

Northwest History Consortium

US Intervention in World War I

Jeremy Ritzer
11th Grade

National Standard

Era 7: The Emergence of Modern America (1890-1930) / Standard 2

Standard 2: The changing role of the United States in world affairs through World War I

SCENARIO

It is April of 1917 and almost all of Europe is involved in a war. Both sides have asked the United States and President Wilson to join the war on their side. Up to this point, Wilson has maintained the United States' neutrality, including much of the country, many of his own advisors, his Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan, and also most of Congress want to stay out of the war. Wilson himself campaigned on the fact that "he kept us out of war," and he went so far as to state in his 2nd Inaugural Address that:

"We have been deeply wronged upon the seas, but we have not wished to wrong or injure in return; have retained throughout the consciousness of standing in some sort apart, intent upon an interest that transcended the immediate issues of the war itself.

As some of the injuries done us have become intolerable we have still been clear that we wished nothing for ourselves that we were not ready to demand for all mankind—fair dealing, justice, the freedom to live and to be at ease against organized wrong.

It is in this spirit and with this thought that we have grown more and more aware, more and more certain that the part we wished to play was the part of those who mean to vindicate and fortify peace. We have been obliged to arm ourselves and to make good our claim to a certain minimum of right and of freedom of action. We stand firm in armed neutrality since it seems that in no other way can we demonstrate what it is we insist upon and cannot forget."

Wilson, Woodrow. "Second Inaugural Address" 15 March 1917 from Inaugural Addresses of the Presidents of the United States. Washington, DC: U.S. G.P.O., 1989.

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TASK

In spite of this speech and the opinions of his advisors and the US Congress, President Wilson is not ruling out the possibility of becoming involved and has asked you, the members of his Foreign Policy Team, to make a recommendation about whether or not the United States should become involved in the war, and to help him create a war speech, if one is needed.

Possible roles:

Vice President: Thomas R. Marshall (1913-21)

Cabinet:

Secretary of State

Robert Lansing (1915-20)

Secretary of the Treasury

William G. McAdoo (1913-18)

Secretary of War

Newton D. Baker (1916-21)

Attorney General

Thomas W. Gregory (1914-19)

Postmaster General

Albert S. Burleson (1913-21)

Secretary of the Navy

Josephus Daniels (1913-21)

Secretary of the Interior

Franklin K. Lane (1913-20)

Secretary of Agriculture

David F. Houston (1913-20)

Secretary of Commerce

William C. Redfield (1913-19)

Secretary of Labor

William B. Wilson (1913-21)

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RESOURCES

WWI Activity – Day 1 Worksheet

Group members.	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____
List hypotheses, ideas, or hunches.	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
List what your groups knows.	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
Make your own timeline of the important events of the WWI era.	1912 1913 1914 1915 1916 1917 1918 1919
List what your groups does not know, but what they need to know in order to come up with a recommendation.	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
What are the arguments for U.S. involvement?	
What are the arguments against US involvement?	
List what needs to be done to develop a recommendation.	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

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WWI Activity – Day 2 Worksheet

What is your group's recommendation to President Wilson?	
If you are arguing for US involvement, when would the ideal time for US intervention have been (assuming you can travel through time)?	
Why did your group choose this position?	
What are some potential (positive and/or negative) consequences of following your recommendation?	1. 2. 3.
Provide evidence to support your recommendation.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
If you were then asked to testify before Congress that was debating a declaration of war, who/what would you bring to support your position? Why?	
Come to think of it, why would you even be called to testify before Congress? Can't President Wilson handle this one by himself? Explain.	

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ASSESSMENT

PBL Participation Assessment Rubric

	1	2	3	4
Central Question or Problem	Identifies a relevant issue or sub-problem in the scenario	States a central question or problem in the scenario	States a clear and accurate central question or problem with reasons for its importance	Gives other possible questions or problems and tells why this is the central question or problem
Position or Decision	Focuses on the central issue in the scenario	Answers the question or addresses the problem	Explains why this decision is better than other possible choices	Describes the process of making the decision
Supporting Argument	Explains the decision with reasons	Provides two or more logical reasons	Provides two or more reasons that, taken together, logically lead to the position	Provides at least one counter-reason to the position
Evidence Sources	Gives sources to explain the decision	Gives two or more reliable (good) sources	Gives sources to support the main parts of the argument	Gives sources that do not support the decision and tells why they were not accepted
Argument	Uses vocabulary that can be understood by the audience	Gives the question, decision, argument, and evidence with sources	Explains why the ideas should be important to this audience	Uses a story, or other “hook” to get the audience interested
Reflection	Gives timeline of problem-solving activities	Describes problems or challenges the group had	Identifies important “ah-hahs” for the group and explains how they happened	Describes what could have been better and lessons learned

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PBL Writing Assessment Rubric

Each student will complete an individual post-write after the PBL.

4 - Excellent	3 – Proficient	2 - Partial	1 - Minimal
States a position on the question States why studying this historical question helps us to understand current issues and events.	States a position on a historical question that outlines a reason(s) in support of the position.	States a position on a historical question that is unclear or vague.	Describes events or presents ideas about how people lived during a time period.
Provides one or more reasons that, taken together, logically lead to the position. In addition, provides at least one counter-reason to the position.	Provides one or more reasons that, taken together, logically lead to the position.	Provides one or more logical reasons for the position	Provides one or more reasons that are relevant to the position
The evidence for the position includes: An evaluation of how well four or more different sources support the reasons for the position, including primary sources AND published interpretations.	The evidence for the position includes: An evaluation of how well three different sources support the reasons for the position, including primary sources AND published interpretations.	The evidence for the position includes: An evaluation of how well two different sources support the reasons for the position, including primary sources OR published interpretations.	The evidence for the position includes: An evaluation of how well one source supports the reasons for the position, including a primary source OR a published interpretation.
Makes explicit references within the paper or presentation to four or more credible sources that provide relevant information. (Credible means really well-known, such as the Constitution, or enough information given so you can find the quote or idea referred to.)	Makes explicit references within the paper or presentation to three credible sources that provide relevant information.	Makes explicit references within the paper or presentation to two sources that provide relevant information.	Makes explicit references within the paper or presentation to one source that provides relevant information.

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REFERENCES/CITATIONS

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For Teachers, Not For Students

Littlejohn, Jeffrey L. "The Debate Over Entering World War I." Study the Past (Sam Houston State University). 2011. Huntsville, TX. 6 April 2011 <http://www.studythepast.com/vbprojects/debate_world_war_1.htm>.

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