



PREPARING FOR THE EXAM

Before understanding how the United States became involved in World War I, it is important to review the basic causes of that war which began in 1914.

For each cause listed, give an example.

Nationalism:

Industrialism:

Imperialism:

Alliances:

Militarism:

Panama took over the canal on December 31, 1914.

THE UNITED STATES AND WORLD WAR I

World War I began in Europe in 1914 and lasted until 1918. The United States did not enter the war until 1917. The financial and human costs of this devastating conflict were enormous.

Causes of World War I

There were several factors that led to the outbreak of war in Europe.

NATIONALISM Strong nationalistic competition had developed among France, Britain, Russia, Austria-Hungary, and Germany, espe-

**READING
STRATEGY****Analyzing Cause and Effect**

Use the text and these three quotes to summarize the steps by which the United States entered World War I. Note the dates on each quote.

"... impartial in thought as well as in action."
—Woodrow Wilson, 1914

"He kept us out of war."
—Wilson campaign slogan, 1916

"The world must be made safe for democracy."
—Wilson request for declaration of war, April 2, 1917

- Did United States policy contradict Wilson's earlier statements and therefore involve the U.S. in the war, OR
- Did circumstances beyond the United States' control lead the nation to break its policy of neutrality?

cially after the unification of Germany in 1871. There was also national unrest within nations. For instance, the Czechs and Slovaks wanted to free themselves from Austro-Hungarian control.

IMPERIALISM Several nations were involved in keen competition for markets and colonies throughout the world.

THE ALLIANCE SYSTEM As national and imperial goals conflicted, two groups of nations organized against each other in an effort to maintain a balance of power. The Triple Alliance consisted of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy. The Triple Entente was made up of France, Russia, and Great Britain. If fighting were to break out, members of either alliance were pledged to help each other.

MILITARISM The early 1900s witnessed a continual buildup of armies and navies. Germany, for instance, tripled naval construction in order to challenge Britain's control of the seas.

Causes of United States Entry into World War I

War broke out in Europe in July 1914, after the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne was assassinated. Because of the alliance system, most major European nations soon joined the conflict. The United States was officially neutral. In 1917, however, the United States was drawn into the war. There were several reasons for this.

CULTURAL LINKS Few Americans were truly neutral. Some sympathized with the **Central Powers**, dominated by Germany and Austria-Hungary. These included German-Americans because of ties to Germany and Irish-Americans because of anti-British feeling. The majority of Americans, however, favored the **Allies**, or the Triple Entente nations. Americans had long-standing cultural ties with Britain. Many also felt loyalty to their first ally, France.

ECONOMIC TIES United States links to the Allies were economic as well as cultural. A British blockade of the North Sea effectively

The United States and World War I



Europe During the War



ANALYZING DOCUMENTS

Examine the map at left, then answer the following questions.

- Which nations were the Allied Powers?
- Which were the Central Powers?
- Which nations remained neutral?

ended American exports to Germany, which dropped in value from about \$345 million in 1914 to \$29 million in 1916. Meanwhile, the value of trade with the Allies increased fourfold. American business and agriculture benefited from this trade, much of it financed by U.S. government loans to the Allies, totaling more than \$2 billion by 1917.

Most Americans did not believe that trade with or loans to the Allies violated the nation's neutrality. In fact, President Wilson and his closest advisers were in favor of the Allies. However, even in the 1916 election for President, Wilson continued to proclaim American neutrality, campaigning on the slogan "He kept us out of war."

PROPAGANDA Aided by their control of the transatlantic cable, the Allies conducted an effective propaganda campaign in the United States. They pictured the war as one of civilized, democratic nations against the barbaric monarchy of Germany.

GERMAN SUBMARINE WARFARE The Germans made frequent use of submarines in World War I. Because a submarine was very vulnerable when surfaced, Germany announced a policy of unrestricted submarine warfare, ignoring international law that required a warship to stop and identify itself before its crew boarded the enemy vessel and to remove the ship's crew before sinking it. Germany's attempt to destroy the British blockade by attacking Allied ships was the single most important reason for American entrance into the war. Wilson still insisted that America as a neutral nation had the right to trade with the nations at war and to send its civilians on ships into war zones.

READING STRATEGY

Organizing Information

Suppose you were a member of Congress in 1917. You must decide whether the United States should go to war against Germany and the other Central Powers.

- Based on the information from this section, which events would influence your decision?

ANALYZING DOCUMENTS

American public opinion was extremely critical of Germany and its use of U-boats. Germany, however, did warn travelers—including passengers of the *Lusitania*—to stay out of the war zone.

NOTICE!

TRAVELLERS intending to embark on the Atlantic voyage are reminded that a state of war exists between Germany and her allies and Great Britain and her allies; that the zone of war includes the waters adjacent to the British Isles; that, in accordance with formal notice given by the Imperial German Government, vessels flying the flag of Great Britain, or of any of her allies, are liable to destruction in those waters and that travellers sailing in the war zone on ships of Great Britain or her allies do so at their own risk.

IMPERIAL GERMAN EMBASSY,
WASHINGTON, D. C., APRIL 22, 1915.

CUNARD



EUROPE VIA LIVERPOOL
LUSITANIA

Fastest and Largest Steamer
now in Atlantic Service Sails
SATURDAY, MAY 1, 10 A. M.
Transylvania - Fri., May 7, 5 P.M.
Orduna, - - - Tues., May 18, 10 A.M.
Tuscania, - - - Fri., May 21, 5 P.M.
LUSITANIA, - Sat., May 29, 10 A.M.
Transylvania, - - - 5 P.M.

ANALYZING DOCUMENTS

"We shall endeavor to keep the United States neutral. In the event of this not succeeding, we make Mexico a proposal of alliance. . . : Make war together, make peace together, . . . and . . . Mexico is to reconquer the lost territory in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona."

—German foreign secretary
Arthur Zimmermann

- What was Germany's first plan concerning the United States?
- If that plan failed, what did Germany propose to do in alliance with Mexico?
- What reaction would this note have had in the United States?

When a German submarine sank the British passenger liner *Lusitania* in 1915, almost 1,200 persons lost their lives, including 128 Americans. Even though the ship was carrying ammunition and Germany had posted warnings, the United States was outraged by the attack on civilians. In 1916, the Germans torpedoed a French steamer, the *Sussex*, with injury to Americans. Wilson threatened to break diplomatic relations with Germany, which then agreed to the Sussex Pledge. This stated that Germany would no longer sink passenger or merchant ships without warning and that the Allies would no longer violate international law with their blockade. Wilson accepted the first part of the pledge but ignored the second.

EVENTS OF 1917 A series of events early in 1917 finally led to America's entry into World War I.

- On February 1, Germany announced a policy of unrestricted submarine warfare. It warned it would attack without warning all vessels headed for Allied ports. The main reason for Germany's decision was that the war was at a stalemate. Germany knew that its move would probably bring the United States into the war. However, Germany believed its U-boats, or submarines, could break the blockade and defeat the Allies before the United States could get troops to the battlefields.
- Two days later, the United States broke diplomatic relations with Germany. Tension and suspicion increased with the **Zimmermann note** of March 1. This was a message from the German foreign

secretary, Arthur Zimmermann, to the German minister in Mexico. It urged a German military alliance with the Mexicans, promising them support in regaining their “lost territories” in the southwestern United States. When the message was made public, Americans reacted angrily.

- Four U.S. merchant ships were sunk by the Germans in March.
- Also in March, the **Russian Revolution** overthrew the czar. It appeared that more democratic forces would take control in Russia, so that if the United States went to war, it would be joining an alliance of democratic nations.

Role of the United States in the War

The United States entered World War I on the side of the Allies in April 1917. But earlier, in 1916, passage of the National Defense Act and the Navy Act, began the expansion of the armed forces. The 1916 Revenue Act was also passed to pay for military expansion.

THE DRAFT ISSUE Even before the entrance of the United States into World War I, the question of how to raise an army was being debated. Those favoring the draft saw it as being fair and democratic, with all Americans serving together. Those opposed to the draft—who preferred that military service be voluntary—viewed the draft as an example of the rich and educated exercising power over the poor, the working class, and immigrants. In May 1917, Congress passed the **Selective Service Act**, which established a draft. Eventually all males between the ages of 18 and 45 had to register. The constitutionality of the draft was challenged but upheld by the Supreme Court.

AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE By the end of the war, 4.8 million Americans had served in the armed forces, 2.8 million of them draftees. Eventually, over 2 million Americans served in France in a separate command, the American Expeditionary Force, led by General John J. Pershing.

The United States supplied fresh troops to a war in which both sides were exhausted by years of trench warfare. Neither side had moved more than a few miles, but casualties were in the millions. The entry of the United States tipped the scale in favor of the Allies. The United States lost about 51,000 men, far fewer than the millions lost by other nations.

MOBILIZING THE ECONOMY To get the nation’s economy geared up for war, certain economic operations were centralized and concentrated through a series of government agencies. Relying on the broad wartime powers of the President, Wilson used the Council of National Defense to oversee these agencies. Government control over the American economy increased vastly during World War I. For the first time, the government entered fields such as housing and labor relations. It also supervised various public utilities, including the telephone and

KEY THEMES AND CONCEPTS

Diversity

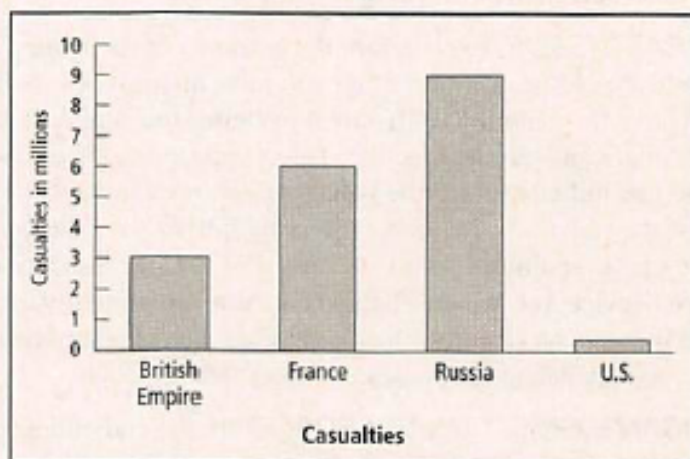
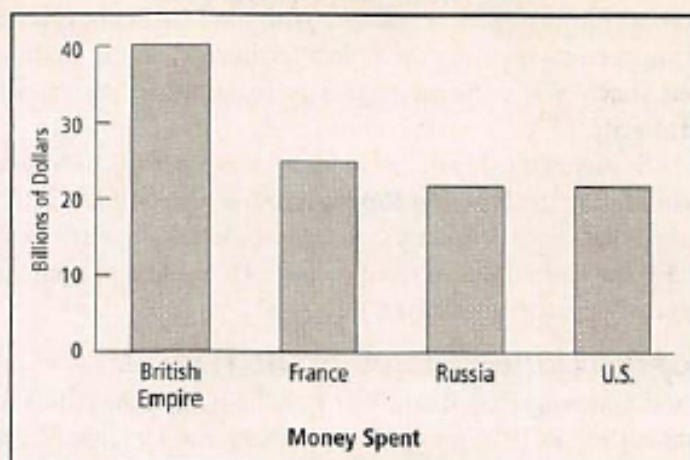
Discrimination in the armed forces denied African Americans the opportunity to serve in combat. Many volunteered to fight with the French as the 369th Infantry Regiment. Though facing combat for the first time, they performed with such skill and bravery that they were awarded the French Croix de Guerre.

ANALYZING DOCUMENTS

Examine the graphs, then answer the questions that follow.

- Approximately how many casualties did Russia suffer in the war?
- Approximately, how much money did the United States spend on the war?

Costs of the War for the Allies



Source: V.I. Exposito, *A Concise History of World War I*

KEY THEMES AND CONCEPTS

Diversity

The entry of the United States into World War I led to a general hostility toward Germans and German Americans. German composers and musicians were banned from symphony concerts. German measles became "liberty measles," and a hamburger (named after the German city of Hamburg) became a "liberty sandwich."

telegraph. About 16 percent of male workers went into the military, and their jobs were filled by women, African Americans, and retirees.

PATRIOTISM To Wilson, World War I was a crusade. He believed that the Allies were fighting the war to end all wars, a war to make the world "safe for democracy." These idealistic goals helped make Wilson the Allies' moral leader. They also helped mobilize the American people to support the first conflict the United States had ever fought outside the Western Hemisphere. The nation geared up for the war with patriotic enthusiasm.

A propaganda campaign organized by the Committee on Public Information encouraged patriotism. Songs, posters, and pamphlets attacked Germany, urged the purchase of Liberty Bonds, and encouraged the conservation of resources. Patriotism was accompanied by an outbreak of anti-German and anti-immigrant hysteria. Americans burned German books, banned the teaching of German in some

schools, and renamed sauerkraut “liberty cabbage.” Nativism was expressed in a 1917 law, passed over Wilson’s veto, that required a literacy test for immigrants.

Wartime Constitutional Issues

This social climate of patriotism and nativism led to actions that restricted some people’s civil rights, usually in the name of national security. Not only were German Americans and other immigrants suspected of being possible traitors, but so were socialists, pacifists, and others who questioned the war.

THE ESPIONAGE AND SEDITION ACTS Two broadly worded acts served to control and punish those who opposed the war effort. The Espionage Act of 1917 made it a crime to interfere with the draft and allowed the postmaster general to bar “treasonous” materials from the mail. The Sedition Act of 1918 made it a crime to speak or publish anything “disloyal, profane . . . or abusive” about the government, Constitution, flag, or military services of the United States.

Under these acts, the government prosecuted more than 2,000 Americans and sent 1,500 of them to jail. Pacifists, socialists, and others seen as extremists suffered the most. A special target was the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), a radical union active in the West. Its leaders were arrested, its strikes broken up, and many of its members interned.

SCHENCK V. UNITED STATES In 1919, the Supreme Court ruled that free speech could be restricted during wartime in the landmark case *Schenck v. United States*. In a unanimous decision, Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote, “Free speech would not protect a man falsely shouting *fire* in a theater and causing a panic.” Holmes went on to say that Congress has the right to prevent words that would cause “a clear and present danger.” That same year, the Court upheld the Sedition Act, but in that decision the minority expressed concern that freedom of expression was endangered.

THE RED SCARE 1918–1919 In 1917, the Russian Revolution resulted in the communist overthrow of the czar. The communist system was openly hostile to American values and beliefs, such as capitalism, private ownership of property, and certain freedoms. By 1918, an intense fear of communism swept the United States, and many Americans began to call for the imprisonment or exile of communists in the United States, even though the number of American

ANALYZING DOCUMENTS

In wartime (particularly during the Civil War, World War I, and World War II), civil liberties were restricted. The Red Scare and McCarthyism that followed each of the world wars also led to violations of certain civil liberties.

“Words can be weapons. . . . The question . . . is whether the words used are used in such circumstances and are of such nature as to create a clear and present danger that will bring about the substantial evils that Congress has a right to prevent.”

—*Schenck v. United States*
(1919)

- According to this Supreme Court ruling, under what circumstances was it constitutional to restrict freedom of speech?

communists was very small. This fear led some Americans to target others as well, including socialists, anarchists, labor leaders, and immigrants.

THE SEARCH FOR PEACE AND ARMS CONTROL

World War I ended in November 1918 with an Allied victory. The United States, particularly President Wilson, played a major role in the peacemaking process.

KEY THEMES AND CONCEPTS

Government

- Were Wilson's Fourteen Points a realistic basis for the peace treaty written at Versailles?
- Why did the Senate refuse to ratify the Treaty of Versailles?
- Was the failure to approve the Treaty of Versailles a turning back or a temporary halt in United States foreign policy?

The Fourteen Points

Wilson had first suggested his own peace proposals in January 1918. His **Fourteen Points** included the following:

- Open, not secret, diplomacy
- Freedom of the seas
- Removal of trade barriers
- Arms reduction
- **Self-determination** of peoples—that is, letting various national groups make their own political decisions
- An “association of nations” to guarantee political independence and territorial integrity

Wilson and the Treaty of Versailles

The Fourteen Points became the basis for the peace negotiations held at Versailles, France, beginning in January 1919. Wilson led the American delegation, thus becoming the first President of the United States to leave American soil while in office. Other Allied leaders included Georges Clemenceau of France, David Lloyd George of Britain, and Vittorio Orlando of Italy.

European nations, who had suffered far more than the United States, were cool to Wilson's plans. They wanted to be repaid for some of their losses, and some had made secret wartime deals involving territorial changes and money settlements that contradicted provisions of the Fourteen Points.

The most important agreement reached at Versailles was the treaty with Germany, the **Treaty of Versailles**. According to its provisions, Germany had to do the following:

- Accept complete responsibility for causing the war
- Pay huge reparations to the Allies
- Give up its military forces
- Cede lands to the new nations of Poland and Czechoslovakia
- Give up its overseas colonies

Wilson opposed many of the settlements of the Versailles Treaty and treaties with the other Central Powers. However, he was willing to



ANALYZING DOCUMENTS

Examine the cartoon, then answer the following questions.

- Who is the man in the cartoon?
- What does the child represent?
- Who does the man want the "child" to play with?
- Why does the "child" want to play by himself?

compromise because the treaties provided for a new world organization, the League of Nations. The League, Wilson believed, would correct any problems caused by the peace treaties.

The League of Nations

The United States Senate had to approve the Versailles Treaty, and there Wilson ran into a great deal of opposition. Wilson had angered Republicans by excluding them from the American delegation to the Versailles Conference. Yet Republicans had a majority of seats in the Senate. The chairman of its foreign relations committee, Henry Cabot Lodge, distrusted and disliked Wilson. The feeling was mutual.

Some features of the League of Nations worried Americans. They feared, for instance, that the United States might be obligated to furnish troops to defend member nations.

Wilson stubbornly refused to allow any but the most minor changes in the Treaty of Versailles. He became increasingly moralistic and uncompromising.

When Wilson went on a speaking tour to gain popular support for the treaty, he collapsed and then suffered a stroke. His illness thereafter prevented him from playing an active role in the treaty debate.

The Senate voted several times on the Treaty of Versailles, but always defeated it. The United States made a separate peace with Germany, and never did join the League. Fundamentally, the nation had voted to retain its traditional foreign policy of preferring nonintervention and of acting alone when it did choose to play a role.

The Peace Movement: Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Although the United States failed to join the League of Nations, there was still great concern in the United States about keeping the peace. During the Paris Peace Conference, for example, many American women met with others from around the world to form the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. Jeannette Rankin, a prominent American pacifist, and reformer Jane Addams were among this group, and Addams was voted the first president of the league.

The Women's International League opposed peace terms that would create additional anger and hostility among nations. The organization opposed the Treaty of Versailles for that reason, suggesting that its legacy would only be more war. Peace organizations wanted disarmament, arms control, and neutrality.

Postwar Loans and Debts



Reparations and War Debts

In 1914, the United States had been a debtor nation, meaning that it owed more money to foreign nations than they owed to the United States. After World War I, the United States became the world's leading creditor nation, meaning that other countries owed more to the United States than it owed them. The nation was also the world's leading industrial producer, exporter, and financier. These changes were due in large part to money from the payment of war debts owed this nation by the former Allies.

During World War I, the European Allies borrowed a great deal of money from the United States in order to buy war supplies from American manufacturers. After the war, these debts became a source of conflict. European nations argued that their debts should be canceled because, while the United States had contributed money, Europe had paid a heavy price in lives. Nevertheless, the United States insisted on repayment.

A factor that made repayment difficult was U.S. protectionist policy. High American tariffs limited European trade with the United States and thus reduced earnings that might have been used to pay off war debts. These tariffs also led to retaliation by 26 nations, which raised their own tariff rates.

One step aimed at making repayment easier was the Dawes Plan, adopted in 1924. Under this plan, the United States lent funds to Germany so that it could make war **reparations**—money it owed to the European Allies as payment for economic losses during the war. The Allies would, in turn, use the funds to make payments on the war debts they owed the United States.

Steps Toward Peace and Arms Control

In 1921, President Warren G. Harding hosted the Washington Naval Conference. The United States, Britain, France, Italy, and Japan agreed to set limits on the number of warships each nation could build. They also pledged to keep the peace in Asia and to protect the independence of China. The conference, however, failed to establish any means of enforcement.

In 1928, 15 nations met in Paris to sign the Kellogg-Briand Pact, which outlawed war except in self-defense. Enforcement provisions were missing from the pact, which 60 nations eventually signed.

Although the United States never joined the League of Nations or the World Court, it did send observers to League meetings. American judges also served on the World Court, which was based in Geneva, Switzerland.