Borders and Backlash

Trace how a peace treaty changed land and politics

SS24.WH.7c "Explain the consequences of the Treaty of Versailles of 1919, including political and boundary changes."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two boundary changes and circle two political consequences in the passage. Number one boundary change and a political consequence it helped cause as 1 and 2.

What Changed After Versailles?

1 In June 1919, German representatives arrived at Versailles to sign a treaty they had not helped write. The Treaty of Versailles ended the state of war between Germany and the Allied powers and set conditions for peace. Article 231 assigned Germany and its allies responsibility for losses and damage caused by the war. Germany had to pay reparations, although the final total was set later. The treaty limited its army to 100,000 soldiers, banned an air force, and required the Rhineland, a German region near France, to remain free of German troops. Allied leaders hoped these terms would reduce Germany's ability to start another war.

2 The treaty also redrew Germany's borders. Alsace-Lorraine returned to France, reversing Germany's seizure of the region in 1871. Poland gained territory that gave it access to the Baltic Sea. This strip separated East Prussia from the rest of Germany, so German travelers between the two areas now crossed Polish territory or traveled by sea. Nearby Danzig, a largely German-speaking port, became a Free City under League of Nations supervision rather than part of Poland. Germany also lost its overseas colonies, which became territories governed by other powers under League mandates. The new arrangements gave Poland access to the sea but left disputes over land and identity.

3 Political effects followed these changes. Many Germans regarded the treaty as a humiliation, and opponents of Germany's new democratic government blamed its leaders for accepting it. Anger about lost land, military limits, and reparations gave nationalist groups arguments they could use against that government. Reparations added to Germany's financial burdens, though they were not the only cause of its later economic crises. Poland gained access to trade by sea, yet the border left German-speaking communities outside Germany and created tensions between the two countries. The League of Nations was meant to help manage disputes, but the United States never joined, limiting its influence.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How were the limits on Germany's army and troops in the Rhineland intended to affect security after the war?

2. How did Poland's new territory both help Poland and change travel between German regions?

3. How did the treaty's demands give opponents of Germany's new government a political argument?

4. How did the treaty change political control of Germany's overseas colonies?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 75 to 100 word newspaper editorial set in 1920 for readers in Germany or Poland. Explain how two specific treaty terms, including one border change, could affect daily life and political debate, then end with a prediction supported by your explanation.

ANSWER KEY

Borders and Backlash

GRADE 9 · SS24.WH.7c

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two boundary changes and circle two political consequences in the passage. Number one boundary change and a political consequence it helped cause as 1 and 2. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How were the limits on Germany's army and troops in the Rhineland intended to affect security after the war?	**Allied leaders hoped the limits would reduce Germany's ability to start another war.**
2	How did Poland's new territory both help Poland and change travel between German regions?	**It gave Poland access to the Baltic Sea but separated East Prussia from the rest of Germany. Travelers between those German areas had to cross Polish territory or go by sea.**
3	How did the treaty's demands give opponents of Germany's new government a political argument?	**Opponents blamed the government for accepting terms many Germans resented, including lost land, military limits, and reparations.**
4	How did the treaty change political control of Germany's overseas colonies?	**Germany lost control of its colonies. Other powers governed them under League of Nations mandates.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

For readers in Poland, our new access to the Baltic Sea offers merchants a way to send goods abroad. Yet that same strip separates East Prussia from the rest of Germany, making travel harder for some German families. German-speaking neighbors may view the border as unfair, even as Polish merchants welcome it. The treaty also keeps German troops out of the Rhineland, which may ease French fears but anger German nationalists. If leaders ignore these competing views, resentment over the treaty may make cooperation between Germany and Poland more difficult.

Accept other accurate cause-and-effect explanations supported by the passage. For the editorial, look for two specific terms, a plausible effect on daily life and political debate, and a prediction that follows from those effects.