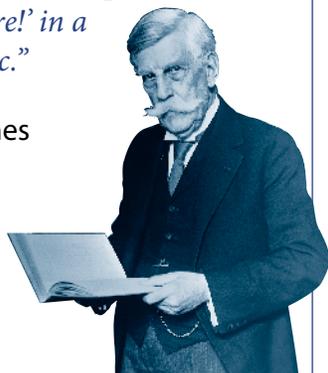
“The question in every case is whether the words used are used in such circumstances and are of such a nature as to create a clear and present danger that they will bring about the substantive evils that Congress has a right to prevent.”

Justice Holmes noted that “in ordinary times” the First Amendment might have protected Schenck, but “[w]hen a nation is at war many things that might be said in time of peace . . . will not be endured.”

The analogy that Holmes used to explain why Schenck could be punished for his words has become probably the best-known observation ever made about free speech:

“Protection of free speech would not protect a man in falsely shouting ‘Fire!’ in a theatre and causing a panic.”

Writing for the Court, Holmes implied that during wartime, Schenck’s leaflet was just that dangerous.



Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr.,
Supreme Court Justice 1902–1932

LEGAL SOURCES

LEGISLATION

U.S. Constitution, First Amendment (1791)

“Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press.”

The Sedition Act (1918)

“(W)hoever . . . shall willfully utter, print, write or publish any disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive language about the form of government, . . . Constitution, . . . military or naval forces, . . . flag, . . . or the uniform of the Army or Navy of the United States . . . shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$10,000 or imprisonment for not more than twenty years, or both.”

RELATED CASES

***Debs v. United States* (1919)**

The conviction against Eugene Debs for speaking against the war and the draft is upheld.

***Frohwerk v. United States* (1919)**

The publisher of a newspaper that had criticized the war is sentenced with a fine and ten years in prison.

***Abrams v. United States* (1919)**

Leaflets criticizing the U.S. expeditionary force in Russia are found to be unprotected by the First Amendment. Holmes writes a dissenting opinion calling for the “free trade of ideas.”

WHY IT MATTERED

During the course of World War I, the federal government brought approximately 2,000 prosecutions for violations of the Espionage Act of 1917 or the Sedition Act of 1918, the same laws under which it convicted Schenck, Debs, and Frohwerk.

By the fall of 1919, however, Holmes had changed his mind. The case of *Abrams v. United States* concerned leaflets that criticized President Wilson’s “capitalistic” government for sending troops to put down the Russian Revolution. Justice Holmes, joined by Justice Louis Brandeis, dissented from the majority of the Court, which upheld the conviction. In his dissent, Holmes emphasized the importance of a free exchange of ideas so that truth will win out in the intellectual marketplace. His reasoning won him acclaim as a protector of free speech.

The belief that truth will eventually win out in the marketplace of ideas has become important legal justification for promoting freedom of speech.



Eugene Debs was arrested for antiwar speeches like the one he gave at this 1916 presidential campaign stop.

HISTORICAL IMPACT

Disagreements about what kinds of speech are “free” under the First Amendment continue. During the 1950s, when people were jailed for supporting communism, and during the Vietnam War, when war protestors supported draft resistance, these issues again reached the Supreme Court.

The Court has also been asked to decide if young people in schools have the same First Amendment rights as adults. In *Tinker v. Des Moines School District* (1969), the Court ordered a school to readmit students who had been suspended for wearing black armbands in protest of the war in Vietnam.

This so-called symbolic speech, such as wearing an armband or burning a draft card or a flag to express an opinion, has sparked heated debate. In *Texas v. Johnson* (1989), the Court, by a narrow five to four vote, invalidated a law under which a man who burned an American flag to protest Reagan administration policies had been convicted. The decision so outraged some people that members of Congress considered amending the Constitution to prohibit any “physical desecration” of the flag. The amendment did not pass. Our freedoms of expression continue to depend upon the words in the first article of the Bill of Rights, written more than 200 years ago.



In 1965 Mary Beth Tinker and her brother, John, were suspended from school for wearing armbands that symbolically criticized the Vietnam War.

Critical Thinking

1. Connect to History Read Justice Holmes’s dissent in *Abrams v. United States*. Compare it with the opinion he wrote in *Schenck v. United States*. Explain the major difference or similarity in the two opinions.

2. Connect to Today Use the library or Internet to research articles about recent free speech issues. Select an issue—such as whether the press should have freedom to publish information that could put national security at risk—to discuss as a class. Work in groups to propose a point of view on the issue, and develop as many arguments as you can to defend it. Then present a debate to the class.

Wilson Fights for Peace

The Big Idea

European leaders opposed most of Wilson's peace plan, and the U.S. Senate failed to ratify the peace treaty.

Why It Matters Now

Many of the nationalist issues left unresolved after World War I continue to trouble the world today.

Key Terms and People

Fourteen Points

self-determination

League of Nations

Georges Clemenceau

David Lloyd George

Treaty of Versailles

reparations

war-guilt clause

Henry Cabot Lodge

One American's Story

In January 1918, at the magnificent Palace of Versailles outside Paris, President Wilson tried to persuade the Allies to construct a just and lasting peace and to establish a League of Nations. Colonel E. M. House, a native of Texas and a member of the American delegation to Versailles, later wrote about the conference.

“How splendid it would have been had we blazed a new and better trail! . . . It may be that Wilson might have had the power and influence if he had remained in Washington and kept clear of the Conference. When he stepped from his lofty pedestal and wrangled with representatives of other states, upon equal terms, he became as common clay. . . .



Colonel Edward M. House was a friend and adviser to President Woodrow Wilson.

To those who are saying that the Treaty is bad and should never have been made and that it will involve Europe in infinite difficulties in its enforcement, I feel like admitting it. But I would also say in reply that empires cannot be shattered and new states raised upon their ruins without disturbance.”

—Colonel E. M. House, quoted in *Hooray for Peace, Hurrah for War*

House saw what happened when Wilson's idealism ran up against practical politics. The Allied victors, vengeful toward Germany after four years of warfare, rejected most of Wilson's peace program.

Wilson Presents His Plan

Rejection was probably the last thing Wilson expected when he arrived in Europe. Everywhere he went, people gave him a hero's welcome. Italians displayed his picture in their windows. Parisians scattered flowers in the street. Representatives of one group after another, including Armenians, Jews, Ukrainians, and Poles, spoke to him. They appealed for his help in setting up independent nations for themselves.

FOURTEEN POINTS Even before the war was over, Wilson presented his vision for the postwar world. On January 8, 1918, he presented his **Fourteen Points** plan to Congress. The first several points were issues that Wilson believed had to be addressed to prevent another war. He suggested banning secret agreements between nations. He proposed lower tariffs to facilitate free trade. He also called for military cutbacks and freedom of the seas.

Several other points focused on the need to resolve national border disputes. His plan also proposed settlements for colonial peoples who wished to be independent. Wilson suggested that colonial policies should consider

Document-Based Investigation Historical Source

The Fourteen Points

In addition to outlining specific proposals for peace, the Fourteen Points marked a new philosophy—that the foreign policy of a democratic nation should be based on a sense of morality, not just national interests.

“We entered this war because violations of right had occurred which touched us to the quick and made the life of our own people impossible unless they were corrected and the world secured once for all against their recurrence. What we demand in this war, therefore, is nothing peculiar to ourselves. It is that the world be made fit and safe to live in; and particularly that it be made safe for every peace-loving nation which, like our own, wishes to live its own life, determine its own institutions, be assured of justice and fair dealing by the other peoples of the world as against force and selfish aggression.”

—Woodrow Wilson, from the “Fourteen Points”

Goals of the Fourteen Points

1. Public diplomatic negotiations and an end to secret treaties
2. Freedom of navigation on the seas
3. Free trade among nations
4. Reduction of armaments to the level needed for domestic safety
5. Fair resolution of colonial claims that arose because of the war
6. Evacuation of Russia and restoration of its conquered territories
7. Preservation of Belgium's sovereignty
8. Restoration of France's territory, including Alsace-Lorraine
9. Redrawing Italy's borders according to nationalities
10. Divide up Austria-Hungary according to nationalities
11. Redraw the borders of the Balkan states according to nationalities
12. Self-determination for Turks and other nationalities under Turkish rule
13. Creation of an independent Polish nation
14. Creation of a League of Nations

Analyze Historical Sources

How do Wilson's ideas for foreign policy in the Fourteen Points reflect the democratic ideals expressed in the nation's founding documents?

Woodrow Wilson (1856–1924)



At the end of the war, President Wilson wanted the United States to become more involved in international affairs. He believed the nation had a moral duty to

help maintain peace in the world. Wilson's sense of moral purpose had a lasting influence on American foreign policy.

Background

Few ethnic groups have been as successful in influencing foreign policy as were Polish Americans after World War I. The re-creation of Poland has been linked to the Wilson administration's interest in securing the Polish American vote.

the interests of the colonial peoples as well as the interests of the imperialist powers. Wilson believed strongly in **self-determination**—the right of people to choose their own political status. He wanted groups that claimed distinct ethnic identities to be able to form their own nation-states or decide for themselves to what nations they would belong.

The final point called for the creation of an international organization. Its purpose would be to address diplomatic crises like those that had sparked the war. This **League of Nations** would provide a forum for nations to discuss and settle their differences without having to resort to war.

THE PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE

Wilson planned to present his Fourteen Points to world leaders at a peace conference in Paris in January 1919. Leaders from 32 nations attended. They represented about three-quarters of the world's population. For example, delegates from Poland attended the conference seeking independence. Poland had been divided between Germany and Russia during the war. Also attending were representatives from several Central European Slavic groups.

Contrary to custom, the peace conference did not include the defeated Central powers. Nor did it include Russia, which was now under the control of a Communist government, or many of the smaller Allied nations. From the beginning, the negotiations were dominated by leaders of the four major Allied countries: the United States, Great Britain, France, and Italy. Together, these leaders became known as the "Big Four." Wilson was an idealist. He

Aims at the Paris Peace Conference



(left to right) David Lloyd George, Georges Clemenceau, and Woodrow Wilson in Paris in 1919

Wilson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to create a League of Nations • to ensure Germany was not destroyed • to avoid blaming Germany for the war
Clemenceau	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to take revenge on and punish Germany • to reclaim Alsace-Lorraine for France • to avoid creation of the League of Nations • to gain reparations • to disband the German army and prevent future attacks
Lloyd George	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to achieve a "just" peace that would satisfy those who wanted to "make Germany pay" but leave Germany strong enough to trade • to retain land for Britain's empire • to protect Britain's naval supremacy

Reading Check
Analyze Motives
Why did the Allies
reject Wilson's plan?

hoped that the other leaders would share his dream of restoring peace to Europe without punishing Germany too harshly.

Wilson was naive about the political aspects of securing a peace treaty. This was shown by his failure to understand the anger felt by the Allied leaders. The French premier, **Georges Clemenceau** (klēm'ən-sō'), had lived through two German invasions of France. He was determined to prevent future invasions. **David Lloyd George**, the British prime minister, had just won reelection on the slogan "Make Germany Pay." The Italian prime minister, Vittorio Orlando, wanted control of Austrian-held territory.

These differences of opinion created tension within the Big Four. Eventually, Lloyd George persuaded Clemenceau to agree to the League of Nations and a more lenient peace treaty. Also, in order to get others to agree to establish the League of Nations, Wilson had to give up most of his Fourteen Points.

Debate over the Treaty of Versailles

On June 28, 1919, the Big Four and the leaders of the defeated nations gathered in the Hall of Mirrors of the Palace of Versailles (vər-sī') to sign the peace treaty. They had suffered four years of devastating warfare. Everyone hoped that the treaty would create stability for a rebuilt Europe. Instead, anger held sway.

PROVISIONS OF THE TREATY The **Treaty of Versailles** established nine new nations—including Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia. It changed the boundaries of other nations. It carved areas out of the Ottoman Empire and gave them to France and Great Britain as mandates, or temporary colonies. Those two Allies were to administer their respective mandates until the areas were ready for self-rule and then independence.

The treaty barred Germany from maintaining an army, and it required Germany to return the region of Alsace-Lorraine to France. It also compelled Germany to pay **reparations**, or war damages, to the Allies in the amount of \$33 billion.

THE TREATY'S WEAKNESSES This treatment of Germany weakened the ability of the Treaty of Versailles to provide a lasting peace in Europe. Several basic flaws in the treaty sowed the seeds of postwar international problems. These problems eventually would lead to the Second World War.

First, the treaty humiliated Germany. It contained a **war-guilt clause**. This clause forced Germany to admit sole responsibility for starting World War I and causing the resulting damage. German militarism had played a major role in igniting the war. However, other European nations had been guilty of provoking diplomatic crises before the war. Furthermore, there was no way Germany could pay the huge financial reparations. Germany was stripped of its colonial possessions in the Pacific, which might have helped it pay its reparations bill.

In addition, for three years the Russians had fought on the side of the Allies. Russia suffered higher casualties than any other nation. However,

Russia was excluded from the peace conference. As a result, it lost more territory than Germany did. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (or Soviet Union), as Russia was officially called after 1922, became determined to regain its former territory.

Finally, the treaty ignored the claims of colonized people for self-determination. One example was in Southeast Asia. There, the Vietnamese people were beginning to demand the same political rights enjoyed by people in Western nations.

OPPOSITION TO THE TREATY When Wilson returned to the United States, he faced strong opposition to the treaty. Some people, including Herbert Hoover, believed it was too harsh. Hoover noted, “The economic consequences alone will pull down all Europe and thus injure the United States.”

POINT



COUNTERPOINT

“The League of Nations was the world’s best hope for lasting peace.”

President Wilson campaigned for the League of Nations. He explained that it was “necessary to meet the differing and unexpected contingencies” that could threaten world peace. Wilson believed that the League would create a forum where nations could talk through their disagreements. He also hoped it would provide collective security. He saw this as a way for nations to “respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all members of the League.” Wilson believed the League could prevent devastating warfare.

Critics complained that membership in the League would limit American independence in international affairs. However, Wilson argued that League membership included “a moral, not a legal, obligation.” Congress would be free to decide its own course of action. Wilson tried to assure Congress as well as the general public that the League was “not a straitjacket, but a vehicle of life.” It was also “a definite guaranty . . . against the things that have just come near bringing the whole structure of civilization into ruin.”

“The League of Nations posed a threat to U.S. self-determination.”

Senator William Borah was one of the foremost critics of the Treaty of Versailles because he objected to U.S. membership in the League of Nations. Borah feared that membership in the League “would draw America away from her isolation and into the internal affairs and concerns of Europe” and involve the United States in foreign wars. “Once having surrendered and become a part of the European concerns,” Borah wondered, “where, my friends, are you going to stop?”

Many opponents also feared that the League would nullify the Monroe Doctrine. They believed the League would limit “the right of our people to govern themselves free from all restraint, legal or moral, of foreign powers.”

Wilson argued that the League of Nations would have no such power of restraint. However, Borah was not convinced. He responded to Wilson’s argument by asking, “What will your League amount to if it does not contain powers that no one dreams of giving it?”

Critical Thinking

1. Connect to History Both supporters and opponents of the League hoped to preserve peace. How did each group propose to secure peace for the United States?

2. Connect to Today What are some contemporary arguments against United States participation in international organizations such as the United Nations or the World Court?

Others believed the treaty was a sell-out to imperialism. They thought it simply exchanged one set of colonial rulers for another.

Some ethnic groups in the United States objected to the treaty and tried to block its passage in the Senate. They objected to the new national boundaries established by the treaty. They argued that the new boundaries did not satisfy their particular demands for self-determination. For example, many Armenian Americans feared that the treaty left their homeland open to domination by the Soviet Union. Italian Americans were angry that the Italian city of Fiume was excluded from Italy's control. Irish Americans criticized the president for failing to consider Irish independence in the peace settlement. Syrian Americans, Greek Americans, and Lithuanian Americans also fought against ratification of the treaty.

The main domestic opposition, however, centered on the issue of the League of Nations. A few opponents believed that the League threatened the U.S. foreign policy of isolationism. Conservative senators, headed by **Henry Cabot Lodge**, were suspicious of the provision for joint economic and military action against aggression, even though it was voluntary. They wanted the constitutional right of Congress to declare war included in the treaty.

WILSON REFUSES TO COMPROMISE Wilson unwisely ignored the Republican majority in the Senate when he chose the members of the American delegation. If he had been more willing to accept a compromise on the League, it would have been more likely that the Senate would have approved the treaty. Wilson, however, was exhausted from his efforts at Versailles.

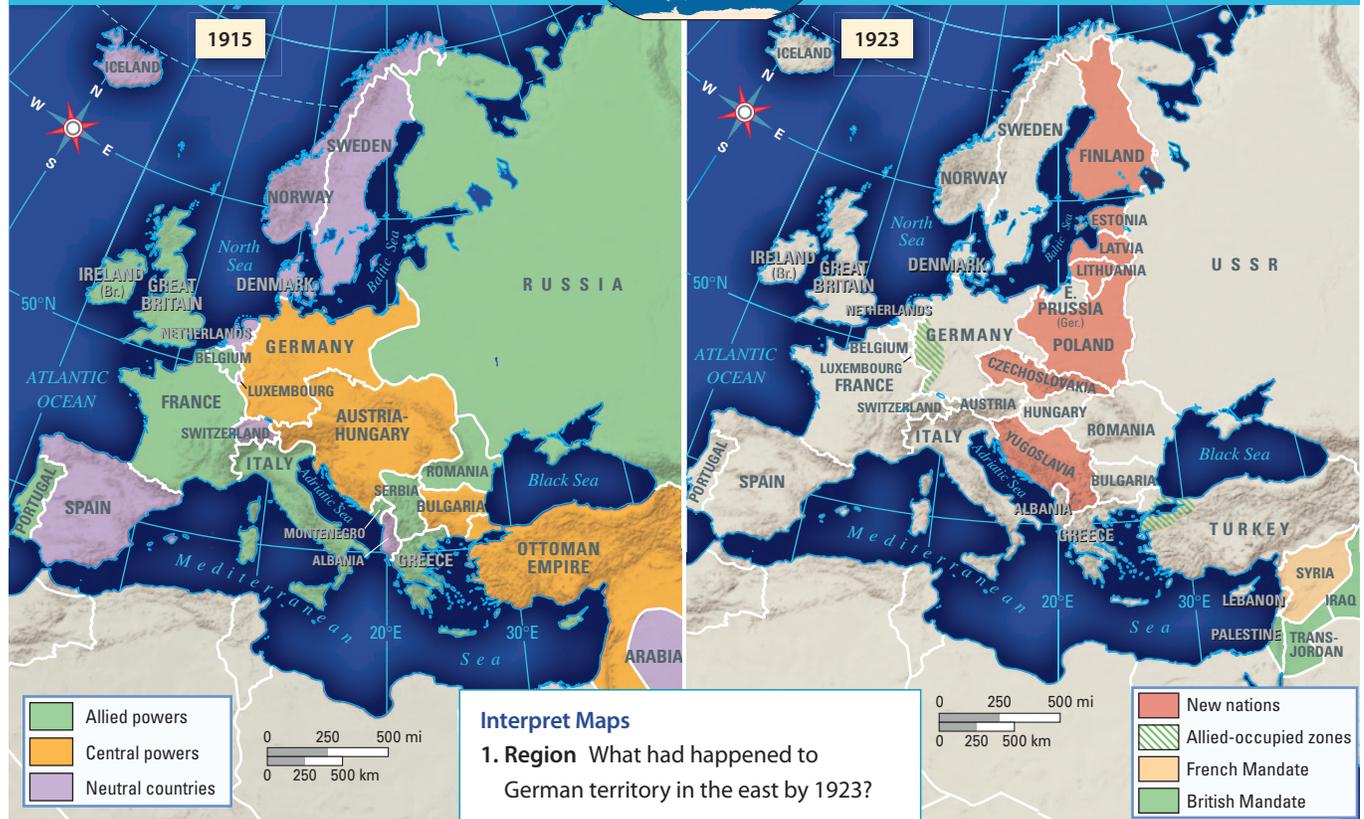
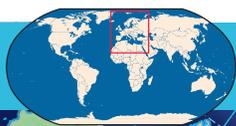
Despite ill health, Wilson set out in September 1919 on an 8,000-mile tour. He delivered 34 speeches in about 3 weeks, explaining why the United States should join the League of Nations. On October 2 Wilson suffered a stroke (a ruptured blood vessel to the brain). He lay partially paralyzed for more than two months, unable to even meet with his cabinet. His once-powerful voice was no more than a thick whisper.

The treaty came up for a vote in the Senate in November 1919. Senator Lodge introduced a number of amendments. The most important one

Major Provisions of the Treaty of Versailles

Military changes	The treaty limited the German army to 100,000 men, with no tanks or heavy artillery. It also limited the German navy to 15,000 men and banned Germany from having an air force.
Territory changes	The treaty required Germany to cede land to France, Denmark, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Belgium. It also required Germany to surrender all colonies to the control of the League of Nations. Finally, Germany and Austria were prohibited from uniting.
War-guilt provisions	The treaty's war-guilt clause held Germany solely responsible for all losses and damages suffered by the Allies during the war. It required Germany to pay reparations of \$33 billion.
League of Nations	The treaty initially did not permit Germany to join the League.

Europe and the Middle East



Interpret Maps

- Region** What had happened to German territory in the east by 1923?
- Location** Which new nation absorbed Serbia and Montenegro by 1923?

Reading Check
Make Inferences
 Why were some people afraid of the treaty's influence over American foreign policy?

qualified the terms under which the United States would enter the League of Nations. It was feared that League membership would force the United States to make foreign policy in agreement with the League. The Senate rejected the amendments. It also failed to ratify the treaty.

Wilson refused to compromise. "I will not play for position," he proclaimed. "This is not a time for tactics. It is a time to stand square. I can stand defeat; I cannot stand retreat from conscientious duty." The treaty again came up for a vote in March 1920. The Senate again rejected the Lodge amendments. Again it failed to gather enough votes for ratification.

The United States finally signed a separate treaty with Germany in 1921, after Wilson was no longer president. The United States never joined the League of Nations. However, it had an unofficial observer at League meetings.

The Legacy of the War

When World War I ended, many Americans looked forward to a return of what Warren G. Harding called "normalcy." However, both the United States and the rest of the world had been utterly transformed by the war. World War I had devastated many European economies. The war had also revealed the military and industrial potential of the United States. The combination

Vocabulary

fascist
characteristic of or relating to fascism, a system of totalitarian government

Reading Check

Analyze Effects
How did World War I transform the United States into a world power?

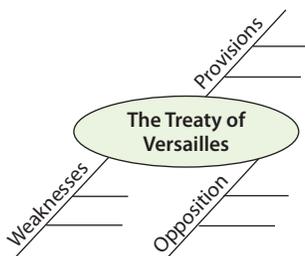
of these factors meant that the United States emerged from the war as a new world power. The war had strengthened the power of government in the United States. It had also accelerated social change, especially for African Americans and women. In addition, the propaganda campaign had provoked powerful fears and antagonisms that were left unchanneled when the war finally came to an end.

In Europe, the destruction and massive loss of life severely damaged social and political systems. In many countries, the war created political instability and violence that persisted for decades. During the war years, the first Communist state was established in Russia, while after the war, militant fascist organizations seized control in Italy, Spain, and Germany.

Americans began to call World War I “the war to end all wars,” in the hope that humanity would never again fight such a war. Although the United States had returned mostly to a policy of isolationism, unresolved issues in Europe would eventually drag America into an even wider war. The Treaty of Versailles had settled nothing. The redrawn maps of Europe and European colonial possessions created a new set of problems. In addition, the reparations imposed on Germany had crippled its economy, and the war-guilt clause caused much anger and hostility there. In fact, some European nations longed to resume the fight, and the League of Nations did not have the power to stop them. The ominous shape of things to come emerged in the writings of an Austrian named Adolf Hitler, an angry veteran of World War I: “It cannot be that two million [Germans] should have fallen in vain. . . . No, we do not pardon, we demand—vengeance!” Two decades after the end of the Great War, Adolf Hitler’s desire for vengeance would plunge the world into an even greater war, in which the United States would play a leading role.

Lesson 4 Assessment

1. **Organize Information** Fill in a spider diagram with information about the provisions and weaknesses of the Treaty of Versailles and opposition to it.



Do you think Congress should not have ratified the treaty?

2. **Key Terms and People** For each key term or person in the lesson, write a sentence explaining its significance.

3. **Predict** Predict how the Treaty of Versailles would affect international conflicts after World War I. Give reasons for your predictions.

Think About:

- what Germans thought of the war-guilt clause, reparations, and the loss of territory
- the redrawn map of Europe
- how the League of Nations affected international relations
- the rise of authoritarian governments and ideologies in Europe following World War I

4. **Synthesize** What was Wilson’s philosophy of foreign policy? How did he reflect it in the way that he dealt with Germany and the other Central powers?
5. **Summarize** Why did so many Americans oppose the Treaty of Versailles?
6. **Develop Historical Perspective** Why didn’t the Treaty of Versailles lay the foundations for a lasting peace?

Module 7 Assessment

Key Terms and People

For each key term or person below, write a sentence explaining its connection to World War I.

1. nationalism
2. trench warfare
3. Zimmermann note
4. Selective Service Act
5. John J. Pershing
6. armistice
7. Espionage and Sedition Acts
8. Great Migration
9. Fourteen Points
10. Treaty of Versailles

Main Ideas

Use your notes and the information in the module to answer the following questions.

World War I Begins

1. Where did Germany begin its war offensive, and what happened there?
2. Why did the war in Europe become a stalemate?
3. Describe some ways in which World War I threatened the lives of civilians on both sides of the Atlantic.
4. Why did the Allies reject President Wilson's "peace without victory" plan?
5. What were the main reasons for U.S. involvement in the war? How did events in Russia in 1917 lead the United States to enter the war?

The United States Joins the War

6. How did the United States mobilize a strong military during World War I?
7. What new weapons made fighting in World War I deadlier than fighting in previous wars?
8. How did American troops help the Allies break the stalemate with Germany?

The War at Home

9. Why did the U.S. government impose regulations on industrial and food production during the war? What was the impact of the regulation for the Allies?
10. How did World War I affect the economy of the United States?
11. What methods did the U.S. government use to finance and direct public support of the war?
12. What effect did the war have on the lives of recent immigrants in the United States?
13. What events during the war undermined civil liberties?

Wilson Fights for Peace

14. What were the goals of the Fourteen Points and the League of Nations? How did Wilson's goals for peace differ from those of the other Allies?
15. What were the major effects of the Treaty of Versailles?
16. How did Wilson's support for the League of Nations stand in the way of Senate support for the Treaty of Versailles?

Critical Thinking

1. **Analyze Causes** In a chart, provide causes for the listed effects of World War I.

Causes	Effects
	Russia's new government withdraws Russian army from the eastern front
	U.S. enters World War I
	German advance into France stopped
	Germany collapses
	U.S. economy becomes more productive

Module 7 Assessment, continued

- Analyze Causes** Do you think that Germany's submarine warfare was an appropriate response to the British blockade?
- Make Inferences** How did the United States intend to "make the world safe for democracy" when most of the European countries on both sides of the war were monarchies?
- Evaluate** Was trench warfare effective as a military strategy in World War I? Explain.
- Analyze Issues** Do you think it was right that some people, such as Native Americans, willing to serve the nation in war were excluded from full citizenship? Explain why or why not.
- Evaluate** Why do you think General Pershing refused to put American troops into foreign units? Do you think his decision to train his troops in Europe rather than have them immediately join the Allies was wise? Explain.
- Predict** Could the Allies have won the war without the help of the United States? Explain why or why not.
- Draw Conclusions** Why do you think it was necessary for the government to set prices and production controls for food and fuel during the war?
- Form Opinions** Do you think that that government propaganda and positive stories in the media were needed to generate support for the war? Explain.
- Interpret Maps** Look at the maps of Europe before and after World War I in Lesson 4. Describe the changes in national boundaries after the Versailles peace settlement. How might the redrawn map of Europe lead to new conflict among European powers?
- Analyze Motives** Why did some special interest groups work to influence U.S. foreign policy and public opinion in World War I?
- Evaluate** Explain the significance of President Wilson's foreign policy decisions during and after World War I. Which principles do you think should guide American diplomacy: moral and legal ideals or national interest?
- Develop Historical Perspective** Between 1914 and 1920, Americans debated the role their country should have in world affairs. From the events of World War I, what might Americans have learned about intervention in the affairs of other nations?

Engage with History

Imagine you are a diplomat participating in the peace talks at the end of World War I. Decide whether you support or oppose the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles. As you determine your position, think of some of the reasons different nations had for supporting or opposing measures, such as creating the League of Nations, to prevent future wars. Then write a speech convincing the other participants to adopt your point of view. If you support the treaty, explain why. If you oppose it, offer an alternate version. Use persuasive language and clear examples.

Focus on Writing

Given its history of neutrality, was the United States justified in going to war against Germany and the other Central powers? Write an essay, arguing for or against American involvement in World War I. Use information from the module to support your argument.

Multimedia Activity

Use library and Internet resources to find out about other world conflicts in which the United States became involved. What were the United States' motives for getting involved in each of these wars? With a partner, write and record a short podcast in which you describe the different motives, and debate whether these motives would be valid today.



Dear home:
**LETTERS FROM
WWI**

When U.S. troops arrived in Europe in 1917 to fight in World War I, the war had been dragging on for nearly three years. The American soldiers suddenly found themselves in the midst of chaos. Each day, they faced the threats of machine-gun fire, poison gas, and aerial attacks. Still, the arrival of American reinforcements had sparked a new zeal among the Allies, who believed the new forces could finally turn the tide in their favor. The letters soldiers wrote to their families back home reveal

the many emotions they felt on the battlefield: confusion about their surroundings, fear for their own safety, concern for friends and loved ones, and hope that the war would soon be over.

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“I have been on every front in France. You can’t imagine how torn up this country really is. Every where there are wire entanglements and trenches and dugouts. Even out of the war zone there are entanglements and dugouts to protect the civilians from air raids.”

—Corp. Albert Smith, U.S. soldier



Letter from France

Read the document to learn about one soldier’s observations of wartime life.



Over There

Watch the video to learn about the experiences of American soldiers on the way to Europe and upon their arrival.



War on the Western Front

Watch the video to hear one soldier’s vivid account of battle and its aftermath.



Surrender!

Watch the video to experience soldiers’ reactions to the news that the war was finally over.

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ISBN 978-0-544-66906-2

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