

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 WHINE 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

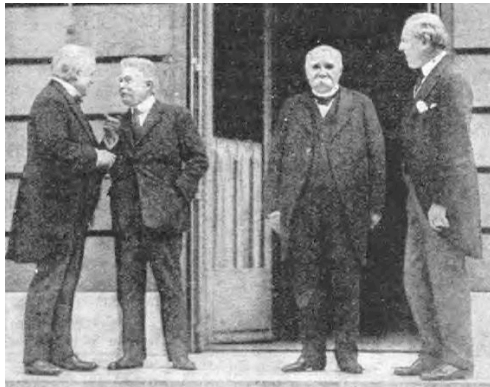
1. Look at Sources A and B. Make a spidergram to show what would you have been thinking and feeling if you had been going as a delegate to the Versailles Conference?
2. Read Source C. Imagine you are Mr Geddes's speech-writer. Write the next paragraph, in which he explains WHY he wants to do this.

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)