

Reading Essentials and Study Guide

networks

World War I and Its Aftermath, 1914-1920

Lesson 3 *A Bloody Conflict*

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Why do nations go to war?

Reading HELPDESK

Content Vocabulary

convoy a group that travels with something, such as a ship, to protect it

armistice a temporary agreement to end fighting

national self-determination the free choice by the people of a nation of their own future political status

reparations payment by the losing country in a war to the winner for the damages caused by the war

Academic Vocabulary

network an interconnected system

adequately sufficiently; completed to its minimum requirements

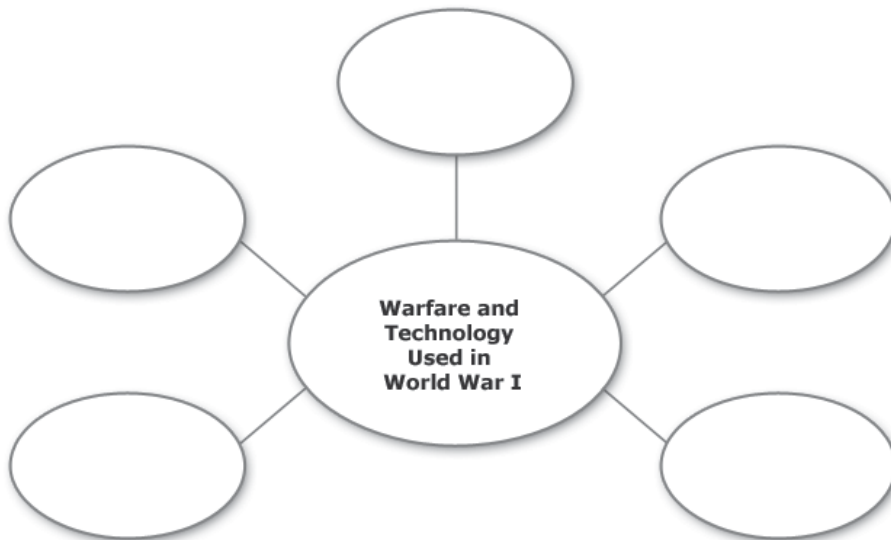
resolve to come to an agreement

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TAKING NOTES: Organizing

ACTIVITY As you read the lesson, complete a graphic organizer similar to the one below by listing the kinds of warfare and technology used in the fighting.



IT MATTERS BECAUSE...

Technology caused both sides to lose millions of men during World War I. The arrival of U.S. troops helped the Allies win. Yet the peace treaty set the stage for another war.

Combat in World War I

GUIDING QUESTION How did new technologies increase the number of casualties compared with previous wars?

By the spring of 1917, World War I had significantly damaged Europe. Old strategies and new technologies led to great destruction. Many Americans believed, however, that sending troops would make a difference and quickly bring the war to an end.

Trench Warfare

Early fighting showed that warfare had changed. Powerful artillery guns placed far behind the lines of battle shot huge explosive shells onto the battlefield. More people were killed by artillery fire than by any other weapon.

German troops fought against French, British, and Belgian forces on the Western Front. To keep themselves safe from artillery fire, troops dug a **network** of trenches along the Western Front. It stretched from the English Channel to the Swiss border. Both sides used barbed wire. They also used a new weapon, the machine gun, to fight the enemy. Attacks usually began with artillery gunfire. Soldiers then ran across the rough land toward enemy trenches. Troops used any weapon available to kill the enemy. Both sides began using the new style of fighting, new weapons, and new technology. Despite great loss of life, the fighting

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led to a stalemate on the Western Front. Allied and German attacks and defense efforts resulted in little success.

New Technology

Breaking through enemy lines needed new technologies. The Germans first used poison gas in 1915. The Allies soon followed. The gas caused vomiting, blindness, and an inability to breathe. Both sides created gas masks to stop the fumes. In late 1915, the British began using the armored tank. It could crush barbed wire and cross trenches. But there were still too few of the slow, unreliable machines to change warfare.

World War I also marked the first use of aircraft in war. Early in the war, the Germans used giant, rigid balloons called zeppelins to drop bombs on British warships in the North Sea. At first, airplanes were used to spy on enemy troops and ships. Then the Allies put machine guns and rockets on them to attack the German zeppelins. Other aircraft carried small bombs to drop on enemy lines. As technology got better, airplanes were able to shoot down other airplanes in battles known as dogfights. But early military aircraft were difficult to fly and easy to destroy. A fighter pilot could expect to live for about two weeks on average.

PROGRESS CHECK

Describing What new technologies were introduced in World War I, and how did they impact the war?

The Americans Arrive

GUIDING QUESTION Why was the arrival of U.S. forces so important to the war effort?

Nearly two million U.S. troops marched into the bloody stalemate on the Western Front. Nicknamed “doughboys,” the U.S. troops did not have experience, but they were fresh and ready to fight. As the Americans began to arrive, many people in Germany concluded that the war was lost.

Winning the War at Sea

American admiral William S. Sims had the idea that merchant ships and ships carrying troops should travel together in groups called **convoy**s. Destroyers—small warships that could easily move around—kept convoys safe as they moved across the Atlantic. If a ship was sunk, other ships in the convoy could rescue survivors. Convoys greatly reduced shipping losses. They also ensured that U.S. troops arrived safely in time to help the Allies on the Western Front.

Russia Leaves the War

In March 1917, riots broke out in Russia. Czar Nicholas II, the leader of the Russian Empire, gave up his throne. The Russian Revolution began. A temporary government was put in place. Its leaders wanted Russia to stay in the war.

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The logo for 'networks' features the word 'networks' in a bold, lowercase sans-serif font. To the right of the text is a stylized graphic consisting of several thin, intersecting lines that form a starburst or network pattern around a central point.

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However, the government was not able to deal **adequately** with the problems facing the country. As a result, Vladimir Lenin's Bolshevik Party took power. It established a Communist state in November 1917.

Germany's military luck improved with the Bolshevik takeover. Lenin pulled Russia out of the war so it could focus on creating a Communist state. Lenin agreed to the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with Germany on March 3, 1918. Under this treaty, Russia gave up the Ukraine, its Polish and Baltic territories, and Finland. With the Eastern Front settled, Germany could move its forces to the west.

Americans Enter Combat

When World War I began, many Americans thought they owed the French a debt for their help in the American Revolution. General John J. Pershing was in charge of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF). He arrived in Paris on July 4, 1917. British and French commanders wanted to add U.S. troops to their armies. Pershing said no. Eventually only one unit, the 93rd Infantry Division—an African American unit—was transferred to the French.

Germany's Last Offensive On March 21, 1918, the Germans carried out a huge gas and artillery attack along the Western Front. Reinforcements from the Russian front made the Germans stronger. They pushed deep into Allied lines. By early June, the Germans were less than 40 miles (64 km) from Paris. In late May, as the attack continued, the Americans started their first major attack. They quickly captured the village of Cantigny. On June 1, U.S. and French troops stopped the German drive on Paris at the town of Château-Thierry. On July 15, the Germans began one last great attack in an attempt to take Paris. U.S. and French troops held their ground.

The Battle of the Argonne Forest French marshal Ferdinand Foch was top commander of the Allied forces. With the German drive halted, he ordered large counterattacks. In mid-September U.S. troops drove back German forces at the Battle of Saint-Mihiel. On September 26, 1918, the biggest offensive for the American Expeditionary Force was started in the region between the Meuse River and the Argonne Forest. Although the Germans caused heavy casualties, their positions slowly fell to the advancing U.S. troops. By early November the Americans had opened a hole on the eastern side of the German lines. All across the Western Front the Germans began to fall back.

The War Ends

Meanwhile, a revolution had arisen in Austria-Hungary. In October 1918, Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia declared independence. By early November, the governments of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Ottoman Empire had surrendered to the Allies.

On November 3, sailors in Kiel rebelled. Kiel was the main base of the German fleet. Within days, groups of workers and soldiers took power in other German towns. The German emperor stepped down. On November 9 Germany became a republic. Two days later the German government signed an **armistice**—an agreement to stop fighting. On November 11, 1918, the fighting stopped.

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PROGRESS CHECK

Identifying Cause and Effect How did the arrival of American troops affect German attitudes about the war?

A Flawed Peace

GUIDING QUESTION Why did President Wilson's ideas for peace negotiations differ from those of French Premier Clemenceau and British Prime Minister Lloyd George?

The fighting had stopped. But World War I was not over. In January 1919, delegates from 27 countries met at the peace conference at the Palace of Versailles, near Paris. The treaty with Germany that they wrote came to be called the Treaty of Versailles. The meeting also resulted in the Treaty of Saint-Germain. It ended the war with Austria-Hungary. Meetings about the Treaty of Versailles lasted five months. The most important people involved were the so-called "Big Four." The Big Four were President Wilson of the United States, British Prime Minister David Lloyd George, French Premier Georges Clemenceau, and Italian Prime Minister Vittorio Orlando. The Russians were not invited to the meeting. Allied leaders did not recognize Lenin's government as legitimate.

The Fourteen Points

President Wilson arrived in Paris in 1919. He brought with him a peace plan known as the Fourteen Points. His plan was meant to establish a lasting peace. In the first five points, Wilson aimed to remove the causes of the war through free trade, freedom of the seas, removing weapons, fair changes to colonial claims, and open diplomacy.

The next eight points talked about the right of **national self-determination**. This was the idea that the borders of countries should be drawn based on ethnicity and national identity. Supporters of this idea believed that when borders are not based on national identity, nations are more likely to go to war to **resolve** border disagreements. This way of thinking also meant that no nation should keep territory taken from another nation. This meant the Central Powers would have to leave all countries they had invaded. Germany would have to give back the French territory of Alsace-Lorraine, which it had taken in 1871.

The fourteenth point called for the creation of the League of Nations. The League's members would help keep peace by promising to respect and protect each other's territory and political independence. Wilson was willing to give up his other goals in exchange for support for the League.

The Treaty of Versailles

Wilson's popularity in Europe put him in a strong negotiating position. The peace conference decided to use the Fourteen Points as the basis for negotiations. But Wilson's ideas did not impress everyone. The Germans had caused great suffering in much of Europe. Premier Clemenceau of France and British Prime Minister Lloyd George wanted to punish them. Britain also refused to give up its naval advantage. This would happen if it agreed to Wilson's call for freedom of the seas.

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The Treaty of Versailles included many terms designed to punish and weaken Germany. Germany reluctantly signed the treaty on June 28, 1919. Germany's armed forces were greatly reduced. Its troops were not allowed west of the Rhine River. The treaty also blamed German aggression for the war. This allowed the Allies to demand that Germany pay **reparations**. Reparations are money to pay for the war damages it had caused. A commission decided that Germany owed the Allies about \$33 billion. This sum went far beyond what Germany could pay all at once. It was meant to keep the German economy weak for a very long time.

Wilson had better success with encouraging the idea of national self-determination. The Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Russian Empire, the German Empire, and the Ottoman Empire were dismantled. In their place, new nations were created. In general, the majority of people in each new country were from one ethnic group. But both Poland and Czechoslovakia were given territory where the majority of the people were German. Germany itself was split in two in order to give Poland access to the Baltic Sea. This arrangement helped set the stage for a new series of major problems in the 1930s.

The Treaty of Versailles ignored freedom of the seas, free trade, and Wilson's goal of a fair settlement of colonial claims. No colonial people in Asia or Africa gained independence. France and Britain took over colonial areas in Africa and the Middle East. Japan took responsibility for colonies in East Asia. However, the treaty did call for the creation of a League of Nations. League members promised to reduce arms, to discuss disputes that put peace in danger, and to help any member who was threatened with aggression.

The U.S. Senate Rejects the Treaty

President Wilson was certain the American people would support the Treaty of Versailles. But he had badly underestimated opposition to the League of Nations in the Senate. One group of senators was nicknamed the "Irreconcilables." They felt the League was the type of organization that the Founders had warned against. A larger group of senators known as the "Reservationists" agreed to ratify the treaty. But they would only do so only if it were changed to say that any military action by the United States required the approval of Congress. Wilson refused, fearing the change would damage the League's effectiveness.

Wilson decided to take his case directly to the American people. Starting in September 1919, he traveled 8,000 miles and made more than 30 major speeches in three weeks. Soon afterward he had a stroke. Although bedridden, Wilson still refused to change his mind about the treaty.

The Senate voted in November 1919 and in March 1920, but both times it refused to approve the treaty. After Wilson left office in 1921, the United States negotiated separate peace treaties with each of the Central Powers. The League of Nations formed without the United States.

PROGRESS CHECK

Comparing and Contrasting How did Wilson's perspective on the best outcome of the peace process differ from those of European leaders?
