

# **WILSON AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS**



A Re-creation of President Wilson's Agonizing Efforts to  
Establish a League of Nations after World War I



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to establish a League of Nations after World War I

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# Why do psychologists find Wilson's decision-making so fascinating?

President Woodrow Wilson's decision whether or not to accept any change in his Treaty of Versailles was a pivotal one in the annals of American foreign policy. Wilson wanted to lead America into the thick of world affairs; others wanted America to return to the traditional isolationism that preceded World War I.

This activity will re-create the events, circumstances, and viewpoints pressuring President Wilson as he struggled to decide if he should accept Senator Henry Cabot Lodge's compromise version of the treaty or insist that the Senate accept his original version verbatim. Through participating in this re-creation students will accomplish the following:

### **Knowledge**

1. Explaining the reasons for World War I's outbreak and for the United States' entrance into it
2. Recognizing Wilson's idealistic aims for peace as embodied in the League of Nations and the Fourteen Points
3. Comparing reasons for and against American acceptance of the Treaty of Versailles
4. Evaluating the president's decision about compromise with Senator Lodge

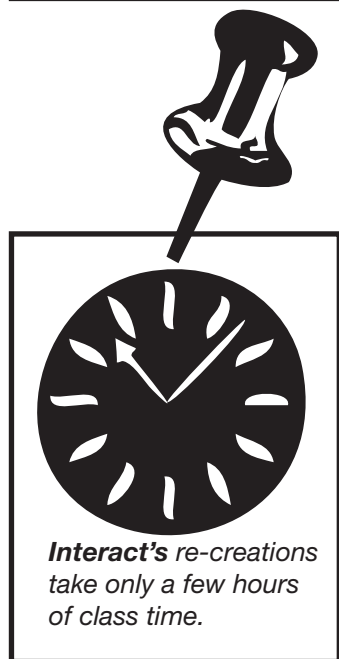
### **Attitudes**

1. Recognizing the need for assessing all points of view in decision-making
2. Explaining how compromise is sometimes necessary to achieve one's ends
3. Prioritizing viewpoints necessary to evaluate a decision

### **Skills**

1. Reading the Background Essay and applying its information to role-playing
2. Comparing and analyzing opposing viewpoints
3. Writing paragraphs explaining points of view
4. Evaluating components of a decision

## OVERVIEW



During three days of instruction, students will read about, role-play, and react to Wilson's ratification dilemma.

### Day 1

Motivate the re-creation by having students read portions of the Student Guide. Assigns roles/responsibilities for the actual re-creation.

### Day 2

The actual re-creation has two scenes. In the first, Senator Gilbert Hitchcock, the Democratic Senate minority leader, meets with two staunch Republicans, senators William Borah and Henry Cabot Lodge. They discuss how the Senate will likely vote on the Versailles Treaty. In the second scene, Senator Hitchcock reports to President Wilson and his wife. They discuss whether or not the president can compromise. Finally, the president makes his decision.

### Day 3

Within activity groups students use their notes while examining a 22-item UNIT TEST. The groups break up and students take the test separately. A debriefing case study over giving the United Nations "sovereignty" over the United States reunites the activity groups, which discuss and reach a conclusion about the case study. See page 8 of the Student Guide.

# SETUP DIRECTIONS



**Note:** *You will not need to duplicate the bulleted items the first time you use this re-creation, for Interact has given you different colored handouts for those students playing roles. If you choose to use the optional UNIT TEST, you will have to duplicate it. All other items necessary for the re-creation are in the Student Guide.*

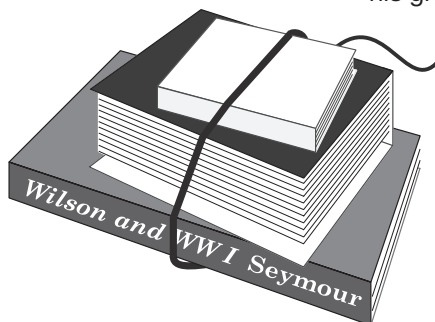
1. **Handouts** See note at left the first time you use this re-creation. For subsequent classes, duplicate the number in parentheses, using the masters in this Teacher Guide.
  - GILBERT HITCHCOCK (one: three pages, back to back)
  - HENRY CABOT LODGE (one: two pages, back to back)
  - WILLIAM BORAH (one: two pages, back to back)
  - PRESIDENT WOODROW WILSON (one: three pages, back to back)
  - MRS. WILSON (one: two pages, back to back)
  - MODERATOR (one: two pages, back to back)
  - \* UNIT TEST (optional—class set: two pages, back to back)
2. **Assigning roles** Assign the six roles in the re-creation. Other students will make vital contributions as audience members. Of course, critical roles require assigning capable students. (Senator Gilbert Hitchcock is the most demanding of all the roles in this re-creation.) Lesser roles, however, can be filled with competent but less skilled students who can receive help from you, the moderator, and fellow classmates. One of the real satisfactions in using participatory materials, we believe, is watching students grow as persons as well as historians!

*... watching students  
grow as persons as  
well as historians!*

# ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

*Consider seeing your friendly school librarian so that she/he will set up a Wilson and the League of Nations Reserve Shelf just for your class.*

*Certain students—the one playing Wilson, for example—just might go to scholarly works such as Charles Seymour's analysis of Wilson in order to "flesh out" this/her character.*



Bailey, Thomas, *Diplomatic History of the American People*, Appleton-Century Crofts, New York, 1969. Excellent, balanced, general description of the causes of the World War and the circumstances of our entrance. It also deals clearly with the Versailles Treaty problems.

Bailey, Thomas, "Woodrow Wilson Wouldn't Yield," *American Heritage Magazine*, June 1957. Particularly useful and easily read account of the entire ratification struggle. Bailey clearly dissects both the problems at Versailles and the subsequent Senate problems. He rightfully views the situation as a tragic one, where more compromise might have won the day.

Cranston, Ruth, "Myths of the League," *New York Times Magazine*, August 20, 1944. The author offers some interesting details concerning the Republican political maneuvers and examines the wide degree of support for the League of Nations among the American public.

Duroselle, Jean-Baptiste, *From Wilson to Roosevelt: Foreign Policy in the United States, 1913-1945*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1963. Duroselle intriguingly analyzes the entire ratification affair. He writes from a French perspective and takes a detached view of American objectives and motives.

Garraty, John A., "The Training of Woodrow Wilson," *American Heritage Magazine*, August 1956. A valuable article because it describes some of Wilson's troubles as president of Princeton. The author compellingly offers Wilson's behavior there as a foreshadowing of his later troubles with Senator Lodge.

Garraty, John A., "Spoiled Child of American Politics," *American Heritage Magazine*, August 1955. Garraty paints an interesting portrait of Wilson's opponent, Senator Lodge. Generally sympathetic toward Lodge's case, the article is vague on the senator's specific ploys during the political struggle.

Hoover, Herbert, "The Ordeal of President Wilson," *American Heritage Magazine*, June 1958. Former President Hoover offers an intricate defense of Wilson's ideals and goals for the Treaty of Versailles. He describes in detail how Wilson was forced to abandon his Fourteen Points in order to salvage the league.

Link, Arthur S., *Woodrow Wilson: A Brief Biography*, World Publishing Co., Cleveland, 1963. A fine general biography of Wilson's career and contributions offering good background on the ratification effort.

Lodge Jr., Henry Cabot, "A Communication," *American Heritage Magazine*, December 1955. Senator Lodge's grandson writes a calm and interesting response to Garraty's article about his grandfather. The younger Lodge seeks to refute some of Garraty's conclusions, stressing that his grandfather's opinions have been borne out by time.

Seymour, Charles, *Wilson and World War I*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1921. Mr. Seymour provides valuable political analysis of the Versailles Treaty and of the political infighting to gain ratification.

Thurston, Robert L., *Isolation: The U.S. and the League of Nations*, Xerox Education Publications, Connecticut, 1972. Part of an excellent Values and Decisions series, this little paperback analyzes Republican opposition to and Wilson's response to the Versailles Treaty.



# DAILY TEACHING DIRECTIONS - 1



*Be certain you have carefully planned how to integrate this re-creation with the post-World War I history chapters you have had your students read in their textbooks.*

**Before Day 1** Be sure you have thoroughly examined this Teacher Guide, the Student Guide, and the various handouts.

## Day 1

1. Introduce the topic with an interest catcher. This device will cue the students to the re-creation's theme. Use a filmstrip, movie, lecture, or anything else which you find useful. With all the furor in the world today, a news article or story about a current crisis in the United Nations might be a good jumping off point.
2. Link your interest catcher to the re-creation by handing out the Student Guide. Have the students read the Purpose and Background Essay.
3. Assign students to portray the roles. (You may choose to play the moderator yourself.) Give them their special handouts and send the advisers, critics, president, and moderator to a separate place in order to prepare for their roles.
4. Help the remaining students prepare their note-taking sheet. (See the directions in the Student Guide.)
5. Check with your role-players. Satisfy yourself that each understands his/her role and specific tasks.
6. For homework instruct everyone to finish reading the Student Guide and history textbook on World War I and the Treaty of Versailles.
7. Remind advisers and critics a) that they must write paragraphs explaining their viewpoints, and b) that these are to be ready by the beginning of Day 2.

## Day 2

1. The moderator should follow the sequential directions found in the MODERATOR handout under The Re-Creation Hour.
2. Be mindful that your own role in Day 2 is to be as unobtrusive as possible. Avoid normal teacher inclination to intervene in the discussion if it is going poorly. If the students understand their tasks and have prepared thoroughly, the re-creation will run itself.
3. Your only role is to watch the clock to be certain that all facets of the discussion get adequate time. (You may want to prearrange some signals with the president to slow down, speed up, ask for more explanation, etc.)
4. Before Day 2 ends, pick up the paragraphs your advisers/critics wrote. Then tell students what to expect for Day 3. Some options:



## DAILY TEACHING DIRECTIONS - 2



*Encourage your students to speak passionately. Work to get them truly involved in their characterizations.*

*If you have a quality class and you are considering using this re-creation next year, videotape the presidential decision so that you can show portions next year to stimulate students' performance. (Such a video is also useful for open house when you want parents to see the participatory nature of your instruction.)*

- **Option 1:** Review notes for objective exam.
- **Option 2:** Have students read the Debriefing case study in their Student Guides and then develop arguments for and against giving the United Nations “sovereignty” over the United States.
- **Option 3:** Give no overnight assignment.

### Day 3

1. Divide your class into activity groups of about five to six members each. Insure that the students who played key roles are split equally among the groups.
2. Have the groups form circles. Then give each student the UNIT TEST, which group members may discuss among themselves. **Note:** Only their notes and the test sheets may be on their desks. No pens or pencils are allowed at first.
3. Have students return to their regular seats and individually take their tests without any aid from their notes.
4. Exchange papers, score them, and have the groups reform and calculate their average scores. Give a bonus to the group members with the highest scores. Answer key: 1. d; 2. a; 3. c; 4. b; 5. b; 6. b; 7. a; 8. a; 9. c; 10. d; 11. f; 12. h; 13. a; 14. i; 15. b; 16. e; 17. g; 18. b; 19. a; 20. b; 21. a; 22. b.
5. Now move into debriefing by using the case study on giving the United Nations sovereignty over the United States. See that each group has a chairperson and a recorder.
6. Insure that each group's recorder writes down the strengths and weaknesses of each alternative the president should consider.
7. Culminate your debriefing by having members vote and choose one representative to join the other groups' representatives in front of the class for a give-and-take discussion.

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# MODERATOR - 1

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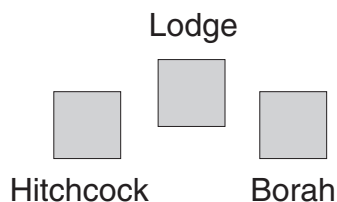
You have the responsibility to insure that the re-creation runs smoothly. Think of yourself as the “glue” holding together all the parts.

## Before the re-creation

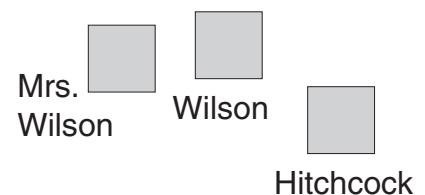
1. Meet with the role-players and insure that all participants feel comfortable in their tasks and that they are prepared.
2. Give all role-players suggestions that will help them play their roles realistically. Point out how to talk, look, and act like the historical persons involved. For example, the student playing Borah, since he is to be a flamboyant, oratorical type, should see that his speech has fire and grace—and possibly a little pomposity. Be sure to remind the student playing Lodge to dress and use body language that make him both distinguished and somewhat haughty. Wilson, of course, has recently suffered a stroke and should be in either a bed or a wheelchair. Encourage Mrs. Wilson to hover over her husband, fixing blankets, possibly giving him “medicine,” etc.
3. Try to identify and bring to class appropriate props (e.g., bookcase full of books, American flag, bed, wheelchair, water, medicine, copies of the treaty).
4. Decide in advance how you will arrange the room realistically for each scene. Insure that role-players will sit or stand so that everyone in class will be able to see and hear what is going on. Insure that all role-players face the audience as much as possible. Draw room arrangement diagrams in advance for both scenes and show them to the role-players.



**Note:** You will move into and out of the scene as you moderate the re-creation.

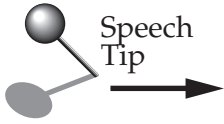


**Scene 1**



**Scene 2**

5. Write brief introductions for each scene. You will read each aloud. Cover the following in your separate introductions:
  - **Scene 1: Time**—Early November 1919. **Place**—the Senate Office Building office of Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. **Participants**—Senators Lodge, Hitchcock, and Borah. **Situation**—Senator Hitchcock has asked for this meeting in Lodge’s office during which he hopes that his two colleagues will give him suggestions about how to talk President Wilson into accepting Senator Lodge’s reservations, which the Senate has already accepted.



*You will be more effective if you strive to be as historically accurate with each presentation as you can.*

*Note that the most effective speakers are carefully prepared, speak forcefully and clearly, and communicate how interesting they think the subject is. Therefore, strive to be prepared, forceful, clear, and enthusiastic!*

## Read or Tell

**Note:** Read aloud all these four statements once **before** having students vote so that they understand their options. Then reread the four statements.

- **Scene 2: Time**—the evening of November 6, 1919. **Place**—the president’s bedroom in the White House. **Participants**—Senator Hitchcock, President Woodrow Wilson, Mrs. Edith Wilson. **Situation**—Senator Hitchcock reports on the Senate situation and joins with Mrs. Wilson in urging the president to accept the Lodge Reservations already accepted by the Senate.

### The re-creation hour

#### Scene 1

1. Arrange the room. (See number 4 on page 7.)
2. Read or speak your introduction to Scene 1.
3. Senator Hitchcock conducts the meeting in Senator Lodge’s office.

#### Scene 2

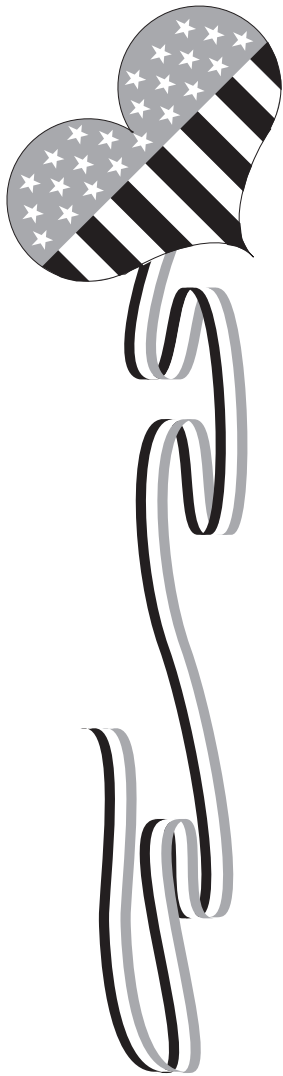
4. Rearrange the room. (See number 4 on page 7.)
5. Read or speak your introduction to Scene 2.
6. Mrs. Wilson tells the president that Senator Hitchcock has arrived.
7. The president then follows the sequence found in his handout.
8. The second scene ends at the moment the president announces his decision. Then you step in, tell the class the re-creation is over, and invite members of the audience to question President Wilson so that they can thoroughly understand his reasoning. Allow them to challenge the wisdom of his decision by asking critical questions. Permit students who were advisers or critics to slip out of their roles so that they, too, can ask questions.
9. You can also poll the students’ opinions by asking students to raise their hands once to signify which of the following statements represents their current conviction about Wilson’s 1919 decision.

- a. The president’s decision that he would not compromise was made in the United States’ best interest.
- b. The president politically underestimated his opposition. He should have settled with Senator Lodge to gain at least most of his objectives.
- c. The president’s decision was based on a blend of principle and vanity. He let his ego get involved too much.
- d. The president’s decision was passed purely on principle. Bending one’s principle to suit the situation would be wrong.

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# GILBERT HITCHCOCK - 1

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As President Woodrow Wilson's chief Senate adviser, you will assist him in discussing the treaty ratification problems he faces in the United States Senate. You will also offer him personal advice about the best alternative he can choose for the benefit of the U.S.

To fulfill your responsibility you have several tasks to fulfill:

1. Know your background and political career.
2. Familiarize yourself with your role in Wilson's ratification struggle.
3. Write a paragraph summarizing your viewpoints about ratification.
4. Be prepared to counter those viewpoints which oppose the treaty.
5. Be ready to help the president evaluate his various alternatives.

## Background information

You began your career in Nebraska; first as a lawyer, then a newspaper publisher. Later you were elected a Democratic senator from your state. Briefly you became chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1918; however, when the Republican majority took over in 1919, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge replaced you in that powerful post. Your Democratic colleagues responded by choosing you to serve as their minority leader in the Senate. This is a crucial job, for you are charged with politically maneuvering your party's legislative proposals through the Senate. You are inexperienced at this sort of parliamentary wheeling and dealing, but you're doing the best you can.

Certainly your chief objective now is to help President Wilson gain Senate acceptance of his Versailles Treaty. This will be no easy task, for you realize that your 43 Democratic votes are well short of the required 64 for ratification. You have been trying to find a way to build a coalition between Wilson's position and that of at least some of the Reservationist Republicans.

With this end in mind you even submitted your own versions of Lodge's reservations for Senate consideration. For example, your reservations also had sought to assert Congress' right to authorize or forbid use of American forces for league sanctions. However, the Senate has rejected all your reservations and favors Lodge's Fourteen Reservations.

At this point in time you are loyal to your president. You feel your responsibility as Senate Democratic minority leader is to help President Wilson gain acceptance of his own unmodified treaty. Therefore, in the two scenes in this re-creation you must be amply prepared to meet Lodge's and William Borah's criticisms of the Versailles Treaty. For example, you do not accept the premise that a forfeiture of a small measure of American sovereignty would be such a bad thing. In your

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## GILBERT HITCHCOCK - 2

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opinion, if all countries were required by the league to limit arms building, such an arms limitation would lessen risk for war for all nations. As a result, the entire world would be a safer place in which to live.

You view our league membership as no threat to the Monroe Doctrine. A provision in the covenant itself specifically allows “regional” agreements. You have pointed out: “It is true that if matters come up that lead to a dispute among nations, they must go to the Executive Council. But that does not mean any sacrifice of the Monroe Doctrine. That instrument remains inviolate.”

You see Article X as no risk to engulf us in foreign entanglements. The United States has veto power on all Executive Council votes. Besides, the council could only advise cooperation; it could not require it. Although we might have a moral obligation to protect member nations from aggression under the league, we would not have a legal obligation. Thus, Congress would remain free to make the final decision.

Furthermore, you dismiss concerns about the United States being forced to be controlled by inferior nations. You believe such concerns are sheer prejudice. Isn't the United States itself a melting pot of many nations? What exactly do we have to fear from the world?

### Role in the re-creation scenes



Acting  
Tip

*Always radiate a calm confidence. You know what needs to be said. Speak clearly and confidently.*

**Note:** Although you don't have the authority to make the final decision—President Wilson does—you are the most important participant in this re-creation. Its success requires that you prepare yourself thoroughly in order that you can skillfully hold together the two scenes.

**Scene 1** When you enter Senator Lodge's office to meet with him and Senator Borah, thank them for agreeing to meet with you. Then slowly cover the treaty's history, asking them to discuss with you the following questions. Be sure you add your opinions.

1. By ratifying the treaty which the Allied leaders and President Wilson have negotiated, we have the opportunity to help lead the world into an era of lasting peace. Don't you agree?
2. What is it about the treaty that particularly troubles you? What part would you change?
3. Do you really believe our membership in the league threatens our nation's security?
4. Don't you believe that tampering with the treaty is dangerous?
5. Doesn't the United States have a responsibility to help maintain world peace?

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## GILBERT HITCHCOCK - 3

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6. How do you assess the chance of the Senate ratifying the treaty on November 19—without Lodge’s Fourteen Reservations?
7. If we allow the treaty to die, what will be the consequences for the U.S.? for the world?

Once you have heard how neither Borah nor Lodge is willing to budge from his position, thank them once again for meeting with you. Scene 1 then ends.

**Scene 2** After Mrs. Wilson ushers you into the president’s bedroom, inquire about his health. He will then ask you to tell him about “the situation in the Senate.” Point out how you were so concerned about the treaty that you arranged to meet with senators Borah and Lodge in the latter’s office.



*You know that much of what you will report will not be welcome news to the Wilsons. Nevertheless, look them both in the eye and give them an accurate report.*

Briefly and reluctantly cover what went on at the meeting. Tell the president and his wife the two men’s responses to your questions and the points you made while disagreeing with their responses. (President Wilson will likely interrupt your answers because they will so deeply disturb him: he will be sensing the death of his dream.) End your coverage of the answers to the seven questions by pointing out a) that the Senate majority believes in the treaty but seems to want Lodge’s 14 Reservations, and b) you can muster only 43 “for sure” Democratic votes for an unmodified Versailles Treaty.

At this point, the president will ask everyone to discuss his four alternatives. They are listed on page 7 in the Student Guide. The three of you will then discuss the good and bad points of each alternative. As you speak, urge President Wilson to seek acceptable compromise. Advise him to offer the “olive branch” to Senator Lodge. Doing so would likely allow the Senate to accept at least a weakened treaty instead of none at all. Yet you must also expect the president to reject your sound logic because of his stubbornness and idealism. However, you will have done your best to defend Wilson’s treaty and to reach acceptable compromise.

Scene 2 ends after President Wilson tells you and his wife that he will accept Alternative 1: No modification of the treaty.



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# HENRY CABOT LODGE - 1

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As President Woodrow Wilson’s chief adversary in this re-creation, you have a critical and interesting role to play. In general your responsibility is to criticize the president’s version of the Treaty of Versailles while you advance your own modified pact.

To meet these obligations you have several tasks to fulfill:

1. Know your background and political career.
2. Familiarize yourself with your views about foreign affairs and Wilson’s proposed treaty.
3. Know your relationship with the president and your considerable role in the ratification struggle.
4. Write a paragraph summarizing your views about ratification.
5. Be ready to exchange opinions with the two other senators.
6. Prepare yourself to argue for adoption of your reservations to the treaty.

## Background information

In 1850 you were born into the flower of Massachusetts high society. You lived a life of privilege which eventually catapulted you into politics, first as a congressman, later as a senator. A scholar with a Ph.D. degree and a person who also has a reputation as a writer, you are respected by your fellow senators because you are hardworking, honest, and predictable. Critics, however, find you highly partisan, haughty, and vain.

As the Senate majority leader and the current chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, you have a priceless opportunity to practice your passion—international politics. An ardent, even old-fashioned nationalist, you make all your foreign-policy decisions with that patriotism clearly in mind. You are not an isolationist, however, as is your colleague, Senator William Borah. You have always called for an American role in the world arena. In fact, you even briefly supported the idea of a League of Nations, although you didn’t think it would work. At bottom, however, you are protective, even jealous of American interests.

You once stated, “Once a treaty is signed, it must be lived up to. Therefore, never sign one that you are not prepared to carry out—to the letter.” Thus, to insure that no one misunderstands American intentions about the League Covenant, you have introduced your Fourteen Reservations to the treaty. The most important of these reservations seeks to clarify interpretation of Article X. This article requires that the United States support any action the League Council might adopt. Your reservation, however, specifies that Congress alone reserves the



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## HENRY CABOT LODGE - 2

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right to determine the degree of American support, if any, of a council resolution. Thus, American adoption of this reservation will preserve the United States from needless involvement in foreign intrigues.



*As a student you will find researching Lodge's relationship to Wilson very interesting. Try to spend some extra time in a solid Wilson or Lodge biography reading about how they detested one another.*

*If you do such research, you will definitely help yourself in finding out how you should act in Wilson's presence.*

You recently stated: "We will not have our country's vigor exhausted, or our moral force abated, by everlasting meddling and muddling in every quarrel, great and small, which afflicts the world. Our ideal is to make her ever stronger and better and finer, because in that way alone, as we believe, can she be of the greatest service to the world's peace and to the welfare of mankind." Your other reservations reflect the same premise. Now, after much debate and compromise, most senators seem to believe in adopting the Versailles Treaty in some form or other. You want to insure that the treaty, if adopted, has your reservations attached. You sense in early November that you have the Senate votes to insure this.

Although you will not directly admit it, another dimension of your opposition to the Versailles Treaty is Wilson's involvement in it. You intensely dislike the president. You resent the presence of another Ph.D. in Washington who has stolen some of your limelight. You will undoubtedly indirectly convey your dislike for Wilson during your recreation scene. After all, his arrogance and moral inflexibility have him acting like a prophet with a direct pipeline to God!

### Role in Scene 1

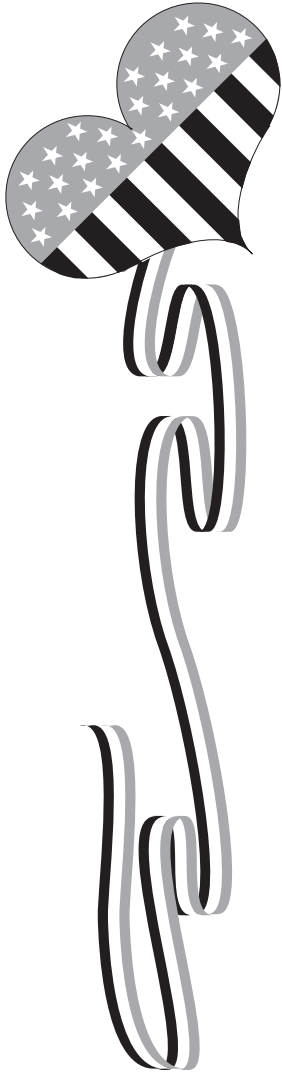
You will meet with senators Borah and Gilbert Hitchcock in your office; the latter is coming into your territory seeking something. You know you have the upper hand. Answer whatever questions you are asked. Drip some disdain for the arrogance and inflexibility of the president. Offer your Fourteen Reservations as the best compromise for all to accept. Explain how Wilson would have membership in his league; you would have carefully limited our participation. Stress that your reservations are themselves the product of political compromise. Originally you submitted 45 amendments and four reservations for consideration. The Senate has ground these down to the final 14. Now it is the president's turn to compromise by accepting your safeguards to the treaty.

In summary, attack Wilson's treaty and advance your version. It alone clearly protects American sovereignty while remaining politically expedient: Only if your reservations are accepted will the Versailles Treaty pass the U.S. Senate!

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# WILLIAM BORAH - 1

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As a noted isolationist senator, you will be severely critical of President Woodrow Wilson's Treaty of Versailles during this re-creation. You will do whatever you can to defeat it.

To meet this responsibility you have a series of tasks to fulfill:

1. Know your background and political career.
2. Familiarize yourself with your role in the ratification struggle.
3. Write a paragraph summarizing your views about ratification.
4. Ready yourself to exchange viewpoints with other participants.
5. Prepare to attack several aspects of the treaty.

## Background information

You have had a long, flamboyant career as senator from Idaho. Some have called you "the Great Opposer," a determined opponent who often takes fiery stands against given issues. But you regard yourself, first and foremost, as a sincere patriot. You supported our entry into the Great War, even though you were a staunch isolationist. Now that the war has ended, you have vowed to use your considerable oratorical and dramatic talents to defeat Wilson's Versailles Treaty.

You are one of about 14 senators who are irreconcilably opposed to Wilson's treaty. Furthermore, your group is absolutely against any form of American membership in a foreign League of Nations.

As an isolationist you see no reason for the United States to entangle itself in foreign alliances. You view these pacts as foreign conspiracies. These plotters hope to devour American economic and political might to further their own imperialistic ends. Thus, you're committed to defeating Wilson's Treaty of Versailles. To this end you and your colleagues have developed a tough strategy. You hammered at the weak points of the treaty to educate the public to recognize these pitfalls. You even "trailed" Wilson on his speaking tour on behalf of the league. A few hours after he finished a speech, you would give a heated speech in the same city which attacked his arguments. Gradually support for the president's position began to erode.

As you enter the meeting with senators Henry Cabot Lodge and Gilbert Hitchcock in the former's office, you are prepared to fight Wilson's treaty at every point.

1. You object once again to the league's power to regulate the size of a member nation's armies, navies, and arsenals. You view this league power as a clear violation of Congress' constitutional authority to decide these matters. You will never allow such a treaty to take away such a fundamental power belonging to Congress.

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## WILLIAM BORAH - 2

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2. Furthermore, you believe our membership in the league will eliminate traditional cornerstones of our foreign policy such as the Monroe Doctrine.
3. You believe that our overall foreign policy simply cannot be subject to the whims of outsiders. For example, you have pointed out: “If Japan threatens to take southern California, (under this treaty) we would not settle the matter but would refer it to a tribunal .... In other words, the entire matter would be decided by the European (sic) powers.”
4. You object to the “entangling alliances” this treaty encompasses. You believe the U.S. needs no part of European affairs and alliances. Must we police the world?
5. You are dreadfully afraid of the league’s inevitable attempts to control America. For example, each of Britain’s dominions, six, will have a vote in the league. That unfairly tips the political balance in Great Britain’s favor. Such a situation is hardly to our advantage!
6. Furthermore, you are troubled that the majority of countries—whose representatives can gang up and outvote the United States—are “obviously racially and culturally inferior to us.”

For these reasons and more you will oppose the treaty.

### Role in Scene 1

You have a very interesting part to play in the re-creation. You are fundamentally opposed to any form of the treaty, but you are ready to play politics with the various alternatives. You can ally with Lodge in criticizing the treaty, but you must remember that he is pushing his own modifications to the treaty. You also oppose these modifications. You may want to play a shadow game by encouraging Senator Hitchcock to tell Wilson to reject Lodge’s Reservations. (Remember you need only 33 votes to defeat either treaty version. Supporting Wilson against Lodge’s Reservations will defeat the senator.) Later you can ally with Lodge’s forces to vote against Wilson’s original treaty. Either way you and the other irreconcilables will win.

In summary, therefore, you’re obliged to punch as many holes in Wilson’s treaty as possible. Offer the president’s senator (Hitchcock) any advice that will defeat the treaty and keep the United States out of the League of Nations.



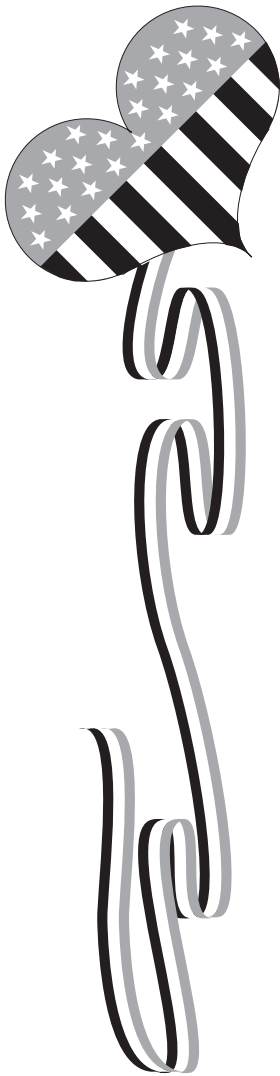
Acting  
Tip

You are one of your country’s most powerful senators. Speak forcefully. Act as if you know that your opinions carry real weight.

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# PRESIDENT WOODROW WILSON - 1

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While portraying President Woodrow Wilson, the decision maker and central figure in this re-creation, you have two general responsibilities to fulfill:

- accurately portraying a mentally sharp, but physically injured president;
- making, announcing, and justifying your decision.

## Background information

Effective portrayal of the president requires that you are familiar with your views on war and your idealistic hopes for a permanent peace. You must also never forget your belief that you must maintain a firm stance during the ratification crisis. The following represents some critical points to remember.

1. You come from a religious family which never compromised when a matter of principle was involved. You were a brilliant teacher whose lectures could intellectually move persons. You eventually became a distinguished president of your alma mater, Princeton University. You managed to institute several reforms there; however, your other attempts at reform were faced by firm resistance. You met this opposition with characteristic firmness.
2. As president you took a leadership role in ending World War I. Your Fourteen Points program idealistically called for erasing many of the causes of that war.
3. The keystone of these Fourteen Points and to the subsequent Treaty of Versailles was the League of Nations. This organization, if adopted, will be dedicated to promoting worldwide justice and to maintaining peace among all the countries of the world.
4. This league requires that each nation agree to surrender some of its sovereignty to the league so that the league can make and carry out decisions for the entire world's welfare.
5. You are proud of the league and are certain that it will work. However, not everyone in the United States agrees with you. Chief among your critics is Senator Henry Cabot Lodge. He introduced and has gained Senate support for reservations to the treaty. And how many reservations? 10? 15? No. He has sarcastically presented 14!
6. Changing any part of the treaty is virtually unthinkable to you. You believe any modification would weaken the league's effectiveness and needlessly assert American sovereignty at the league's expense. Moreover, you must prepare yourself to counter Republican criticism of the pact.

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# PRESIDENT WOODROW WILSON - 2

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7. In the face of growing opposition, you decided to take your case directly to the people. You traveled around the country delivering passionate calls for popular support of the league. However, a near fatal stroke stopped your tour. Now bedridden much of the time, you are often shielded from visitors by your loving wife. Thus, you have been helpless to marshal your forces for ratification.
8. The approaching Senate ratification vote on November 19 troubles you because you realize that Lodge may have enough votes to pass his modified version of the treaty. Moreover, your original treaty is in danger of complete defeat. Thus, you are torn between your desire for American entrance into the league and your abhorrence of compromising with the distasteful Henry Cabot Lodge.

## Role in the re-creation



*Approach your role seriously.*

**Above all:** *Never leave any doubt that **you** are the president. Even though your health has deteriorated, be as focused and as alert as possible. Be sure to radiate the fire and idealism that has fueled you for years.*

**Scene 1** Your chief contact with what is happening to your treaty in the Senate is Senator Gilbert Hitchcock, the minority leader from Nebraska. This loyal Democrat has been communicating with you regularly since your mental and physical health improved around the first of November. He is planning to meet with senators Henry Cabot Lodge and William Borah in a last-minute attempt to win the support of the two Republican factions they represent: the Reservationists, who will accept the Versailles Treaty if it is significantly modified “to protect American interests,” and the Irreconcilables, who are opposed to the treaty in any form. Lodge you dislike for his haughty disdain for you; Borah you consider a narrow minded antiquarian out of touch with the realities of the world.

Prior to Hitchcock’s meeting with these two senators, you and Hitchcock must huddle together and marshal the strongest arguments you can. Hitchcock will use these arguments while discussing the treaty in Senator Lodge’s office during Scene 1.

**Scene 2** After the moderator has introduced the scene and your wife has ushered Senator Hitchcock into your White House bedroom, ask the senator to review for you what happened while he met with senators Lodge and Borah. As Hitchcock reveals the increasingly bad news, express your exasperation openly. Convey your inner frustration: you are facing one of the most crucial moments of your presidency at a moment when you are not fully recovered from your recent stroke. If Hitchcock seems vague or confusing in his summary of what transpired in the Lodge-Borah meeting, ask him how and why questions.

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## PRESIDENT WOODROW WILSON - 3

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Next, focus Hitchcock's, your wife's, and your own attention on the four alternatives available to you.

**Alternative 1:** Remain firm. Insist that the Senate must approve the treaty in its unaltered form. Accepting anything less will nullify the treaty's noble intentions and the league's chances for success. Advise the Senate's Democrats to vote against the treaty with Lodge's reservations.

**Alternative 2:** Accept the Lodge Reservations as the only way to gain acceptance of the treaty and United States membership in the League of Nations. A weakened treaty is better than no treaty at all.

**Alternative 3:** Insist on passage of the "pure" treaty without reservations even though you realize it might be defeated for now. You can then carry your case to the people by working to get pro-league senators elected in 1920. Possibly, the treaty could then be ratified in 1921.

**Alternative 4:** Withdraw the treaty entirely—for now. Accept the fact that the United States is not ready now to accept its role in the world arena. This action will avoid public embarrassment for you at this time. However, possibly the treaty can be resubmitted if you decide to seek and then do win a third term.

“  
Go over  
all four  
alternatives  
carefully.  
”

Ask everyone to help you pinpoint what is good and bad about each alternative. Go over all four alternatives carefully.

After all the views have been aired, you must make and announce your decision. Despite advice to the contrary you will support Alternative 1. Insist that the treaty be ratified in its original form. Order Hitchcock to instruct the Senate Democrats to vote against Senator Lodge's version. There are a number of reasons for your choice. You are not one to compromise easily over a matter of principle. Also you are convinced that any modifying of the treaty amounts to a nullifying of the pact. Although you realize that your treaty may suffer a setback, you remain hopeful that your dream will be upheld—eventually.

Explain your decision by doing the following:

- citing the strong points justifying your choice;
- pointing out the weaker points of the others;
- restating your overriding faith in the original treaty;
- explaining your complete aversion to accepting Lodge's reservations; and
- holding out hope that the Senate will see the rightness of your decision.

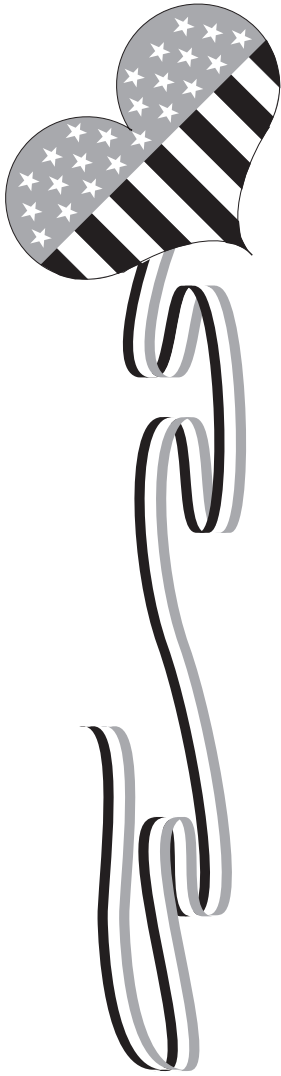
Finally, be prepared to answer questions from the audience. Your classmates will likely have questions they want to ask you.



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# MRS. WILSON - 1

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As Edith Bolling Galt Wilson, the wife of the idealistic Woodrow Wilson, the president of the United States, you have an interesting and vital role in the re-creation. Your first desire is to protect your husband's health. Of course, you are also anxious to offer advice about the ratification struggle.

Prepare yourself in the following ways:

1. Know your background and relationship with the president.
2. Write a paragraph summarizing this role and your opinion about compromise with Senator Henry Cabot Lodge.
3. Prepare yourself to protect the president's health and shield him from agitation.
4. Be ready to offer opinions to the president and to exchange viewpoints with the other participants.

## **Background information**

President Wilson's first wife passed away in the summer of 1914. He had been devoted to her and was naturally heartbroken at her death. However, a little more than a year later, he met and married you, a young widow living in Washington, D.C. You two became deeply devoted to one another. You were with the president amidst the applause at Paris and during the rancor of the subsequent ratification fight. You were also at his bedside when he nearly died in early October 1919.

Only you and Dr. Grayson, Wilson's physician, knew how ill Wilson actually was. (You had considered advising your husband to resign, but you also realized that resignation might kill him just as readily as remaining president.) Your husband needed protection, and you did not shy from this responsibility. You welcomed it! Feeling that he was your husband first, the president second, you have done all in your power to insulate him from the rigors of the presidency. You have permitted absolutely no visitors or calls. You have delivered to you—not the president—any bills or correspondence. You even have helped him sign his name. To avoid any upsetting or any agitating news, you have screened and predigested all information for him. This action has kept Wilson shielded, but it has also prevented him from seeing the entire situation. Consequently, the Democratic senators' attempt to win ratification has suddenly become rudderless.

Now your husband's health has improved somewhat, and you have allowed Senator Gilbert Hitchcock this meeting.



## Role in Scene 2



*You are very worried about your husband's health. Be protective of him during this time. He is under great pressure.*

Actually you have a dual role in Scene 2. First, you will introduce Senator Hitchcock into Wilson's bedroom. Don't be afraid to warn the senator to be watchful of the president's health. (Protect him, hovering over him if necessary.) Second, you will actively participate in the session, giving your own opinions. For, as one who has been close to the presidency—some, in fact, say you are our first woman president!—you feel you are more than qualified to exchange and argue viewpoints and to advise the president, too. Since you are anxious to resolve this crisis in order for your husband to fully recover, you should advise him to compromise with Senator Lodge. Numbers don't lie: he needs 64 votes for ratification. A coalition of Wilson's Democrats and Lodge's Reservationists will ratify a modified treaty. Thus, compromise is necessary.

In summary, therefore, be solicitous for your husband's health and urge him to accept Senator Lodge's Fourteen Reservations.

# UNIT TEST- 1

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Part 1

Complete the following questions by writing the letter of the best choice in the space provided.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Wilson's efforts to gain ratification were similar to problems he encountered when he
- worked to get reelected president
  - struggled to avoid impeachment
  - tried to become governor of New Jersey
  - worked to institute reforms at Princeton.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. When World War I broke out, the United States tried to identify its role in the conflict. Wilson
- declared official neutrality, but various groups within the United States rooted for opposing sides
  - immediately declared war on Germany
  - declared our neutrality, and the nation supported him fully
  - made an alliance to protect our interests in Europe.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Our foreign policy prior to 1917
- had traditionally involved us in the world's events
  - had totally isolated us from world affairs
  - had changed and evolved with the changes and development of our own country
  - had always been warlike and aggressive.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. America's eventual entrance into the war
- saved Russia from Communism
  - aided the Allies militarily and enabled Wilson to use his influence to end the war
  - was too late to help Germany
  - protected our colonies in Northern Africa.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Wilson's Fourteen Points had been characterized
- as meaningless nonsense by Germany
  - as an idealist's solutions to the causes of the war
  - as a blueprint for peace by the Allies
  - none of the above.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. The heart of Wilson's Fourteen Points was the League of Nations. This organization
- would replace the ineffective United Nations
  - would enforce peace by having the power to punish aggressive nations
  - was hailed by both Republicans and Democrats
  - would be an international debating society with no real powers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. At the Paris Peace Conference Wilson's idealism
- clashed with the more vengeful Allies
  - encouraged Germany to give up its hope for new territory
  - encouraged all present to realistically seek a just and lasting peace
  - discouraged Republicans who had hoped for new colonies in Europe.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. The most important part of the League Covenant was
- Article X
  - the full cooperation of the United States
  - the powers of the league assembly
  - the acceptance of Wilson as the head of the league.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Americans
- understood the need for each country to surrender some sovereignty to the league
  - readily agreed with the league's power to regulate arms
  - were divided on entering the league at all
  - distrusted Wilson's motives for peace.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. The president
- may make and ratify treaties
  - may propose treaties but needs the Supreme Court's approval
  - may propose treaties but needs constitutional amendments for acceptance
  - may propose treaties but needs approval of two-thirds of the Senate.

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# UNIT TEST 2

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Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Part 2

Match the items listed in column A with the most appropriate items in column B.

### Column A

- \_\_\_\_11. fear of Communism in the United States
- \_\_\_\_12. angry at British gains in treaty
- \_\_\_\_13. majority party after 1918 elections
- \_\_\_\_14. 14 Reservations
- \_\_\_\_15. near fatal stroke
- \_\_\_\_16. Democratic Senate leader
- \_\_\_\_17. Irreconcilable

### Column B

- a. Republicans
- b. President Wilson
- c. Democrats
- d. Clemenceau
- e. Senator Hitchcock
- f. Red Scare
- g. Senator Borah
- h. Irish-Americans
- i. Senator Lodge

## Part 3

Read the following paragraph carefully. In order to complete the passage correctly, find the correct choice listed below and mark its letter in the space provided.

Lodge sought to modify Wilson's treaty by including reservations and amendments. (18. \_\_\_\_ ) would force the president to renegotiate certain parts of the treaty. (19. \_\_\_\_ ) on the other hand, stated our own interpretations of the pact. President Wilson would accept neither. Although he knew (20. \_\_\_\_ ) had enough votes to reject his own treaty, Wilson refused to allow Democrats to vote for Lodge's (21. \_\_\_\_ ) that would have passed a weakened version of the treaty. Thus, the United States membership in the League of Nations was (22. \_\_\_\_ ).

### Answers to #18–#22:

- 18. a. reservations; b. amendments
- 19. a. reservations; b. amendments
- 20. a. Senator Hitchcock; b. Senator Lodge; c. Senator Borah
- 21. a. 14 Reservations; b. 14 Points
- 22. a. assured; b. doomed; c. set aside temporarily

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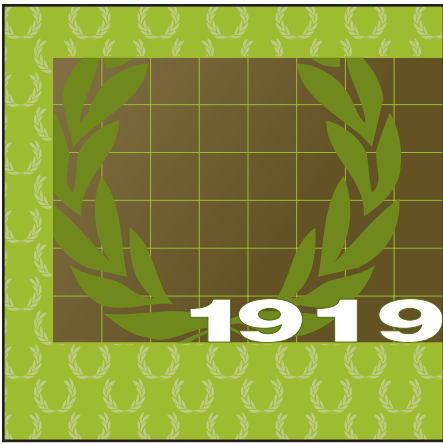
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# WILSON AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

A re-creation of President Wilson's agonizing efforts to establish a League of Nations after World War I

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## PURPOSE

This re-creation probes Woodrow Wilson's 1919 struggle to win Senate ratification of the Treaty of Versailles and subsequent acceptance of a new role for the United States in world politics. He worked to accomplish this while facing strong opposition from Republican senators led by the powerful Henry Cabot Lodge. A group of you will assume the roles of President Wilson, his advisers, and his adversaries. Together you will help the president consider several alternatives before he makes a crucial decision.

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## BACKGROUND ESSAY

**Introduction** Following the end of World War I, Woodrow Wilson had gone to the Paris peace conference as a hero. He had earned world-wide acclaim as the president who had ended World War I. In June 1919 he returned to the United States somewhat bloodied by the harshness of the negotiation and compromise he had experienced. Nevertheless, he dreamed that his new League of Nations might usher in an era of world peace. Yet even before Wilson returned, opposition to the Versailles Treaty was growing in the United States, much of it led by Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, Republican of Massachusetts. As chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Lodge sought either a modified treaty or no treaty at all.

**Wilson's early life** Thomas Woodrow Wilson was born in 1856 in Virginia. During his early childhood he witnessed the ravages of the Civil War. These images burned into his soul a lifelong hatred of war. As part of a loving religious family, Wilson gained a stern moral code from his minister father, a strict disciplinarian. The boy learned not to compromise on moral issues. Young Woodrow entered Princeton with plans for a political career after he had completed his education. Once he had his Ph.D. degree from Johns Hopkins, however, he began teaching, a career which eventually returned him to Princeton.

His brilliance as a teacher at Princeton led to his becoming president of this prestigious university in 1898. His leadership sparked several reforms in curriculum and academic standards. He was involved in several conflicts at Princeton involving issues which he saw as moral battlefields. As a result, he was rigidly inflexible—a characteristic that would haunt him in his League of Nations crisis. Wilson's struggles at Princeton eventually led to his resigning his presidency there. Shortly afterward he made a successful run for the governor's seat in New Jersey.

Only two years later, Governor Wilson was nominated to head the Democratic ticket for the upcoming presidential election. Wilson ran on a reformist platform and won the election. During his two presidential terms domestic reforms such as the graduated income tax and the direct election of senators were secured. However, the significance of these accomplishments faded with the coming of the Great War in 1914.

**Causes of World War I** The Great War was a culmination of intense national rivalries, both petty and grand, between the European nations. (See your history text for further background.) This war, waiting to happen, started when the Archduke Francis Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary was assassinated in 1914. Threats, counterthreats, and ultimatums plunged Europe into World War I. The Allied Powers (France, Britain, and Russia) marched off to fight the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and Turkey).

**The United States' role** Traditional American foreign policy had carefully isolated our nation from European conflicts. However, as our nation expanded physically and economically, our foreign policy also changed so that we were more involved in the world. By the outbreak of World War I, each side recognized the value of the United States as a source of war material, food, money, and even as a potential ally. However, wary of any involvement, Wilson declared official neutrality and sought to make peace by offering to mediate the grievances between the sides.

**The U.S. enters the war** International law required submarines to halt unarmed cargo ships and to allow all the ships' passengers into lifeboats before torpedoing the vessel. Conscious of world opinion against "cowardly" submarine attacks without any warning, Germany had tried at first to follow the rule. By late 1916, however, the British blockade of German ports had seriously affected Germany's ability both to wage war and to feed its civilian population. Although there was a general stalemate on the battlefield, the Allied blockade threatened to turn the war against Germany.

In January 1917 Germany decided, therefore, to resume unrestricted submarine warfare, vowing to sink all shipping around the British Isles. Germany reasoned that this decision would force the U.S. into the war against them. However, they also believed that they could win the war against the Allies before American participation would make a difference. All of the above proved too much for even Wilson's patience, and in April 1917 he asked Congress to declare war against Germany.

**U.S. role in World War I** America helped win the war by contributing on at least two broad fronts. Militarily, the United States poured fresh troops, able and eager to fight the "Huns," onto the battlefield. American industrial might brought supplies and weapons into the conflict. American capital bolstered the Allies' economies as well. More importantly, however, Wilson's political leadership helped bring each side to the peace table after an armistice ended the war in 1918.

**Fourteen Points** An idealist is someone who has a conception of things as they should be or as one would wish them to be. Wilson was such a person. He fervently believed he had a blueprint which would maintain peace and make things as they ought to be. The president enunciated his idealism in a speech on January 22, 1918; he called for a "peace without victory," one in which there would be "no winners or losers." This blueprint for a just and lasting peace became known as his famous Fourteen Points.

Wilson addressed what he saw as the prime causes of the war and tried to remove them from the future. Among his points he called for no secret treaties, freedom of the seas, disarmament, and self-determination for all national groups. Most importantly, the president asked for a League of Nations. This international forum would allow the world's governments to work together to check aggression and to encourage peaceful solutions to potential conflicts.

While many applauded the thrust of Wilson's efforts, our Allies never viewed Wilson's Fourteen Points as a vehicle for a just peace. In a fact, they weren't really interested in a just peace at all. Nevertheless, the Fourteen Points were a powerful propaganda tool against Germany and Austria-Hungary. By fall 1918 the Germans, anxious for peace before an Allied invasion of their homeland, deposed their kaiser and accepted the Fourteen Points as the basis for surrender. Thus, an armistice ended the war on November 11, 1918.

**Wilson in Paris** The president arrived in Paris to head the American peace delegation in January 1919. Hailing him as a virtual savior, the French people turned out by the thousands and greeted him with thunderous acclaim. Wilson planned to justify their expectations by hammering out a peace treaty based on his Fourteen Points. Above all, he dreamed of giving birth to his League of Nations. The league would be the structure insuring world peace, justice, and prosperity!

Allied expectations, however, were of a different bent. The chief allied leaders were Georges Clemenceau of France, David Lloyd George of Great Britain, and Italy's Vittorio Orlando. Already bound by secret treaties during the war, these men came to Paris prepared to bicker about many issues: division of war spoils, German payment of war debts, and the reduction of German military power. To these leaders such issues were more important than structuring a just and lasting peace.





*Knowing President Wilson's moral and idealistic background, what problems do you suppose he had compromising with the various nations' negotiators?*

**Wilson's problems at Versailles** The president was guilty of some tactical errors which damaged his goals both at the peace table and in the United States. One mistake Wilson made was assuming total control of the peace delegation. He alienated Republicans by taking no members of their party along as foreign policy experts and members of the peace delegation. At the peace conference itself he became extremely inflexible and would compromise only after bitter debate. He clashed with his more vindictive colleagues on several points. One was a pivotal argument over the inclusion of the league covenant in the peace treaty. Another conflict was the French desire to acquire German territory and to require the German people to pay the costs of the war. Italian and Japanese demands for territory also aggravated the negotiations.

**Results** Wilson was forced to make concessions which diluted some of the vengeful elements of the treaty. He did, however, retain provisions for the league. He was also confident, too, that if the league could simply start functioning, it would tame the excesses of the treaty's provisions and preserve peace. The resulting Versailles Treaty was an imperfect document which reflected only about four of the Fourteen Points. Germany lost Alsace-Lorraine to France, all her colonies, all her aircraft, and most of her fleet. Germany also had to reduce her army, pay billions in reparations (the cost of the war), and allow France to occupy her Saar Valley for 15 years. On the other hand, the treaty did liberate and create nationhood for millions of minorities. And, most importantly, it established Wilson's League of Nations.

**League of Nations** The Allies had finally created a structure consisting of an Executive Council and a Deliberative Assembly. Nine members would sit on the Executive Council, whose decisions would require unanimous approval for action. All members had to agree not to make war without first submitting the issue to arbitration. If a nation failed to do this, its unilateral action amounted to war against the entire league.

Actually the keystone of the league was found in Article X, which stated that the Executive Council could "advise upon measures necessary to maintain order and keep peace in the world." President Wilson viewed this article as the most vital part of the entire league covenant; he realized it gave the league the authority to keep the peace.

Wilson naturally was ecstatic about the league's formation. He said, "I think I can say of this document that it is at one and the same time a practical and humane document. There is a pulse of sympathy in it. It is practical, and yet it is intended to purify, to rectify, to elevate ...."

**Wilson's expectations** The president returned from France exhausted and not entirely pleased with the treaty. However, he was bolstered by his firm belief that the new League of Nations would smooth out any future rough spots between nations. He was confident, too, that he had the public's support in the upcoming Senate ratification effort. He knew the American people were weary of war; they would accept the United States' part in the new League of Nations if for no other reason than it was so intertwined with the general peace treaty itself.

**“ We are participants in the world, whether we wish to be, or not ... ”**

**Reasons for ratification** Wilson believed there were obvious reasons for Senate approval. A League of Nations would simply make the world a safer place by reducing the chances for war and by stopping needless arms building. Most importantly, America would assume its rightful role in the forefront of world affairs. Thus, we could use our best intentions and leadership to promote world peace. He said, "We are participants in the world, whether we wish to be or not .... What affects mankind is inevitably our affair as well ...."

**Post-war U.S. climate** The treaty, however, did not exist in a vacuum. Economic, social, and political factors could easily combine to obstruct ratification. Therefore, the question of Senate ratification must be considered in light of the post-war conditions existing in the United States.

Inside the country was growing a rising intolerance towards things "un-American." Groups such as the reborn Ku Klux Klan dedicated themselves to preserving America from immigrants and blacks. Citizens feared that communism, a belief thought to be supported by immigrant workers, might overthrow the government. This so-called red scare led to the Palmer Raids, in which federal agents rounded up and deported thousands of immigrants suspected of disloyalty. Similarly, blacks, who had begun to move

to northern cities in search of better jobs, were victims of discrimination and violence. Logically, the treaty, which concerned itself with “foreign” matters, came under suspicion as well.

In fact, a general backlash had taken place against the Great War. Americans had begun to question the wisdom of our having participated in a war that had caused many American deaths and wounded. Stories of Allied greed and desire for revenge at the peace table disillusioned many Americans who had thought that the war had been fought to “make the world safe for democracy.” This revulsion at the treaty and a vague desire to return to the good old days of isolationism became stumbling blocks to treaty ratification.



**Political opposition** Although the public widely supported the treaty, significant segments of the country opposed it for a variety of reasons. Irish-Americans fought acceptance because it seemed to favor hated British interests. German-Americans were against the harshness of the treaty. Italian-Americans were angry at the lack of territorial gains Italy had been promised. Conservatives argued that the pact wasn’t harsh enough. In contrast, liberals criticized the vengeful terms of the agreement. Ardent isolationists stood firm against any participation in the league, and equally fervent anti-Wilsonites were opposed to anything President Wilson was for. All of these elements worked against passage.

The Senate’s Republicans intended either to modify the treaty’s provisions or to defeat it. Besides the normal partisan criticism of the treaty’s terms, a more intense antagonism against Wilson and his treaty had formed. Republicans had been angered by Wilson’s call for a Democratic majority during the 1918 elections. This call promptly backfired when the voters selected a Republican majority, instead. Republicans were still smoldering because Wilson had insulted their party’s leaders by failing to select one to serve in the American peace delegation in Paris. Then, too, many Republicans were genuinely concerned about the intent and interpretation of the League Covenant.

**Henry Cabot Lodge** Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, the Republican senator from Massachusetts, spearheaded the opposition to Wilson’s treaty. The newly appointed chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the president thoroughly disliked one another; this dislike would intensify during this struggle. Lodge, an astute politician, knew the numbers. Sixty-four votes were needed for ratification. Wilson could rely on about 43 members of his own party for support. Perhaps another 12 Senate Republicans represented a middle group who favored mild reservations to the treaty. A third group of about 20 Republicans were strong reservationists; they advocated sweeping changes in the treaty. Finally, about 14 senators were “irreconcilables”—men unalterably opposed to any form of the treaty. In short, it was clear to Lodge that Wilson would have to accept some changes in his treaty or accept defeat.

**Wilson’s efforts** The chief executive has duties beyond those described in the Constitution. He must not only carry out the law of the land; he must also devise, deliver, and bring about his own programs and policies. As political leader, the president must be able to size up his opposition, identify obstacles, wheel, deal, and compromise if necessary—all to gain his objectives. Although Wilson was no political novice, his missionary zeal to ratify the treaty without any changes made it difficult for him to accept compromise. Nevertheless, the president made serious efforts to sell the complete and unchanged treaty. For example, he quite willingly testified before Lodge’s committee where he amiably discussed all facets of the agreement. Mindful of the need for support from the mild reservationists, he met personally with each to gain their support.

**Public speeches** By late summer the president realized that the anti-treaty forces were blocking ratification. Wilson decided to take his case over the Senate’s head and to appeal directly to the American public. He believed that when he explained the case for the League of Nations clearly and compellingly to the people, their overwhelming support for passage would force the Senate to fall in line. The president took this ploy against the advice of his doctor. His physician believed that the long



trip and grueling schedule would damage the president's frail health. Dismissing this advice, Wilson pointed out that many American boys had died for peace. How could he do less than work his hardest to secure that peace? So off he went by train, speaking across America.

Public response to Wilson's crusade started slowly in the mid-west. However, the farther west the president traveled, the warmer and more favorable was the reaction he received. Nevertheless, his doctor's warning proved all too true, for on September 25 he collapsed. A few days later he suffered a crippling stroke which nearly killed him. In the stroke's aftermath the president became a bed-ridden invalid. His illness, moreover, forced him into total isolation. His wife and doctor insulated him from all visitors and from any upsetting news. Thus, the president's condition stalled the pro-league impetus and left it leaderless during much of the crucial debate over ratification.

**Concerns about the treaty** The Republicans had focused their concerns on several of the treaty's provisions. They wondered if Article X might dilute Congress' constitutional authority to declare war, build weapons, and raise armies. Many worried that the League Covenant might force us to forsake traditional American foreign policy such as the Monroe Doctrine. Such action might allow the Europeans to cavort in our hemisphere while dragging us into intrigues on their own continent. More Republicans objected on the grounds that our proposed membership in the league amounted to an entangling alliance that would destroy our traditional isolationism. Yet another fear was that our membership would place us under control of foreigners, who were non-white, non-Christian, and hardly interested in the United States' best interests.

**Lodge's maneuvers** Lodge lost little time in advancing these arguments and in taking political action to obstruct Wilson's efforts. As chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, he had the power to fill vacancies in that group. He packed these openings with treaty opponents. Lodge dragged the hearings out by taking a full two weeks to read—aloud—the entire text of the treaty into the record. He took six more weeks to hear testimony from any conceivable witness.

The real core of Lodge's tactics rested with his amendments and reservations. And proposed amendments to the treaty would require renegotiation with the Allies. This delay was something Wilson definitely wanted to avoid! Reservations to the treaty, however, did not require renegotiation. Reservations were merely the United States' official interpretation of questionable terms of the treaty. Thus, Lodge began by introducing 45 amendments and four reservations. However, these were eventually pared down to Fourteen Reservations, Lodge's sarcastic comment on the president's Fourteen Points.

Lodge's reservations affirmed the Monroe Doctrine and the right of the United States to make its own decisions. One reservation, for example, modified Article X to state that the United States would obey council decisions only with Congress' consent. By early November 1919, four-fifths of the senators said they favored the Versailles Treaty in some form or other; a majority seemed to be leaning toward adopting the Lodge Reservations. The stage was set for a showdown.

**Wilson's decision** Thus, during the weeks preceding the Senate ratification vote on November 19, President Wilson was deeply troubled. The Senate seemed ready to add reservations to the Versailles Treaty. He faced the very real possibility that the Senate would not accept the treaty unless he himself agreed to accept the Lodge reservations. Wilson wondered if he could compromise. He knew he must weigh his alternatives carefully. The fate of the entire post-war peace and the United States' role in the world rested on his decision. And so the moment is at hand in which this re-creation presents the opportunity for two scenes to take place.

**Scene 1** takes place early November 1919 in the Senate Office Building, where senators Henry Cabot Lodge, Gilbert Hitchcock, and William Borah who represent a spectrum of beliefs about the treaty will express their convictions. They will communicate to President Wilson how Americans throughout the country regard the treaty.

**Scene 2** takes place a few days later in the White House. It includes President Wilson, Senator Hitchcock, and the president's wife, Edith. After the three of them discuss the current mind of the Senate, the president will evaluate his alternatives and then announce his decision.

**Will President Wilson follow any decision pattern from his past ...**

## AUDIENCE MEMBERS' RESPONSIBILITIES



**Audience** Although audience members take no direct part in the re-creation, they nevertheless have several important responsibilities:

- listening carefully to the discussions
- identifying the key factors Wilson must consider
- differentiating between points of view
- analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of each alternative available to the president
- developing questions to ask the president about his decision
- evaluating his decision

In order to demonstrate that you are fulfilling the above responsibilities, you should do a thorough job of note-taking as described immediately below.

**Note-taking** On the day before the re-creation begins, take out a clean sheet of 8-1/2" x 11" paper and prepare it for the next day's note-taking.

**Side 1** of your note-taking sheet should look like this model:

### President Wilson and the League of Nations

Suggestions from Senator **Henry Cabot Lodge** (Massachusetts)

Suggestions from Senator **William E. Borah** (Idaho)

*Please take considerable notes, writing down what is said during this mini-unit. You will then be prepared for a meaningful debriefing experience.*

*Research shows us that when persons write as they are learning, they retain considerable knowledge—and for a long time period.*

**Side 2** Turn over the note-taking sheet you made for the first part of your notetaking. Make the back side of this sheet look like the model below. While the two scenes are taking place, take notes on both sides of your note-taking sheet. Pay particular attention during the second scene to Mrs. Wilson's and Senator Hitchcock's advice when President Wilson asks them what they think of his following alternatives:

**Alternative 1:** *Remain firm. Insist that the Senate must approve the treaty in its unaltered form. Accepting anything less will nullify the treaty's noble intentions and the league's chances for success. Advise the Senate's Democrats to vote against the treaty with Lodge's Reservations.*

**Alternative 2:** *Accept the Lodge Reservations as the only way to gain acceptance of the treaty and United States membership in the League of Nations. A weakened treaty is better than no treaty at all.*

**Alternative 3:** *Insist on passage of the "pure" treaty without reservations even though you realize it might be defeated for now. You can then carry your case to the people by working to get pro-league senators elected in 1920. Possibly, the treaty could then be ratified in 1921.*

**Alternative 4:** *Withdraw the treaty entirely—for now. Accept the fact that the United States is not ready now to accept its role in the world arena. This action will avoid public embarrassment for you at this time. However, possibly the treaty can be resubmitted if you decide to seek and then do win a third term.*

**Suggestion:**

Be certain you take your notes in **sentence fragments** on both the front and back of your note sheet.

Do not attempt to write down verbatim—i.e., word for word—what is said. Simply try to get the main point of each idea being presented.

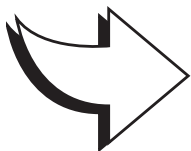


**Another idea:**

Before the **Debriefing and Testing** which end the unit, you may wish to come back to your notes and carefully write in your own opinions of what was said. (If your note sheets are full, use a different sheet of paper.)

Research about writing has also found that if a person writes down personal reactions or relationships to what is being studied, the information becomes increasingly real to the person.

President Wilson and the League of Nations		
Alternatives	Good Points	Bad Points
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1</b></p> <p>Remain firm. Insist Senate approve treaty in its unaltered form.</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>2</b></p> <p>Accept Lodge Reservations.</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>3</b></p> <p>Insist on "pure" treaty without reservations.</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>4</b></p> <p>Withdraw the treaty entirely.</p>		



*This culminating activity will be enjoyable and a real learning activity if you have studied and listened carefully enough to get truly involved in Wilson's decision.*

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## DEBRIEFING

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For one or more class periods following the re-creation, you will work in activity groups to solve a hypothetical case study that will stimulate a debriefing of the issues and procedures in the re-creation.

Back inside your activity group your members will discuss the case study below. But before you begin, you must choose a chairperson who then chooses a recorder. The chairperson leads the discussion; the recorder writes down the president's alternatives and each alternative's strengths and weaknesses.

**Case study: Giving the United Nations "sovereignty" over the United States** During and after the "war" with Iraq, one question kept recurring: Should the United States have stopped its destruction of the Iraqi army and Saddam Hussein before either or both were completely wiped out?

"Yes," answered President George Bush, "because the United Nations resolution was to restore Kuwait's rightful leaders and to end Iraq's illegal occupation of that country."

"No," responded a number of American military and political leaders, "because we are giving up an excellent opportunity to rid the world, once and for all time, of a fascist menace. And we should have pursued this objective, whether or not the United Nations agreed."

In future cases of this sort, should the United States allow the United Nations to dictate what its military—and political—objectives should be?

**The president's dilemma:** As an avowed internationalist, the president doesn't want the United States to forsake its commitment to the United Nations. List and discuss the alternatives you think President Bush should have considered in the Iraq conflict.

Then, using a hypothetical circumstance, wherein another country—for example, China—decides to occupy Manchuria. What should the United States' position be, if the United Nations does nothing? Or if the United Nations orders the formation of an international army to force China out? Or if the United States agrees to lead the attack, should the United States be in command or should a commander be appointed by the United Nations?

Add whatever you wish, but give each person a chance to give his/her opinion. (Have your recorder write down each alternative's strengths and weaknesses.)

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## TESTING

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Within an activity group of classmates, you will all be allowed to use the notes you took during the re-creation. These notes will help you figure out the answers to the 22-item objective test over the Student Guide's Background Essay and the re-creation itself. **Note:** After about 10 to 15 minutes of discussion, your group will separate so that each member takes the test in isolation—without any notes. All members of the group with the highest average score will receive bonus points on the test.

