

# 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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.



## After 1919: Dates List

18 Jan 1919	Paris Peace Conference begins.
14 Apr 1919	Reparations provisionally set at £5.4 billion
21 Jun 1919	Germans scuttle their fleet, at Scapa Flow, rather than hand it over to the Allies.
28 Jun 1919	Treaty of Versailles signed (reparations set at £1 billion).
12 Sep 1919	Gabriele d'Annunzio and an Italian army seize Fiume, against the Treaty,
19 Nov 1919	US Senate refuses to join the League of Nations.
16 Jan 1920	First meeting of the League of Nations.
5 Feb 1920	The German government refuses to hand over 890 alleged 'war criminals'.
19 Feb 1920	<b>US Senate refuses to sign the Treaty of Versailles.</b>
17 Mar 1920	Kapp Putsch (rebellion) in Germany, against the peace treaty, fails.
6 Apr 1920	<b>French troops invade Ruhr</b> in Germany (until 17 May 1920) after the German government had sent troops into the Rhineland to stop rioting.
25 April 1920	<b>Poland invades Russia</b> and Lithuania and takes land east of the 'Curzon line' agreed in the Treaty of Versailles.
25 April 1920	The League of Nations suggests reparations of £4.5 billion.
22 Jun 1920	The League of Nations suggests reparations of £12.5 billion.
28 Jul 1920	The Allies bully Poland into accepting Czech occupation of Teschen.
28 Jan 1921	The League of Nations suggests reparations of £10 billion.
8 Mar 1921	<b>French, British and Belgian troops invade the Ruhr</b> in Germany (until 30 Sep 1921) to force Germany to pay reparations.
27 April 1921	<b>Reparations finally fixed at £6.6 billion</b> , to be paid in instalments until 1984.
11 May 1921	Germany agrees to pay reparations.
11 Jul 1921	The 'Big Three' agree to hold a disarmament conference.
15 May 1922	Upper Silesia, which had voted in a plebiscite to be German, is partitioned and given to Poland after an investigation by the League of Nations.
26 Jul 1922	An economic crisis in Germany (until 1924). Britain and France agree to a 6 months delay in reparations payments.
11 Jan 1923	<b>French and Belgian troops, against US and Britain's advice, invade the Ruhr</b> in Germany (until Nov 1924) to force Germany to pay reparations.
21 Jan 1923	The German miners go on strike against the French invasion, which deepens the economic crisis in Germany.
21 Oct 1923	Bavaria and Rhineland declare independence from Germany (Germany is falling apart).
8–9 Nov 1923	Hitler's Munich Putsch fails.
9 Apr 1924	<b>The Dawes Plan</b> gives Germany longer to pay reparations, and grants huge loans to get the German economy going.
2 Dec 1924	Trade Treaty between Britain and Germany.
16 Oct 1925	Locarno Pact: peace agreement between Fr., Br., Belgium, Italy & Germany.
30 Jan 1926	British troops leave the Rhineland.
5 Aug 1926	France and Germany sign a trade agreement.
8 Sep 1926	<b>Germany admitted to the League of Nations.</b>
16 Sep 1927	German President Hindenburg denies German War Guilt; nothing is done.
27 Aug 1928	<b>Kellogg-Briand Pact:</b> 65 nations (inc. Fr/Br/USA/Ger) promise to abolish war.
7 Jun 1929	The <b>Young Plan</b> reduces reparations.
24 Oct 1929	Wall Street Crash; USA recalls all loans, causing an economic crisis in Europe.
30 Jun 1930	Last Allied troops leave the Rhineland.
13 Jul 1931	German economic crisis – all banks have to close (until 5 Aug 1931). USA, France and Britain give Germany a huge loan.
9 Jul 1932	<b>Lausanne Agreement:</b> USA, France and Britain suspend all reparations payments indefinitely.

## 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 [**Sai**NTS]

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.