

Debating the Peace

Analyze why the Senate rejected the Treaty of Versailles and how policy changed afterward.

8.4d "Following extensive political debate, the United States refused to ratify the Treaty of Versailles. The United States then sought to return to prewar policies by focusing on domestic rather than international matters."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline reasons for Senate opposition. Circle later domestic priorities. Mark the two-thirds approval rule with 1.

A Treaty, a Debate, and a New Direction

- ① In 1919, President Woodrow Wilson returned from Paris with the Treaty of Versailles, a peace agreement with Germany. Wilson valued its League of Nations, a goal of his Fourteen Points. League members would cooperate against aggression. For the United States to ratify the treaty, the Senate had to give its advice and consent. The Constitution required two-thirds of senators present to agree, so a determined minority could block approval.
- ② Many senators supported peace but objected to Article X of the League covenant. They feared it might pressure the United States to use military force in a future conflict without Congress making an independent decision about war. Senator Henry Cabot Lodge proposed reservations, or changes in the Senate's approval, to protect United States control over such choices. Wilson urged acceptance of the treaty without Lodge's reservations. After months of speeches, negotiations, and Senate votes, the treaty failed to gain the required support in 1919 and 1920.
- ③ After the rejection, the United States did not join the League of Nations. In 1920, Warren G. Harding won the presidency while calling for a return to "normalcy," which many voters understood as attention to problems at home after the war. Congress later passed immigration restrictions and raised tariffs, policies centered on domestic concerns. In 1921, the United States made separate peace treaties with Germany, Austria, and Hungary instead of accepting the Versailles treaty. These choices showed a return toward limited involvement in international political commitments.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What did opponents fear Article X might pressure the United States to do? Which branch of government did they want to keep in control of that decision?

2 What Senate vote requirement made it possible for a determined group of opponents to block the treaty?

3 How did Wilson and Senator Lodge disagree about the Treaty of Versailles?

4 Name two postwar actions that showed the United States was focusing more on domestic matters or limiting international commitments.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a four-sentence claim explaining why the United States rejected the Treaty of Versailles and how later actions reflected a turn toward domestic matters. Include one detail about the League debate and two postwar actions from the passage.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline reasons for Senate opposition. Circle later domestic priorities. Mark the two-thirds approval rule with 1. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What did opponents fear Article X might pressure the United States to do? Which branch of government did they want to keep in control of that decision?	They feared Article X could pressure the United States to use military force in a future conflict. They wanted Congress to retain independent control over decisions about war.
2	What Senate vote requirement made it possible for a determined group of opponents to block the treaty?	The treaty needed the concurrence of two-thirds of the senators present.
3	How did Wilson and Senator Lodge disagree about the Treaty of Versailles?	Lodge wanted reservations that protected United States control over military choices. Wilson urged the Senate to accept the treaty without Lodge's reservations.
4	Name two postwar actions that showed the United States was focusing more on domestic matters or limiting international commitments.	Answers may include not joining the League of Nations, passing immigration restrictions, raising tariffs, or making separate peace treaties with Germany, Austria, and Hungary.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

United States senators rejected the Treaty of Versailles because many feared that Article X could pressure the nation into military conflict without Congress deciding about war. Lodge tried to protect United States control through reservations, but Wilson supported the treaty without them. Afterward, the United States stayed out of the League of Nations and made separate peace treaties. Congress also restricted immigration and raised tariffs, showing greater attention to domestic matters.

Accept equivalent explanations that connect Article X to concern about congressional control over war decisions. For the open response, require a clear claim, one League-related detail, and two accurate postwar actions that support the claim.