

## **Treaty of Versailles Simulation**

### **Overview**

The students will engage in a simulation in which they each take the part of a major participant in the Treaty of Versailles. They will either be the US, France, or Britain. I have left out the Italian Prime Minister because I wanted an odd number so they can vote on the measures. Italy was also not a major player in the war. I have not said much about them up until this point. The game will be rigged so that if the students follow the instructions it will end up like the real treaty. This lesson plan is based on one that was developed by Mr. McDonald of [www.schoolhistory.co.uk](http://www.schoolhistory.co.uk).

### **Instructional Setting**

*School:* Union High School is an inner city school in Grand Rapids, MI. A local TV News Program has recently called the school the most dangerous school in the city.

*Class:* 10<sup>th</sup> grade US History. The classes are mostly honors but this lesson will also be given to a regular history class in a modified format (those modifications will be outlined below).

### **Lesson Objectives**

- The students will understand that the desires of each country going into the negotiations were different. They each wanted the most out of the negotiations that they could get. Britain was torn between a moderate peace and punishment of Germany. France wanted revenge for damage done to their country. The US wanted a lasting peace. No punishment.
- The students will understand the specific negotiating points at the conference: Rhineland, Alsace-Lorraine, Reparations, War Guilt, Reduction of Germany's Armed Forces, Disposition of Colonies, and League of Nations.
- The students will understand how the Treaty actually ended up. The unfair treatment of Germany and who won.

### **National Council of Social Studies Standards**

- Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the ways human beings view themselves in and over time.
- Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of people, places, and environments.
- Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of individual development and identity.
- Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions.
- Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people create and change structures of power, authority, and governance.

- Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people organize for the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services.

### **Resources/Materials Needed**

1. Lesson Plan
2. Readings for each Participant
3. Options for Negotiation
4. Negotiation Worksheet

*Activities and Procedures:* 90 minute class period (Block Schedule)

#### **Introduction (5 – 10 Min)**

- Talk about the war coming to an end swiftly after the US got involved. We trained over 3 million troops to go to war and only 2 million made it overseas before the war ended.
- There were many treaties dealing with the different Central Powers. Treaty of Saint German, Treaty of Trianon, and the Treaty of Versailles. We will deal with the Treaty of Versailles because it deals with Germany, the biggest of the Central Powers, and because it in many ways led to WWII.

#### **Intro to the Simulation (5 – 10 Min)**

- First, the students will be divided into delegations from each nation: France, Britain, and the US. In their groups they will go over their readings and the Options for Negotiation and decide what it is their group wants out of the treaty.
- Second, they are expected to fulfill their obligation as delegates to a peace conference. Their job is to get the treaty to look as much like what has been outlined for them as possible. The numbers are not exact. They represent *about* what each group wanted.
- Third, after they have read the biography and discussed what their party wants to get out of the treaty they will be split into groups based on a number that will be written in the upper right hand corner of their biographies/worksheets.
- While they are discussing their parts the teacher should go around to each group to make sure that they understand the rules of the game.

#### **During Simulation (30 – 40 Min)**

- The students will fill out their worksheets as they negotiate for their sides. They are to get as much out of the negotiations as possible.
- They will have the rest of the hour up until the last 10 – 20 minutes to do their negotiations.
- I will be circulating amongst the students to make sure they are on the right track.



#### Debriefing (10 – 20 Min)

- An overhead was created with the negotiation points on it. The students will then discuss how their negotiations match up to the negotiations of the real treaty.
- The students will be told that the most important thing to get out of this lesson was the demands brought to the table by each country, the negotiation process, and the actual results of the Treaty of Versailles.

## Options for Negotiation

Point of Negotiation	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
War Guilt: who is to blame for WWI?	Germany	Germany and Austria-Hungary	No one is to blame
There was billions of dollars worth of damage done to France, loss of life, and property. France wanted reparations. How much?	\$12 Billion	\$33 Billion	\$100 Billion
German Military: how powerful should it be? Should it be destroyed, kept completely intact, or somewhere in between?	Reduced to 100,000 men. Navy reduced to 36 ships. No tanks, submarines, or aircraft.	Reduced to 250,000 men. Navy reduced to 50 ships. Allowed to keep some tanks, submarines, and aircraft.	All forces returned to prewar levels. No destruction of war materials.
German Colonies: Germany controlled several territories in Africa. Who gets them	Germany gets to keep them.	Split between France and England	France gets them all.
Rhineland: the industrial heart of Germany. With it Germany could rise to power again. It is also on the boarder with France.	Taken over by the French as part of war reparations	An international force takes over the Rhineland	Germany can keep control of the area with Allied supervision.
Alsace and Lorraine: taken from France by Germany in 1870.	Returned to France	Kept by Germany	Made an independent country.
League of Nations: an international peacekeeping body that will negotiate between disputing powers.	No League of Nations.	League of Nations with no power to enforce power over its members	League of Nations with power to put economic sanctions on its members.

### Treaty of Versailles – Negotiation Worksheet

Points of Negotiation	Record your decision and who voted yea or nay	
	Option	The Vote
<i>War Guilt:</i> who was to blame for the war?		
<i>Reparations:</i> how much should Germany pay for invading France?		
<i>German Colonies:</i> What should happen to them?		
<i>Rhineland:</i> a dangerous part of Germany. Who controls it?		
<i>Alsace-Lorraine:</i> taken from France by Germany in 1870 (50 years ago) who gets it?		
<i>German Armed Forces:</i> how many troops/ships can Germany have?		
<i>League of Nations:</i> international peacekeeping body. Should there be one?		



## **Clemenceau and France**

France had suffered very heavy casualties during the war (some 1.24 million military and 40,000 civilians dead; see World War I casualties), and much of the war had been fought on French soil. France wanted to be given control of many of Germany's factories. In wanting this, Clemenceau was representing the interests and opinions of the French public.

Coal from the Ruhr industrial region was transported to France by train. French military had taken over towns in key locations such as Gau Algesheim, forcing homelessness upon its inhabitants. German railroad workers sabotaged coal shipments to France. Around 200 German railroad workers involved in sabotage were executed by French authorities.

Clemenceau's intentions were therefore simple: punitive reparations and Germany's military to be not only weakened for the time being, but permanently weakened so as never to be able to invade France again. Clemenceau also wanted to symbolically destroy the old, militaristic Germany – something that could have been achieved by never allowing the pre-1914 politicians back into politics and by hanging the Kaiser (who had abdicated towards the end of the war and fled to Holland). He also wanted to protect secret treaties and impose naval blockades around Germany, so that France could control trade imported to and exported goods from the defeated country.

Territorily, France felt that Germany should be punished. Obviously, he demanded the return of Alsace-Lorraine to France, but also the demilitarisation of the Rhineland to act as a buffer zone against future attacks. Furthermore, Germany's colonies should be taken from it and distributed between the victors. Clemenceau was the most radical member of the Big Four, and received the nickname "Le Tigre".

### **France and Clemenceau**

- Born in 1841 he was 77 when the talks began in 1919.
- He entered politics in 1871 and was Prime Minister from 1906 to 1909.
- During the war he was critical of the French war leaders.
- In 1917 he was elected again as leader.

Clemenceau was an old man who had seen his nation be invaded by the Germans in 1870 and again in 1914. France had suffered greatly. The youth of the nation had been lost to war and the nation ravaged by its effects.

Clemenceau was a hard uncompromising man (nicknamed 'the tiger') and therefore he wanted Germany to pay for what it had done to his nation and in doing so make sure that it never would be allowed to threaten France again.

### **Main issues to take to the Treaty**

- Clemenceau wanted French troops on the Rhineland guarding against any future German attack.
- Clemenceau wanted Alsace-Lorraine back from Germany - they captured it in the war of 1870.
- Clemenceau wanted Germany to pay for everything that the war cost - this would cripple Germany and make France more powerful in Europe.



## Lloyd George and Britain

It is often suggested that Lloyd George represented the middle ground between the idealistic Wilson and the vengeful Clemenceau. However, his position was a great deal more delicate than it first appears. The British public wanted to punish Germany in a similar fashion to the French for her apparent sole responsibility for the outbreak of the war, and had been promised such a treaty in the 1918 election that Lloyd George had won. There was also pressure from the Conservatives (who were part of the coalition government) demanding that Germany be punished severely in order to prevent such a war in the future as well as preserving Britain's empire. Lloyd George did manage to increase the overall reparations payment and Britain's share by demanding compensation for widows, orphans, and men left unable to work through injury. Also, he wanted to maintain and possibly increase Britain's colonies, and both he and Clemenceau felt threatened by Wilson's 'self-determination,' which they saw as a direct threat to their respective empires. Lastly, like Clemenceau, he supported upholding secret treaties and the idea of a naval blockade.

However, Lloyd George was aware of the potential trouble that could come from an embittered Germany, and he felt that a less harsh treaty that did not engender vengeance would be better at preserving peace in the long run. Another factor was that Germany was Britain's second largest trade partner, and a reduced German economy due to reparations would lower Britain's trade. Moreover, he (and Clemenceau) recognised that America's status as an economic superpower would lead to the U.S. becoming a military superpower in the future, and subsequently, Wilson's idealistic stance could not be laughed at if Britain and France were to remain on good terms with the USA. This helps to understand why the League of Nations, Wilson's main idea (along with self-determination), was apparently jumped at by Britain and France when Wilson arrived at the peace conference. Furthermore, Britain wanted to maintain the 'Balance of Power' — no country within Europe being allowed to become a lot more powerful than the others. If France's wishes were carried out, then not only would Germany be crippled, but France would soon become the main superpower, and so disrupt the Balance of Power in two ways.

Lloyd George's aims can be summarised as follows: 1) To defend British interests by preserving Britain's naval supremacy that had been threatened by Germany in the run up to the war, maintaining Britain's empire and possibly increased colonial expansion; 2) To reduce Germany's future military power and to obtain reparations; and lastly, 3) To not create an embittered Germany that would seek revenge and threaten peace in the long term future.



### **Britain and Lloyd George**

- Lloyd George was born in 1863.
- He entered politics in 1890.
- He became Prime Minister in 1916 - during the war.

Lloyd George was in a difficult situation. On one hand he was a realist and saw the need to compromise and make sure that Germany was not punished too much as that would cause more problems than it would solve. However, Lloyd George had just won an election promising to squeeze the pips out of Germany and the people in Great Britain wanted to see the German Head of State (the Kaiser) hang for starting the war.

### **Main issues to take to the treaty**

- He disagreed with point two of Wilson's fourteen points as Britain who had always had a strong navy felt Britain and her Empire needed to have some control of the seas.
- Lloyd George felt that the British should be given Germany's colonies and the Turkish territories it had captured
- Lloyd George did want to see Germany weakened in some way through it's forces

## **Wilson and the United States**

The Fourteen Points were listed in a speech delivered by President Woodrow Wilson of the United States to a joint session of the United States Congress on January 8, 1918. His speech, Wilson intended to set out a blueprint for lasting peace in Europe after World War I. The idealism displayed in the speech gave Wilson a position of moral leadership among the Allies, and encouraged the Central Powers to surrender.

Wilson's speech took many of the principles of progressivism that had produced domestic reform in the U.S. and translating them into foreign policy (free trade, open agreements, democracy and self-determination). The Fourteen Points speech was the only explicit statement of war aims by any of the nations fighting in World War I: other belligerents gave general indications of their aims; others wanted to gain territory, and so refused to state their names.



## **The United States and Woodrow Wilson**

- Wilson was born in 1856.
- He entered politics in 1910 and by 1912 was President.
- In 1916 he was re-elected under a pledge to remain out of the war but in 1917 he declared war on Germany.

He was an idealist and reformer who saw the war as a means to end wars forever by creating a 'League of Nations' that binds all nations together in a mutual alliance - much different from the alliances that were present before the war started (see point 14 below).

### **Major issues to take to the treaty**

He had 14 points which he saw as a way of bringing peace

1. There should be no secret treaties; all international agreements should be open.
2. The seas were to be free to all countries at all times.
3. Customs barriers between countries should be removed.
4. Armaments should be reduced.
5. The wishes of the peoples in colonies should be taken into account when settling colonial claims.
6. German forces should leave Russia.
7. Belgium should be independent.
8. Alsace-Lorraine should be returned to France.
9. Italy's frontier with Austria should be adjusted to avoid confrontation with Austria.
10. There should be self determination for the peoples of Eastern Europe.  
This allows different nationalities the right to govern themselves as independent nations.

11. Serbia should be given a coastline.
12. There should be self-determination for the people of the Turkish empire.
13. Poland should be independent and given a coastline.
14. An International organisation should be set up to deal with international incidents and disputes (therefore avoiding war) - League of Nations.

- Wilson wanted a Europe that was saved from war but also available to trade with the United States. The U.S. had done well economically out of the war and saw trade as a key part of any peace deal (There are at least 4 points that deal with trade - can you spot them?).
- Wilson had no national interests or claims to colonies - he wanted the league to look after them or for them to be self-governed.
- However Wilson was prepared to compromise issues and points to get the League of Nations agreed to.