From Neutral to War

Read how events overseas changed a U.S. decision.

SS24.5.5a "Identify and explain international events that led to the United States' entry into World War I."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three actions by Germany that affected the United States. Circle the U.S. risk or reaction linked to each action.

Why the United States Entered World War I

1 In 1914, a war began in Europe, and the United States stayed neutral. Many Americans still crossed the Atlantic Ocean on ships. In May 1915, a German submarine sank the Lusitania, a British passenger ship, near Ireland. Among those killed were 128 Americans. News of their deaths angered many people in the United States. Even so, the country did not enter the war then.

2 Germany had used submarines to attack ships carrying people and supplies to its enemies. In February 1917, Germany began sinking ships without warning in the waters near Britain, even if the ships belonged to neutral countries. This put American sailors and trade at risk. In March, German submarines sank several American merchant ships. These attacks made staying out of the war harder for the United States.

3 Another warning reached Americans in 1917. In a secret message, German official Arthur Zimmermann asked Mexico to join Germany if the United States entered the war. Germany offered to help Mexico regain land it had lost to the United States. British officials found the message and shared it with U.S. leaders. Americans saw a possible threat close to home. On April 6, Congress declared war on Germany.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the sinking of the Lusitania affect people in the United States, and did the country enter the war then?

2. Why did Germany's submarine attacks in 1917 make staying out of the war harder for the United States?

3. Why did Zimmermann's message make Americans worry about a threat close to home?

4. What changed between the Lusitania sinking in 1915 and Congress's decision in April 1917?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you are writing to a visitor from 1915 who thinks the United States will always stay out of the war. In four sentences, explain how at least two later international events affected U.S. safety or choices, and tell the visitor what Congress did in April 1917.

ANSWER KEY

From Neutral to War

GRADE 5 · SS24.5.5a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three actions by Germany that affected the United States. Circle the U.S. risk or reaction linked to each action. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the sinking of the Lusitania affect people in the United States, and did the country enter the war then?	**The deaths of 128 Americans angered many people, but the United States did not enter the war in 1915.**
2	Why did Germany's submarine attacks in 1917 make staying out of the war harder for the United States?	**Germany sank ships without warning, putting American sailors and trade at risk. German submarines also sank several American merchant ships.**
3	Why did Zimmermann's message make Americans worry about a threat close to home?	**Germany asked Mexico to join it if the United States entered the war and offered to help Mexico regain land it had lost to the United States.**
4	What changed between the Lusitania sinking in 1915 and Congress's decision in April 1917?	**The United States stayed out of the war after the Lusitania sank. In 1917, German attacks on American merchant ships and the message to Mexico added threats that made war more likely.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In 1915, the United States stayed out of the war even after the Lusitania sank. In 1917, German submarines sank American merchant ships, putting sailors and trade in danger. Germany also asked Mexico to join it if the United States entered the war, which made Americans fear a threat near home. On April 6, 1917, Congress declared war on Germany.

Accept responses that accurately connect the 1917 submarine attacks and Zimmermann's message to U.S. risks or choices. Students need not suggest that either event alone caused the declaration of war.