War Comes Home

Why the United States entered World War I and what changed at home

USH.3.4 "Analyze why the United States joined World War I and how the war affected the nation."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two reasons the United States entered the war, circle two changes the war brought at home, and write 1 beside a detail that complicates Wilson's democratic goal. Use your marks to trace causes and consequences.

A Distant War Reaches Home

1. In 1914, the United States stayed out of Europe's war, although American businesses sold goods and banks lent money to Britain and France. Britain used its navy to block goods headed to Germany, while German submarines attacked ships near Britain. After a submarine sank the Lusitania in 1915, killing 128 Americans, President Woodrow Wilson protested. Germany later promised to limit attacks on passenger ships. Early in 1917, however, Germany resumed unrestricted submarine warfare, hoping to defeat Britain before American forces could arrive. Attacks now threatened American ships and trade, making neutrality harder to defend.

2. Another shock came when Britain revealed the Zimmermann Telegram. In this message, Germany proposed an alliance with Mexico if the United States entered the war, and offered to support Mexico in recovering territory lost to the United States. The offer did not become an alliance, but it made a distant European conflict seem closer to home. Wilson also argued that fighting Germany could help make the world "safe for democracy." In April 1917, Congress declared war. German attacks posed an immediate danger, while the telegram and Wilson's democratic goal gave Americans additional reasons to support intervention.

3. War reshaped life at home. A federal draft brought millions of men into military service, and the government coordinated production through the War Industries Board. Factories needed workers, helping draw more African Americans from the South to northern cities in a movement already underway. Women also took jobs in war industries, though many lost them afterward. Americans bought Liberty Bonds to help pay for the war. At the same time, the Espionage Act and Sedition Act punished some antiwar speech. After the fighting ended in 1918, Wilson backed a League of Nations, but the Senate refused to join it.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did Germany's decision in early 1917 make it harder for the United States to remain neutral?

2. How did the Zimmermann Telegram add to the pressure created by submarine attacks?

3. Explain how the war changed the lives of two groups of people in the United States.

4. How did one wartime policy at home conflict with Wilson's goal of making the world "safe for democracy"?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 90 to 110 word newspaper editorial set in 1919 arguing whether entering the war was worth its costs. Use two reasons for entry and two effects at home from the passage, and explain how they support your judgment.

ANSWER KEY

War Comes Home

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two reasons the United States entered the war, circle two changes the war brought at home, and write 1 beside a detail that complicates Wilson's democratic goal. Use your marks to trace causes and consequences. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did Germany's decision in early 1917 make it harder for the United States to remain neutral?	**Germany resumed unrestricted submarine warfare, threatening American ships and trade despite its earlier promise to limit attacks.**
2	How did the Zimmermann Telegram add to the pressure created by submarine attacks?	**Submarine attacks threatened ships and trade, while Germany's proposed alliance with Mexico suggested a danger closer to the United States.**
3	Explain how the war changed the lives of two groups of people in the United States.	**The draft brought millions of men into military service. Factory demand drew more African Americans from the South to northern cities. Other supported examples include women taking war-industry jobs.**
4	How did one wartime policy at home conflict with Wilson's goal of making the world "safe for democracy"?	**The Espionage Act and Sedition Act punished some antiwar speech, limiting dissent while Wilson said the nation was fighting for democracy.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Entering the war was justified, but its costs should trouble us. Germany resumed submarine attacks that threatened American ships and trade. Its proposal to help Mexico reclaim U.S. territory made the danger feel closer still. Once we entered, the draft sent millions of men into service, while factory demand drew more Black southerners toward northern cities. Those changes show how a decision made in Washington reached families across the country. Yet laws that punished antiwar speech conflicted with Wilson's promise to defend democracy. If we claim to fight for freedom abroad, we must protect disagreement at home.

Accept either judgment in the editorial if it uses two supported reasons for entry and two supported domestic effects to defend its position. Students may describe the migration as accelerated by wartime factory demand, not begun by the war.