

The First World War

Domestic life is greatly affected as the U.S. helps the Allies achieve victory in World War I. The Treaty of Versailles punishes Germany, but is never ratified by the U.S. Senate.

The First World War

SECTION 1 World War I Begins

SECTION 2 American Power Tips the Balance

SECTION 3 The War at Home

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Section 1

World War I Begins

As World War I intensifies, the United States is forced to abandon its neutrality.

SECTION

1 World War I Begins

Causes of World War I

Nationalism

- **Nationalism**—devotion to interests, culture of one's nation
- Nationalism leads to competition, antagonism between nations
- Many fear Germany's growing power in Europe
- Various ethnic groups resent domination, want independence
- Russia sees self as protector of all Slavic peoples

Imperialism

- Germany industrializes, competes with France, Britain for colonies

Continued . . .



SECTION

1

continued Causes of World War I**Militarism**

- Cost of building, defending empires leads to more military spending
- **Militarism**—development of armed forces, their use in diplomacy
- By 1890, Germany has strongest army on European continent
 - competes with Britain for sea power
 - leads other powers to join naval arms race

Alliance System

- Triple Entente or **Allies**—France, Britain, Russia
- Germany, Austria-Hungary, Ottoman Empire are **Central Powers**
- Alliances give security; nations unwilling to tip balance of power

SECTION

1

An Assassination Leads to War

Alliances Complicate Conflict

- Balkan Peninsula known as “the powder keg of Europe” because:
 - ethnic rivalries among Balkan peoples
 - leading powers have economic, political interests
- **Archduke Franz Ferdinand** of Austria shot by Serbian nationalist
- Austria-Hungary declares war on Serbia, expects short war
- Alliance system pulls one nation after another into war

SECTION

1

The Fighting Starts

Early Battles

- Germany's Schlieffen Plan: hold Russia, defeat France, then Russia
- German troops sweep through Belgium, cause major refugee crisis
- By spring 1915, 2 parallel systems of trenches cross France
- “**No man's land**”—barren expanse of mud between opposing trenches
- Scale of killing horrific, fighting inconclusive
- Armies fight to gain only yards of ground in bloody **trench warfare**

SECTION

1

Americans Question Neutrality

Divided Loyalties

- Socialists, pacifists, many ordinary people against U.S. in war
- Naturalized citizens concerned about effect on country of birth
- Many feel ties to British ancestry, language, democracy, legal system
- U.S. has stronger economic ties with Allies than with Central Powers

SECTION

1

The War Hits Home

The U.S. Prepares

- By 1917, U.S. has mobilized for war against Central Powers to:
 - ensure Allied repayment of debts
 - prevent Germans threat to U.S. shipping

The British Blockade

- British blockade, mine North Sea, stop war supplies reaching Germany
 - also stop food, fertilizer
- U. S. merchant ships seldom reach Germany
- Germany has difficulty importing food, fertilizer; by 1917, famine

Continued . . .



NEXT

SECTION

1

continued **The War Hits Home****German U-Boat Response**

- Germany sets up U-boat counterblockade of Britain
- U-boat sinks British liner *Lusitania*; 128 Americans among the dead
 - U.S. public opinion turns against Germany
- President Wilson protests, but Germany continues to sink ships
- Germany asks U.S. to get Britain to end food blockade
 - otherwise will renew unrestricted submarine war

The 1916 Election

- Democrat Wilson defeats Republican Charles Evans Hughes

SECTION

1

The United States Declares War

German Provocation

- Wilson tries to mediate, calls for “a peace between equals”
- Kaiser announces U-boats will sink all ships in British waters
- **Zimmerman note**—proposes alliance of Germany, Mexico against U.S.
- Four unarmed American merchant ships sunk
- Russian monarchy replaced with representative government
 - war of democracies against monarchies

America Acts

- Wilson calls for war to make world “safe for democracy”



Section 2

American Power Tips the Balance

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

SECTION

2

American Power Tips the Balance

America Mobilizes

Raising an Army

- **Selective Service Act**—men register, randomly chosen for service
- African Americans in segregated units, excluded from navy, marines
- Soldiers train for 8 months, often drill with fake weapons
- Women in army, navy, marines as nurses secretaries, phone operators

Mass Production

- To expand fleet to transport men, food, equipment to Europe, U.S.:
 - gives special status to shipyard workers
 - uses fabrication techniques
 - takes over commercial, private ships



SECTION

2

America Turns the Tide

U.S. Navy Contributions

- **Convoy system**—destroyers escort merchant ships across Atlantic
 - losses drop dramatically
- Navy helps lay mines across North Sea, keep U-boats out of Atlantic
- 1918, Germans have difficulty replacing boats, trained submariners

Fighting in Europe

- After 2 1/2 years fighting, Allied forces are exhausted, demoralized
- American troops bring numbers, freshness, enthusiasm



SECTION

2

Fighting “Over There”

Doughboys in Europe

- **General John J. Pershing** leads **American Expeditionary Force**
 - soldiers impressed by cities, shocked by battle

New Weapons

- By 1917, British learn to use tanks to clear path for infantry
- Early planes flimsy, only do scouting; later ones stronger, faster
 - carry machine guns, heavy bomb loads
- American ace **Eddie Rickenbacker**, other pilots in dogfights
- Observation balloons used extensively, prime target of ace pilots



SECTION

2

The War Introduces New Hazards

New Problems of War

- New weapons and tactics lead to horrific injuries, hazards
- Troops amidst filth, pests, polluted water, poison gas, dead bodies
- Constant bombardment, battle fatigue produce “shell shock”
- Physical problems include dysentery, trench foot, trench mouth

SECTION

2

American Troops Go on the Offensive

Allies Stop German Advance

- Russia pulls out of war 1917; Germans shift armies to western front
 - come within 50 miles of Paris
- Americans help stop German advance, turn tide against Central Powers

American War Hero

- **Conscientious objector**—person who opposes war on moral grounds
- Originally a conscientious objector, **Alvin York** decides WWI is just
- Alone kills 25 Germans; with 6 others, captures 132 prisoners
- Promoted to sergeant; becomes U.S. celebrity

Continued . . .



NEXT

SECTION

2

continued **American Troops Go on the Offensive****The Collapse of Germany**

- November 3, 1918, Austria-Hungary surrenders to Allies
- German sailors, soldiers rebel; socialists establish German republic
 - kaiser gives up throne
- Germans exhausted; **armistice**, or truce, signed November 11, 1918

The Final Toll

- World War I bloodiest war in history to date
 - more than half of 22 million dead are civilians
 - 20 million more are wounded
- 10 million people become refugees

Section 3

The War at Home

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

SECTION

3 The War at Home

Congress Gives Power to Wilson

War Industries Board

- Economy shifts from producing consumer goods to war supplies
- Congress gives president direct control of much of the economy
- **War Industries Board** is main regulatory body
 - urges mass-production, standardizing products
- **Bernard M. Baruch**, prosperous businessman, is head of board
- Railroad Administration, Fuel Administration also control industries
- Conservation measures adopted by public, nation

Continued . . .



SECTION

3

continued **Congress Gives Power to Wilson****War Economy**

- Industrial wages rise; offset by rising costs of food, housing
- Large corporations make enormous profits
- Unions boom from dangerous conditions, child labor, unfair pay
- Wilson creates National War Labor Board to settle disputes

Food Administration

- Food Administration under Herbert Hoover works to produce, save food
- Encourages public conservation, increase of farm production

SECTION

3

Selling the War

War Financing

- U.S. spends \$35.5 billion on war effort
- 1/3 paid through taxes, 2/3 borrowed through sale of war bonds

Committee on Public Information

- **Propaganda**—biased communication designed to influence people
- Former muckraker **George Creel** heads Committee on Public Information
- Creel produces visual works, printed matter to promote war
- Gets volunteers to speak about war, distribute materials

SECTION

3

Attacks on Civil Liberties Increase

Anti-Immigrant Hysteria

- Attacks against immigrants, especially from Germany, Austria-Hungary
- Suppression of German culture—music, language, literature

Espionage and Sedition Acts

- **Espionage and Sedition Acts**—person can be fined, imprisoned for:
 - interfering with war effort, speaking against government
- Violate 1st amendment; prosecute loosely defined antiwar activities
 - target socialists, labor leaders



SECTION

3

The War Encourages Social Change

African Americans and the War

- Du Bois urges support for war to strengthen call for racial justice
- Most African Americans support war
- Some think victims of racism should not support racist government

The Great Migration

- **Great Migration**—large-scale movement of Southern blacks to North
 - escape racial discrimination
 - take up new job opportunities
- Press of new migrants intensifies racial tensions in North

Continued . . .



NEXT

SECTION

3

continued **The War Encourages Social Change****Women in the War**

- Many women take jobs in heavy industry previously held by men
- Many do volunteer work for war effort
- Some active in peace movement; Women's Peace Party founded 1915
- Women's effort bolsters support for suffrage; 19th Amendment passes

The Flu Epidemic

- International flu epidemic of 1918 has devastating effect on economy
- As many as 30 million people die worldwide

Section 4

Wilson Fights for Peace

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

SECTION

4 Wilson Fights for Peace

Wilson Presents His Plan

Fourteen Points

- Wilson's plan for world peace known as **Fourteen Points**
- Points 1–5 propose measures to prevent another war
- 6–13 address how ethnic groups can form own nations or join others
- 14 calls for international organization or **League of Nations**
- League to enable nations to discuss, settle problems without war

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SECTION

4

continued **Wilson Presents His Plan****The Allies Reject Wilson's Plan**

- Wilson fails to grasp anger of Allied leaders against Germany
- French premier **Georges Clemenceau** wants to prevent German invasion
- British Prime Minister **David Lloyd George** wants to “Make Germany Pay”
- Italian Vittorio Orlando wants Austrian-held territory
- Conference excludes Central Powers, Russia, small Allied nations
- Wilson gives up most of his points in return for League of Nations



SECTION

4

Debating the Treaty of Versailles

Provisions of the Treaty

- **Treaty of Versailles** creates 9 new nations, British, French mandates
- Places various conditions on Germany:
 - cannot have an army
 - Alsace-Lorraine returned to France
 - pay **reparations**, or war damages

Continued . . .



NEXT

SECTION

4

continued Debating the Treaty of Versailles**The Treaty's Weaknesses**

- **War-guilt clause**—Germany must accept sole responsibility for war
- Germany cannot pay \$33 billion in reparations that Allies want
- Russia loses more land than Germany; territorial claims ignored
- Colonized people's claims for self-determination ignored

Continued . . .

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SECTION

4

continued **Debating the Treaty of Versailles****Opposition to the Treaty**

- Strong opposition to treaty in U.S.
- Some, like Hoover, think treaty too harsh, fear economic effects
- Some feel treaty exchanged one group of colonial rulers for another
- Some ethnic groups not satisfied with new national borders

Debate over the League of Nations

- Some think League threatens U.S. foreign policy of isolation
- Senators like **Henry Cabot Lodge** mistrust provision for joint action

Continued . . .

NEXT

SECTION

4

continued **Debating the Treaty of Versailles****Wilson Refuses to Compromise**

- Wilson ignores Republicans in Senate when choosing U. S. delegation
- Goes on speaking tour to convince nation to support League
 - has stroke, is temporarily disabled
- November 1919, Lodge introduces amendments to treaty
 - amendments, treaty rejected
- Wilson refuses to compromise
- March 1920, 2nd vote: neither amendments nor treaty approved
- U.S., Germany sign separate treaty; U.S. never joins League



SECTION

4

The Legacy of the War

Consequences of the War

- In U.S., war strengthens military, increases power of government
- Accelerates social change for African Americans, women
- Fears, antagonisms provoked by propaganda remain
- In Europe, destruction, loss of life damage social, political systems
 - Communist, fascist governments form
- Treaty of Versailles does not settle conflicts in Europe



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