

CHAPTER
19

The World War I Era (1914-1920)

SECTION **THE ROAD TO WAR**

TEXT SUMMARY

THE BIG IDEA
World War I began in July 1914 and quickly spread across Europe. The United States remained neutral.

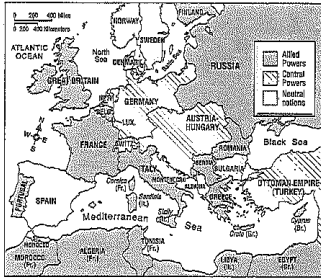
The causes of World War I included European imperialism, or the competition for overseas colonies, **militarism**, the aggressive buildup of armed forces, nationalism in many European nations, and a system of complex alliances. The European nations formed alliances to protect their security and began **mobilization**, getting their forces ready for war. By August 4, 1914, all the major European powers were at war.

The **Central Powers** of Germany and Austria-Hungary lined up against the **Allies**: Britain, France, Russia, and Serbia. A few weeks into the war, the sides had reached a **stalemate**, in which neither had an advantage. Both sides were using a strategy of trench warfare, which was costly in lives and resources. Modern weapons such as efficient machine guns, artillery, hand grenades, and poison gas decimated the soldiers of both sides and perpetuated the stalemate.

Most Americans did not want to be involved, although they opposed the Central Powers. Looking at the German leader, Kaiser Wilhelm II, as an **autocrat**, a ruler with unlimited power. They also saw Germany as too militaristic. Much false **propaganda**, information intended to sway public opinion, by Britain also helped turn Americans against Germany.

President Wilson declared the United States to be neutral and worked for a peace settlement. However, American business leaders were concerned with how the war would disrupt trade and urged a policy of preparedness. Preparedness had its critics. A peace movement that included many Populists, Progressives, and social reformers urged the United States to stay out of the war.

GRAPHIC SUMMARY: European Alliances in World War I



A week after war broke out, most of Europe was involved in World War I.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- How did the President of the United States react to the outbreak of war in Europe?
- Map Skills** Which side did Italy join in World War I?

SECTION

THE UNITED STATES DECLARES WAR

TEXT SUMMARY

As World War I continued in Europe, tensions between the United States and Germany increased. Much of the conflict resulted from a new German weapon, the **U-boat**, a submarine that changed the rules of naval warfare. The U-boat would remain hidden and fire on ships without warning. German U-boats attacked British ships at will as well as neutral American ships suspected of carrying weapons. In 1915 a U-boat torpedoed a British ship, the *Lusitania*, rightly suspected of carrying weapons. Included among the dead were 128 Americans.

As U-boats continued to attack Allied ships, President Wilson demanded that Germany agree to the **Sussex Pledge**, a promise not to attack ships without warning. Then in 1917 Germany withdrew its promise and continued unrestricted submarine warfare. Wilson's hopes of remaining neutral were fading.

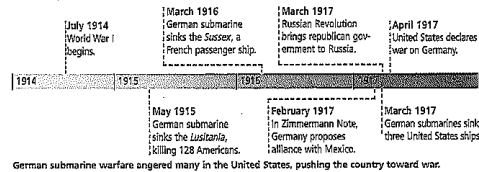
Germany did refrain from attacking

American ships for a time, but the British intercepted a telegram from the German foreign secretary, Arthur Zimmermann, to the Mexican government promising the American Southwest to Mexico if it declared war on the United States. Most people did not take this **Zimmermann Note** seriously, but it pushed America closer to war.

In 1917 the **Russian Revolution** overthrew the Czar. Americans had always used the non-democratic Russian government as an excuse for not allying themselves with the Allies. With the Czar gone, Americans were now more willing to join the Allies. The final straw came when Germany sank three more American ships. President Wilson officially declared war on the Central Powers on April 6, 1917.

THE BIG IDEA
Attacks by German submarines against American ships pushed the United States to enter World War I on the side of the Allies.

GRAPHIC SUMMARY: The United States Enters World War I



REVIEW QUESTIONS

- Name two events that caused many Americans to turn against Germany.
- Time Line Skills** In what year did the United States enter World War I?

SECTION

AMERICANS ON THE EUROPEAN FRONT

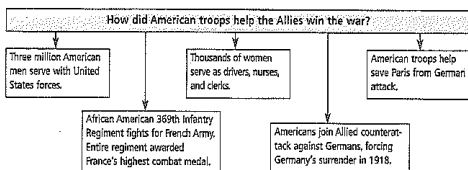
TEXT SUMMARY

The United States was unprepared for war in 1917. At first, Congress sent a small army with supplies and loans for the Allies. At the same time, Congress passed the **Selective Service Act** authorizing a draft of men into the military. Three million men eventually were selected to serve in the **American Expeditionary Force (AEF)**. Thousands of women also contributed to the war effort by volunteering as nurses, drivers, and clerks. African Americans served in segregated units, but few saw combat. To get the soldiers to Europe without being attacked by German U-boats, Americans used a **convoy** system in which troop and merchant ships sailed to Europe surrounded by armed warships. The Russians, led by Vladimir Lenin,

signed a truce with Germany. This allowed Germany to move all its troops into France and attempt a final offensive before American reinforcements could arrive. Once in Europe, American soldiers fought German forces along the front and deep in Allied territory. Turning the Germans back near Paris, the Allies, with the help of American soldiers, counter-attacked in July 1918 and pushed the Germans back. The war finally ended on November 11, 1918, with an **armistice**, or ceasefire. Around 50,000 American soldiers died in battle, but more died from influenza, a global epidemic that took the lives of some 30 million people around the world. Adding to the casualties was the **genocide**, or deliberate killing of a group of people, of the Armenians by the Turkish government.

THE BIG IDEA
American troops joined the war in 1917, helping the Allies to defeat the Central Powers.

GRAPHIC SUMMARY: American Soldiers in World War I



The turning point of World War I came in 1918, as American troops helped the Allies turn back the German advance.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- How did American troops travel to Europe without being attacked by U-boats?
- Diagram Skills** In what year was Germany forced to surrender?

SECTION

AMERICANS ON THE HOME FRONT

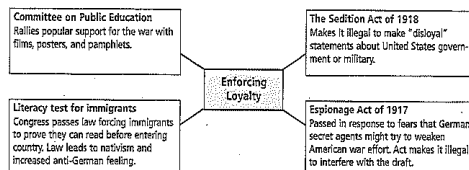
TEXT SUMMARY

While soldiers fought in Europe, the U.S. government worked on the home front to finance the war. **Liberty Bonds**, special war bonds sold to Americans, raised a great deal of money. President Wilson also set up new government agencies to help manage the economy. The government managed the production and distribution of food and established **price controls**, through which the government set food prices. The government also instituted a policy of **rationing**, or distributing goods to consumers in a fixed amount. A fuel agency sponsored gasless days and instituted **daylight saving time**, turning the clocks ahead one hour for the summer, to increase the number of daylight hours for work. To enforce loyalty to the Allied cause, the government also regulated news and

information by censoring the press and banning some publications. A public information agency also rallied support through films, pamphlets, and posters. A fear of foreigners and the possibility of spies approached hysteria as the government repressed civil liberties and passed a **Sedition Act** to quell any disloyal speech or action. Groups of **vigilantes** often took the law into their own hands to hound and even lynch radicals and German immigrants. World War I made social changes in Americans' lives. The war halted immigration, and the need for workers led many businessmen to recruit Mexican, African American, and female workers.

THE BIG IDEA
To strengthen the war effort, the American government expanded its control over the economy and brought changes to American society.

GRAPHIC SUMMARY: Enforcing Loyalty



President Wilson declared that disloyalty during wartime would be "dealt with with a firm hand of stern repression."

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- What effect did the war have on women and minorities?
- Diagram Skills** What did the Sedition Act make illegal?

SECTION 5 GLOBAL PEACEMAKER

TEXT SUMMARY

To make the world safe from war, President Wilson offered a program called the **Fourteen Points**. It included an end to alliances, removal of trade barriers among nations, reduction of military forces, and the right of ethnic groups to **self-determination**, to make decisions about their own futures.

THE BIG IDEA

Wilson's plan for world peace met with opposition at home and in Europe.

At the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, Wilson was forced to compromise. Britain, France, and Italy wanted the **spoils**, or rewards of war. Wilson did convince the Allies to accept his plan for a **League of Nations**, an organization of all the nations to work for worldwide security and peace.

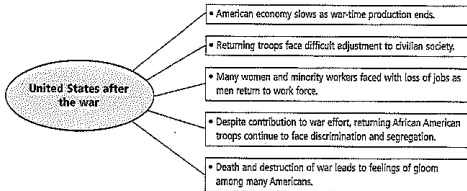
But the Allies opposed Wilson's ideas for self-determination and redrew the map of Europe, creating new ethnic minorities and increasing tensions. In addition, Britain, France, and Italy demanded Germany pay

reparations for economic injuries suffered in the war. The **Versailles Treaty** ended the war officially in June 1919. Germany never forgave or forgot this humiliation.

At home, Wilson was met with resistance to the League of Nations from senators worried that the League would draw the nation into another war. Wilson toured the nation to promote the League, but the treaty was not ratified until 1921, and the United States did not join the League of Nations.

World War I thrust the United States into a position of world leadership, but the aftermath brought problems. Returning soldiers found jobs scarce, and many women and minorities had to give up their jobs. The brutal war with its terrible casualties brought a postwar gloom to the American people.

GRAPHIC SUMMARY: After the War



After World War I, the American people faced a difficult adjustment to peacetime life.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why did the Senate reject American participation in the League of Nations?
2. **Diagram Skills** How did the war's end affect women and minorities?

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

CHAPTER 19 Test

IDENTIFYING MAIN IDEAS

Write the letter of the correct answer in the blank provided. (10 points each)

1. Germany and Austria-Hungary were opposed at the start of the war by
 - A. Britain, France, and America.
 - B. Britain, France, Russia, and Serbia.
 - C. Britain, France, Italy, and Serbia.
 - D. Britain, Italy, Russia, and Serbia.
2. The United States responded to the war by
 - A. declaring its neutrality.
 - B. sending troops immediately to Europe.
 - C. stopping its overseas trade.
 - D. forming an alliance with the Central Powers.
3. Tensions between Germany and the United States grew because of
 - A. German submarine attacks.
 - B. British submarine attacks.
 - C. Germany's refusal to use American U-boats.
 - D. Germany's threats to use U-boats.
4. After the Russian Revolution in March 1917, Americans were
 - A. frightened of the new Russian government.
 - B. more willing to join the Allies.
 - C. more willing to join Germany.
 - D. more determined to remain neutral.
5. When the United States joined World War I, it
 - A. refused to loan money to the Allies.
 - B. sent a huge army to Europe right away.
 - C. had already instituted a draft as part of its preparations for war.
 - D. needed to institute a draft to build a large army.
6. Soon after arriving in Europe, American troops
 - A. helped break through French lines.
 - B. helped save Paris from a German attack.
 - C. were unable to save Paris from capture by the Germans.
 - D. attacked Russia after it had made peace with Germany.
7. During World War I, the government's role in the American economy
 - A. grew.
 - B. decreased.
 - C. was insignificant.
 - D. was felt only in military production.
8. During the war, the United States government passed laws to
 - A. prohibit all immigration.
 - B. silence opposition to the American war effort.
 - C. promote freedom of the press.
 - D. protect people's right to criticize the Constitution.
9. The overall goal of President Wilson's Fourteen Points was to
 - A. create a lasting peace.
 - B. promote imperialism.
 - C. force Germany to pay for war damages.
 - D. preserve Europe's system of alliances.
10. In the Senate, the main criticism of the League of Nations was that it would
 - A. not be located in the United States.
 - B. be too expensive.
 - C. threaten American independence.
 - D. accept too many nations as members.