

Neutrality, War, Peace

Trace Wilson's shift from neutrality to a new international order.

11.6b "While the United States attempted to follow its traditional policy of neutrality at the beginning of World War I, the nation eventually became involved in the war..."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two developments pushing the United States toward war. Circle a proposal for peace. Mark two obstacles to treaty ratification.

Wilson's Shift in World War I

- ① When European war began in 1914, Wilson declared U.S. neutrality. Many Americans opposed joining a distant conflict, and immigrant communities had differing loyalties. Economic ties continued, especially with the Allies as Britain's blockade restricted German trade. Germany's sinking of the Lusitania in 1915 killed 128 Americans but did not immediately bring U.S. entry. In 1916, Germany's Sussex pledge limited submarine attacks, temporarily easing tensions.
- ② In early 1917, Germany resumed unrestricted submarine warfare, threatening American shipping. The Zimmermann Telegram proposed a German-Mexican alliance if the United States entered the war and offered support for Mexico to recover lost territory. Its publication intensified American concern. Wilson asked Congress for war on April 2; Congress declared war on Germany on April 6, 1917. Security threats, economic ties, and Wilson's ideals all shaped the decision.
- ③ In January 1918, Wilson announced the Fourteen Points, including open diplomacy, lower trade barriers, and a League of Nations. At the peace conference, he compromised on other goals to secure the League in the Treaty of Versailles. Senators feared its collective-security commitments could limit Congress's control over war. Partisan conflict and Wilson's resistance to proposed reservations also blocked agreement. The Senate rejected ratification, and the United States never joined the League. Wilson's hopes for international reform therefore faced limits at home and abroad.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 Why did many Americans initially favor neutrality, and why was U.S. economic involvement uneven?

2 How did Germany's resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare threaten United States interests?

3 What did the Zimmermann Telegram propose, and why would its message concern the United States?

4 What future goal did Wilson pursue through the Fourteen Points, and what Senate concern helped prevent the treaty from being ratified?

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

In four sentences, link U.S. entry to Wilson's peace goals. Include both 1917 developments, a Fourteen Points proposal, and an obstacle to ratification.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline two developments pushing the United States toward war. Circle a proposal for peace. Mark two obstacles to treaty ratification. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did many Americans initially favor neutrality, and why was U.S. economic involvement uneven?	Many opposed a distant war and immigrant communities had differing loyalties. Britain's blockade restricted German trade while U.S. economic ties with the Allies continued.
2	How did Germany's resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare threaten United States interests?	It allowed German submarines to attack ships without warning, threatening American ships and travelers.
3	What did the Zimmermann Telegram propose, and why would its message concern the United States?	It proposed that Mexico ally with Germany if the United States entered the war and suggested Mexico could regain lost U.S. territory. It raised the threat of conflict involving Mexico and the United States.
4	What future goal did Wilson pursue through the Fourteen Points, and what Senate concern helped prevent the treaty from being ratified?	Wilson sought a more stable order through the League of Nations. Senators feared collective-security obligations could limit Congress's authority over war.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Submarine warfare and the Zimmermann Telegram increased pressure for U.S. entry. Wilson also hoped participation would help shape a safer international order. His Fourteen Points proposed a League of Nations to prevent future wars. Concern over Congress's war powers and disagreement over reservations prevented Senate ratification.

Accept supported explanations linking wartime threats, peace goals and treaty opposition. The Fourteen Points followed U.S. entry; the Lusitania sinking did not immediately bring war.