

World War I

Section 4



MAIN IDEAS

1. The costs of war included millions of human lives as well as financial burdens.
2. President Woodrow Wilson and European leaders met to work out a peace agreement.
3. The U.S. Senate rejected the Treaty of Versailles.

Key Terms and People

League of Nations an international assembly of nations to settle disputes between countries and encourage democracy

reparations payments for war damages

Treaty of Versailles a final peace settlement of World War I

Henry Cabot Lodge a senator who led Republican opposition to the ratification of the Treaty of Versailles

Section Summary

THE COSTS OF WAR

More lives were lost in World War I than in any previous war. More than 8 million soldiers died and 20 million more were wounded. The war also caused financial ruin and led to food shortages in much of Europe.

In 1918 a flu epidemic spread across the world. The disease spread rapidly, changing life in many places. The flu killed more people than had died in the war. By 1919 more than 800,000 Americans had died from the flu.

Circle the number of soldiers killed and wounded in World War I.

THE PEACE AGREEMENT

President Woodrow Wilson had a vision for the postwar world. His plan for peace became known as the Fourteen Points. The plan included ways to settle border questions. It encouraged military cut-backs, lower trade tariffs, and a ban on secret agreements between nations.

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The final point in Wilson’s plan called for the creation of the **League of Nations**. Its mission would be to settle disputes among countries and to promote democracy.

Some allied leaders disagreed with Wilson’s plan. They wanted to punish Germany. They also wanted to make sure Germany could never again become a world power. Leaders from the United States, Britain, France, and Italy met at a peace conference to discuss the terms. Many leaders insisted on **reparations**, which were set at \$33 billion.

Wilson reluctantly agreed to the **Treaty of Versailles**. The League of Nations was formed, and the map of Europe was reshaped. Several new and independent countries were formed.

What was the final point of Wilson’s Fourteen Points?

VERSAILLES TREATY REJECTED

In the United States, treaties must be ratified by at least two thirds of the Senate. Republican senators, led by **Henry Cabot Lodge**, insisted on changes to the treaty before ratifying it. They were afraid that the League of Nations could force the United States to send American troops to war.

Wilson refused to compromise. He worked to get the treaty ratified exactly as it was written. On November 1, 1919, a vote to ratify the Treaty of Versailles failed in the Senate. Wilson was extremely disappointed. The United States signed separate peace treaties with the Central Powers and did not join the League of Nations.

Why did some senators object to the Treaty of Versailles?

CHALLENGE ACTIVITY

Critical Thinking: Writing to Debate Imagine that you are a senator in 1919. Write a paragraph explaining why you support or oppose the Treaty of Versailles.