

Reading Essentials and Study Guide

networks

World War I and Its Aftermath, 1914-1920

Lesson 2 *The Home Front*

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Why do nations go to war?

Reading HELPDESK

Content Vocabulary

victory garden a garden planted by civilians during war to raise vegetables for home use, leaving more of other foods for the troops

espionage spying, especially to gain government secrets

Academic Vocabulary

migrate to move from one location to another

draft to select a person at random for mandatory military service

Reading Essentials and Study Guide *Cont.*



World War I and Its Aftermath, 1914-1920

TAKING NOTES: Organizing

ACTIVITY Use the major headings of this lesson to create an outline similar to the one below.

The Home Front	
I.	Organizing the Economy
A.	
B.	
C.	
II.	
A.	
B.	

IT MATTERS BECAUSE...

To fight World War I, the U.S. government used progressive ideas and new government agencies to prepare the population and organize the economy for war.

Organizing the Economy

GUIDING QUESTION What did Congress do to prepare the economy for war?

When the United States entered the war in April 1917, progressives controlled the federal government. Their ideas about planning and management shaped how the government organized the war effort.

Wartime Agencies

As part of the war effort, Congress created new agencies to organize people for war. Business people, managers, and government officials ran these agencies. They made sure resources were used well. They also stressed cooperation between big business and government.

The War Industries Board (WIB) organized the creation of war materials. Early problems led Wilson to expand the Board's powers. The WIB told factories what they could make. It also distributed raw materials, ordered new factories to be built, and sometimes set prices.

Herbert Hoover ran the Food Administration. Its job was to increase food production while decreasing how much food Americans consumed overall. The agency tried to get families not to waste food. It also encouraged them to grow their own vegetables in **victory gardens**.

The Fuel Administration managed the use of coal and oil. To save energy, it started daylight saving time. It urged people to have Heatless Mondays. It also made workweeks shorter for factories that were making goods not used for war.

The United States had spent about \$32 billion by the end of the war. Congress raised income tax rates to fund the war effort. It also put new taxes on company profits and the profits of arms factories. It borrowed more than \$20 billion by

Reading Essentials and Study Guide *Cont.*

The logo for 'networks' features the word 'networks' in a bold, lowercase sans-serif font. A stylized graphic of intersecting lines forms a starburst or network pattern behind the letter 'o'.

World War I and Its Aftermath, 1914-1920

selling Liberty Bonds and Victory Bonds. Americans who bought bonds were lending money to the government. The government promised to repay the money with interest in a certain number of years.

Mobilizing the Workforce

The war effort also needed the cooperation of workers. The government did not want any strikes to disrupt the war effort. It created the National War Labor Board (NWLB) in April 1918. The NWLB tried to get companies to pay better wages and use an eight-hour workday. It also encouraged them to give unions the right to organize and bargain collectively. In exchange, labor leaders agreed not to disrupt war production with strikes or other disturbances. As a result, membership in unions increased by more than one million between 1917 and 1919.

With so many men in the military, employers were willing to hire women for jobs traditionally held by men. Some one million women joined the workforce for the first time. Another eight million switched to better factory jobs. Women worked in factories, shipyards, and railroad yards. They served as police officers, mail carriers, and train engineers. When the war ended, however, most women returned to their previous jobs or stopped working. Yet the changes showed that women could hold jobs that many had believed only men could do.

Henry Ford was desperate for workers. He sent agents to the South to find African Americans to work for him. Other companies soon did the same. Promises of high wages and plentiful work led between 300,000 and 500,000 African Americans to move north. This huge movement of people became known as the Great Migration. The African American population of cities such as Chicago, New York, Cleveland, and Detroit changed greatly. In time, so did politics in the Northern cities, where African Americans were able to vote.

The war also caused other groups to **migrate**. Between 1917 and 1920, more than 100,000 Mexicans migrated into the Southwest. They provided labor for farmers and ranchers. Mexican Americans also worked in factory jobs in Chicago, St. Louis, Omaha, and other cities. Many faced hostility and unfair treatment when they arrived in U.S. cities. Like other immigrant groups, they settled in separate neighborhoods where they could support one another. They called these neighborhoods *barrios*.

Shaping Public Opinion

Progressives did not think that organizing the economy was enough to make sure the war effort was successful. They also thought the government needed to shape public opinion. Soon after Congress declared war, Wilson created the Committee on Public Information (CPI). Its job was to "sell" the war to the American people. Journalist George Creel was head of the CPI. The CPI gave jobs to advertising experts, artists, authors, songwriters, entertainers, public speakers, and motion picture companies. It was their job to help sway public opinion.

The CPI handed out information. It organized thousands of "four-minute speeches" to be delivered at movie theaters and other public places. Some 75,000 speakers became known as Four-Minute Men. They urged audiences to support the war in various ways, from buying war bonds to reporting draft resisters to the authorities. Nongovernmental groups also helped raise awareness and funds for the war. For example, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee raised \$63

Reading Essentials and Study Guide *Cont.*



World War I and Its Aftermath, 1914-1920

million in relief funds. The Jewish Welfare Board set up centers at home and abroad for Jewish servicemen.

The government also passed laws to limit opposition to the war and to fight **espionage**, or spying to gain government information. The Espionage Act of 1917 made it illegal to aid the enemy, give false reports, or disrupt the war effort. The Sedition Act of 1918 made it illegal to speak against the war publicly. In practice, it allowed officials to take anyone who spoke against the government to court. These two laws led to more than 1,000 guilty judgments. Despite protests, the Espionage and Sedition Acts were upheld in court.

Wartime fears led to attacks on German Americans, labor activists, socialists, and pacifists. Ads urged Americans to watch their fellow citizens. Some German Americans hid ties to their culture to avoid suspicion or abuse. Some individuals and businesses changed their names. Many German-language newspapers closed.

PROGRESS CHECK

Explaining What were some new agencies that Congress established to help manage the wartime economy?

Building the Military

GUIDING QUESTION How were progressive ideals used in preparing the military for war?

Progressives did not leave behind their ideas when it came to building up the military. Instead, they used those ideas to develop a new system for recruiting a large army.

Volunteers and Conscripts

When the United States entered the war in 1917, the army and the National Guard together had slightly more than 200,000 troops. Many men quickly volunteered. Yet many more were still needed.

Many progressives believed that forced military service went against democratic and republican ideals. But Congress believed a **draft** was needed. With Wilson’s support, Congress created a new system called selective service.

Instead of having the military run the draft from Washington, D.C., the Selective Service Act of 1917 required all men between 21 and 30 to sign up for the draft. A lottery randomly determined the order in which men were called before a local draft board. The draft board was then in charge of selecting or releasing people for military service. The members of the draft boards were people from local communities. Progressives believed local people best understood community needs. They would know better which men to draft than a big government group in a faraway city. Eventually, about 2.8 million Americans were drafted.

Not all American soldiers were drafted. About 2 million men volunteered for military service. Some had heard stories about German horrors and wanted to fight back. Others believed democracy needed to be protected. Many believed they had a duty to help their nation.

Reading Essentials and Study Guide *Cont.*



World War I and Its Aftermath, 1914-1920

The horrors of war soon became clear to the American troops. Yet their morale remained high and helped their allies win the war. More than 50,000 Americans died in the fighting. More than 200,000 were wounded. Another 60,000 soldiers died from disease, mostly from the influenza epidemic of 1918 and 1919. The flu outbreak was not limited to the battlefield. It spread around the world and made more than a quarter of all Americans sick. The disease killed an estimated 25 to 50 million people worldwide, including more than 500,000 Americans.

Of the nearly 400,000 African Americans who were drafted, about 42,000 served overseas as combat troops. African American soldiers encountered discrimination and prejudice in the army. They served in racially segregated units, almost always under the supervision of white officers. Despite these challenges, many African American soldiers fought with distinction. For example, the African American 92nd and 93rd Infantry Divisions fought in difficult battles along the Western Front. Many of them won praise from the French commander, Marshal Philippe Pétain, and the United States commander, General John Pershing.

An estimated 12,000 Native Americans and about 20,000 Puerto Ricans served in the armed forces. Thousands of Mexican Americans also served in the war. They volunteered for service more than any other minority group in the United States. Some Asians fought on the side of the United States even before they were U.S. citizens. Though they faced discrimination, many Asians served in the U.S. Army with distinction. They were granted citizenship for their contributions.

Women Join the Military

World War I was the first war in which women officially served in the armed forces. However, they did not fight. As the military got ready for war in 1917, it faced a severe shortage of office workers because so many men were assigned to active duty. Early in 1917, the navy allowed the enlistment of women to work in office jobs.

Women serving in the navy wore a standard uniform and had the rank of yeoman. By the end of the war, more than 11,000 women had served in the navy. Most took on office jobs. Others served as radio operators, electricians, pharmacists, chemists, and photographers. Unlike the navy, the army would not enlist women. Instead, it began hiring women as temporary employees to fill office jobs. The only women to actually serve in the army were in the Army Nursing Corps.

Women nurses had served in both the army and the navy since the early 1900s, but as auxiliaries. They were not given ranks and were not technically enlisted in the army or navy. Army nurses were the only women in the military sent overseas during the war. More than 20,000 nurses served in the Army Nursing Corps during the war, including more than 10,000 overseas.

PROGRESS CHECK

Synthesizing How did progressive ideas influence the roles of women during World War I?
