

Inquiry Lesson

What led the United States to enter into World War One?

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## Inquiry Lesson: What led the United States to enter into World War One?

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### **OVERVIEW**

On July 28, 1914 the First World War began with the declaration of war on Serbia by the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In short order, the European alliance system compelled the continent's nations to join the fray, and on August 4, with Britain's declaration of war on Germany, all the Great Powers of the world were involved in what would become the deadliest conflict in human history to that point – all but one that is. Also on August 4, United States President Woodrow Wilson addressed Congress with a declaration of neutrality, a position favored by the majority of the American population. His address recognized the cultural connection the people of the nation had to both sides in the conflict, and he warned against partisanship, that “every man who really loves America will act and speak in the true spirit of neutrality.” Yet the United States would not be able to maintain its neutrality. After two and a half years of pressures to join the war, Wilson sought a declaration of war from Congress which was granted April 6, 1917. Historians still debate the primary reason behind the president's decision. Thus, students will review primary and secondary documents that cover many of the perceived motives for the declaration of war in order to form a conclusion to the central question: What led the United States to enter into World War One?

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### **RATIONALE**

The decision to go to war ranks among the most serious actions a nation can undertake. Students need to understand the potential pull that honor, pride, economics, morality, carelessness, and a host of other factors may contribute to a nation's desire engage in such a destructive event. The United States in particular faces this dilemma generation after generation, and by reviewing our past decisions to go to war our students will be better equipped to make informed and reasoned decisions to avoid or engage in war in the future. World War One is remarkably relevant in pursuing this wisdom. National pride, economic security, and moral righteousness are at the forefront of thought for the nation's entrance into the conflict. Are these sufficient justifications for the loss of 120,000 Americans or the contribution to a war that devastated the world and resulted in deaths of millions of lives?

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### **AUDIENCE and TIME**

This inquiry lesson is most appropriate for 12<sup>th</sup> grade students in an advanced placement U.S. history, world history, or European history course. Many of the documents presented are long, complex, and will require proficient reading skills to complete in the assigned timeframe. However, with minimal reductions or replacements of the data sets, this lesson could be used any highschool grade. Prior knowledge of World War One is not essential; however, initial hypotheses will be better attained if the students do have some background of the conflict. Introducing this inquiry lesson after discussing the war's origin and the conflict itself up to the point of U.S. entry should be sufficient. This lesson is well suited for placement chronologically in courses or thematically as America's emergence onto the world stage. The recommended time allocated for this lesson is five or six 60 minute class periods. This estimate is due to the number and size of documents involved in the inquiry process, extensive use of group and class discussion, and an out-of-class assessment that may require a weekend to complete.

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## OBJECTIVES

By engaging in this inquiry lesson students will:

- Study potential motives for the United States's entry into the First World War and identify such motives during discussions and through written assignments;
- Analyze and evaluate primary and secondary sources with conflicting evidence and perspectives and describe such differences during discussions and through written assignments;
- Assess the credibility of such sources during discussions and through written assignments;
- Make a reasoned hypotheses for what caused the U.S. to join the war using evidence during discussions;
- Create a tentative conclusion to the central question and defend that position logically with evidence during discussions and through written assignments;
- Engage in thoughtful discussions in which evidence is used to support their positions;
- Respectfully consider and react to differing opinions, and potentially alter their own position based on the views of others expressed during discussions;
- Gain an appreciation and show empathy for the sacrifices made for the war, and internally debate the values of life, honor, freedom, and duty while constructing their final conclusion; and
- Learn the basic roles of the United States during the First World War through evidence presented in data sets and during discussions, including: a general attitude to avoid participation in the war, a relative late entrance into the conflict, a significant industrial and agricultural supplier to the Allies, and a relatively smaller role in military actions than most of the other European states.

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## WISCONSIN MODEL ACADEMIC STANDARDS ADDRESSED IN THE INQUIRY

- B.12.1. Explain different points of view on the same subject using data gathered from various sources, such as letters, journals, diaries, newspapers, government documents and speeches.
  - This is a requirement of the persuasive essay assignment using data set evidence.
- B.12.2 Analyze primary and secondary sources related to a historical question to evaluate their relevance, make comparisons, integrate new information with prior knowledge, and come to a reasoned conclusion.
  - This will occur using the data set evidence during discussions and finalized in the essay.
- B.12.4 Assess the validity of different interpretations of significant historical events.
  - This will occur during class discussions and in the persuasive essay.
- B.12.11 Compare examples and analyze why governments of various countries have sometimes sought peaceful resolution to conflicts and sometimes gone to war.
  - Determining why the U.S. entered WWI is the entire premise of this inquiry.
- B.12.15 Identify a historical or contemporary event in which a person was forced to take an ethical position, such as a decision to go to war, the impeachment of a president, or a presidential pardon, and explain the issues involved.
  - Data set 11 outlines President Wilson's reasoning for going to war.
- D.12.13 Describe and explain global economic interdependence and competition using examples to illustrate their influence on national and international policies.
  - Data sets 4 and 5 and the disconfirming data set provide information and evidence that suggests the Allies' dependence on foreign imports was contributing factor to the United States' entrance into the war, and teacher input during discussion will add to this topic.

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## MATERIALS

The materials necessary to complete this inquiry lesson include:

- Copies of the *Hypothesis/Evidence Tracking Sheet* for each student
- Copies of *Prelude to War* introduction sheet
- Copies of the data sets for each student
- Copies of the *Document Analysis Sheet* for each student (optional- one for each group)
- Copies of the *Persuasive Essay Assignment* for each student
- A computer with internet access
- Internet sites:
  - *PBS American Experience: Woodrow Wilson Part Two; The Redemption of the World* found at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RQXBGLrtqx8>.
  - PBS: Gallery; Poster Art of World War 1 found at: [http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/wilson/gallery/p\\_war\\_03.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/wilson/gallery/p_war_03.html).
  - Opening scene of 1979 version of *All Quiet on the Western Front* found at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SXtsiqrhqsU>.
- Video projector/Smart Board
- DVD player and television (If computer and internet access is not available)
- Overhead projector or document camera
- Transparencies (if overhead projector is used)
- Chalkboard/Whiteboard with appropriate writing utensils

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## INQUIRY LESSON PROCEDURE

### 1. ENGAGEMENT IN THE INQUIRY

To gain students' interest in the inquiry as well as show the seriousness of the topic at hand, show a clip which depicts a conflict role that the United States was typically involved in during the war: Atlantic warfare, airborne warfare, or trench warfare. There are many primary source clips available on the internet for use. However, one recommendation that is higher quality and likelier to gain interest is the opening scene (4 minutes) of the 1979 version of *All Quiet on the Western Front* available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SXtsiqrhqsU>. Although the scene does not portray Americans, it is typical of what American troops encountered on the western front. The scene shows the futility of trench warfare as an Allied assault against a German position fails, followed by a failed German counterattack. After watching the opening scene from *All Quiet on the Western Front*, load part two of the PBS documentary *American Experience: Woodrow Wilson* found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RQXBGLrtqx8>, or use DVD if internet is not available. Only the scenes from the following time segments are necessary: 9:10-14:30 and 24:00-26:10.

The purpose of the two sets of videos is to gain the attention and interest of the students as well as provide a limited yet adequate background on potential reasons for U.S. entrance into the war. The first clip is an attention grabber with its action portraying a seemingly futile effort of war. The Woodrow Wilson clips portray the president's personal desire to remain neutral in the war because of his childhood experience in the post-Civil War South and the potentially divided loyalties of the large immigrant population of the nation. Furthermore, the topics of submarine warfare, economic ties to Europe, and democratic

civilization are mentioned as possible reasons for U.S. entry into the war: these are the strongest answers to the inquiry's central question, and they are the most focused issues in the documents provided in the inquiry's data sets.

Finally, distribute a copy of the *Prelude to War* sheet to each student. Have a student that is particularly vocal and animated in his/her reading read the *Prelude to War* to the class. This sheet gives additional background to World War One as well as significant reasons for discussing the topic today. The intent of this sheet is to instill a sense of purpose in the inquiry lesson; that the inquiry into U.S. entrance into the war is a relevant topic.

## **2. ELICIT HYPOTHESES**

After completing the engagement, write the following question on the board: What led the United States to enter World War One? The central question should be displayed at all times during each day of the lesson. Distribute copies of the *Hypothesis/Evidence Tracking Sheet* to each student and have them individually create and record hypotheses that might answer the question in the appropriate column of the worksheet. After the students have created a few hypotheses, explain the general purpose and process of an inquiry lesson. The students should know that they will be presented with data sets which include information which might support, undermine, or add new hypotheses to the *Hypothesis/Evidence Tracking Sheet*. The students should understand that they are expected to keep accurate records of what data sets support or undermine their hypotheses and for what reasons they do so because the information from the data sets and *Hypothesis/Evidence Tracking Sheet* will be used for creating a written assignment at the end of the inquiry lesson. Inform them that participation in group and class discussion of the data sets is essential to developing in-depth understanding of the material presented, and that greater participation will aid them in the creation of their final written assignment and contribute to their informal assessment.

Following the explanation of the inquiry lesson, divide the class into groups of 4-5 students. Have them share their individual hypotheses amongst the group and create new hypotheses in the process. Have one student from each group present one of the group's hypotheses to the class, and continue this process with different members of each group until all prospective hypotheses created in the class have been described. The teacher should not suggest correctness or incorrectness of any of the students' hypotheses. During this process each student should add any new hypotheses to their own *Hypothesis/Evidence Tracking Sheet*. Additionally, either the teacher or one student should record one "master list" for the class on an overhead transparency, a Smartboard projection, or some other means which can be saved and presented for the class during each day of the inquiry lesson. An optional procedure the teacher may choose to take would be to have students develop a few unlikely or "out-of-the-box" hypotheses that may create an added curiosity for the students as well as further develop their ability to disregard unsupportable hypotheses.

## **3. DATA SET ANALYSIS and HYPOTHESES EVALUATION**

Presentation of the data sets is the most significant aspect of the inquiry lesson plan. Prior to delivery of the data sets, give each student one copy of the *Document Analysis Sheet*, so the students know how they should attempt to interpret the data sets. The teacher has some discretion as to the manner in which the data sets are delivered, dependant on time and the degree to which the students can analyze the sets without teacher guidance. Ideally, each data set should be presented individually, and time allowed for the students to review and analyze them both individually and in groups prior to a class wide discussion of each set –the first few data sets may be read aloud and done as a class if the teacher feels it appropriate to

give the students practice. If time is at a premium or the students are experienced at reviewing such documents, the teacher may opt to deliver the data sets in pairs or threes after the first few sets have been discussed. Regardless of the delivery method, each data set should be thoroughly discussed as a class. If an overhead projector or document camera is available, the data sets can be displayed for the class.

During class discussion, the teacher should attempt to elicit responses from each student at least once to ensure they are grasping the inquiry process. The teacher should also use a *Document Analysis Sheet* during class discussion and be sure that each of the main points on the *Document Analysis Sheet* is addressed before delivering the next data set. It is expected that class discussion will be longer and teacher involvement will be greater during the earlier data set discussions, but as the students grow accustomed to the inquiry process, teacher involvement will lessen to the point of facilitator. The teacher should, however, encourage the students to defend any point of view on data sets with evidence found within the documents. During discussion of the data sets students should mark their own *Hypothesis/Evidence Tracking Sheet* with data sets that support or undermine any hypotheses. Also, the students should make any relevant notes that might describe why the data sets support or undermine specific hypotheses. Any new hypotheses that arise after reading data sets should be added. The master list for the class should also be updated similarly by the teacher or a student during class discussions.

Periodically, after a few data sets have been discussed, the teacher should ask for volunteers to give their opinions on what hypothesis they are currently leaning toward being the correct conclusion to the central question – natural locations for this question occur after data sets 3, 5, 10, and 12 (the final data set). This aspect of the inquiry lesson is critical for students to learn how to use evidence to support their conclusions and to promote respect for opposing points of view since it is likely that not all students will be of the same opinion in developing their conclusions. Some students may even be persuaded to alter their own conclusion.

In addition to the general guidelines described in the *Document Analysis Sheet*, there are specific aspects to most data sets that the teacher should be sure is addressed by the students prior to moving on to the next data set. Those aspects are listed here:

- Data Set 1: Polling newspaper editors was a common manner to gain an impression of public opinion during this time. Although editors do not speak directly for the people, they do have a considerable ability to influence public opinion.
- Data Set 2: The Bryce Report was a major issue in swaying public opinion. The Germans were generally disdained for the very fact they invaded neutral Belgium.
- Data Set 3: The photo copy of this cartoon may not depict its complete meaning. Below the brute reads the word “America,” implying Germany had the potential to attack America. There are several propaganda cartoons available online if a Smartboard or other projector is available. See [http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/wilson/gallery/p\\_war\\_03.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/wilson/gallery/p_war_03.html) for additional sources.
- Data Set 4: Students should understand that increased trade relations with nations typically indicate an increased affection for those nations. Furthermore, nations which increase their imports dramatically tend to pay for such items on credit.
- Data Set 5: John Milton Cooper, Jr. is well respected historian regarding World War I.
- Data Set 6: The purpose of this graph is of secondary value to the inquiry. It should dispel any notion the students have that the United States was the cause of Allied victory. This would be an appropriate time to indicate that Russia had withdrawn from the war at the same time the

U.S. entered. Any hypotheses indicating glory for the U.S. should be undermined due to the death tolls of the nations already at war.

Data Set 7: This issue of the *New York Times* had several articles regarding the sinking of the *Lusitania*. The tone of this article can be described as moderate in comparison to the others.

Data Set 8: Given the outrage in the nation over the sinking of the *Lusitania*, Wilson's tone does not indicate a desire for war.

Data Set 11: Wilson's request for a declaration of war is quite revealing. If time is available for the entire document, see <http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/usawardeclaration.htm>.

Data Set 12: Note that only the autocracies of Europe had territorial losses, even Russia though it was at once an Ally. Explain that the Ottoman Empire was divided significantly in the Middle East.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

After all data sets have been distributed, evaluated, and discussed, debrief the class by asking for their positions on the strongest hypotheses remaining and what new information regarding America's entrance into the war they learned. Next, assign copies of the *Persuasive Essay Assignment* to each student as homework. Good essays require time, and this assignment should be given several days, preferably a weekend, to complete. The *Persuasive Essay Assignment* is described in detail, but the students should be reminded that a convincing argument often requires recognition of the merits opposing views may have. When describing opposing views the students should give credence to these views and not attempt to mislead or misinterpret such views.

When assignments have been completed and turned in, distribute copies of the Disconfirming Data Set to each student (they no longer need to be in groups). This data set involves the Nye Committee report started in 1934 and ended in 1936. The report had mixed reviews, but it generally suggested that the U.S. entered the war to protect Britain and France from defaulting on loans made by American banks, so that they could purchase American weapons and foodstuffs. This data set would support data sets 4 and 5, but cast doubt on conclusions regarding submarine warfare and democratic righteousness.

Debrief students by getting their responses to the Disconfirming Data Set just as was done with the original data sets. Ask for opinions on whether this data supported or undermined anyone's conclusion. For those whom had their conclusion undermined, would this data have changed their opinion? With the remaining class-time, which should be considerable, end with a class discussion on the merits of the U.S. entering the war; should the U.S. have entered into WWI? Just as with all discussions in the class, the students should be encouraged to defend their positions; however, they may use their own opinions, judgments, and values to support their positions in addition to evidence created by the data sets.

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#### ASSESSMENT

Students will be assessed formally and informally. Informal assessment consists of students' participation in group and class discussion of the data sets. The overall degree to which students defended their positions based on logic and evidence is a considerable aspect to the informal assessment, for it aids all students in developing their conclusions for the persuasive essay. The teacher must record such informal activities throughout the course of the inquiry lesson. Formal assessment will be made with the grading rubric for the persuasive essay.

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## **MODIFICATIONS FOR INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

Given the frequency of reading and writing required during the inquiry lesson, students for whom English is a second language and students who otherwise encounter difficulties with reading and writing may require special modification for their circumstance. All final modifications are, of course, at the discretion of the teacher and others responsible for such individuals' education. Some suggestions are: the teacher may make copies of the class "master list" *Hypothesis/Evidence Tracking Sheet* for these students at the end of the final data set, so that such students can focus on discussions; groups may read the documents orally and students with reading difficulty exempted from reading or given shorter documents; the persuasive essay assignment may be modified to suit the student's situation.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

### Hypothesis/Evidence Tracking Sheet

Hypothesis	Supporting/Undermining Data Sets and Notes

## Document Analysis Sheet

Keep these questions and suggestions in mind while reviewing the documents for the inquiry lesson:

Does this document support or undermine any of my conclusions? Does this document suggest any new conclusion I have not yet considered?

When was this document made? Was it made before or after the event this inquiry is examining?

Is this document a primary source or a secondary source?

If it is a primary source, how relevant is the author/creator to the event this inquiry is examining? Does this author/creator have any potential bias?

If it is a secondary source, how credible is the author/creator? Is the author/creator professional, experienced, or biased?

Does the document create more questions? Are there aspects of the document that seem important, but you don't know the meaning? If so ask another group member, then the teacher if needed.

Documents are not an all-or-nothing source. If you gave a negative response to several of the above questions it may be considered a weak piece of evidence. Generally, primary source documents are stronger than secondary sources, but if a primary source is rife with bias, a secondary source may be stronger. Be sure to weigh such questions when forming your conclusion; don't simply view the hypothesis with the most supporting documents as the winner.

Remember, a document may support and undermine the same hypothesis depending on your interpretation of the document.

## Prelude to War

In the years following the Civil War, the United States enjoyed the fastest economic and industrial growth in the history of the world. By 1910, America had become the world's leading financial and industrial power, and she had taken her seat alongside Britain, France, Germany, Russia, and Austria-Hungary at the table of Great Powers. Despite her prominent role in international politics, however, the United States was a comparatively weak military power with approximately 100,000 active-duty military personnel.

On July 28, 1914 the First World War began with the declaration of war on Serbia by the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In short order, the European alliance system compelled the continent's nations to join the fray, and on August 4, with Britain's declaration of war on Germany, all the Great Powers of the world were involved in what would become the deadliest conflict in human history to that point – all but one that is. Also on August 4, United States President Woodrow Wilson addressed Congress with a declaration of neutrality, a position favored by the majority of the American population. His address recognized the cultural connection the people of the nation had to both sides in the conflict, and he warned against partisanship. He noted that “every man who really loves America will act and speak in the true spirit of neutrality.” Yet the United States would not be able to maintain its neutrality. After two and a half years of pressures to join the war, Wilson sought a declaration of war from Congress which was granted April 6, 1917. The U.S joined the fight on the Allied side and ultimately mobilized 4.3 million military personnel before the war's end.

Worldwide, more than 65 million military personnel were mobilized for the First World War, and 8.5 million combatants and 2 million civilians lost their lives. The war triggered a worldwide influenza pandemic that caused the deaths of another 6 million people, was a major factor in the cause of the Great Depression, gave rise to Adolph Hitler and the start of World War Two, and redrew the world map resulting in future conflicts in the southeast Europe, southeast Asia, and the Middle East. The United States was involved in each of these terrible outcomes related to the Great War, and will likely continue to feel the effects for years to come.

Historians still debate the primary reason for U.S. entry into World War One. How is it that a nation so dedicated to neutrality could be drawn into such a terrible conflict so far from home? During this inquiry lesson you will be given historical evidence and the perspectives of World War One historians that support and undermine potential conclusions to the central question:

**What Led the United States to enter into World War One?**

## Data Set 1

### American Sympathies in the War

Do a majority of the American press or the American people favor the Germans or the Allies? To approach an answer to this question we have obtained statements from between 350 and 400 editors, telling their own attitudes and the feelings of their communities toward the warring nations. We need hardly say that we give the result of this inquiry entirely without partizanship, and purely for our readers' information. The replies cover the country from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from Mexico to the Canadian border.

#### ATTITUDE OF THE PRESS

Of the 367 replies, 105 editors report that they favor the Allies, 20 favor the Germans, and 242 are neutral. Of the pro-Ally editors 34 are in the Eastern States, 13 in the Central, 47 in the Southern, and 11 in the Western. Only one pro-German editor hails from the Eastern States, while 10 are from the Central, 5 from the Southern, and 4 from the Western group. The neutral editors number 43 in the Eastern States, 112 in the Central, 51 in the Southern and 36 in the Western.

Extract From:

"American Sympathies in the War," *The Literary Digest*, 49 (14 November 1914): 939-41, 974-78.

## Data Set 2

### Bryce Report into German Atrocities in Belgium, May 12, 1915

The British government, headed by Prime Minister Herbert Asquith, concerned by persistent reports of German brutality towards the civilian population in invaded Belgium in 1914, consequently requested James Bryce to prepare an independent report based upon his and an appointed committee's findings.

The committee might reasonably have been expected to present decidedly biased findings given its entirely British composition. However Bryce was a widely respected former Ambassador to the United States and his report was viewed as credible in Washington, thus seriously damaging Germany in the eyes of U.S. public and political opinion.

The Bryce Report is a lengthy document. This is one excerpt:

"Individual acts of brutality treatment of civilians, rape, plunder, and the like - were very widely committed. These are more numerous and more shocking than would be expected in warfare between civilised Powers, but they differ rather in extent than in kind from what has happened in previous though not recent wars.

"In all wars many shocking and outrageous acts must be expected, for in every large army there must be a proportion of men of criminal instincts whose worst passions are unloosed by the immunity which the conditions of warfare afford.

"Drunkenness, moreover, may turn even a soldier who has no criminal habits into a brute, who may commit outrages at which he would himself be shocked in his sober moments, and there is evidence that intoxication was extremely prevalent among the German army, both in Belgium and in France, for plenty of wine was to be found in the villages and country houses which were pillaged. Many of the worst outrages appear to have been perpetrated by men under the influence of drink. Unfortunately little seems to have been done to repress this source of danger.

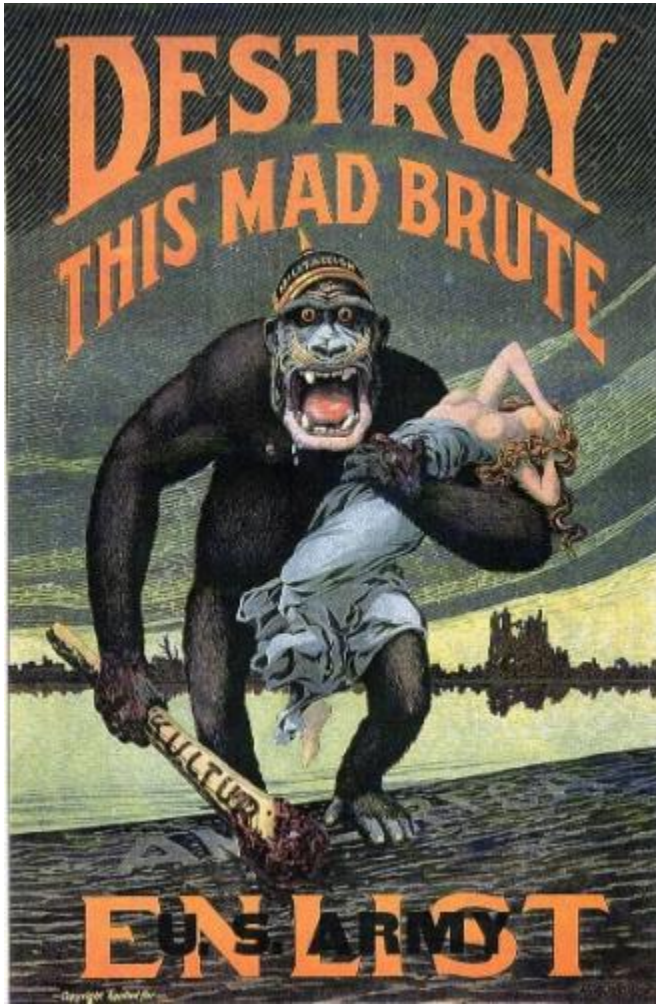
"In the present war, however - and this is the gravest charge against the German army - the evidence shows that the killing of non-combatants was carried out to an extent for which no previous war between nations claiming to be civilised (for such cases as the atrocities perpetrated by the Turks on the Bulgarian Christians in 1876, and on the Armenian Christians in 1895 and 1896, do not belong to that category) furnishes any precedent."

firstworldwar.com, "Bryce Report into German Atrocities in Belgium, 12 May 1915," available at [http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/brycereport.htm#\(c\)](http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/brycereport.htm#(c)) Accessed October 21, 2012.

## Data Set 3

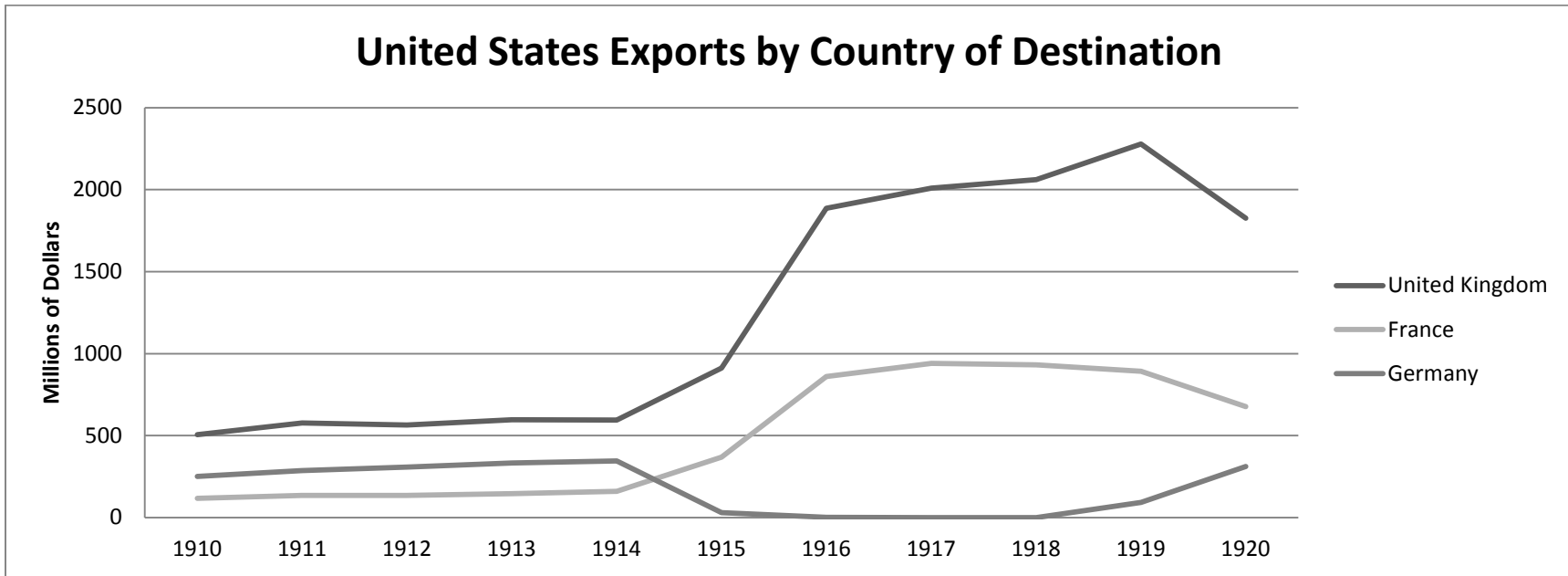
### Destroy This Mad Brute

While England and France were depicted as “civilization,” Germany was shown as a “mad brute” — here, a giant, drooling gorilla wielding the club of German kultur (culture) and carrying the limp, half-naked body of a woman.

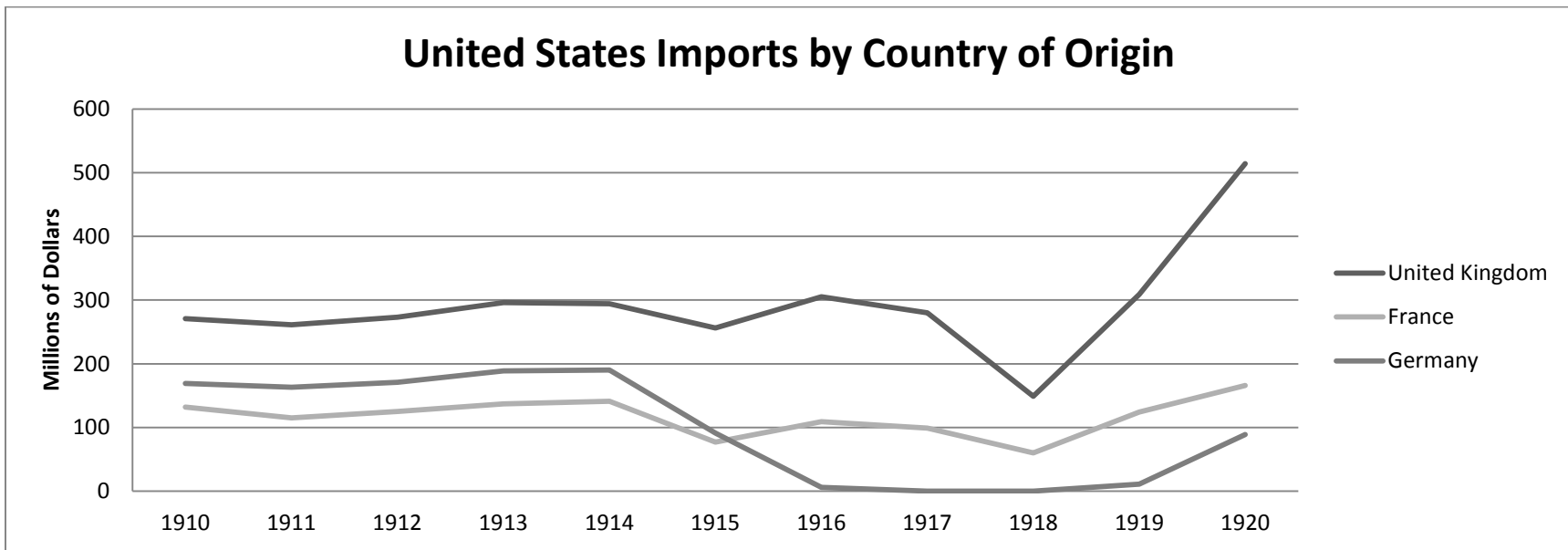


Learn NC Multimedia, <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/ww1posters/4964> Accessed October 21, 2012.

## Data Set 4



Source: *Historical Statistics of the United States: Earliest Times to the Present*. vol. 5. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006. 536.



Source: *Historical Statistics of the United States: Earliest Times to the Present*. vol. 5. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006. 542-43.

## Data Set 5

### The Role of Economics in the War

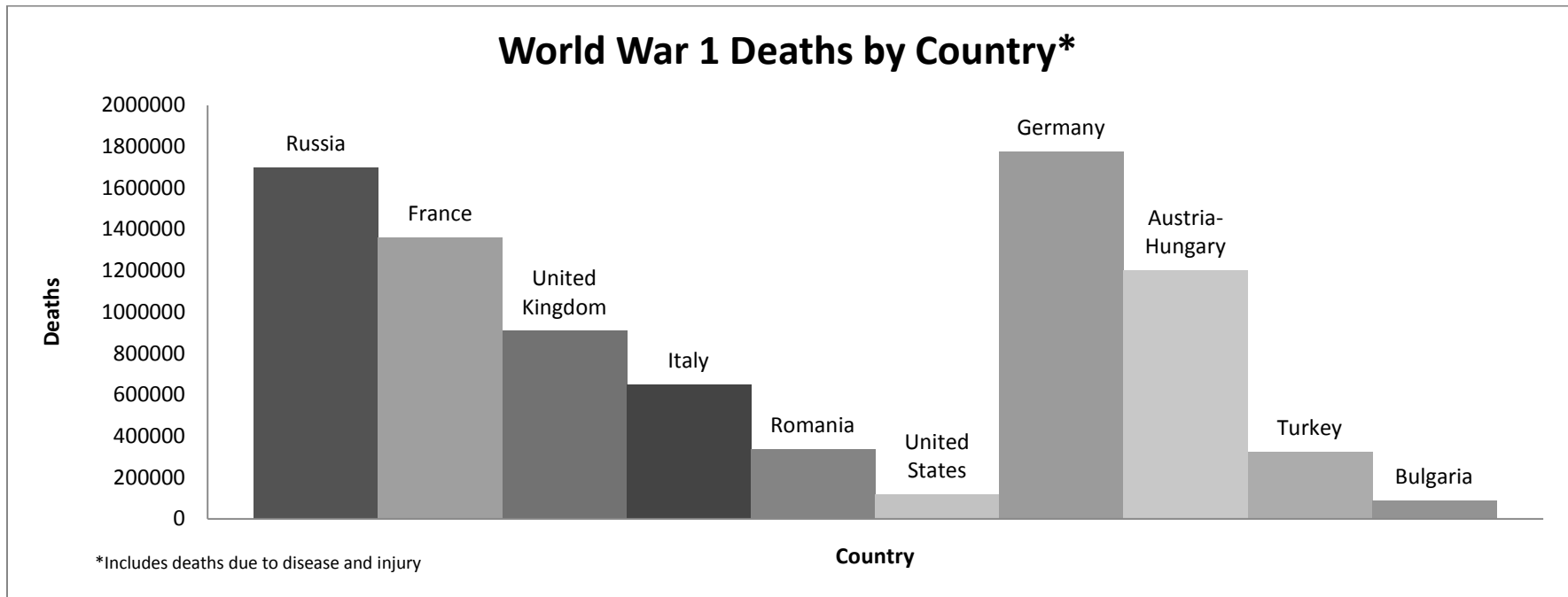
In his essay, "The United States," provided for the book *The Origins of World War I*, historian John Milton Cooper, Jr. discusses several of the historical interpretations for the cause of United States entry into the war. Below is one excerpt from that essay in which he describes a prominent view historians have taken on the subject:

"Finally, if such ties of geopolitics and culture were not enough, economics exerted an inexorable pull. Both Britain's control of the seas and its dependence on overseas trade quickly turned the United States, which had the largest industrial and agricultural economy in the world, into the Allies' supply house, especially for munitions and foodstuffs. The vast, urgent demand for American products necessitated borrowing on a huge scale by the British on behalf of themselves and the Allies, mainly through J.P. Morgan and Company. That borrowing soon turned the United States into the Allies' banker as well. By 1917, the British had exhausted their sources of collateral and faced a credit crisis that could have crimped or possibly even cut their overseas lifeline of supplies. Such fears, some have argued, were what really prompted the United States to intervene in 1917. It was to save the Allies from financial collapse or, as some left-wing critics jeered, "to save the Morgan loan."

Cooper, John Milton, Jr., "The United States," In *The Origins of World War I*, edited by Richard F. Hamilton and Holger H. Herwig, 415-442, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.



## Data Set 6



Source: "World War I Casualty and Death Tables," PBS, [http://www.pbs.org/greatwar/resources/casdeath\\_pop.html](http://www.pbs.org/greatwar/resources/casdeath_pop.html) Accessed October 26, 2012.



**"Germany Must Have Gone Mad."**  
*Special to The New York Times.*

**RICHMOND, Va., May 7.—**Discussing editorially the sinking of the Lusitania, The Times-Dispatch tomorrow will say:

Germany surely must have gone mad. The torpedoing and sinking of the Lusitania, although it was well known to German authorities that there were many Americans aboard the ill-fated Cunard liner, evince a reckless disregard of the opinions of the world in general and of this country in particular—a determination to win by any methods and at any cost—only compatible with the assumption that blood lust has toppled reason from its throne.

Through centuries of incessant struggle, in the ascent of the race from savagery, civilization has wrung from war certain guarantees of the sanctity of human life. These guarantees are expressed in the code that enlightened nations recognize. They affect neutrals even more intimately than they do belligerents, nor can any belligerent, by its mere ipse dixit, destroy the neutral's privileges and rights.

When a man fires a revolver into a crowd, the law presumes he must have intended the natural consequences of his action. Germany so designed the bolt, and it is that design that fills the American heart with loathing and bitter resentment. It is for that intent that Germany must answer.

## Data Set 8

### Third U.S. Protest over the Sinking of the Lusitania, July 21, 1915

The German sinking of RMS Lusitania on May 7, 1915, with its consequent loss of 128 U.S. lives provoked great public and diplomatic anger within the U.S. Already concerned at Germany's policy of unrestricted submarine warfare, many in the U.S. believed the sinking of the *Lusitania* to be a calculated provocation of the U.S. on Germany's part.

President Wilson's government replied by sending the first of four diplomatic protests to Germany on May 13, 1915. Wilson himself sent a third note some two months later, on July 21, 1915. In his note Wilson warned the German government that any future infringement of U.S. rights would be deemed "deliberately unfriendly."

Below are the closing statements of Wilson's third note:



"The Government of the United States and the Imperial German Government are contending for the same great object, have long stood together in urging the very principles upon which the Government of the United States now so solemnly insists. They are both contending for the freedom of the seas.

"The Government of the United States will continue to contend for that freedom, from whatever quarter violated, without compromise and at any cost. It invites the practical cooperation of the Imperial German Government at this time, when cooperation may accomplish most and this great common object be most strikingly and effectively achieved.

"Repetition by the commanders of German naval vessels of acts in contravention of those rights must be regarded by the Government of the United States, when they affect American citizens, as deliberately unfriendly."

firstworldwar.com, "Third U.S. Protest over the Sinking of the Lusitania, July 21, 1915," available at <http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/lusitania3rdprotest.htm> Accessed October 22, 2012.

## Data Set 9

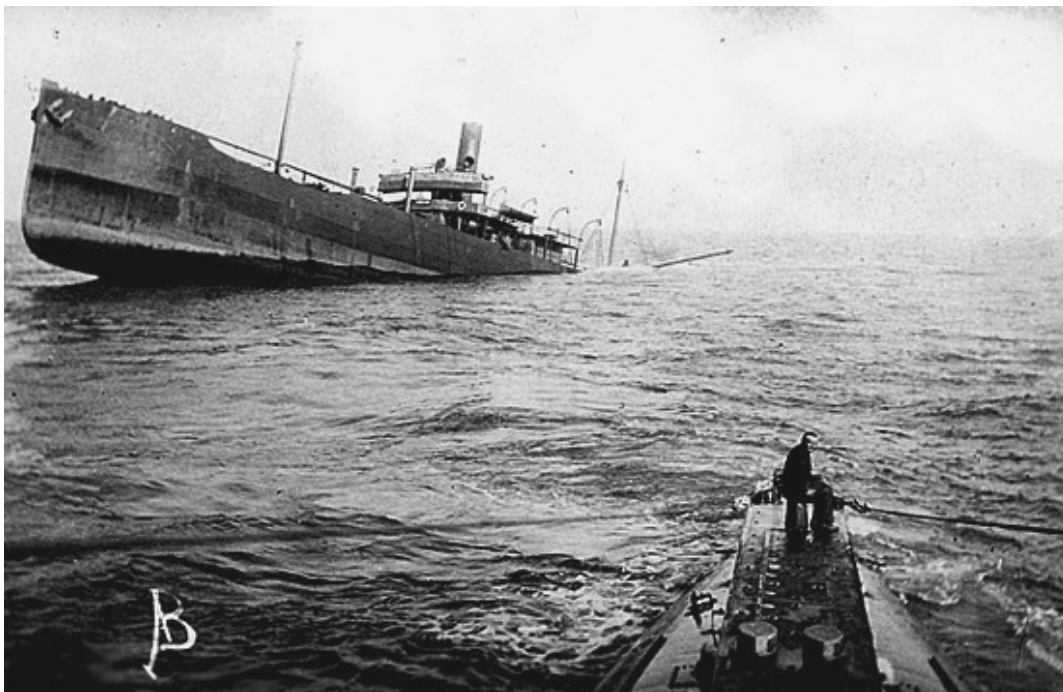
### Germany's Response to U.S. Ultimatum Regarding Unrestricted U-Boat Warfare, May 4, 1916

Woodrow Wilson condemned Germany's policy of unrestricted submarine warfare, which resulted in merchant vessels being sunk without warning should they be suspected of trading with the Allies. Wilson warned that the U.S. would not tolerate the continuation of such a policy and demanded it be revoked by the German government (a stance re-iterated in a speech to Congress the following day). Wilson had been spurred into action by the sinking of the British passenger ship *Sussex* while it was in the English Channel. Several U.S. citizens were among those drowned. Germany initially denied sinking the *Sussex* but subsequently admitted doing so.

Alarmed by the U.S. stance the German government withdrew its policy, noting that in the future a clear warning would be given before ships were torpedoed. Below is the order sent by the German government to its naval forces:

"In accordance with the general principles of visit and search and the destruction of merchant vessels, recognized by international law, such vessels, both within and without the area declared a naval war zone, shall not be sunk without warning and without saving human lives unless the ship attempts to escape or offer resistance."

firstworldwar.com, "Germany's Response to U.S. Ultimatum Regarding Unrestricted U-Boat Warfare, 4 May 1916," available at [http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/uboot1916\\_jagowresponse.htm](http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/uboot1916_jagowresponse.htm) Accessed October 22, 2012.



Data Set 10

Zimmermann Telegram

On January 16, 1917, German Foreign Minister Zimmermann sent the German Minister in Mexico an enciphered message with a proposal to be presented to the Mexican government. British intelligence intercepted and deciphered the message, and turned it over to the Americans on February 24, 1917. Publication of the message increased popular support for the U.S. declaration of war a few weeks later.

RECEIVED  
Director 1-6-17  
PERSON, State Dept.

TELEGRAM RECEIVED.

By *Wm. A. E. Hoff*  
*Oct. 27, 1917*

FROM 2nd from London # 5747.

"We intend to begin on the first of February unrestricted submarine warfare. We shall endeavor in spite of this to keep the United States of America neutral. In the event of this not succeeding, we make Mexico a proposal of alliance on the following basis: make war together, make peace together, generous financial support and an understanding on our part that Mexico is to reconquer the lost territory in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. The settlement in detail is left to you. You will inform the President of the above most secretly as soon as the outbreak of war with the United States of America is certain and add the suggestion that he should, on his own initiative, ~~invite~~ <sup>invite</sup> Japan to immediate adherence and at the same time mediate between Japan and ourselves. Please call the President's attention to the fact that the ruthless employment of our submarines now offers the prospect of compelling England in a few months to make peace." Signed, ZIMMERMANN.

## Data Set 11

### U.S. Declaration of War with Germany, April 2, 1917

U.S. President Woodrow Wilson outlined the case for declaring war upon Germany in a speech to the joint houses of Congress on April 2, 1917. Wilson's speech focused on two themes regarding the purpose of requesting war: First, the reintroduction of German unrestricted submarine warfare was addressed repeatedly as a "cruel and unmanly business" which could not be allowed to continue. Second, Wilson implied a moral superiority of free democratic nations over inherently ruthless autocracies such as Germany.

Below are selected excerpts from the declaration request, each conveying Wilson's themes:

"I am not now thinking of the loss of property involved, immense and serious as that is, but only of the wanton and wholesale destruction of the lives of non-combatants, men, women, and children, engaged in pursuits which have always, even in the darkest periods of modern history, been deemed innocent and legitimate. Property can be paid for; the lives of peaceful and innocent people cannot be. The present German submarine warfare against commerce is a warfare against mankind.

"With a profound sense of the solemn and even tragical character of the step I am taking and of the grave responsibilities which it involves, but in unhesitating obedience to what I deem my constitutional duty, I advise that the Congress declare the recent course of the Imperial German Government to be in fact nothing less than war against the government and people of the United States; that it formally accept the status of belligerent which has thus been thrust upon it; and that it take immediate steps not only to put the country in a more thorough state of defense but also to exert all its power and employ all its resources to bring the Government of the German Empire to terms and end the war.

"Our object now, as then, is to vindicate the principles of peace and justice in the life of the world as against selfish and autocratic power and to set up amongst the really free and self-governed peoples of the world such a concert of purpose and of action as will henceforth insure the observance of those principles.

"We are now about to accept gauge of battle with this natural foe to liberty and shall, if necessary, spend the whole force of the nation to check and nullify its pretensions and its power. We are glad, now that we see the facts with no veil of false pretence about them, to fight thus for the ultimate peace of the world and for the liberation of its peoples, the German peoples included: for the rights of nations great and small and the privilege of men everywhere to choose their way of life and of obedience.

"The world must be made safe for democracy. Its peace must be planted upon the tested foundations of political liberty. We have no selfish ends to serve. We desire no conquest, no dominion. We seek no indemnities for ourselves, no material compensation for the sacrifices we shall freely make. We are but one of the champions of the rights of mankind. We shall be satisfied when those rights have been made as secure as the faith and the freedom of nations can make them."

firstworldwar.com, "U.S. Declaration of War with Germany, 2 April 1917," available at

<http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/usawardeclaration.htm> Accessed October 22, 2012.

Map 1



Europe Before World War I

Map 2



Europe After World War I

Notice that not all of the Allies gained territory. What did the nations which were divided after the war have in common?

## Disconfirming Data Set

September 4, 1934

### "Merchants of Death"

On a hot Tuesday morning following Labor Day in 1934, several hundred people crowded into the Caucus Room of the Senate Office Building to witness the opening of an investigation that journalists were already calling “historic.” Although World War I had been over for 16 years, the inquiry promised to reopen an intense debate about whether the nation should ever have gotten involved in that costly conflict.

The so-called “Senate Munitions Committee” came into being because of widespread reports that manufacturers of armaments had unduly influenced the American decision to enter the war in 1917. These weapons’ suppliers had reaped enormous profits at the cost of more than 53,000 American battle deaths. As local conflicts reignited in Europe through the early 1930s, suggesting the possibility of a second world war, concern spread that these “merchants of death” would again drag the United States into a struggle that was none of its business. The time had come for a full congressional inquiry.



Gerald Nye

To lead the seven-member special committee, the Senate’s Democratic majority chose a Republican—42-year-old North Dakota Senator Gerald P. Nye. Typical of western agrarian progressives, Nye energetically opposed U.S. involvement in foreign wars. He promised, “when the Senate investigation is over, we shall see that war and preparation for war is not a matter of national honor and national defense, but a matter of profit for the few.”

Over the next 18 months, the “Nye Committee” held 93 hearings, questioning more than 200 witnesses, including J. P. Morgan, Jr., and Pierre du Pont. Committee members found little hard evidence of an active conspiracy among arms makers, yet the panel’s reports did little to weaken the popular prejudice against “greedy munitions interests.”

Although the Nye Committee failed to achieve its goal of nationalizing the arms industry, it inspired three congressional neutrality acts in the mid-1930s that signaled profound American opposition to overseas involvement.

Schlesinger, Arthur M., Jr., and Roger Bruns, eds. *Congress Investigates: A Documented History, 1792-1974*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1975.

Located at US Senate, [http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/minute/merchants\\_of\\_death.htm](http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/minute/merchants_of_death.htm) Accessed October 26, 2012



## Persuasive Essay Assignment

Your assignment is to create a persuasive essay in which you support your conclusion to the central question: What led the United States to enter World War One? In creating your persuasive essay you will explain a conclusion to the question which you DO NOT support, but you will show the potential validity of this interpretation by highlighting some of its strong points using evidence supplied in the data sets. To counter that conclusion, you will present evidence which contradicts that interpretation, also using evidence from the data sets. Finally, you will use evidence you have gathered in the data sets that you believe supports your conclusion to the central question.

Remember! Credible historians acknowledge that opposing views have merit and do not attempt to mislead or misinterpret opposing evidence. You should do the same, give credence to another view on this subject. You should select an opposing view that you believe to be the second or third best conclusion to the central question and not neglect evidence which supports that view. After all, if you believe the opposing view has better evidence, then it should be your primary conclusion. Your *Hypothesis/Evidence Tracking Sheet* should have all the information you need to locate your evidence quickly within the data sets. Use data set numbers as your citation, and place your citations parenthetically.

Your 2-3 page persuasive essay should be structured like this:

- **Introduction:**
  - The introduction should begin with overview of the topic at hand and a restatement of the central question in your own words.
  - The introduction should mention briefly the conclusion you oppose.
  - The introduction should end with a strong statement of your conclusion to the central question.
- **Body:**
  - One paragraph explaining a conclusion to the central question you do not agree with.
    - Support this conclusion with 2-3 legitimate pieces of evidence from the data sets.
  - One transition paragraph explaining why you believe that conclusion is not warranted.
    - Support this conclusion with evidence from the data sets. If no evidence directly addresses a rebuttal to this viewpoint, use reasoned assertions as to why such a conclusion is insufficient in answering the central question.
  - One or two paragraphs explaining the conclusion to the central question which you support.
    - Support this conclusion with at least 3 logical pieces of evidence – more is better.
- **Conclusion:**
  - Restate the central question in your own words.
  - Briefly restate your conclusion.
  - Close with an overview of the inquiry's theme.

All the rules of spelling and grammar apply. Use transitional and topic sentences at paragraph beginnings and keep your reader motivated by inserting sentence modifiers. This is a formal essay: no first person references (I believe, I conclude), and no contractions.

## Persuasive Essay Rubric

	1	2	3	4	Score
Support and Evidence	Most interpretations are incorrect in regard to evidence cited, and evidence is often applied to arguments in which they don't pertain.	Significant errors in interpretation and judgment exist in regard to evidence cited, and evidence is applied to arguments in which they don't pertain.	Most of the supporting and opposing evidence is interpreted correctly and all are applied correctly to the roles in which they were intended.	All supporting and opposing evidence supplied is accurately interpreted and applied correctly to the roles in which they were intended.	
Introduction and conclusion	Significant aspects of the introduction and conclusion are missing, or one or both paragraphs are not supplied.	Several criteria for the introduction and/or the concluding paragraph are missing.	The introduction is missing an overview, a restatement of the question, an opposing view, or an answer to the central question; or The concluding paragraph is missing a restatement of the question, its conclusion, or an overview.	The introduction includes an overview of the topic, a restatement of the central question, an opposing view point, and a conclusion to the central question. The concluding paragraph restates the central question and the conclusion to it, and it gives an overview of the paper's theme.	
Body	Major problems exist with the inclusion of positions or the support of positions addressed.	One of the three criteria for the body is not submitted, or significant amounts of criteria for a proper defense of the body are not submitted.	Opposing view is presented and defended with evidence. Rebuttal to the opposing view is present and defended. Conclusion to the central question is supported with evidence.	Opposing view is presented and defended with at least 2 supporting evidence. Rebuttal to the opposing view is sound and logical. Conclusion to the central question is supported with at least 3 supporting evidence.	
Mechanics and Grammar	Major problems in sentence structure, grammar, and diction. Frequent major errors in, punctuation, and spelling. Essay is difficult to understand and often impossible. No citations are used.	Problems exist in sentence structure, grammar, and diction. Frequent major errors in citation style, punctuation, and spelling. Essay is difficult to understand	Sentence structure, grammar, and diction strong despite occasional lapses; punctuation and citation style often used correctly. Some minor spelling errors.	Sentence structure, grammar, and diction excellent; correct use of punctuation and citation style; minimal to no spelling errors.	

## Lesson Plan Evaluation/Reflection

This lesson plan contains several primary source documents that are lengthy and complex both in content of issue and diction. For this reason, a higher level of reading skills are required to interpret, discuss, and debate the content addressed in the lesson plan – a grade 12 or advanced placement class is the intended audience. With alteration, this lesson is suitable for use throughout highschool grades. The content of World War I clearly rests in the realm of U.S., European, or world history courses. This lesson can be placed in a chronological location in course material, or it is also suited for a thematic purpose such as America's entrance into world affairs.

### **PASS STANDARDS**

#### **1. HIGHER ORDER THINKING: Score 5**

As designed, the teacher has the task of ensuring **all** students are participating in the lesson with the class, and there is more than sufficient opportunity for the students to engage in the issue at hand either individually, as a group member, or during class-wide discussions. This lesson involves frequent introductions of new material to the students in which they are required to review, interpret, and synthesize with previously introduced materials. Drawing a conclusion and explaining the material presented is requested throughout the lesson and is a requirement of the students as a part of their final assessment. Uncertainty is guaranteed in the students' thought process because the data sets provide several potential conclusions to be made, and at no point should the teacher suggest a correct manner of reasoning in coming to conclusions.

#### **2. DEEP KNOWLEDGE: Score 5**

As designed, the teacher has the task of ensuring **all** students are participating in the lesson with the class, and there is more than sufficient opportunity for the students to engage in the issue at hand either individually, as a group member, or during class-wide discussions. The central idea of this lesson is explored in detail. The data sets and discussions present an opportunity for interpretations to be made regarding the existence or lack thereof of relationships between the documents presented. Problem solving, constructing explanations, and drawing conclusions is requested of the students frequently during group and class discussion, and they are required as part of the final student assessment. The content of the material is important and relevant to the students, and their involvement in discussions and debates over the material indicates a high level of understanding.

#### **3. SUBSTANTIVE CONVERSATION: Score 5**

As designed, the teacher has the task of ensuring **all** students are participating in the lesson with the class, and there is more than sufficient opportunity for the students to engage in discussion with one another and with the teacher. The lesson requires discussion involving higher order thinking where questions are raised, debated, and discussed primarily by the students with some clarification delivered by the teacher. Information in the data sets may be interpreted differently by each student and each student may assign greater or lesser importance on varying documents resulting in a virtually unscripted discussion. Greatest importance is placed on the students' ability to explain their positions with evidence when challenged by others with opposing views. The nature of the data sets will certainly lead to several viewpoints of the central question addressed.

**4. CONNECTIONS TO THE WORLD BEYOND THE CLASSROOM: Score 2**

As designed, the students are informed of the significance World War I had and has on the world since the conflict was completed. The students build an understanding that decisions to go to war are not/should not be made in haste and they may express that opinion outside the classroom. With an altered presentation or extended discussion time the teacher could relate World War One to the conflicts in Vietnam, the Balkan Peninsula, and the Middle East in the last several decades. The potential exists that students may have relatives that engaged in these conflicts, and current situations in the Middle East should be particularly relevant to students approaching military age. However, there is no explicit link to students' daily lives outside the classroom intended in the design of this inquiry lesson, and linking the United States's involvement in World War One specifically to these contemporary issues would deviate considerably from the lesson's intention.

**5. ETHICAL VALUING: Score 5**

As designed, the teacher has the task of ensuring **all** students are participating in the lesson with the class, and there is more than sufficient opportunity for the students to engage in the issue at hand either individually, as a group member, or during class-wide discussions. Specific connections to value judgments are presented in data sets involving President Wilson's defense of democratic societies and condemnation of autocratic empires and those which suggest retribution for submarine actions taken against ships with American ties. In addition, the final wrap-up of the lesson asks students to give their own opinions on the justification to go to war which should result in further discussion and portrayal of ethical valuing. Less direct influences on ethical valuing will result naturally in discussion regarding war, revenge, profit motives, and national morality. Discussion of the national heritage of American citizens will result in an understanding of the perspectives the people of the nation faced. Furthermore, the data sets provide the perspectives of individuals from the time regarding the issue of going to war, most notably President Wilson, who had the greatest influence on the issue. Throughout the lesson, supporting positions taken with evidence is required with regard to discussions.

**6. INTEGRATION: Score 4**

The lesson incorporates two types of integration: interdisciplinary and knowledge and skills. Interdisciplinary enhances the social understanding of students during this lesson by developing their research and interpretation skills as defined by the historical method; relating economic situations to geographic global interdependence such as Britain's inability to provide resources for its own sustainability; understanding circumstances that affect political decision making both nationally and internationally, such as Wilson's justifications for declaring war; and emotional responses such as revenge and vilification to acts of war.

Knowledge and skills enhances civic efficacy in this lesson by giving students the ability to research, interpret, and defend issues of major concern to people in society. Informed and reasoned decision making are at the heart of this lesson, and students are encourage to use thoughtful and considerate discussion skills throughout. These skills are essential to civic efficacy.

Other forms of integration that exist but do not reach the level suggested by PASS standards are Subject integration in the form of English and writing skills required for the persuasive essay; and Time and Place integration which may or may not be discussed as issues of World War One relate to modern conflicts and geographic borders.

**Potential Changes and Teaching and Learning issues:**

There are two points to my inquiry lesson that I feel can be improved with further time and research. First, the “hook” for my lesson is lengthy and not the attention grabber I wish it could be. Dividing the introduction into 3 different short clips will lead to much time wasting. Furthermore, I know there are interesting yet substantive video sources that will gain my students’ attention while still giving a sampling of background information to the United States’ entry into the war. Finding these sources is problematic because it would require me to recall movies or documentaries I viewed long ago, or otherwise begin a search from scratch. In the future, if I come across an interesting and informative piece of video, music, or writing that may have an influence on a lesson I might teach, I will be sure to record its location and give a brief description – I will keep a log. Second, many of my data sets portray only one position on the inquiry question. I would have preferred to have more documents that support more than one conclusion, support one conclusion while undermining another, or support and undermine the same conclusion at the same time. I was expecting to find more of this during my research of primary source documents, but to no avail.

I have learned that inquiry lessons require a great deal of time and research. In some cases I was unable to find graphs that gave all the information I wanted to portray and in a visually clear manner, so I had to find sources with the information and create my own graphs specifically for this lesson. I will be sure to keep a log of pertinent information I come across in the future whether I know I will use it or not. Despite the difficulties I faced while making this inquiry and the time and effort I expect I will use making new ones, I do believe inquiry lessons are an excellent fit to my teaching philosophy. I believe students should discover their own knowledge. Although much information is provided by me as the teacher for inquiry lessons, I do not tell the students how to think or what conclusion to come to, so they indeed discover their own meaning in these lessons.