

The Peace Treaties, 1919–1920

In this module you will learn:

1. THIRTY new words
2. The names of the 'Big Three' leaders at the Versailles Conference.
3. The aims of Clemenceau (4), Wilson (7) and Lloyd George (5) at the Conference.
4. The FOUR main terms of the Treaty of Versailles [BRAT].
5. FIVE reasons the Germans were angry about the Treaty of Versailles.
6. What Clemenceau, Wilson and Lloyd George felt about the Treaty of Versailles.
7. The FOUR other treaties of 1919–1920.
8. FOUR reasons the Treaty of Versailles was more important than them.
9. FIVE new nation-states created in 1919–1920.
10. FOUR problems with self-determination.

Q

Share what you remember about the First World War.

The Versailles Conference

The First World War (1914–1918) had been bad. 10 million people died. The part of France where there had been fighting – the ‘Western Front’ – was totally destroyed.

In November 1918, Germany had signed a cease-fire. It was called ‘the Armistice’. The Germans could not fight any longer. But they did not think they had surrendered!

In January 1919, delegates from 32 countries met at Versailles, near Paris, to make treaties to end the war. The meeting was known as the Versailles Conference.

This module studies what happened at the Conference, the treaties that the leaders made, and what the world thought about them

New Words

Versailles: a famous palace near Paris.

Conference: a meeting.

Armistice: a cease-fire.

Treaty: an agreement between nations.

Delegate: a person representing a country at a conference.

Source A

A picture of Soissons in 1918, showing the damage done during the war.





GIVING HIM ROPE?

GERMAN CRIMINAL (to Allied Police). "HERE, I SAY, STOP! YOU'RE HURTING ME! [Aside] I ONLY WINKED ENOUGH I MAY BE ABLE TO WRIGGLE OUT OF THIS YET."

← Source B

What is this cartoon of 1919 saying about the Germans?

Did you know?

When the Russians had wanted to stop fighting in 1917, the Germans had made them sign the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. It took lots of land from Russia.

When they heard about this, many politicians decided that they would be just as tough on Germany.

Tasks

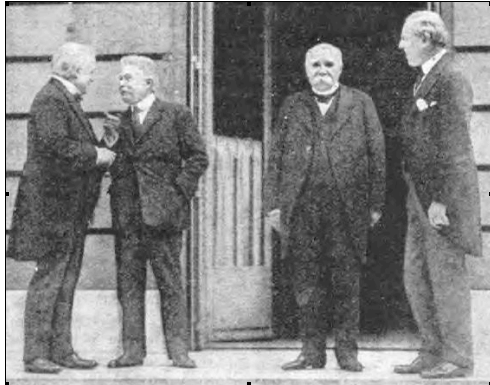
1. Look at Sources A and B. Make a spidergram to show what would you have been thinking and feeling if you had been going as a delegate to the Versailles Conference?
2. Read Source C. Imagine you are Mr Geddes's speech-writer. Write the next paragraph, in which he explains WHY he wants to do this.

Source C

Germany is going to pay. We will get everything you can squeeze out of a lemon, and a bit more. The Germans should hand over everything they own.

From a speech in 1918 by Sir Eric Geddes, a British politician standing for election as an MP.

The Aims of ‘the Big Three’



The three most important men at the Versailles Conference – ‘the Big Three’ – were:

- Georges Clemenceau, the Prime Minister of France.
- Woodrow Wilson, the president of America.
- David Lloyd George, the Prime Minister of Britain.

All three men wanted to stop a war ever happening again, but they did not agree about how to do this. They wanted different things from the peace, and they did not get on well.

New Words

Georges Clemenceau.

Woodrow Wilson.

David Lloyd George.

Colonies: overseas countries ruled by a European nation (e.g. India was a colony of the British Empire).

Disarmament: where countries agree to reduce their weapons.

Self-determination: the right of nations to rule themselves.

Compromise: when you ‘meet someone half-way’ in an argument.



Georges Clemenceau

He was the Prime Minister of France.

He wanted **revenge**, and to **punish** the Germans for what they had done.

He wanted to **make Germany pay** for the damage done during the war.

He also wanted to **weaken** Germany, so France would never be invaded again.

Task

Divide into groups of three. Each person takes the role of one of the Big Three – Clemenceau, Wilson or Lloyd George.

Study what your character wanted from the peace, then re-enact a meeting between the three leaders. Discuss the following:

1. What should happen to the German army, navy and airforce?
2. How much should Germany be asked to pay for the damage done during the war – a lot, or a little?
3. How much land should Germany lose?
4. Should the Treaty blame Germany for the war?
5. What is the best way to stop a war ever happening again?
6. Remember to explain to the others **WHY** you want the things you want.



Woodrow Wilson

He was President of America.

He was a History professor. He wanted to **make the world safe**.

He wanted to **end war** by making a **fair peace**.

In 1918, Wilson published '**Fourteen Points**' saying what he wanted. He said that he wanted **disarmament**, and a **League of Nations** (where countries could talk out their problems, without going to war).

He also promised **self-determination** for the peoples of Eastern Europe.



David Lloyd George

He was Prime Minister of England.

He *said* he would '**make Germany pay**' – because he knew that was what the British people wanted to hear.

He wanted '**justice**', but he **did not want revenge**. He said that the peace must **not be harsh** – that would just cause another war in a few years time.

He tried to get a '**halfway point**' – a compromise between Wilson and Clemenceau.

Essay!

[memorise this essay, then try to write it out from memory]

How did the victorious countries intend to treat Germany in 1919?

A million Frenchmen had died in the war; the French wanted *revenge*, to *punish* the Germans for what they had done. They wanted to *make Germany pay* for the damage done during the war. Finally, they wanted to *weaken* Germany, so France could never be invaded again.

(4 things)

America had not been ruined by the war, so the American president, Woodrow Wilson only wanted a '*fair peace*', which would *make the world safe*, and *end war*. Wilson also wanted *disarmament*, a *League of Nations* (where countries could talk out their problems), and *self-determination* for the peoples of Eastern Europe – the '*Fourteen Points*'.

(7 things)

Some British people wanted to *make Germany pay* – 'everything you can squeeze out of a lemon'. Many, however, like their Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, realised that the peace must *not be harsh*, or there would be another war in a few years time. Lloyd George said he wanted '*justice*' – a *halfway point* between Clemenceau's revenge and Wilson's ideals.

(5 things)

The Terms of the Treaty of Versailles

The main points of the Treaty

After the war, the victors met at the Palace of Versailles, near Paris, to tell Germany the terms of peace.

Defeated Germany was not allowed to send any delegates, and had no choice but to accept whatever was decided.

Most of the delegates wanted revenge.

Only President Woodrow Wilson of the United States wanted a better world.

1. Germany had to accept the blame for starting the war.
2. Germany was forbidden to have submarines or an air force. She could have a navy of only six battleships, and an army of just 100,000 men. In addition, Germany was not allowed to place any troops in the Rhineland, the strip of land, 50 miles wide, next to France.
3. Germany had to pay £6,600 million, called reparations, for the damage done during the war.
4. Germany lost land in Europe (*see map, below*). Germany's colonies were given to Britain and France.
5. Germany could not join the League of Nations.
6. Germany could never unite with Austria.

Source A

A map showing Germany's loss of territory by the Versailles Treaty.



Q

Describe a time when you were unfairly treated.

The Germans and the Treaty

When the Germans heard about the Treaty of Versailles, they felt ‘pain and anger’. They felt it was unfair. They had not been allowed to take part in the talks – they had just been told to sign.

At first they refused to sign the Treaty. Some Germans wanted to start the war again.

The Germans were angry at **Clause 231**; they said they were not to blame for the war. The soldier sent to sign the Treaty refused to sign it – ‘To say such a thing would be a lie,’ he said.

The Germans were angry about **reparations**; they said France and Britain were trying to starve their children to death. At first they refused to pay, and only started paying after France and Britain invaded Germany (January 1921).

The Germans were angry about **their tiny army**. They said they were helpless against other countries. At first they refused to reduce the army, and the sailors sank the fleet, rather than hand it over.

The Germans also thought the **loss of territory** was unfair. Germany lost a tenth of its land. Other nations were given self-determination – but the Treaty forced Germans to live in other countries. Germans were also angry that they could not unite with the Austrian Germans.

Tasks

- 1 List the key words and phrases in Source A which show us how the Germans felt about the treaty.
- 2 Divide into groups of about 5–6.
Devise a role play in which you are a group of Germans talking about the Treaty of Versailles in June 1920. You have just found out what the Treaty says.
Talk about:
 - what the Treaty says,
 - what you feel about the terms of the Treaty,
 - how much you hate the Treaty, and why,
 - what you are going to do about it.

New Words

Clause 231: the paragraph blaming Germany for the war.

reparations: the money Germany had to pay for damage done during the war.

terms of the Treaty: the different things the Treaty said.

Did you know?

The Treaty of Versailles helped Adolf Hitler’s rise to power.

A lot of Germans supported him because he promised to destroy the Treaty.

Source A

The disgraceful Treaty is being signed today.

Don’t forget it!
We will never stop until we win back what we deserve.

From a German newspaper of 28 June 1920.

New Words

Demilitarised zone:
an area where the army is not allowed to go.

Senate: the 'parliament' of the United States.

Source A

We shall have to fight another war again in 25 years time.

Lloyd George, talking about the Treaty of Versailles.

Tasks

- 1 Study Source B. Why is the child weeping? What is the cartoon saying about the Treaty of Versailles?
- 2 Read Source A. Does it contradict Source B, or agree with it?
- 3 Why did many British people hate the Treaty?

Source B →

A British cartoon of 1920. How old will the weeping child be in 1940?

Verdicts on the Treaty

Clemenceau:

liked the harsh things that were in the Treaty:

- Reparations (would repair the damage to France),
 - The tiny German army, and the demilitarised zone in the Rhineland (would protect France),
 - France got Alsace-Lorraine, and German colonies.
- But he wanted the Treaty to be harsher.

Wilson:

Wilson got self-determination for the peoples of Eastern Europe, and a League of Nations, but he hated the Treaty:

- few of his 'Fourteen Points' got into the Treaty,
- when Wilson went back to America, the Senate refused to join the League of Nations, and even refused to sign the Treaty of Versailles!

Lloyd George:

Many British people wanted to 'make Germany pay', but Lloyd George hated the Treaty. He liked:

- the fact that Britain got some German colonies,
 - the small German navy (helped British sea-power).
- But he thought that the Treaty was far too harsh.



New Words

principles: ideas which say how things should happen.

disarm: give up your armies and navies.

self-determination: the right of peoples to rule themselves.

nation-state: a country where the people of a certain race rule over themselves.

Racial minority: where a few people of one race live in a country where most people are of a different race

Tasks

Find four reasons the Treaty of Versailles was more important than the other treaties of 1919–20.

Write down the names of the four other treaties of 1919–20.

Copy what the four other treaties said.

Write down the names of five new nation-states created by the treaties of 1919–20.

Write down four problems facing the new nation states.

The Other Treaties of 1919–1920

The Treaty of Versailles was not the only treaty of 1919–20. But it was the most important.

It was the treaty with **Germany**, and was decided by the **Big Three**. It was the Treaty which set up the **League of Nations**. Also, the Treaty of Versailles **set down the principles** of how the defeated countries would be dealt with:

- the defeated countries had to pay reparations,
- they had to disarm,
- they lost land,
- self-determination.

The Treaties [**SaiNTS**]

FOUR other treaties were made with the four countries who had helped Germany in the war. They were written by officials. They just followed the principles of the Treaty of Versailles.

The Treaties were all named after parts of Paris:

- **Saint** Germain (with Austria),
- **Neuilly** (with Bulgaria),
- **Trianon** (with Hungary) and
- **Sèvres** (with Turkey).

What the Treaties said

All four countries had to pay reparations, they all had to disarm, and they all lost land.

The treaties also created new nation-states in Eastern Europe out of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire.



↑ Source A
 A map of Eastern Europe in 1920. Self-determination caused three small wars:
 1. Poland went to war with Russia and took more land.
 2. Czechs and Poles fought over the town of Teschen.
 3. An army of Italians marched into the Yugoslavian town of Fiume.

Self-determination [CHAPS]

The treaties created new nation-states (*see map above*):

- **Czechs** and Slovaks in Czechoslovakia
- **Hungarians** in Hungary
- **Austrians** in Austria.
- **Poles** in Poland,
- **Slavs** in Yugoslavia,

so it seems that self-determination was a success!

Problems with self-determination

[WiGWaM]

1. Self-determination caused small **Wars** (*see map*).
2. Self-determination was not allowed for **Germany**.
3. A large number of small, **Weak countries** were created, which Hitler easily conquered later.
4. All the new nation-states had racial **Minorities** living in them.