

AP United States History
Unit 7: A Colossus Emerges
Topic- World War I: Reading Selections

Explain the causes and consequences of U.S. involvement in World War I.

World War I: Military and Diplomacy

After initial neutrality in World War I, the nation entered the conflict, departing from the U.S. foreign policy tradition of non-involvement in European affairs, in response to Woodrow Wilson's call for the defense of humanitarian and democratic principles.

After the conclusion of the Spanish-American War, America became much more involved in global affairs. When Theodore Roosevelt became president, it immediately signaled a shift in American foreign policy. From 1903-1914, the nation intervened throughout Latin America and even in Asian affairs, as Roosevelt brokered the settlement which ended the Russo-Japanese War in 1906, for which he would receive the Nobel Peace Prize. But, all was not well, especially between the United States and Japan. After an earthquake struck San Francisco in 1906, the school board decided to segregate the white and Japanese students away from one another. The Japanese government protested because in 1894, the two nations had signed a treaty granting Japanese emigrants the same rights as American citizens. In 1907, the two nations signed a Gentleman's Agreement to ease the tensions, stating that the wives and children of Japanese immigrants already living in the United States could still enter the country, but it denied passports to Japanese laborers who wanted to enter the country. When Roosevelt sent the Great White Fleet (America's navy) on a global tour, it included a stop in Japan, the very next year. As his term was coming to an end in 1909, Roosevelt remained wary of Japan and in fact, predicted that the two nations would be on a collision course due to their interests in Pacific, due to the United States having acquired the Philippine Islands, Guam, the Hawaiian Islands, Midway, American Samoa, and especially after having issued the Open Door Notes to China.

When William Howard Taft came into office, he dropped Roosevelt's Big Stick Diplomacy, which had required the country to intervene in Cuba, Venezuela and the Dominican Republic after issuing the Roosevelt Corollary (which stated that America would intervene in the affairs of the nations of Latin America to keep the Europeans out of the Western Hemisphere— it was an extension of the Monroe Doctrine), used military force to bring the Filipino-American War to an end, and built the Panama Canal. Taft used Dollar Diplomacy— essentially asking American businesses to invest in the nations of Latin America (in fruits, vegetables, sugar, and coffee). It would also require the use of the American military to intervene in Latin America, this time, to protect those business interests. By the time Woodrow Wilson became president, the United States was much more involved in global affairs than it ever had been in its history. Under Wilson, American intervention would take on another dimension entirely, as the nation would become involved in its first global conflict.

Under the Wilson administration, America embarked on what became known as Moral Diplomacy. The philosophy of Moral Diplomacy was that America would support nations which shared our democratic ideals and would use our power and influence to spread democracy throughout the world. It meant, of course, that America would become involved in foreign affairs on a global scale. Even before Wilson became president, the Mexican Revolution had broken-out in 1910. The situation quickly became unstable and by the time Wilson stepped into the presidency, the people of Mexico had gone through multiple leaders, the fighting had increased on an ever-widening scale, and thousands of immigrants had started fleeing into the United States. The Wilson administration intervened in Mexico twice, once in 1914, and again in 1916, after the rebel leader,

Pancho Villa crossed the border and went on a killing spree near present-day Columbus, New Mexico. The administration had also intervened in both Haiti and the Dominican Republic. When Wilson became president, he had made a pledge not to be interventionist in foreign affairs and had preached a doctrine of self-determination (the ideal of allowing countries to determine their own destiny), but once in the presidency, he sent in troops to try to create democracies in both Haiti in the Dominican Republic— much like his efforts in Mexico— both efforts resulted in failures and created longstanding resentments. But, Wilson had a much larger foreign policy problem than the squabbles in Latin America. By 1914, a global conflict had erupted in Europe that would eventually involve the United States.

On June 28, 1914, the European powers became engulfed in the First World War. The causes for the conflict stemmed from the competitive nature of the European powers, the unification of new nations such as Germany and Italy, and the ethnic tensions which had occurred in aging empires such as the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Russian Empire, and the Ottoman Empire. Nationalism, or the desire for ethnic groups of people living within these aging empires to be free to create their own nation-states was one cause for the conflict. The competition between the European powers for colonies in Africa and Asia to create new markets and to feed raw materials into their industrial societies, or imperialism was a cause for the conflict. Another cause for the conflict was the growing militarism in each of the European powers— especially the newly unified German nation which made the situation tense across the European continent in the decades leading up to the war. And last, but not least, due to the fears that the European powers had of one another, each had alliance systems that were triggered when the war started with the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, who was the heir to the aging Austro-Hungarian Empire by the Serbian nationalist group, the Black Hand (His assassin, Gavrilo Princip, was a member of an anarchist and nationalist group which sought the freedom of ethnic Slavs from within the Austro-Hungarian Empire.) The killing of Archduke Franz Ferdinand led the Austro-Hungarian Empire to declare war on Serbia, to which the Russian Empire came to their aid. When the Russian Empire declared war on the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Germany declared war on Serbia and the Russian Empire, which led France to enter the war. When the Austro-Hungarian Empire entered the war, a year later, desiring territory to its north, Italy entered the war on the side of Serbia, France, and the Russian Empire. When the Germans launched an invasion of France by advancing through tiny Belgium, Great Britain joined the Allies— France, the Russian Empire, Italy, and Serbia, against the Central Powers, which consisted of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Germany, and the Ottoman Empire. Though the war had started in Europe, America remained neutral in the conflict, but that stance would not last forever.

It took three long years and a series of events to drag the United States into World War I. In 1915, a passenger liner (a steamship), the *Lusitania*, was torpedoed and sunk by a German submarine off the coast of Ireland which led to the deaths of almost 1,200 people, including 128 American passengers. In 1916, while running for re-election, Wilson ran on the slogan, he kept us out of the war. But, as the war dragged on into its third year, the British blockade of Europe had started to make the Germans more and more desperate and on the ground, the war had entered into a stalemate as the Germans and the French and the British battled for inches on the Western Front. In the South, the Italians and the Austro-Hungarians fought to a bloody stalemate, while British forces ignited Arab resistance in the Middle East which busied the Ottoman Turks. However, in the East, the war was going poorly for the Russian Empire in the face of German and Austro-Hungarian forces. Facing multiple bloody setbacks, the Russian Empire dropped out of the war by early 1917, and soon a Communist revolution in that aging empire would send shockwaves throughout the Western world as the death of the Russian czar and his family led to a brutal civil war that would end with the birth of the Soviet Union. In late 1916, German submarines began sinking American ships— through the process of unrestricted submarine warfare in a desperate attempt to break the British blockade and therefore the stalemate in the war. Knowing the United States would side with the Allies, Germany offered an alliance with Mexico and promised to return to its territories that had been lost with both the annexation of Texas and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (Interestingly enough, it was the Germans who took Vladimir Lenin from his exile in Switzerland and sent him to foment a Communist insurrection inside the Russian Empire. It worked, but the Zimmerman Telegram, dangling an alliance with Mexico and later, Germany making overtures to Japan, did not.) After being intercepted by

British spies and published in newspapers throughout the country, the Zimmerman Telegram enraged Americans at the thought of German treachery with Mexico. American ties to Britain— a common language, customs, and history pulled at the heartstrings of most Americans. When Germany announced it would resume unrestricted submarine warfare after pledging not to sink any more American vessels (breaking the Sussex Pledge), President Woodrow Wilson went back on his campaign pledge and pushed a declaration of war through Congress. On April 6, 1917, the United States officially entered World War I.

Although the American Expeditionary Forces played a relatively limited role in combat, the United States' entry helped to tip the balance of the conflict in favor of the Allies.

When America entered into World War I, it had a relatively small army and navy and had to step into the first modern conflict in the history of warfare. In order to facilitate the development of the American military into a force that could make a difference in the conflict, Congress and the Wilson administration passed the Selective Service Act (1917), which instituted a draft that required all young American men between the ages of 21-45 to register for service in the U.S. Army. Out of the 4.8 million Americans who served in the war, 2.8 million were drafted, while approximately 2 million American soldiers were volunteers. The war that these young men would step into was the first of the Second Industrial Revolution and featured new technologies which allowed for killing on a mass scale. These new weapons included: airplanes, tanks, machine guns, poison gas, and submarines— each of which made the war into one of the deadliest conflicts in human history. The war largely featured trench warfare, and with the weapons that soldiers on both sides at their disposal, crossing no-man's land to attack a trench meant certain suicide on a mass scale. Against this backdrop, American soldiers trained for a classic conflict, one which involved men taking a position through the use of a frontal assault. But, when the first Americans arrived in France, most of them learned from the British and the French how to survive in a trench. However, American soldiers arriving in France took time— the soldiers had to be inducted, trained, transported, and equipped in mass to make a difference in a war that their opponents, the Germans, appeared to be on the verge of winning. It was a monumental undertaking, which required the American government to develop the infrastructure and human agencies to execute it almost overnight. It took a year for it to happen, but by the early summer of 1918, the first American soldiers arrived in mass and almost immediately began to provide a boost for the beleaguered Allied forces— providing them the shot in the arm that was necessary to bring the conflict to a conclusion by November 11, 1918.

American soldiers and sailors served with distinction in World War I. The American Expeditionary Force— under the command of General John “Blackjack” Pershing, fought as a separate command throughout their service with the Allies during the final six months of the war. American forces made a difference in the following battles and campaigns: the Argonne Forest, Belleau Wood, and Cantigny, and finally after participating in the second Meuse-Argonne offensive, helped push the Germans back away from the French capital of Paris by the late summer of 1918. One American, a Tennessean, Alvin York, would subdue an entire German unit by himself, winning the nation's highest military award, the Congressional Medal of Honor. But, by the end of the war, it was the thought of hundreds of thousands of American soldiers still in route to the conflict that convinced the Central Powers to sue for peace. In other words, Americans had arrived in the nick of time to make a difference in the war. Despite having only been involved in the war on the ground for about six months, America suffered over 116,000 deaths (twice the number of deaths that occurred in eight years of fighting in the Vietnam War) and more than 200,000 wounded, but in the end, it was the influenza epidemic (a global pandemic) which killed more people than the war, itself (but the war aided in its spread or diffusion). After the armistice (an agreement to stop fighting), President Woodrow Wilson, the first American president to visit Europe, would make an attempt to make the First World War, the last, but in the end, most of the European powers were solely interested in punishing their former enemies (especially the Germans) and most Americans at home who were both shocked and appalled at the immense casualties in such a short amount of time were not interested in our nation playing a further role in securing the peace. Both of these problems would have tremendously negative consequences for the entire world, as almost exactly twenty years (to the day) later, the world would be engulfed in an even deadlier conflict which would have even more consequential implications.

Despite Wilson's deep involvement in postwar negotiations, the U.S. Senate refused to ratify the Treaty of Versailles or join the League of Nations.

In order to secure a lasting peace, President Woodrow Wilson, traveled to France for the negotiations for the Treaty of Versailles. From the beginning, it was his goal to prevent a future global conflict. He issued his Fourteen Points, a plan for peace for the entire world. It consisted of the following ideals:

1. Open diplomacy without secret treaties
2. Economic free trade on the seas during war and peace
3. Equal trade conditions
4. Decrease armaments among all nations
5. Adjust colonial claims
6. Evacuation of all Central Powers from Russia and allow it to define its own independence
7. Belgium to be evacuated and restored
8. Return of Alsace-Lorraine region and all French territories
9. Readjust Italian borders
10. Austria-Hungary to be provided an opportunity for self-determination
11. Redraw the borders of the Balkan region creating Roumania, Serbia and Montenegro
12. Creation of a Turkish state with guaranteed free trade in the Dardanelles
13. Creation of an independent Polish state
14. Creation of the League of Nations

When he arrived in France, Wilson was greeted with a hero's welcome, but it quickly became clear to him that the other Allied powers, particularly Great Britain and France, were only interested in punishing the Germans. In the end, none of the measures of the Fourteen Points were adopted, with the exception of the last ideal— the League of Nations. The treaty also sowed the seeds for a second global conflict, by forcing Germany to accept full responsibility for the war, to pay reparations for it (which Germany finished paying in 2010), and to give up some of its territories to France and to create a new nation— Poland (for which the Russian Empire was also required by the treaty to give up territory to create, as well). Neither Italy nor Japan, received the concessions from the treaty that either had desired. The treaty led to anger and resentment across the European continent. At home, it was the League of Nations, and the fact that it would require an American global presence in a collective security agreement (whereby if one nation is attacked, each member nation comes to its defense) at a time when most Americans were disillusioned with the war and its shocking casualties, that was on trial. To push for the League of Nations and the ratification of the treaty by the U.S. Senate, which was led by the powerful Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, who was no friend of Wilson's and did not favor the involvement of the nation in a collective security agreement, Wilson went on a national tour in the summer of 1919 to sell his ideas directly to the American people. While speaking to a crowd of supporters in Pueblo, Colorado, Wilson suffered a massive stroke that would debilitate him for the rest of his term in office. Now an invalid, Wilson was forced to watch in humiliation as the treaty and his idea of a League of Nations went down to defeat. He muttered when he heard the news, "They (the U.S. Senate) have shamed us in the eyes of the world." America would negotiate a separate peace agreement with each of the Central Powers, which brought our official involvement in the conflict to an end by 1921, after Wilson left office. Most historians consider the Treaty of Versailles and the subsequent American policy of isolationism that was practiced during the 1920s and 1930s to be primary causes for both the Great Depression and the Second World War.

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Explain the causes and effects of international and internal migration patterns over time.

World War I: The Home Front

Official restrictions on freedom of speech grew during World War I, as increased anxiety about radicalism led to a Red Scare and attacks on labor activism and immigrant culture.

Immigration from Europe reached its peak in the years before World War I. During World War I, nativist campaigns against some ethnic groups led to the passage of quotas that restricted immigration, particularly from southern and eastern Europe, and increased barriers to Asian immigration.

In the years leading up to World War I, more immigrants from Southern, Central, and Eastern Europe had arrived in America than ever before. Most of these immigrants came from the nations that were at war in Europe and on the opposite side of American interests. During the war, German immigrants were hit especially hard with anti-immigrant, and or nativist sentiments. The propaganda that was produced during the war quite often demonized the Germans— who were on the enemy side and ramped up more especially after America entered the war to try to influence young men to join the military effort. In 1917, Congress passed the Espionage Act which gave postal officials the authority to ban newspapers and magazines, or even individuals who posted opposition to the draft. In 1918, Congress passed the Sedition Act which made it a crime to speak in derogatory terms about the government, the Constitution, the American uniform, or the flag. Over 2,000 American citizens were prosecuted under these acts— one of which, Eugene Debs ran for the presidency in 1920 and received almost one million votes from his prison cell. But, the most famous case that came from litigating these acts was the case of *Schenck vs. the United States* in 1919. In the Schenck case, Charles Schenck was prosecuted for mailing flyers that were critical of the military draft. The Supreme Court upheld the conviction of Schenck, and in the ruling upheld the idea that free speech under the First Amendment had limits. In his opinion, Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes famously quipped, “The most stringent protection of free speech would not protect a man from falsely shouting fire in a theater and causing a panic.” Within a year, however, in the case, *Abrams vs. the United States*, the justices broadened their interpretation of free speech as the aftermath of the war began to give way to a new decade in America.

The labor union movement was also hit quite hard by public opinion and political pressure during the war. As factories ramped up their production to provide the materials and supplies necessary to prosecute the war effort, American workers (many of them immigrants) worked around the clock. There were a number of major strikes during the war, but unlike in the years leading up to the war, the strikes were now seen as unpatriotic. One labor union organization, the International Workers of the World (or, the IWW), led large-scale strikes and walk-outs through the war, only to find itself investigated and many of its members jailed for what was seen as their lack of support for the war effort. The organization never recovered from the jailing of many of its leaders and members during the war. In one particularly heinous incident, in Cochise County, Arizona, the local law authorities detained a group of labor union members who were protesting the working conditions in a local silver mine and put them (mostly Mexican immigrants) onto a train car in the desert with no food or water and left them to die. It would not be until the years of the Great Depression and the New Deal that labor union organizations would be looked on favorably by either the American public or the federal government.

The anti-immigrant sentiment continued after the war. Anti-immigrant organizations, such as the Ku Klux Klan, reached the height of their power during the 1920s. The Russian Revolution of 1917 not only provoked fears of

communism, but led to heightened scrutiny of the labor union movement, as well. After a series of bombings on Wall Street in 1920, the Attorney General (the federal government's top prosecutor), A. Mitchell Palmer raided the homes of a number of suspected radicals. This incident and its aftermath led to the creation of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, or the FBI. In 1924, Congress passed the Immigration Act of 1924, which prohibited immigration from Asia and established a quota system (only a set number of immigrants could come into the country) for immigrants coming from Europe. During this period, immigration from Latin America, however, increased. In 1920, in a trial which divided Americans, two Italian anarchists, Nicolo Sacco (a shoemaker), and Bartolomeo Vanzetti (a fish peddler) were convicted of murdering a paymaster and a guard. While a gun linked Sacco to the crime, there was no evidence linking Vanzetti. Both men were executed in 1927, which led to an uproar in Europe. But, for Americans eager to step beyond the horrors of the war, anti-immigrant sentiment would run extremely high, until the shared misery and suffering of the Great Depression began to change public opinion and shift the mood toward dealing with the greatest economic crisis that America had ever experienced.

The increased demand for war production and labor during World War I led many Americans to migrate to urban centers in search of economic opportunities.

World War I accelerated migration patterns that were already occurring during the first half of the period from 1890-1920. As war industries, domestic factories, and farms ramped up their production for the war effort, Americans continued the trend of moving from small towns, rural areas, and farms into America's industrial cities. In part, the increase in farm machinery and new innovations, such as the tractor, combine, and more efficient threshers, reapers, and plows made commercial farms and ranches increasingly more productive. Throughout the war, as European farms were under the constant threat of the destructive nature of the conflict, American farms rapidly grew larger and more productive to feed the Allied war effort. This rapid growth would have dire consequences by the end of the next decade, but it accelerated the trend of American families moving from farming communities into industrial cities. In fact, by 1920, for the first time in American history there were more Americans living in cities than there were in its rural areas. For some, the move was a rapid one— while American industries had been producing products for the Allies since the beginning of the conflict, once America entered the conflict, that production effort accelerated.

In the Great Migration during and after World War I, African Americans escaping segregation, racial violence, and limited economic opportunity in the South moved to the North and West, where they found new opportunities but still encountered discrimination.

With mostly white young men becoming draftees for the war effort, it opened the door for African-Americans and women in particular, to fill the gaps in the ranks of America's industrial factories. The Great Migration which started as lynching and segregation took hold in the South, accelerated during and after the war. African-Americans moved to such cities as Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia, and New York City. But, for the first time, African-Americans (since the exodusters who moved onto the Great Plains at the end of the Civil War) began moving in large numbers to California, to such cities as Los Angeles, San Diego, and Oakland. This migration did not come without its share of problems, as African-Americans often received less pay for their work, and faced both discrimination and prejudice while working in America's wartime factories. The segregation that African-Americans found in the Northern and Western cities was by socio-economic status and by custom, though not by law as it had been in the South. Quite simply, because African-Americans made less money than their white counterparts, they often ended up living in neighborhoods together as family groups that resembled the urban (or, ethnic) ghettos, in which European immigrants had lived in the decades leading up to the war. Due to the war experience being such a brief one, African-Americans were often on the receiving end of awful race riots which occurred throughout the summers of 1919-1921, in places like Washington DC, Chicago, and later, in Tulsa, Oklahoma. These riots occurred as white soldiers returning from the war wanted their factory jobs back from the African-Americans who had filled those jobs during the war (often in roles which ironically had supported the troops). Most of the violence was not perpetuated by white supremacist groups,

but rather by angry mobs of former soldiers, disgruntled former factory workers, and angry migrants who had been displaced by the rise of commercial agriculture. But, the African-American neighborhoods in America's major cities did thrive into the next decade, despite the postwar ugliness that was often directed their way. In fact, it was the African-American communities which developed from the Great Migration and out of the ashes of the experience of World War I that contributed mightily to the growth of American popular culture during the next decade of the 1920s and beyond— a phenomenon that still impacts the modern world of entertainment and even sports, to the present day.