

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Focus Question:**  
Why did the U.S. enter World War I even though it professed a belief in neutrality?

**The Roots of 19<sup>th</sup>-Century American Neutrality and Isolation**

**GEORGE WASHINGTON**

While President, George Washington favored a foreign policy of neutrality. His Proclamation of Neutrality of 1793 declared the U.S. neutral in the conflict going on at that time between France and Great Britain. The Neutrality Act of 1794 was a law that made it illegal for an American to wage war against any country at peace with the United States.

His Farewell Address was a letter he wrote in 1796 to the American people, just before leaving office after his second term as president. Washington urged the American people to take advantage of their isolated position on the planet, and avoid attachments and entanglements in foreign affairs, especially those of Europe, which he argued had little or nothing to do with the interests of America. In his words:

*History and experience prove, that foreign influence is one of the most dangerous enemies of Republican Government. The great rule of conduct for us, in regard to foreign nations, is... to have with them as little political connection as possible.... It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world....*

**JAMES MONROE**

The Monroe Doctrine was a policy of the United States introduced in 1823 by President James Monroe. The Monroe Doctrine asserted that the Western Hemisphere was not to be further colonized by European countries. The Doctrine was issued at a time when many Latin American countries were on the verge of becoming independent from the Spanish Empire; the United States wanted to avoid having any other European power take over Spain's colonies.

Match the phrases on the left to their explanations on the right.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. proclamation of neutrality _____                                 | a. a country taking over another country to use its resources                 |
| 2. avoid attachments and entanglements in foreign affairs _____     | b. a country's statement that it is not taking a side in other countries' war |
| 3. steer clear of permanent alliances _____                         | c. a country doing something to provoke another country                       |
| 4. act of aggression _____<br>involved in other countries' business | d. do not get   |
| 5. colonize the land _____  | e. do not create long term friendships with another country                   |

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## LUSITANIA SUNK!

### British Boat Sunk by German U-Boat!

By Allen Williamson - Associated Press, May 18, 1915

Yesterday, the cruise ship the Lusitania was sunk off the coast of England by a German U-boat. The Lusitania, a British cruise liner, had 1,959 people on board including the crew members who were in charge of taking care of the boat.

The voyage started in New York, and was supposed to end in Liverpool, England. The boat was moving very quickly through out the entire journey.

Yesterday morning, May 17, 1915, the Lusitania was getting very close to its destination in Liverpool. The captain slowed the ship down to prepare for the landing. Naval and boat expert John Anderson says, "When the Lusitania slowed down, the boat was left open to attacks from the German U-Boats."

The Lusitania was hit in the morning hours, and sunk in only 18 minutes. Some experts think that the Lusitania sunk so fast because it was carrying weapons for the British army. When the torpedo hit the area that the weapons were being stored, the gun powder might have ignited, starting a fire and increasing the speed that the boat sank.

The number of deaths from the attack is not known, but it is believed to be in the thousands. Some of those are Americans. Because Americans died, some people in the United States are calling for the U.S. to declare war on Germany for killing innocent people.

A Congressman from Georgia said, "We can not let this event go unanswered, we must defend and honor all Americans. We must go to war!"

This tragic event is one of the worst sea disasters of all time. Innocent women and children were killed. This may lead to the U.S. entering the war on the side of the Allied Powers trying to beat the Central Powers.

President Wilson had these comments, "We must honor the dead Americans who lost their lives."

What else would you want to know after reading this article?

ANSWER IN  
SPACE TO  
THE RIGHT

Would this be enough for you to support going to war with Germany?

ANSWER IN  
SPACE TO THE  
RIGHT

## Document C

On your poster, present to the class, what are Wilson's strongest argument arguments for why the US should join the League of Nations?

### President Woodrow Wilson, September 25, 1919 (Modified)

My fellow citizens, as I have crossed the continent, I have perceived more and more that men have been busy creating an absolutely false impression of the treaty of peace and the Covenant of the League of Nations.

Reflect, my fellow citizens that the membership of this great League is going to include all the great fighting nations of the world, as well as the weak ones. And what do they unite for? They enter into a solemn promise to one another that they will never use their power against one another for aggression; that they never will violate the territorial integrity of a neighbor; that they never will interfere with the political independence of a neighbor; that they will abide by the principle that great populations are entitled to determine their own destiny; and that no matter what differences arise between them they will never resort to war without first submitting their differences to the consideration of the council of the League of Nations, and agreeing that at the end of the six months, even if they do not accept the advice of the council, they will still not go to war for another three months.

I wish that those who oppose this settlement could feel the moral obligation that rests upon us not to turn our backs on the boys who died, but to see the thing through, to see it through to the end and make good their redemption of the world. For nothing less depends upon this decision, nothing less than liberation and salvation of the world.

Source: Woodrow Wilson, speech in Pueblo Colorado, September 25, 1919. When President Wilson returned to the United States in 1919 after the Paris Peace Conference, he toured the country to raise support for the treaty and the League.

#### Vocabulary

Territorial integrity: borders of a country

Abide: accept

Redemption: salvation from evil

## Document D

On your poster, present to the class, what are Lodge's strongest argument arguments for why the US shouldn't join the League of Nations?

### Henry Cabot Lodge, August 12, 1919 (Modified)

Mr. President:

I can never be anything else but an American, and I must think of the United States first.

I have never had but one allegiance - I cannot divide it now. I have loved but one flag and I cannot share that devotion and give affection to the mongrel banner invented for a league. Internationalism is to me repulsive.

The United States is the world's best hope, but if you fetter her in the interests and quarrels of other nations, if you tangle her in the intrigues of Europe, you will destroy her power for good and endanger her very existence. Leave her to march freely through the centuries to come as in the years that have gone.

No doubt many excellent and patriotic people see a coming fulfillment of noble ideals in the words 'league for peace.' We all respect and share these aspirations and desires, but some of us see no hope, but rather defeat, for them in this murky plan. For we, too, have our ideals, even if we differ from those who have tried to establish a monopoly of idealism.

Our first ideal is our country. Our ideal is to make her ever stronger and better and finer, because in that way alone can she be of the greatest service to the world's peace and to the welfare of mankind.

Source: Henry Cabot Lodge, speech, August 12, 1919. Washington, D.C. Republican Henry Cabot Lodge was a staunch opponent of the Democrat President Woodrow Wilson.

#### Vocabulary

Allegiance: loyalty

Mongrel: a mutt; a cross-breed

Repulsive: disgusting

Fetter: restrain with chains

Intrigues: secret plans

Aspirations: hopes

Murky: dark and shadowy

**Document A**

**Summary of Wilson's Fourteen Points**

I. Make no secret diplomatic agreements.
II. Allow freedom of the seas for all in peace and war.
III. Remove as many economic trade barriers as possible between countries
IV. Reduce stockpiles of military arms to lowest point needed for domestic safety
V. Adjust colonial claims to land, giving more weight to the views of colonized peoples.
VI. Evacuate and restore Russian territories seized during the war.
VII. Restore and protect Belgium's sovereignty.
VIII. Restore French territory and settle the debate over Alsace-Lorraine.
IX. Adjust Italy's boundaries according to the nationalities of the peoples living there.
X. Allow the people of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire to choose their own governments.
XI. Redraw boundaries of Balkan states based on nationalities and historical allegiances.
XII. Separate the Ottoman Empire into dependent countries according to nationality; guarantee all nations access to the Dardanelles.
XIII. Restore and protect Poland as a sovereign state with access to the sea.
XIV. Establish an association of nations to provide collective security and to ensure peace.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Focus Question:**

Why did Congress reject U.S. membership in the League of Nations, even though President Wilson was in favor of it?

On the chart below, identify which points of Wilson's 14 Points (Document A) will help to ensure the causes of WWI are not repeated.

<b>Militarism</b>	
<b>Alliances</b>	
<b>Nationalism</b>	
<b>Imperialism</b>	
<b>Assassination</b>	

## Document A: Eugene Debs Speech (Modified)

Comrades, friends and fellow-workers, thank you for this very cordial greeting, this very hearty reception. Three of our most loyal comrades are paying the penalty for their devotion to the cause of the working class. They have come to realize, as many of us have, that it is extremely dangerous to exercise the constitutional right of free speech in a country fighting to make democracy safe in the world.

Every one of these Wall Street conspirators and would-be murderers claims to be an arch-patriot; every one of them insists that the war is being waged to make the world safe for democracy. What humbug! What rot! What false pretense! These autocrats, these tyrants, these red-handed robbers and murderers, the "patriots," while the men who have the courage to stand face to face with them, speak the truth, and fight for their exploited victims—they are the disloyalists and traitors. If this be true, I want to take my place side by side with the traitors in this fight.

I suggest that we stop a moment to think about the term "landlord." "LANDLORD!" Lord of the Land! The lord of the land is indeed a superpatriot... who owns the earth and tells you that we are fighting this war to make the world safe for democracy—he who profiteers at the expense of the people who have been slain [killed in the war]... It is he, this patriot who is in fact the archenemy of the people; it is he that you need to wipe from power. It is he who is a far greater menace to your liberty and your wellbeing than the Prussian Junkers [Germans] on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean.

Yes, in good time we are going to destroy all enslaving and degrading capitalist institutions and re-create them as free and humanizing institutions. The world is daily changing before our eyes. The sun of capitalism is setting; the sun of socialism is rising.

*Source: Socialist leader Eugene Debs delivered this speech in June 1918. He visited three Socialists who were in prison for opposing the draft, and then spoke across the street from the jail, for two hours. The excerpt above is only a small segment of a much longer speech.*

### Vocabulary

conspirators: criminals  
autocrats: dictators

profiteers: makes money from  
menace: threat

## Document B: Schenk Pamphlet (Modified)

### Assert Your Rights

The Socialist Party says that any officers of the law entrusted with the administration of conscription regulations violate the provisions of the United States Constitution when they refuse to recognize your right to assert your opposition to the draft.

No power was delegated to send our citizens away to foreign shores to shoot up the people of other lands, no matter what may be their internal or international disputes.

To draw this country into the horrors of the present war in Europe, to force the youth of our land into the shambles and bloody trenches of war crazy nations, would be a crime the magnitude of which defies description. Words could not express the condemnation such cold-blooded ruthlessness deserves.

No specious or plausible pleas about a "war for democracy" can cloud the issue. Democracy can not be shot into a nation. It must come spontaneously and purely from within.

To advocate the persecution of other peoples through the fighting of a war is an insult to every good and wholesome American tradition.

You are responsible. You must do your share to maintain, support, and uphold the rights of the people of this country.

In this world crisis where do you stand? Are you with the forces of liberty and light or war and darkness?

*Source: Charles Schenck was a Socialist who printed and distributed thousands of anti-war pamphlets in 1917 and 1918 opposing the war. The excerpt above comes from one of his pamphlets.*

### Vocabulary

conscription: military draft  
specious: untrue

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Focus Question:**

Were the U.S. critics of their government's involvement in World War I anti-American?

**Anti-War Documents**

	Document A: Debs	Document B: Schenck
<b>Sourcing:</b> 1. What type of document is this? When was it written and who was the audience?		
<b>Contextualization:</b> 2. What was happening in the U.S. and in Europe at this time? (Same answer for both documents)		
<b>Close Reading:</b> 3. Put the author's main message in your own words. What is he trying to convince his audience of?		
<b>4. Find a quote from the document that supports your answer to question 3.</b>		
<b>5. In your opinion is Debs or Schenck patriotic or anti-American? Explain your claim.</b>		

**SUPREME COURT CASE: SCHENCK V. UNITED STATES (1919)**

*Schenck v. United States* (1919), was a United States Supreme Court decision concerning the question of whether the defendant had a First Amendment right to free speech against the draft during World War I. The defendant, Charles Schenck, a Socialist, mailed a flyer to recently drafted men. The flyer, which referred to the Thirteenth Amendment's prohibition against slavery, advised the men to "assert your opposition to the draft." The flyer said that the draft was morally wrong and caused by economic greed. The flyers proposed peaceful resistance, such as petitioning the government to repeal the Conscription Act.

Schenck was charged with conspiracy to violate the Espionage Act of 1917 by attempting to cause insubordination [disobedience] in the military and to damage the recruiting of new soldiers. The Supreme Court reviewed his case and in a unanimous opinion written by Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., stated that Schenck's criminal conviction was constitutional. The First Amendment did not protect speech encouraging insubordination, since, "[w]hen a nation is at war many things that might be said in time of peace are such a hindrance [obstacle] that their utterance [being said] will not be allowed so long as men fight, and that no Court could regard them as protected by any constitutional right." In other words, the Supreme Court ruled that **the circumstances of wartime permit greater restrictions on free speech than would be allowable during peacetime.**

In the opinion's most famous passage, Justice Holmes defines the "clear and present danger" rule:

"The question in every case is whether the words used are used in such circumstances and are of such a nature as to create a *clear and present danger* that they will bring about the evils that Congress has a right to prevent."

Holmes also said that "The most stringent [strict] protection of free speech would not protect a man in falsely shouting fire in a theatre and causing a panic."

As a result of the 9-0 decision, Charles Schenck spent six months in prison.

**Vocabulary**

**the draft:** when the government tells young male citizens that they must serve in the military (usually 1-2 years); the draft is most often used during wartime

**Socialist:** a person who believes in socialism (the idea that all wealth should be shared equally; opposed to capitalism)

**Conscription Act:** the law that made the draft legal

**Espionage:** spying

**Espionage Act of 1917:** law that made it illegal to criticize the government's war effort

**constitutional:** allowed by law; legal

**clear and present danger:** something that is obviously and immediately dangerous

**1. What does this ruling say?**

**2. Do you agree with the ruling?**

### Guiding Questions

#### President Wilson's Speeches

1. Read the first speech. Does Wilson think the United States should enter WWI? Why or why not?

2. Read the second speech. Does Wilson think the United States should enter WWI? Why or why not?

3. Contextualization: Use the 1917 speech to "imagine the setting." (a) What does Wilson accuse Germany of doing? (b) Do you think this is a good reason to go to war? (c) What additional information would you need to have before making a decision?

4. Close reading: Re-read the last two paragraphs of the 1917 speech. Why do you think Wilson wrote these paragraphs? How do you think these words made Americans feel?



#### Document A: Woodrow Wilson Speech #1 (Modified)

The people of the United States are drawn from many nations, and chiefly from the nations now at war. It is natural and inevitable that some will wish one nation, others another, to succeed in the momentous struggle.

Such divisions among us would be fatal to our peace of mind and might seriously stand in the way of our duty as the one great nation at peace, the one nation ready to play a part of mediator and counselor of peace.

The United States must be neutral in fact, as well as in name, during these days that are to try men's souls. We must be impartial in thought, as well as action.

**Vocabulary**  
mediator: someone who helps two groups reach an agreement  
impartial: taking no sides

**Source:** President Woodrow Wilson, in a speech before Congress, August 19, 1914.

#### Document B: Woodrow Wilson Speech #2 (Modified)

Property can be paid for; the lives of peaceful and innocent people cannot be. The present German submarine warfare against commerce is a warfare against mankind.

The German policy has swept every restriction aside. Ships of every kind, whatever their flag, their character, their cargo, their destination, their errand, have been ruthlessly sent to the bottom of the ocean without warning. American ships have been sunk, American lives taken.

I advise that the Congress declare the recent actions of the Imperial German Government to be, in fact, nothing less than war against the Government and people of the United States. Neutrality is no longer feasible or desirable where the peace of the world is involved.

The world must be made safe for democracy.

**Vocabulary**  
commerce: trade, buying and selling  
ruthlessly: cruelly  
feasible: possible

**Source:** President Woodrow Wilson, in a speech before Congress, April 2, 1917.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Historian Howard Zinn (Excerpted)

President Woodrow Wilson had promised that the United States would stay neutral in the war... But in April of 1917, the Germans had announced they would have their submarines sink any ship bringing supplies to their enemies; and they had sunk a number of merchant vessels. Wilson now said he must stand by the right of Americans to travel on merchant ships in the war zone... As Richard Hofstadter points out (*The American Political Tradition*): "This was rationalization of the flimsiest sort... The British had also been intruding on the rights of American citizens on the high seas, but Wilson was not suggesting we go to war with them..."

The United States claimed the *Lusitania* carried an innocent cargo, and therefore the torpedoing was a monstrous German atrocity. Actually, the *Lusitania* was heavily armed: it carried 1,248 cases of 3-inch shells, 4,927 boxes of cartridges (1,000 rounds in each box), and 2,000 more cases of small-arms ammunition... The British and American governments lied about the cargo...

Prosperity depended much on foreign markets, it was believed by the leaders of the country. In 1897, private foreign investments of the United States amounted to \$700 million dollars. By 1914, they were \$3.5 billion...

With World War I, England became more and more a market for American goods and for loans at interest. J.P. Morgan and Company acted as agents for the Allies and when, in 1915, Wilson lifted the ban on private bank loans to the Allies, Morgan could now begin lending money in such great amounts as to both make great profit and the American finance closely to the interest of a British victory in the war against Germany.

Source: Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States*, New York: HarperCollins, 1980. Howard Zinn is a historian and activist who is best known today as the author of *A People's History of the United States*, a book that tells American history from the perspective of minorities, women, and poor people, and that is very critical of the United States government.

**Vocabulary:**  
merchant vessels: commercial trading ships  
rationalization: to come up with reasons to justify something  
flimsiest: weakest  
atrocious: horrible act  
cargo: contents of a ship or truck; things being shipped

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### "Neutrality Gives Way to War":

Britain Blockades Germany:	German Submarines Violate Neutral Rights:
Wilson Prepares for War:	America Enters the War:

DO NOT DO

#### Guiding Questions for Howard Zinn:

1. Sourcing: Based just on the source information, what do you predict Howard Zinn will say about the United States' reasons for entering WWI?
2. Close reading: Why does Zinn claim that Wilson made a flimsy argument?
3. Close reading: What does Zinn suggest are the real reasons the United States entered the war?
4. Close reading: What evidence does Zinn provide to support his claims that the United States was motivated by other reasons (besides German attacks on U.S. ships)?
5. Do you find Zinn's argument convincing? Why or why not?