

Decision Making in World History

20th Century

Kevin O'Reilly



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PREFACE:

HINDSIGHT vs. FORESIGHT

When we study history, it is all too easy to sit in judgment of those who came before us. We read it after the fact; we see it in hindsight. Given the benefit of such 20/20 hindsight, some historical figures seem to have been very misguided or downright silly in their decisions. Why didn't they anticipate the consequences of their choices? How could they have been so shortsighted? Sports enthusiasts call this sort of analysis "Monday morning quarterbacking." However, it's not so easy to laugh at the follies of past decision makers if we are confronted with decisions in history before we learn the actual results. In such a situation, we find ourselves making some of the same mistakes that historical characters made, and we sometimes commit new errors they did not make. This method of studying history, which we might call "foresight history," is far more challenging—and engaging—than the traditional retroactive method to which we are inured.

In short, when we learn history by hindsight, we risk becoming more arrogant and complacent. If, on the other hand, we learn history by *foresight*, by casting ourselves in the role of those historical figures and making decisions as they did—without knowing the outcome—we can learn humility and gain a great deal of empathy for them. Students in my classes constantly exclaim, "This is hard!" as opposed to, "This is boring!"

Foresight history also helps students improve key decision making skills they will use again and again as citizens. Schools of law, medicine, business, and nursing, along with the military and many other institutions, use case-study methods, where students are forced to make decisions about a particular case and then analyze their thinking. If each of these varied disciplines values decision making so much, shouldn't we be training all our future citizens how to make good decisions?

History provides many benefits for those who study it. Historical knowledge can be liberating all by itself, letting us draw back the veil of ignorance and see the present with eyes enlightened by the past. The more knowledge of history we possess, the better we understand our societies and ourselves. Study and evaluation of primary sources, discussions of motives, debates about significance, analysis of causes and effects, and many other strategies are vital to history courses. The lessons here on decision making support and enhance these other methods of studying history, rather than replacing them with a more "practical" type of history.

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INTRODUCTION

THE *DECISION MAKING IN WORLD HISTORY* SERIES

The lessons in the books of the *Decision Making in World History* series are meant to be used independently within a standard world history course in middle school, high school, or college.

The lessons have four main goals:

- 1. Make History More Interesting.** Simply giving students the problems, having them make decisions, and then telling them what the people involved actually did will keep student interest high. It's exciting to make decisions before you know what the historical characters actually did. It's dynamic learning and it's open-ended. Students enjoy comparing their decisions to those of their classmates and to the decisions actually made by the historical figures. Even if you decide to use the lessons without giving instruction on how to perform the skills involved in decision making, students will still enjoy learning history this way. This increased interest should also lead to increased reading comprehension. After all, when students read their texts, they will actively search for what actually happened and will want to compare it with what they chose.
- 2. Improve Decision Making Through Experience.** The primary way people learn to make better decisions is through the process of making decisions, both good and bad. Students therefore become more sophisticated decision makers with every choice they make. By giving students many chances to make decisions in which they can learn from mistakes and surprises, we can speed up the process of making them savvy decision makers. For example, students who decide to have a foreign government overthrown and then see many negative consequences of their decision will think twice before trying that again and will be skeptical of such a plan if proposed in the present day. Experience itself becomes the teacher.
- 3. More Complex Ethical Thinking.** Ethical questions will arise regularly, and by discussing their positions students will develop more complex moral arguments and understandings. Note, however, that these lessons are not aimed primarily at ethical reasoning. To focus primarily on ethical reasoning, consult *Reasoning with Democratic Values* by Alan Lockwood and David Harris (New York: Teacher's College Press, 1985).
- 4. Improve the Use of Decision making Skills and Reflection on Those Skills.** While experience is an important element that helps students improve their decision making skills, they will develop those skills even more quickly if they learn specific subskills, which can then become guidelines for thinking through decision making problems. The instruction is based on the skills of the **P-A-G-E** model, which is outlined later in this book. One of the teaching strategies emphasizes (in the section "Reflecting on Decision Making") journal writing, in which students reflect on the problems they encounter, including how they could improve their own decision making. If you can get students to reflect on how to improve on decisions they've just made, they will learn to be more reflective in general.

Ideally, we want to train our future citizens to approach decision making by asking insightful questions, carefully probing for underlying problems, seeing a problem from a variety of perspectives, setting clear and realistic goals, and imagining consequences.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Before taking a closer look at the lesson components, it is important to emphasize the following tips. It is best to use these lessons:

1. **Before students read about or study the topics.** If students read about the topics before they do the problems in each lesson, they may know which options worked well or poorly. That will spoil the whole decision making experience!
2. **Individually.** These are stand-alone lessons. They are meant to be plugged into your U.S. history curriculum wherever you see fit. They are not intended as part of a sequence.
3. **Flexibly.** You can use each lesson either as a quick introduction to a historical topic or unit or as a lengthier in-depth study of the topic.
4. **To Teach Skills as Well as History Content.** These lessons focus on real historical problems and are often accompanied by pages of historical context; as such, they provide situations to challenge students' decision making skills along with the historical background necessary to understand those situations.

LESSON COMPONENTS

Each lesson in this book includes the following components:

1. **Introduction:** The first section of each lesson includes an overview of the topic, content vocabulary, and decision making skills emphasized in the lesson.
2. **Lesson plan:** The main part of each lesson offers suggestions for how to use the handouts, how to focus on decision making skills, how to connect the decision problem to the larger historical context, how to use video and other supplementary sources, and how to troubleshoot problems, should any arise.
3. **Teacher notes:** This section includes notes for expanding discussion, along with information about outcomes (student versions of the outcomes are also provided—see item 6 below), references to historians and interpretations of the topic, and decision making analysis.
4. **Sources:** This section lists the specific sources used in the lesson.
5. **Problem(s):** Each lesson includes reproducible handouts for students to use in analyzing the problem.

6. Historical outcome of the problem: In this section, students can read about what people in history actually did to solve the problem, along with the consequences of their decisions.
7. Primary sources and visuals (if any): These are integrated into the lesson itself.

Each individual decision making challenge is referred to as a “problem.” Some lessons have one problem to challenge students, while others contain numerous problems. The basic format of the lessons is problem, decision, outcome, discussion. In addition, each lesson offers handouts with several parts; you can use selected parts or an entire handout.

While decision making is the focus of the books, historical content is also very important. These lessons focus on real problems that convey powerful lessons about U.S. history, such as issues concerning taxation, foreign intervention, regulation of businesses and individuals, immigration, welfare, war, and so forth. In addition, not all of the problems come from the perspective of political leaders; many ask students to consider the perspectives of ordinary Americans, such as workers, voters, farmers, black business owners, Native Americans, and women. Including problems from the perspective of ordinary people prepares students for their roles as citizens in a democracy and encourages empathy for unfamiliar groups.

Most of the problems are brief—some as short as one paragraph—and can be used as class warm-ups that last no more than ten minutes. Even short problems, however, can be complex. Although the problems may look deceptively simple, the analysis can be complicated. You are the best judge of how much analysis to include for each problem and how much time you want to allot for each problem and discussion.

On the other hand, some problems are obviously more complicated. These problems deal with crucial turning points in our nation’s history. Students will almost certainly need more background information before making decisions, and analysis of these problems could take several class periods. These more involved problems could form the organization for an entire unit of study. For example, in my classes the problem on the New Deal provides me with the bulk of the time and activities on my unit concerning the early days of Franklin Roosevelt’s presidency. Students learn about the basic New Deal programs, including their advantages and disadvantages, while simultaneously working to improve their decision making skills.

WHAT IS DECISION MAKING? *(Student Handout 1)*

Because making decisions is the focus of the lessons, it is important to look at what happens in the process of decision making. Decision making involves making a choice when there is no clear right answer. Students can derive important lessons about decision making from encountering “messy” problems like the ones in this book. Use Student Handout 1, “Guide to Thoughtful Decision Making,” to introduce students to the decision making process.

■ Decision Making as Experience

The most powerful way to teach good decision making is through offering students experience. People learn to make good decisions just by making decisions, period. Bad decisions are more instructive, perhaps, in making us more skeptical decision makers. Examples from the teaching profession illustrate this negative reinforcement aspect of decision making.

Teachers who place students into groups without giving specific direction quickly learn not to do that again. They learn to drop or modify those lessons that don't work well. Good teaching is basically good decision making, and good decision making is shaped rapidly by previous decisions.

Ordinary people, including students, have a tendency simply to assume their decisions will result in positive outcomes, rather than making an estimate of the probabilities of certain outcomes. Decision making experts, on the other hand, have a much more realistic view of probabilities, due in part to their greater experience with the types of problems with which they often deal. Experience teaches us to be more realistic about outcomes. Simply encountering the problems and outcomes in this book, therefore, can help students improve their decision making skills in general.

■ Targeting Decision Making Skills

These lessons go beyond decision making problems and their outcomes. They also provide a decision making model and strategies for teaching the skills involved in decision making. Students learn a simple model, called **P-A-G-E**, which provides basic guidelines for making decisions. This model gives support and guidance for student decisions, allows for communication built around specific skills and a common vocabulary, and provides specific criteria for teachers to evaluate student progress on those skills.

You are crucial in this process; your role is to guide students as they encounter the decision making problems, in what Feuerstein (Reuven Feuerstein et al., 1980) refers to as “mediated learning.” Your guidance and questions can help students make sense of what they are thinking when they make decisions about historical situations. The problems and lessons allow you to combine experience and instruction in the form of mediated learning (coaching).

■ Repetition in Order to Master Skills

These lessons are based on the hypothesis that several repetitions of decision making problems and outcomes help improve decision making skills. That is, a person who has tried fifty problems will most likely have improved his or her decision making skills more than a person who has tried only ten problems, simply because he or she has had more experiences making decisions. While you may not use all of the lessons in this book, it is a good idea to use them regularly (once or twice per week, perhaps) as warm-ups to start classes or units. The time spent on the problems will enhance students' experiences in problem solving and decision making.

Having experience with a large number of problems also provides students with more historical analogies on which they can draw. It is striking how often decision makers base their thinking on

an analogy (usually a recent one) in looking for ideas to help decide a problem. Having a broader range of analogies allows students to be more skeptical of any analogy suggested, because students are more likely to think of different analogies than the ones offered.

Though many experiences with decision making will help, it is essential that you coach students and offer them time to reflect on their thinking during decision making problems. According to a number of writers, metacognition (thinking about our own thinking) is vital to improving thinking skills, so it is important that you allow “postmortem” time after each experience for students to reflect on their thinking, either verbally or in writing. In addition, some lessons include premortem activities in which students anticipate unintended consequences before they make a decision. You may find it useful to take more time with some of the problems (1–3 class periods), giving time for more in-depth analysis of student thinking and the historical topics involved; perhaps two or three lessons could be used for in-depth analysis per semester.

■ Individual Choice versus Historical Context

Research indicates that students generally view the role of individual choices as critical to historical events (for example, viewing Rosa Parks as an important catalyst for the civil rights movement), while professional historians stress underlying forces as more important (for example, African Americans fighting in World War II, the Cold War, etc., as important causes of the Civil Rights Movement). Researchers argue that historical actors are constrained by historical context—much more than students probably think.

By focusing on decisions by individuals and by groups, these lessons may seem to perpetuate the overemphasis on the individual vs. historical forces. However, the lessons help students see more historical context, not less. To make good decisions, students need to learn a great deal of historical context. All of the lessons require students to ask questions about context. Each lesson includes a short outcome and a question about why students think that option was tried (e.g., “The Congress rejected the 1790 petition to end slavery. Why do you think it was rejected? What historical forces at the time led to this outcome?”). Each problem also asks students to think about the historical forces that made it difficult for the individual to make a good decision. In addition, many problems include multiple points of view, which enrich student understanding of context. Finally, students discuss the ways in which the actual decision made historically was similar to or different from the decision they made; this strategy emphasizes the role of context in shaping individual choices.

P-A-G-E (*Student Handouts 2 and 3*)

Good decision making involves a number of sub-skills, but many of the sub-skills of decision making are difficult for students to master. To assist students in developing sub-skills, we have given many lessons a multiple-choice format. For example, to improve the “asking for more information” skill, some lessons include a list of questions from which students can select. To improve “identifying underlying problems,” some lessons list possible underlying problems. To improve “considering other points of view,” some lessons include handouts that put students in

different roles (for example, looking at labor/strike problems from the point of view of workers but from that of the owners as well).

The more students can use the sub-skills, the more complex their thinking will be when they make decisions. A simple acronym—**P-A-G-E**—will help students recall the sub-skills involved in decision making. Research indicates that expert decision makers don't follow step-by-step models, so this acronym is intended to help students recollect the sub-skills but does not provide an actual formula for making decisions. Decision making problems are too complex and varied for step-by-step formulas. For instance, in one problem, students need to focus on envisioning unintended consequences, while in another, historical context is more important.

Student Handouts 1, 2, and 3 will help you give students practice using **P-A-G-E**. Student Handout 1 offers a brief introduction to decision making. Handout 2 offers an explanation of the acronym as well as a short framework for the process of P-A-G-E. Handout 3 takes it all a step forward by giving students fuller explanations and examples of the uses of each part of the process.

■ The Problem

The first section of **P-A-G-E** focuses on analyzing the problem, explaining what some experts call “framing.” Framing seems to have a variety of meanings for different people. The handout emphasizes finding the underlying problem in an attempt to keep things simple for students. It also asks, “What’s really going on here?” to help students uncover underlying problems.

According to Gary Klein (1998), experts (people with a great deal of experience in a particular field, such as nursing, firefighting, or chess) “recognize” particular problems as being of one type or another. Once they make this recognition (i.e., once they frame it or represent it a particular way), experts can make very quick and successful decisions—that’s why they’re experts! Experts make these recognitions based on the large numbers of analogies they possess in their area of expertise. Thus, the section of the handout that discusses framing is related to the section on analogies. Experiments with expert chess players have shown that recognition is extremely important. When pieces were placed on a board in completely random fashion, experts were not better at remembering the placement than non-experts. But when the pieces were placed in a way similar to placements in a game, experts could remember the placements with a single glance and project several possible moves.

How students see or frame a problem depends partly on how the problem is worded. To help students become more aware of wording, some problems are phrased in two different ways: for example, half the class could receive the problem worded in positive language, while the other half receives it in negative language. After students make their decisions, the class can discuss the effects of different wording on their decisions.

Was wording a big factor in your decision? Political scientist James Voss (1998) believes that the way people perceive problems in foreign policy acts as a key variable in the decisions they make. He writes that problem representation (which is similar to framing) constrains what we do thereafter.

For example, if we see a problem as a case of Communist aggression, we will make different choices than if we see it as a typical boundary dispute between neighboring countries. Questions included with some problems help students become more attuned to problem representation. The handout's section on assumptions is greatly simplified compared to the literature on assumptions, which delineates several different types of assumptions (presuppositions, working assumptions, etc.). The primary method used in these books to teach students to recognize their own assumptions is by asking them to identify which of a specific menu of assumptions they made. When they see a list of possible assumptions, they can better recognize which ones they've made. This strategy seems more effective than having students read a lengthy explanation on types of assumptions.

■ **Ask for Information**

Asking questions is crucial in good decision making. The more people know about background and context, the better they will understand the real problem. Student Handout 1 emphasizes asking questions about analogies ("How is the historical case different from this decision making problem?"), but you should also encourage students to think of historical analogies in the first place. Students will often think about a problem in terms of a personal analogy; for example, "I don't like it when people criticize me, so it's wrong for a country to make a harsh speech against another country." Ask students where they got their ideas about what is really going on in a problem, probing for personal or historical analogies.

■ **Goals**

This section of the handout includes setting clear, realistic goals and generating numerous options for accomplishing those goals. Questions about morality have also been included in this section, because morality is related to setting goals.

■ **Effects**

The section on effects/consequences includes both long-term unintended consequences and short-term possibilities of what could go wrong. Gary Kline (1998) argues that the ability to run mental simulations—that is, to imagine what could go wrong, and to imagine positive and negative consequences—is a vital skill in decision making. Every decision making problem in this series emphasizes unintended consequences and things that could go wrong.

EVALUATION TIPS FOR STUDENT HANDOUT 5

Here are some criteria to consider in grading the decisions students make as Paul von Hindenburg. Students need only get five criteria and need only to suggest ideas for each criterion. So, for example, you may give full credit to students who suggest any possible underlying problem or ask any reasonable question.

■ Recognize the underlying problem.

1. The underlying causes for Germany losing were not going to change. Morale kept dropping as the Allies pushed ahead and the German army was forced to retreat.
2. The Germans were running low on supplies, and that certainly affected their chances of winning.

■ See the problem from other points of view.

1. How would an ordinary German see this problem? (A lot of Germans might question why Germany is giving up after all this struggle for four years. Many would wonder why all these men died. Others would be relieved that the suffering and sacrifice will stop.)
2. How would upper-class, conservative Germans see this problem? (They would think that surrendering is betraying Germany's honor and status as a powerful country. They would want to blame someone for this reversal.)
3. How would German socialists see this problem? (They would be pleased that the suffering of workers will be ending. They would also use this defeat to try to overthrow the government, either through election or through revolution.)

■ Assumptions/Emotions.

1. The actual decision maker, Hindenburg, was depressed over Germany's defeat, which may have made him look at the situation in a more pessimistic way.
2. Is my assumption accurate that the army will definitely lose? Is there no chance for a key victory that will turn the situation around?

■ Ask about context.

1. What is the strength of enemy forces? Do they have many soldiers surrendering also?
2. What resources does the army have that could be used for a major attack?
3. Is there any new weapon available that could turn the tide back in Germany's favor?
4. What is the trend in German production compared to the production of the Allied countries? Is German production going up fast enough to meet increasing military needs?
5. What is the state of morale on the home front?

■ Ask about sources.

1. How reliable is our information on Allied strengths and weaknesses?
2. Are our spies in Allied countries making accurate reports?

■ Ask about analogies.

1. When the South surrendered in the U.S. Civil War, they waited until their army was almost completely broken. They ended up surrendering unconditionally. (This situation differs in that the two sides in the Civil War were from the same country. Many Northerners thought that secession by the South was an act of treason. So, the North may have been harsher on the South than the Allies would be with the Germans. On the other hand, surrendering sooner may improve Germany's chances for a reasonable treaty.)
2. When the French decided to surrender in 1871, the Germans gave them harsh terms. (This situation differs in that the French were more obviously losing in 1871 than the Germans are in 1918.)

■ What are my goals, and are they realistic?

1. Is German honor more important than the preservation of Germany as a country?
2. Is the goal to preserve a traditional Germany (fight on) or a new, flexible, modern Germany? (surrender so we can move beyond the war)

■ Generate alternative options.

1. There seem to be only two options here, surrender or fight on. However, it might be possible to negotiate with only one of the Allied countries. This would have the effect of dividing the Allies.
2. Another option would be to pull back the army so there is no fighting for a time. In that interval, one of the Allies may come to Germany looking to see if Germany is ready to surrender to the Allies, then blame the government, specifically Jews and socialists in the government, for the surrender. He claimed that the government undermined the army, which hadn't really lost the war. This became the famous "stab-in-the-back" argument that helped bring Hitler to power. Of course, taking an action and then blaming someone else for that action is not moral.

■ Play out the options.

1. Negotiate a surrender: This will be complicated and will require both armies to stop fighting while the surrender is negotiated.
2. Negotiate: Once we say we will negotiate, what will we do if the Allies make demands that are too punitive? It will be very difficult to start fighting again.
3. Keep fighting: If our information is accurate, we will keep losing. The more we lose, the worse the surrender terms will be.

■ Anticipate consequences/effects (long-term).

1. Surrendering will change the destiny of Germany in the future. People in other countries will think of Germany differently, not as a leading world power.
2. Surrendering will probably lead to replacing the kaiser with a democratic government.
3. Surrendering will be very upsetting to patriotic Germans and may lead to right wing extremist (Nazi) parties getting control of the government.
4. Fighting on will also lead to defeat but on worse terms, so all the consequences above will more likely take place or will take place in more extreme form. For example, not only will the kaiser be overthrown, but the likelihood of revolution will be much greater.

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GUIDE TO THOUGHTFUL DECISION MAKING

Student Handout 1

WELCOME TO “FORESIGHT” HISTORY!

The problems in the *Decision Making in World History* series will challenge you to make choices about events in world history before you know what actually happened in those events. This is learning history in a foresighted way—first you decide, then you find out what really happened—rather than hindsight history, where you just find out what happened. You will get at least two benefits from this method of learning history: first, you will improve your decision making skills. Someday, when you avoid buying a “lemon” of a used car that would have wasted thousands of dollars in repairs, you can thank your history teacher for helping you build your decision making skills. Second, it’s fun to learn history as though it’s a cliffhanger mystery, where you’re eager to find out if your decision worked or ended in disaster. But don’t forget to concentrate on the actual historical decision that was made and how it turned out. You can learn a lot about your own decision making through these problems, but you’re mainly in class to learn history and to understand what really happened, not what could have happened.

WHAT IS DECISION MAKING?

You’ve learned about problem solving in other courses such as math and science, and you’ve encountered problem solving when you’ve tried to build something or fix something. Decision making resembles problem solving in some ways (for example, it involves defining a problem and thinking of alternatives) but it’s different from problem solving in that there is no one right answer. The lessons in this book involve “messy” problems; even long after the event, people often disagree about what the best decision was or should have been.

DECISION MAKING AS EXPERIENCE

Experience teaches you how to make good decisions. Every decision that you make—whether good or bad—better equips you to make good decisions in the future. For example, you would probably feel safer being treated by a doctor who had a lot of experience than by a brand-new doctor. The historical problems your teacher gives you will provide you with experience in making decisions in general and will help you become a better decision maker in your role as a citizen. You won’t just have learned about history, you will have experienced it. For some of these lessons, you will feel that you made good decisions; for others, you may feel that you’ve made errors in judgment. As you go along, try to reflect on your experiences as well as on your thinking about decision making.

THE P-A-G-E GUIDE TO DECISION MAKING

While experience is the most important way to learn to make better decisions, it's also helpful to learn some basic decision making skills so that you know what areas to target in order to improve your overall decision making. Handout 2 contains an acronym, **P-A-G-E**, that provides you with guidelines for making better decisions. These aren't rules you have to follow; they are just meant as helpful tips to help you improve your thinking about decision making.

Handout 3 explains and gives examples for each part of the **P-A-G-E** guide to decision making. Keep it in your notebook for reference as you make decisions about situations in world history. Every **P-A-G-E** guideline will not necessarily apply to each decision making problem you encounter. You (with the assistance of your teacher) will have to determine which guidelines will work best with which problems.

P-A-G-E ANALYSIS FOR DECISION MAKING

Student Handout 2

DECISION MAKING ANALYSIS

■ P = Problem

- Identify any **underlying problem**: What's really going on here?
- Consider **other points of view**: How do others see this situation?
- What are my **assumptions**? **Emotions**?

■ A = Ask for Information (about)

- **Historical context**: What is the history and context of this issue?
- **Reliability of sources**: Does my information come from experts on this topic? Do the sources have a reason to lie? Is the information supported by evidence?
- **Historical analogies**: What has been done in the past about situations like this? In what ways do these other situations differ from this situation?

■ G = Goals

- What are my main **goals**? Are they **realistic**?
- Generate **options** to help achieve my goals. Are they **ethical**?

■ E = Effects

- **Predict unintended consequences**. What are some long-term effects?
- **Play out the options**. What could go wrong?

P-A-G-E EXPLANATIONS AND EXAMPLES

Student Handout 3

PROBLEM

■ Underlying problem:

Sometimes, a decision making situation will seem very difficult until you recognize that an underlying problem exists. For example, suppose two people come in for marriage counseling because they have been arguing about money. The counselor is going to look for an underlying problem (such as unfulfilled needs) that might have led to spending more money. A student doing poorly in school might turn things around by discovering she needs glasses—the underlying problem. Please remember that you should **not** just repeat or rephrase the problem: instead, you need to look for what’s behind it, for what’s causing it. Underlying problems are **not** openly given as part of the decision making situation—you have to figure them out on your own.

Another way to think of this skill is “the ability to see what is really going on.” Some people call this “framing” the problem: in other words, by putting a “frame” around the heart of the problem and excluding unimportant parts, you discover what’s really important. You need to call on your own personal experiences to see what’s really going on. In history, this is done through analogies. In a sense, you need to say, “The problem we are facing now is like a problem people faced before [This is an analogy.], so I’d better do *this*.” The way you see (or frame, or represent) a problem influences the decision you eventually make.

Example:

Bob’s grades have been much lower for the last three months in history class. He says he’s bored in class, and he’ll improve his grades when he really needs to.

List at least two possible underlying problems for Bob’s lower grades. What’s really going on?

■ Other points of view:

Other people are always involved in decisions in history. We need to consider their points of view as we make decisions about history, just as we need to consider other points of view in our own lives today.

Example:

My brother Mark is angry at me for borrowing his car three times. But he's wrong to be angry. I needed to get to work each time I borrowed the car.

Rewrite this problem from Mark's point of view.

■ What are my assumptions? Emotions?

Sometimes after we make a decision, we realize that we had made an assumption that we didn't even know we were making until it was too late. Emotions are part of being human, so they represent a legitimate part of the decision making process. We do, however, need to be aware of our emotions during the decision making process. Emotions, especially frustration and anger, can sometimes lead us to make irrational choices. People frequently become frustrated and say, "I've had enough of this situation. Let's just do *something*." But they often come to regret the rushed choices they made under such circumstances. They would have benefited from saying to themselves, "Okay. I'm getting frustrated, but I still need to take the time necessary to make a good decision."

Studies have shown that when people feel pessimistic, or when they're in a bad mood, they exaggerate the possible negative consequences of decisions; similarly, when they feel optimistic or are in a good mood, they overestimate positive consequences. Emotions and gut feelings are unavoidable and natural, but thinking through the situation is crucial to making good decisions. We wouldn't want the president to decide about nuclear missiles in Cuba based solely on his gut feeling—we'd want him to gather information, consider several options, predict the possible consequences for millions of people, and so forth. As decision makers, we need to account for the role of emotion and gut feelings in our decisions and be aware of them as we choose.

Example for assumptions:

Player to teammate: "We'll have no trouble beating Central. After all, Central lost to Suburban, and we beat Suburban the first game of the year."

What is this player assuming?

Example for emotions:

Suppose you have two children and are trying to decide whether to buy life insurance. An insurance ad shows a boy who can't go to college because his father died and had no life insurance.

To what emotion does the ad appeal?

ASK

■ Ask about historical context (history of the issue; context in the world):

Asking questions about both the historical background and the present context of a problem are essential for getting the information necessary to make a good decision. If you don't know the background, you will have difficulty deciding on the best solution. Every problem has a backstory, and we need to find out what that story is. The key is to ask questions that will help you obtain the necessary information.

Example:

You are 17 years old, and you have been thinking about buying a car. You work part-time after school, about 10 hours per week. Your parents have told you that you'll have to pay for the car yourself. You go to a used car dealership and the salesman shows you a used car that costs \$2,000.

What questions should you ask before you buy it?

■ Ask about reliability of sources:

Information is crucial to making good decisions, but we need know the sources of our information and consider the reliability of those sources. Basing a decision on bad information from questionable sources is a recipe for disaster. You can evaluate sources by asking if the person giving the information has a reason to lie, if the person is a primary source, if other sources support this information, if the person is an expert on the topic, what the person's bias is on the topic, or if the person has been reliable in the past. You should always be probing for disagreements among sources. Be wary if there don't appear to be any disagreements. It might mean your advisers are engaging in "groupthink," a situation in which they all get pulled to the same option without thoroughly thinking through other options or considering what could go wrong. Always try to find someone who disagrees with a proposed option. If you can't find one, ask tough questions yourself.

Example:

The car salesman says this used car is in perfect condition.

How reliable is the salesman? What reasons might you have to distrust him?

■ Ask about historical analogies:

It's natural to compare the problems we encounter to other, similar situations that have occurred in the past. In fact, one reason we study history in the first place is to build a deeper understanding of our world today through learning about historical events/analogies. You should try to think of analogies to the problems you encounter. As mentioned above, you derive your understanding of what is important in a problem (framing) from analogies. (Example: "This problem is like that situation George Washington was in at Trenton during the American Revolution.") The more

you draw on your knowledge of history, the more likely you are to fully understand a decision making problem.

However, analogies are tricky because important differences often exist between the problems we encounter now and the historical cases we use to guide our decisions. We should always evaluate analogies by asking, “How do the two cases differ? In what ways are they similar? Are they similar enough to justify the conclusion?” We should also consider whether other, more appropriate analogies exist that could provide us with better guidance.

Example:

Suppose you drove in a race at a parking lot near a mall a month ago. You raced your five-year old Toyota Corolla, and your time was 36.8 seconds. Margaret told you that she drove in a race last Sunday and her time was 28.2 seconds. She says this proves she is a better race driver than you are.

What are two questions you could ask to determine whether Margaret is really a better driver?

GOALS

■ What are my main goals? Are they realistic?

We can’t make good decisions if we are unclear about our goals. Once we establish goals, we can more easily set priorities and use them as a basis for choosing between options.

However, establishing goals isn’t enough. The goals we set need to be realistic. Some decisions in history have been catastrophic because the decision makers didn’t notice that they had unrealistic goals. It didn’t matter how carefully they exercised their other decision making skills—because their goals were unrealistic, they would never achieve them.

Example:

You’re out of school and need a job, because you live on your own and have expenses (rent, car payments, food, heat, insurance, etc.). You’ve got two offers. The first one is close to where you live and pays a lot more money, but it’s doing work you wouldn’t like. The second job is farther away and pays less money (but enough to cover your expenses), but it’s doing something that you really like. What do you do?

After you decide, list your goals and ask how realistic they are.

■ Generate options to help achieve my goals. Are they ethical?

After you’ve made a decision, you don’t want to be stuck thinking, “Oh, I wish I’d thought of that option before I decided.” At the same time, though, you don’t want to become paralyzed trying to

think of every possible option, no matter how remote. However, important decisions should spur us to take the time to consider a number of options.

Example:

You are 25 years old, single, work full-time 10 miles from where you live, and drive your compact car to work. In recent months, gas prices have risen to very high levels. Your main goal at this point is to save money.

What options do you have for coping with these price increases?

EFFECTS

■ Predict unintended consequences:

Most of the time, predicting unintended consequences will be more important than any other thinking you do about a problem. For some problems, it may be enough just to see the situation from other points of view or to ask questions about background or context. However, considering consequences will do more to help you avoid that awful feeling you get when you've made a bad decision.

Example:

You are 35 years old and have a son and a daughter, aged five and two respectively. The company you work for is asking you to move to a different state. You can refuse and take a pay cut.

If you make the move, what unintended consequences might you and your family experience in 10 years? Guess at what the effects of the move might be.

■ Play out the option. What could go wrong?

Here, you need to think about short-term effects, as opposed to predicting unintended consequences, which focuses more on long-term effects. For example, say you're playing the role of president and decide to try to get a law passed to help solve a problem. You have to take into account the fact that Congress has the constitutional power to pass laws, and thus to get your law enacted you need to convince Congress to approve it. By noticing that the approval of Congress is vital to the success or failure of your decision, you've identified something that could go wrong and need to plan accordingly (overcoming opposition by talking to individual members of Congress, thinking of another option as backup, etc.).

Example:

Suppose you are 30 years old and working at a job you like pretty well. You get an offer to work at a job for higher pay that is further away from where you live now.

If you take the job, what might happen? Make a list of two or more things that could go wrong.

DECISION MAKING LOG

Student Handout 4

■ What I learned about the P-A-G-E Topic

■ Actual decision

■ My decision

■ Why different/similar from this topic? (2 examples)

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LESSON 1:

ASSASSINATION IN SARAJEVO, 1914

For Teachers

INTRODUCTION

■ Overview

The Great War was one of the salient events of the twentieth century, a catastrophe for Europe that spawned a host of effects that were wondrous in their importance. In this lesson students will have the opportunity to make decisions to avoid or stumble into the general war. The story is gripping, rather like a mystery novel, but it is also quite complex. The negotiations went from country to country over a period of more than a month. Only three or four key decision points, depending on the option chosen, are included in the lesson, but it is nevertheless a challenge for many students to keep straight. It's a challenge well worth the effort. Students will experience the difficulties of deciding when to compromise and when to hold their ground. It will teach them more about the causes of the Great War, or any war, than memorizing the four MAIN (militarism, alliances, imperialism, nationalism) causes of World War I.

■ Vocabulary

- Archduke Francis Ferdinand—Austro-Hungarian leader who was assassinated by Serbs
- Black Hand—Serbian nationalist group involved in the assassination of the archduke
- Serbia—Slavic country in southeastern Europe
- Slavs—ethnic group in Europe sharing language and cultural traditions
- Bosnia-Herzegovina—areas in southeastern Europe taken over by Austria-Hungary in 1908
- alliance (military)—an agreement between two or more countries to support each other militarily in attack or defense
- kaiser—German emperor or king
- tsar—Russian emperor or king
- von Schlieffen Plan—German military plan to defeat France quickly before Russia could mobilize
- mobilization—the process of preparing soldiers for war
- Balkans—the area of small countries in southeastern Europe

- Franz Joseph—emperor of Austria-Hungary
- division—unit of military organization of about fifteen thousand soldiers
- Nicholas II—tsar of Russia
- Wilhelm II—kaiser of Germany
- ultimatum—a set of demands with a time limit

■ Decision-making Skills Emphasized

- Identify underlying problems
- Consider other points of view
- Identify assumptions, emotions
- Ask about analogies
- Generate options
- Predict unintended consequences
- Play out options

LESSON PLAN A: IN-DEPTH LESSON *(One 50-Minute Class Period)*

■ Procedure

Distribute Handouts 1 and 2 and have students read them silently or for homework. Handout 1 helps students to understand the historical context for this complex topic. Handout 2 puts students in the position of Austria-Hungary. Next, divide students into groups and have them discuss their choices. Allow time for students to ask questions. Bring the class back together and have students vote on what they will do first. If they chose to ask Germany for support, tell the class that they will now take a look at the crisis from the German point of view. You might want to review the context information (Handout 1) on Germany as a refresher for students. Have students read Handout 3 on the German point of view, and ask them to decide what option they will choose in reaction to the request by Austria-Hungary for support against Serbia. If students do not choose to ask Germany for support in Handout 2, tell them that Austria-Hungary actually did ask for support from Germany and students will now switch to that point of view.

Tell students to return to Handout 2. They have the support of Germany to take strong action against Serbia. In fact, the kaiser said, according to the Austro-Hungarian ambassador to Germany, that “if we [Austria] had really recognized the necessity of warlike action against Serbia, he would regret if we did not make use of the present moment which is all in our favor.” Which option or options will they choose? Circulate around the room to answer students’ questions as they discuss

their choices in small groups. Bring the class back together and vote on which actions they will take as Austria-Hungary. If students choose Option D, have them read Handout 6 and decide which demands to include in the ultimatum to Serbia. Their choices will reveal whether they want to settle the crisis with Serbia through negotiation or whether the ultimatum is a pretext for attacking Serbia by making the demands so great that Serbia will have to reject them. After students vote on the demands, tell them that Serbia accepts most of the demands but can't agree to one or two of them (you choose the demands to reject). If students do not accept Serbian rejection of one or more demands, ask students if they will mobilize for war (Option E) and declare war (Option F). Have students discuss which option to do next and then vote again. If students accept the Serbs' partial agreement to the demands, tell them that this agreement would end the crisis, but in reality there was no agreement between Austria-Hungary and Serbia. So, for fun, the class is going to follow what really happened. Have students vote again on whether they will mobilize for war (Option E) and declare war (Option F).

If students choose to negotiate (Option B from Handout 2), tell them that Serbia is happy to negotiate, is prosecuting the assassins, and has tightened up security to prevent any more trouble. Meanwhile, there are still celebrations of the assassination in some cities in Serbia, and there are anti-Serbian riots in Vienna, Austria-Hungary's capital, about the assassination. Newspapers are asking why something isn't being done to punish Serbia, a position that seems to be supported by the majority of people in Austria-Hungary. The teacher's position in the negotiations as Serbia is to be polite and agree to some demands but to plead that Serbia can't agree to others. The negotiations proceed the same as the ultimatum does, as described in the paragraph above. If students reject the Serbian negotiating position, have them decide on Options E and F. If they accept the Serbian terms, tell them that for fun the class will continue with what actually happened (Austria-Hungary rejected Serbian terms in the ultimatum), and then have them decide on Options E and F.

At this point, no matter what students chose initially from Handout 2 (as Austria-Hungary), they are all forced to decide on Options E (mobilizing) and F (declaring war). Once students have voted on these options, tell them that the class is now going to shift to the Russian perspective. You might want to review the context information on Russia (Handout 1). Distribute Handout 4, and then have students read it, discuss the options, and vote. If students choose not to mobilize (Option A), tell them that Russia did mobilize, so the class will continue with what actually happened. If students choose partial mobilization (Option B), tell them that according to military leaders, the only plan is for full mobilization. Due to the complicated nature of the train schedules and movement of troops from all over the country, partial mobilization isn't possible. Do students want no mobilization or full mobilization?

If students end up mobilizing as the Russians, tell them that the class is now going to swing back to the German point of view. Have them reread the section on Germany in the historical context (Handout 1). Ask:

- What is the military situation of Russia in terms of strength compared to Germany? (Russia is modernizing and may be stronger than Germany in a few years.)

- What is the von Schlieffen Plan? (Germany plans to attack France through Belgium and defeat France before Russia is fully mobilized.)
- How does Russian mobilization affect the German plan? (Russian mobilization means the clock is ticking. Unless Germany mobilizes and attacks France within a few days, Germany will lose the option of fighting one country at a time. German military leaders think that Germany cannot fight both countries at the same time and win.)

Tell students that General von Moltke is pleading with you, the kaiser, to order mobilization and the attack on France through Belgium. He reminds you that if Russia attacks Austria-Hungary and Germany fights Russia to defend Austria-Hungary, the French will likely declare war on Germany. If the Germans fight at all, they will probably have to fight both Russia and France. Why not follow the German plan to defeat France before Russia gets ready to fight? Some German troops are already mobilized and prepared to capture key railroad stations and to attack a key system of forts in Belgium. It is all planned on a detailed schedule and is just waiting for your order. Which option will students choose? Write these options on the board:

- A. Order the mobilization and attack on Belgium.
- B. Negotiate with Russia. If Russia attacks Austria-Hungary, fight Russia, risking war with France also.
- C. Negotiate with Russia. If Russia attacks Austria-Hungary, don't get involved, allowing Austria-Hungary to be crushed by Russia.

Students have now gone through some of the key points in the complicated, torturous negotiations leading from the assassination of the archduke to the start of World War I. Have them read Handout 5 (which describes the outcomes) in class or for homework. Direct them to analyze the decisions made both by the leaders in history and by themselves in this lesson.

You can also have students read and answer the Questions for Analysis for the primary source (Handout 7). This is especially appropriate if students chose as Austria-Hungary to send an ultimatum to Serbia, as they can compare the demands they made to the demands in the actual ultimatum. (Suggested answers: 1. According to the government of Austria-Hungary, the reason for the ultimatum is the policy of the Serbian government to take territory from Austria-Hungary and the support for the assassination of the archduke. 2. Those who think the ultimatum is an excuse to justify an attack could cite the section in which the Serbian government must publish a statement condemning any propaganda against Austria-Hungary and make a statement of regret about the assassination. They could also cite number 6, in which the Serbian government must allow Austrian officials to participate in the investigation in Serbia. This is a violation of sovereignty, which the Austrians may have felt the Serbians could not accept. Those who think the ultimatum was not an excuse could cite the fifth paragraph in which the government of Austria-Hungary states that it cannot be patient any longer. The statement continues that Austria-Hungary must put an end to the intrigues that led to the assassination and demands that the Serbian government help end the intrigues. The paragraph shows a government that is upset but still trying

to find a solution short of war. 3. In the actual crisis Serbia had the most difficulty with demand number 6, as mentioned above. Students may cite other demands that would have been difficult for Serbia to accept. 4. This source is primary but has great reason to exaggerate Serbian evil and Austro-Hungarian innocence. On the other hand, as evidence of Austro-Hungarian demands, it is reliable and essential.)

Option—Different Handouts for Students: Proceed as in the lesson plan above, but give different groups of students different handouts. Every student gets Handout 1. Then give one-third of students Handout 2 (Austria-Hungary), one-third Handout 3 (Germany), and one-third Handout 4 (Russia). Each third of the class reads its handout and then splits into pairs to discuss options and decisions (one large group for each handout won't work very well), and votes when its country needs to make a decision. So, the lesson goes this way: The students with Handout 2 (Austria-Hungary) decide if they want German support. The students with Handout 3 (Germany) then decide if they will give support. (If Austria-Hungary does not ask for German support, tell students that in the actual situation in 1914, Austria-Hungary did ask for German support; and that that is the scenario they will be following.) Then go back to Austria-Hungary to see what those students will do next. Then, the students with Handout 4 (Russia) decide what they will do in response to Austria-Hungary mobilizing or declaring war on Serbia. (If Austria-Hungary does not mobilize or declare war, tell students that we're going to follow what actually happened.) Then back to Germany to find out what those students will do in response to Russian mobilization. (If Russia does not mobilize, tell students that we will follow what actually happened.)

Option—Restrain Austria-Hungary?: After Russia has mobilized (or not), but before Germany reacts to that mobilization, tell students that the British prime minister has asked Germany to restrain Austria-Hungary and has proposed that the major powers attend a peace conference to settle the crisis. Will German leaders ask Austria-Hungary to moderate its demands, take the Serbian capital of Belgrade (no other part of Serbia) temporarily, and agree to the conference? If the students say yes to restraining Austria-Hungary, then ask Austria-Hungary's leaders for their response. Germany is asking them to compromise on their demands to Serbia and to attend a conference to settle the crisis. They are also asking that Austria-Hungary take only Belgrade, and only temporarily. The Germans do not want Austria-Hungary to take any Serbian territory permanently. (As the outcomes show, Germany did try to restrain Austria-Hungary, but it didn't work. Austria-Hungary wanted to settle the Serbian crisis militarily.)

Option—What Are the Causes of World War I? Ask students to list what they think are the main causes of World War I (called the Great War at the time). Have them explain the causes on their list. You could follow up with an essay assignment on the main causes of World War I. The lesson covers three of the four traditional (MAIN) causes outlined in textbooks (militarism, alliances, and nationalism are involved, but imperialism is not), but students will also generate other possible causes, such as misperceptions, poor communications, and personal insecurities. It is important to note that all four of the MAIN causes of World War I are disputed by some historians (Ferguson 1999; Fromkin 2004), especially imperialism. The method used in this lesson avoids the trap of students memorizing four causes that are actually in dispute. In this lesson, students

have to think for themselves to generate causes. Thinking about causes is more important than memorizing causes.

■ Reflecting on Decision Making

Ask students what they would have done differently, if anything, now that they know the outcomes. Which decision-making skills were particularly important in making decisions about the follow-up to the assassination in 1914? Which of the letters of **P-A-G-E** applied especially to this problem? (See the “Decision-making Analysis” section below for ideas.) Ask students what they did well or poorly in terms of the **P-A-G-E** analysis of decision making. Discuss their answers, or have students write their answers in their journals or in their decision-making logs.

■ Putting the Actual Decisions into Historical Context

Ask: Which played a more important role in influencing the decisions of the leaders of Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Russia—historical forces or personal characteristics/choices? (People who think that it was personal characteristics argue that the personalities of the various leaders was very important. The kaiser was an impulsive, moody person who could make judgments based on strong emotions. He also held prejudiced attitudes; in 1913 he stated, “The Slavs were born to serve and not to rule.” Bethmann-Hollweg’s wife had just died, as explained below, and General von Moltke was an emotional person who was rigidly tied to the von Schlieffen Plan. One of the German diplomats lied repeatedly to foreign diplomats and to his superiors in Germany. The key German minister in Austria-Hungary was a close friend of the assassinated archduke. The prime minister of Serbia lied and blamed others to avoid responsibility. The tsar was a reluctant leader, unsure that he was qualified to lead the country. The kaiser and tsar were cousins and thought they could settle their provocative actions by personal appeals, as explained in Handout 5. On the other hand, people who stress historical forces as being more important than personalities emphasize militarism, alliances, and nationalism. Britain and Germany were involved in a naval arms race. Due to the rise of modern armaments, all countries feared falling behind and being attacked. Countries were tied to each other by alliances, and nationalist groups [such as the Black Hand] and nationalist feelings among the general populations propelled countries to take strong stands against their rivals.)

■ Connecting to Today

Ask students about a current conflict between two countries in the world. What could lead other countries to get involved in such a way that it would lead to a general war? How are the conditions today similar to and different from the conditions in 1914?

■ Troubleshooting

Mobilization is a concept that is difficult for some students to remember, because they live in an age with missiles and very quick reactions. Keep reminding students that it took a long time to get soldiers ready and organized for war.

Students can easily lose track of the various countries and their particular goals and fears. This is especially true if the lesson lasts more than one class period. Use the maps and Handout 1 to keep this complicated information straight in students' minds.

LESSON PLAN B: QUICK MOTIVATOR LESSON *(20 to 30 Minutes)*

Assign Handouts 1 and 2 as homework. In class, have students pair up and discuss their choices for three minutes or so. Ask for a show of hands for Option C. If a majority of students picks Option C, tell them that Germany supports their actions against Serbia. Then have them vote on the other options. Distribute Handout 5, and for homework have students comment on what they learned from these outcomes.

TEACHER NOTES FOR EXPANDING DISCUSSION

(For outcomes for students, see Handout 5.)

There is a rich historiographical debate on the causes of World War I, specifically over the diplomatic failure between June 28 and August 2, 1914. The debate is outlined by both John Langdon (1986) and in William Jannen (1996, 381–384). Fritz Fischer (1961) primarily blames Germany, while other scholars put more blame on Austria-Hungary, Serbia, Russia, or France. Fischer emphasizes Germany's desire for more colonies by establishing military dominance in Europe. He also emphasizes that German leaders wanted a patriotic war to unite the country and control the Social Democrats, a policy referred to as *Weltpolitik*. Other historians see German military actions growing out of fear more than the desire for military dominance. Some scholars emphasize the personalities of the leaders in 1914, while others cite public opinion, modernization (including the threats from democracy and socialism), the creaking alliance system, or the excessive militarism—as exhibited in elaborate war plans—at the time. The lesson does not address all these shades of interpretations, but students will nevertheless see that there are different ways to interpret the causes as they listen to their classmates' interpretations in the course of the lesson.

The evidence that the ultimatum from Austria-Hungary to Serbia was a pretext for war comes from the minutes of the Council of Ministers of Austria-Hungary: "All present except the Royal Hungarian Premier hold the belief that a purely diplomatic success, even if it ended with a glaring humiliation of Serbia, would be worthless and that therefore such a stringent demand must be addressed to Serbia that will make refusal almost certain, so that the road to a radical solution by means of military action will be opened." The Germans knew it was a pretext for war. The

German ambassador to Austria-Hungary stated to the chancellor, “The Note [ultimatum] is being composed so that the possibility of its acceptance is practically excluded.” (Fromkin 2004)

An experienced diplomat told the Austrian foreign minister that the idea of a small war against Serbia was sheer fantasy. He said that an attack on Serbia would result in a general war in Europe. This information was not included in the description so students will have to figure this out for themselves.

The leading German diplomat, after the kaiser, was Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg. He was under severe psychological strain during the crisis, compounded by having to deal with the kaiser, who was psychologically unstable. The kaiser changed his mind frequently and sometimes said foolish things without thinking so that he had to reverse himself later. He was very insecure, always worried that other people thought he was weak. He very much disliked Bethmann-Hollweg, who was a thinker, whereas the kaiser thought of himself as a real man, a man of action. As a result, Bethmann-Hollweg had to endure criticism from the kaiser on a daily basis. To top off all these strains, Bethmann-Hollweg’s wife died in May, about one month before the crisis.

Many historians put a great deal of the blame for the war on Bethmann-Hollweg (Jarausch 1969). He, along with the Kaiser, encouraged the Austrians in early July to take strong action with Serbia, hoping it would lead to a local war in which Austria-Hungary would be stronger and France and Russia would be weaker. He thought a more general war with Russia and France would be terrible in some ways, but Germany would probably win that war. What he was risking, however, was a world war in which Britain was also involved and Germany would lose. He lost his gamble, and millions of people died. Bethmann-Hollweg is clearly a key (some historians would say *the* key) negotiator in the crisis, but I decided to put students in the role of the kaiser, who had to make the final decision for mobilization and war. It would have been too complicated to have students decide for two German leaders.

There was an effort among Austrian leaders to call their note to Serbia a list of demands with a time limit, rather than an ultimatum. However, the similarity is so great that it is useful to describe it as an ultimatum in the lesson to keep the explanation as simple as possible.

The army of Austria-Hungary had a great dilemma in executing its military plans. One plan was to use most of the army to crush Serbia while ignoring Russia, while the other plan called for using most of the troops to defend against Russia and deemphasize Serbia. With the Russians mobilizing, the military leaders of Austria-Hungary decided on the second plan. The army that was left to face Serbia won some victories but was forced to retreat several times. By the end of 1914, Serbia still controlled its country and capital.

German planners wanted Austria-Hungary to attack Russian troops, keeping them busy while Germany concentrated on defeating France. Meanwhile, the leaders of Austria-Hungary wanted German troops to attack Russian troops so Austria-Hungary could concentrate on defeating Serbia. No one seemed to notice the problem with these conflicting expectations.

The Serbs seemed to agree with almost all the demands in the ultimatum, but in reality their response allowed them to get around most of the demands. For example, the ultimatum demanded that the Serbs “suppress every publication ... which shall be directed against the territorial integrity of [Austria-Hungary].” Serbia replied that it would introduce legislation that would allow the government to punish publications engaged in such activities. The leaders of Austria-Hungary knew the introduction of legislation did not guarantee suppression of anti-Austrian propaganda. It was the same for most of the other demands and responses. However, to other countries, it looked like Austria-Hungary got all it could reasonably expect to get from the ultimatum.

■ Decision-making Analysis

P = Problem

- * **Identify any underlying problem(s).**
- * **Consider other points of view.**

What are my assumptions? Emotions?

A = Ask for information (about)

Historical context (history of this issue; context in the world)

Reliability of sources

Historical analogies

G = Goals

What are my main goals? Are they realistic?

- * **Generate options to help achieve these goals. Are they ethical?**

E = Effects

Predict unintended consequences.

Play out the options. What could go wrong?

* Denotes topics emphasized in this lesson. The bold items are skills involved in the lesson.

- **Underlying problem (framing):** Students should examine at least three underlying problems at the time of the crisis. The first was that industrialization and modernization had changed the world. Modern weapons had destabilized warfare. Those who had a temporary military advantage may have been prone to fight in a crisis situation. The modernizing world made the royal leaders of Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Russia feel threatened and out of step with the times. Kaiser Wilhelm and Tsar Nicholas also thought they could avoid war through personal notes. The personal world of royalty was being replaced by the impersonal world of military timetables and plans. A second problem was the system of alliances. Students should ask, as some diplomats did in 1914, whether the various alliances

were worth the cost. Was it worth it, for example, for Russia to risk war to protect Serbia? A third underlying problem was the internal weakness of Austria-Hungary. It is possible that the threat from Serbia was really a manifestation of these internal weaknesses. Fix the internal problem, and the external threat might have dissipated. Once Austro-Hungarians or Germans recognized this as the key underlying problem, they could have generated options, such as the one outlined below, to address the underlying problem. The German ambassador to Austria-Hungary did seem to recognize the problem. He stated, “I constantly wonder whether it really pays to bind ourselves so tightly to this phantasm of a state [Austria-Hungary] which is cracking in every direction.” (Massie 1991) Had the main German leaders recognized this problem, Germany might have cut its commitment to Austria-Hungary and realigned with other powers. The Great War might have been avoided.

- **Consider other points of view:** The lesson focuses on seeing the crisis from various points of view. The descriptions are not sufficient, however. Students need to put themselves in the roles of the other powers. For example, a student group trying to decide as the Russians should stop and look at the effects of that decision from the German point of view. If students were German leaders at the time, would they mobilize to protect Austria-Hungary? If the students as Germans are trying to decide whether to attack Belgium, they need to look at it from the point of view of the British. As British leaders, would they get involved to protect Belgium?
- **Assumptions:** Like the leaders in 1914, students will be making several assumptions, such as:
 1. (As Russia) The Austro-Hungarian note to Serbia is a pretext for war.
 2. (As Germany) The Russian army will be stronger than the German army in a few years.
 3. (As Austria-Hungary) The Germans will help defend the country if Austria-Hungary gets into a struggle with Russia.
 4. (As Austria-Hungary) The multi-ethnic nature of the country is pulling it apart.
 5. (As Austria-Hungary) The Serbs are waiting for Austria-Hungary to fall “like a worn-out corpse into the lap of the soon to be created Great Serb Empire.” (Austria-Hungary’s Foreign Policy from the Bosnian Crisis)

Assumption #2 is an example of a damaging perception. The Germans thought they were losing to the Russians, when in fact the Germans dominated Russia economically and militarily. Meanwhile, the Russians and French thought they were behind Germany, and the people of Austria-Hungary thought they were behind all the great powers. Every country could not be correct in these assumptions, but the assumptions themselves were a cause of the Great War.

- **Ask about analogies:** Austria-Hungary thought that a negotiated settlement would not bring peace with Serbia because previous settlements hadn’t worked because other countries didn’t want Serbia to be punished too much. Each of the previous agreements between Austria-Hungary and Serbia is an analogy to this crisis of 1914. Students should ask how the cases are similar or different. This crisis situation was different from previous problems because all the

powers sympathized with Austria-Hungary. That means the countries might have gone along with harsher punishment of Serbia.

- **Generate options:** One option that Austria-Hungary might have considered was allowing Slavs to have representation in the government. Austrians and Hungarians ran the government, but almost half of the population wasn't represented in the government. The archduke himself had the idea of a tripartite government, rather than a dual government. The third part of the government would have included Slavs, possibly solving the problem with Serbia. After the assassination, creating this kind of government would have been difficult, but the leaders of Austria-Hungary should nevertheless have considered more seriously this tripartite option. Many of the leaders seemed resigned to having to fight rather than trying to think of options to resolve the crisis without war. Leaders of Austria-Hungary thought they had no choice but to crush Serbia. German leaders said they had no choice but to support Austria-Hungary. Russian leaders thought they had to prevent the dominance of Austria-Hungary in the Balkans. The Russian Council of Ministers decided to go to war to defend Serbia even though the ministers recognized that Russian military forces were unlikely "ever ... to compete with those of Germany or Austro-Hungary [sic] as regards to modern technical efficiency." A German newspaperman said the German foreign office reminded him of a great casino in which players were resigned to face destruction as they gambled away their last possessions. It seemed that many leaders gave up trying to solve the crisis without war.
- **Play out the options:** There is evidence that leaders did clearly play out options. For example, the German chancellor, Bethmann-Hollweg, as well as the leaders of Austria-Hungary, played out what would happen when they attacked Serbia. The attack would be quick and Serbia would be defeated before Russia was ready to fight. Under those circumstances, Russia would surely negotiate rather than fight. Playing out the option turned out to be wrong. Perhaps they should have gathered more evidence on how the Russians were reacting to actions by Austria-Hungary. Another, more perceptive, German leader said that Russia hated Austria-Hungary and predicted that Russia would intervene if Austria-Hungary attacked Serbia.
- **Unintended consequences:** Several leaders predicted that a general war would lead to revolution as an unintended consequence, but these same leaders went to war anyway. Revolution toppled governments in Germany, Russia, and Austria-Hungary. More importantly for all the countries involved, millions of people were killed and maimed as a result of the war. These are just two of the many consequences. It is difficult to understand how people who could clearly imagine some of the drastic consequences of war could not have been more careful in their decisions to avoid that war.

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LESSON 1:

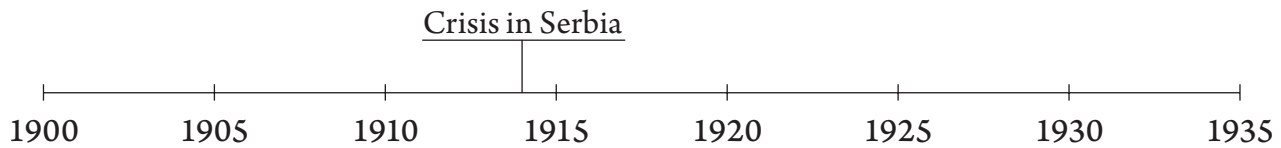
ASSASSINATION IN SARAJEVO, 1914

VOCABULARY

- Archduke Francis Ferdinand—Austro-Hungarian leader who was assassinated by Serbs
- Black Hand—Serbian nationalist group involved in the assassination of the archduke
- Serbia—Slavic country in southeastern Europe
- Slavs—ethnic group in Europe sharing language and cultural traditions
- Bosnia-Herzegovina—areas in southeastern Europe taken over by Austria-Hungary in 1908
- alliance (military)—an agreement between two or more countries to support each other militarily in attack or defense
- kaiser—German emperor or king
- tsar—Russian emperor or king
- von Schlieffen Plan—German military plan to defeat France quickly before Russia could mobilize
- mobilization—the process of preparing soldiers for war
- Balkans—the area of small countries in southeastern Europe
- Franz Joseph—emperor of Austria-Hungary
- division—unit of military organization of about 15,000 soldiers
- Nicholas II—tsar of Russia
- Wilhelm II—kaiser of Germany
- ultimatum—a set of demands with a time limit

HISTORICAL CONTEXT IN 1914

Student Handout 1



On June 28, 1914, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife were assassinated in Sarajevo. (See map.) This is very serious, as the archduke was in line to become the next emperor after the elderly Franz Joseph's reign was over. Three of the six men involved in the assassination plot confessed. They said they were armed and trained by a Serbian nationalist group, the Black Hand, and they detailed how Serbian border guards helped them cross the border into Austria-Hungary, carrying weapons they obtained from the Serbian military. All of the countries in Europe want to avoid a general war, but these countries have their own fears and different national interests.

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY AND SERBIA

Austria-Hungary is an empire made up of 13 nationalities, 16 languages, numerous religions, and several separatist groups. Many of these groups would be happy to break away from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Serbia is the biggest threat to the security of the empire, because Serbia incites Slavic people to fight for independence (see map). Nearly half, 47 percent, of the people in Austria-Hungary are Slavic, so if they obtain their independence, the empire will surely fall apart.

There has been trouble between Austria-Hungary and Serbia for many years. In 1903, Serbian nationalists assassinated their own pro-Austrian king and queen, who were replaced by pro-Russian leaders. The Serbs were very upset in 1908 when Austria-Hungary took over Bosnia and Herzegovina, areas with a Slavic majority that Serbia was hoping to take over. It is interesting that the city of Sarajevo, where the assassination took place, is located in Bosnia. In the Balkan Wars ending last year (1913), Turkey and Bulgaria—which was backed by Austria-Hungary—were defeated, while Serbia doubled in size. For the past year, Serbian newspapers have been predicting the break-up of Austria-Hungary. Serbia is supported by France, which has given military aid to and modernized the Serbian army, and especially by Russia, which is a Slavic country and supports Slavic peoples such as the Serbs.

Austria-Hungary's army is about four times larger than the Serbian army but is outnumbered compared to the combined strength of Russia and Serbia. The power of Austria-Hungary has steadily declined in the past 15 years, and defense spending in Austria-Hungary is far below the level in Russia. The leaders of Austria-Hungary are hoping that their alliance with Germany will prevent Russia from attacking. If the Russians do attack, the military leaders of Austria-Hungary

are relying on the Germans to attack the Russians to draw off enough Russian troops to make it possible for Austria-Hungary to fight to victory.

GERMANY

Germany, a large country in central Europe, was actually a large number of smaller states until 1871 when these states finally united. So Germany is a fairly new country (see map). It has a strong economy based on industry. Politically, conservative Germans in the government are worried by the strong socialist movement, including many labor strikes, in the country. Socialists are trying to bring about a revolution in which the workers will take control of the government. Ominously, the Social Democratic Party won great victories in the 1912 election and is now the largest political party in Germany. These Social Democrats want to increase taxes on rich people in the form of inheritance taxes and property taxes, decrease military spending, and increase spending for social services, such as for health care. Conservatives hate these proposals.

The kaiser (king of Germany) had personally taught the archduke about leadership in preparation for becoming emperor of Austria-Hungary. The kaiser is very upset by the archduke's assassination.

Germany has a treaty commitment to support Austria-Hungary militarily in case of a conflict. Unfortunately for Germany, France (Germany's mortal enemy) and Russia have an alliance to help defend each other, and Britain has a friendly understanding, a little less formal than an alliance, with France and Russia. In fact, the three countries are cooperating more and more lately. For example, the British, with the strongest navy in the world, have been holding talks with the Russians about cooperating militarily. Germany is stronger than any of the other countries individually and has a long tradition of disciplined military power. However, Germany is weak when compared to the combined power of Britain, France, and Russia. According to some advisors, Germany cannot afford to let Austria-Hungary, its main ally, become weak. Without a strong Austria-Hungary, Germany will be surrounded by strong countries, and thereby isolated.

Germany had plans to build a railroad from Berlin to Baghdad (in Iraq), which would have gone through Turkey (see map). The Germans also sent a military mission to Turkey to begin closer cooperation. But the Russians objected and forced Germany to withdraw the military mission and stop work on the railroad. These events humiliated Germany.

Russia is growing stronger at an alarming rate. The Russians are building railroads and getting modern equipment for their army. At this point, Germany is stronger than Russia. However, because there are so many more Russians than Germans, eventually Russia will be stronger than Germany. The army's chief of staff, General von Moltke, meanwhile, is alarmed that France is trying to match the size of the German army by calling up 85 percent of its young men. Von Moltke started enlarging the German army last year.

The German military has a plan, called the von Schlieffen Plan, to fight and defeat France by attacking through Belgium (see map) before Russia can fully mobilize. Mobilization is the

Lesson 1: Assassination in Sarajevo, 1914

process of calling soldiers to their units, getting equipment, and otherwise preparing to fight. It is estimated that Germany could mobilize in 10 days, Austria-Hungary in 15 days, and Russia in 20 to 30 days. The Germans are relying on the army of Austria-Hungary to attack Russia to delay the Russian attack on Germany. According to the plan, by the time the Russians are prepared to attack, the French will be defeated and the Germans will be able to use their whole army to defeat the Russians.

RUSSIA

Russia is an enormous country in eastern Europe and Asia (see map). The Russian economy is growing but is regarded as backward in many ways. For example, transportation is very poor and Russian farmers and industrial workers have lower productivity. The Russian government is concerned about a strong socialist movement within the country. Despite government repression, there have been numerous labor strikes in recent years. Russia is also a Slavic country and the Slavs in southeastern Europe (in countries such as Austria-Hungary, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Romania) look to Russia for help. Serbia is especially important to Russian interests in the area.

The Germans and Austrians have been very active in the Balkans (southeastern Europe). It is especially worrisome that the Germans have tried to be friendly with Turkey, including through military cooperation. Russia has to have access to the Mediterranean Sea through the straits in Turkey, so from the Russians' perspective, Turkey must not be under the influence of Russia's enemies (see map). Austria-Hungary has repeatedly forced Serbia to back down in confrontations. Six years ago, Austria-Hungary took over Bosnia-Herzegovina, areas of Slavic population that were also of interest to Serbia (see map). Then, Austria-Hungary got the upper hand in Albania, preventing Serbia from getting a harbor on the Mediterranean. In each case, Russia influenced Serbia to give in rather than fight. Russian leaders are tired of giving in to Austria-Hungary at the expense of Serbia.

The Russian army was soundly defeated in the Russo-Japanese War nine years ago. To overcome this military weakness, Russia has modernized its army in the past few years, but the modernization process is several years from being completed. The German army is smaller but much more modern in terms of weapons, supplies, and training. Russian leaders deplore the assassination and do not want a war against Germany. However, Russia cannot just let Serbia, and thereby the whole Russian policy in southeastern Europe, be crushed. Austria-Hungary and Germany would have dominant power in southeastern Europe, including Turkey, and Russia would be surrounded and isolated.

French and Russian leaders are aware that Germany will try to defeat France quickly, before Russia can mobilize to attack. To counter the German strategy, the French want the Russians to attack Germany as fast as possible, as Germany can't fight both armies at once. If there is going to be a general war, Russia will need to mobilize as soon as possible.

FRANCE

France has a large, modernizing economy, although it is smaller than the economies of Germany and Britain. There is a large socialist movement in France, which is a concern for the government. There have been numerous labor strikes in recent years.

France fears Germany, because Germany has a much larger population and therefore a much larger army. The French are drafting a larger percentage of young men (85%) than the Germans are to counteract the German advantage. Military spending is a burden for the French people, but the country must be defended. French leaders hope their alliance with Russia will prevent Germany from attacking. If the Germans do attack, the French are hoping that a Russian attack against Germany in the east will force Germany to move some troops east to stop the attack. Then the French will be more likely to defeat the weakened German army in the west. However, the French have some doubts about Russia as an ally. Will Russia actually attack Germany if a war breaks out, or will Russia leave France to fight Germany all alone?

BRITAIN

Britain is a powerful country with a large economy and a great deal of trade with its colonies and other nations around the world. There is a socialist movement in Britain, but it is not as strong as in Germany, Russia, or France. On the other hand, the labor movement is strong, including many strikes.

Britain relies on its navy, rather than its small army, for defense. The country has a friendly understanding with Russia and France but no formal alliance to defend these countries. The British and the French have had some clashes over colonies in Africa, and the British and Russians have also had disputes over territory in Asia. Nevertheless, the three countries have been cooperating more closely in the past few years. The British and Russians have had some naval cooperation, for example.

Germany has built a huge navy, which is a direct threat to Britain, so it wouldn't be in Britain's national interest to stand aside and allow France and Russia be defeated by Germany. In addition, some British leaders think that Britain has a moral obligation to protect Belgium from attack, because Belgium is a neutral country. The Germans may attack France through Belgium, which would force Britain to decide whether to fight Germany. On the other hand, in the past few years the British have made several agreements with the Germans—for example, on naval armaments and on the railroad through Turkey.

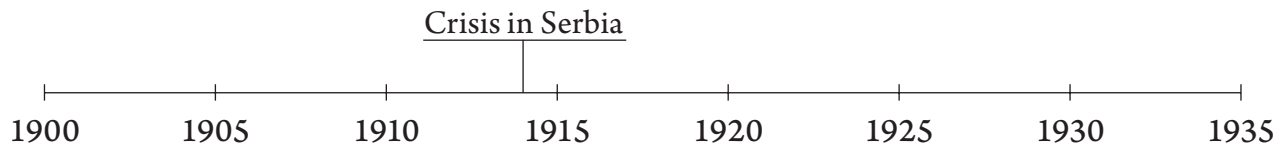
MAP, EUROPE 1914



Russia needs these straits to be open so needs Turkey to be friendly to Russia.

PROBLEM FOR AUSTRIA-HUNGARY

Student Handout 2



You are Franz Joseph and you have been the leader of Austria-Hungary for the past 66 years. It is July 1914, and you face a crisis with Serbia. On June 28, 1914, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife were assassinated in Sarajevo (see the map in Handout 1). The evidence shows, as noted in Handout 1, that Serbian nationalists were behind the assassination and Serbian soldiers were involved also. This murder is very serious, because the Archduke was in line to take over as emperor after your reign. Many Austrians feel the archduke was the only person who would be able to hold the empire together after you leave the throne. He proposed that Slavs be allowed to serve in the Austro-Hungarian government, which would have been difficult in some ways but would have made the government more representative of the population.

Some newspapers in Serbia have been cheering the atrocity. There has been celebrating in Belgrade, the Serbian capital, and in many other areas in Serbia. Serbian leaders ask that you not blame the Serbian government for the acts of a handful of extremists and say they are doing all they can to subdue nationalist, anti-Austrian demonstrations. However, according to your advisors, the Serbian leader can't be trusted. He is a slick politician who lies whenever he feels it will help him.

Your foreign minister, Count Berchtold, and his wife were personal friends with the archduke and his wife. He wants to "settle" matters with Serbia once and for all so that country can't cause any more trouble. Baron Conrad, the chief of staff of the army, twice before (in 1908 and in 1913) has called for war against Serbia, but both times the Austrian government didn't attack. Now he's saying that at long last we should teach Serbia a lesson. Serbia's army, at about 11 divisions in strength (a division is a unit of about 15,000 men) is no match for Austria-Hungary's 48 divisions. After the assassinations, there were anti-Serb riots in Bosnia and Herzegovina, areas that were taken over by Austria in 1908 (see map). One of the newspapers in Vienna (the capital of Austria-Hungary) is urging "decisive action" against Serbia for the monstrous crime at Sarajevo. If the Serbs get away with this outrage, your people may see your government as so weak that you don't deserve to rule Austria-Hungary anymore.

Austria-Hungary is outnumbered compared to the combined strength of Russia and Serbia, and defense spending in Austria-Hungary is far below the level in Russia. However, your foreign minister believes Russia won't be a problem. First, there is no reason why Russia would support Serbia in this case. There have been numerous assassinations in Russia, so there is no reason for Tsar Nicholas II to support terrorists who have assassinated a monarch such as him. Second, the

Lesson 1: Assassination in Sarajevo, 1914

Russians, while supportive of Serbia in general, did not interfere on three occasions in the past few years when Serbia lost a conflict or was forced to back down to Austria-Hungary. Third, if Austria-Hungary attacks quickly, Serbia would be conquered before Russia mobilizes its army. If Austria-Hungary conquers Serbia before the Russian army is ready, the Russians will probably negotiate rather than try to take Serbia back through war.

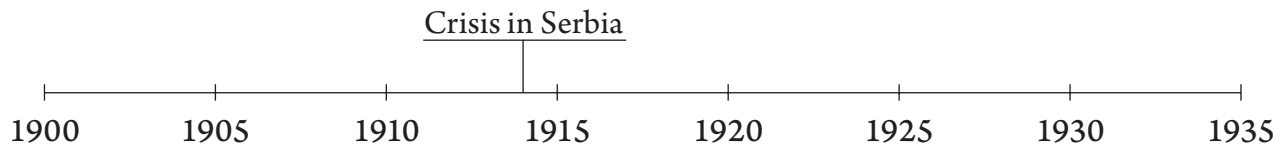
One of your ministers thinks Austria-Hungary should not attack Serbia but should instead build a new alliance with Bulgaria and Turkey, which will isolate Serbia. Several other advisors feel strongly that we need to check with Germany before Austria-Hungary does anything. Germany is Austria-Hungary's only ally and is the strongest power in Europe. We need to know where Germany stands. Another advisor insists that we take no military action until we first send Serbia an ultimatum (a list of demands with a time limit). If Serbia agrees to the demands, Austria-Hungary will achieve a diplomatic victory without war. If Serbia doesn't agree, Austria-Hungary will be more justified in attacking Serbia in the eyes of other countries.

You have several options for dealing with Serbia, but you can choose only one to do first. Which of the following will you do first?

- A. Propose a treaty with Bulgaria and Turkey in order to isolate Serbia.
- B. Negotiate with Serbia in order to defuse the crisis.
- C. Ask German leaders if they will support Austria-Hungary in taking strong actions, including war, against Serbia.
- D. Send the Serbs an ultimatum giving them 48 hours to agree to all of Austria-Hungary's demands.
- E. Mobilize the Austro-Hungarian army in preparation for an attack on Serbia.
- F. Declare war on Serbia and mobilize the Austro-Hungarian army.

PROBLEM FOR GERMANY

Student Handout 3



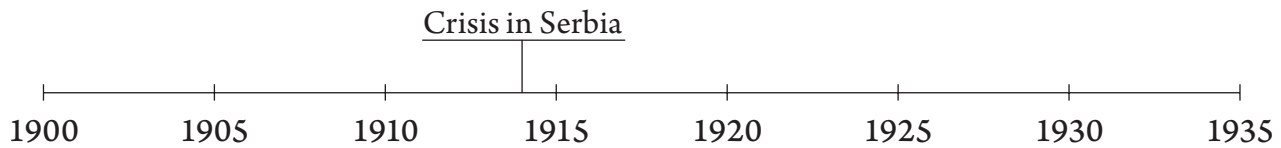
You are Kaiser Wilhelm, leader of Germany in July 1914. In reaction to the assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife on June 28, Austro-Hungarian diplomats have asked you if Germany will back Austria-Hungary in taking “strong action” against (attacking) Serbia. Most advisors think we should back Austria-Hungary in its attack on Serbia. These advisors believe Russia won’t get involved, especially if the Russians know that Germany is supporting Austria-Hungary. The Russians do not want war with Germany, at least for the next several years before their army is modernized. If Russia did attack, France would have some obligation to support Russia, but because Russia and France would be attacking, Britain would remain neutral. Without British support, France would most likely not get involved. So, Britain and France would most likely pressure Russia to back off.

What will you do about the request by Austria-Hungary for support for strong actions against Serbia?

- A. Reject the request. Tell Austria-Hungary that their actions could lead to a general war in Europe, which would be a catastrophe. Germany doesn’t want a general war.
- B. Tell the Austro-Hungarians that they can take strong actions, but it can’t be more than capturing the Serbian capital, Belgrade. Germany doesn’t want Austria-Hungary to take Serbian territory or to crush Serbia. After capturing Belgrade, the Austro-Hungarians can force Serbia to do something humiliating (pay reparations to Austria-Hungary or turn over the accused for trial in an Austrian court) and then withdraw from the city.
- C. Tell Austria-Hungary that Germany supports Austria-Hungary in whatever actions it takes, including an attack on Serbia.
- D. Tell Austro-Hungarian leaders that they should definitely take military action and do it quickly.

PROBLEM FOR RUSSIA

Student Handout 4



You are Tsar Nicholas II of Russia in July 1914. As a result of the assassination of the archduke of Austria-Hungary in June, Austria-Hungary has started mobilizing against Serbia and has sent an ultimatum to Serbia. According to Russian advisors, the ultimatum is filled with unreasonable demands. For example, one demand is that Serbia allow Austro-Hungarian agents to work with Serbian investigators on tracking down suspects in the assassination plot against the Archduke. Serbia could never agree to such a demand, because it is a violation of Serbian sovereignty. It certainly looks like the ultimatum was given knowing Serbia would have to refuse. The refusal would then provide Austria-Hungary with an excuse to attack Serbia. Many Russian leaders believe it is time to support Serbia to prevent the country from being destroyed. According to these leaders, Russia has given in repeatedly to Germany and Austria-Hungary. It is time for Russia to stop appeasing other countries and stand up for Slavic people. If the Austro-Hungarians are allowed to mobilize and attack before the Russians mobilize, the Austro-Hungarians will take over Serbia before the Russians can counter them. Russia will be forced once again to back down and accept the takeover of Serbia.

If the Russian army mobilizes on the Austro-Hungarian border, the Austro-Hungarian leaders will probably come to their senses and settle the conflict through negotiations rather than war. After all, the Austrian ambassador in St. Petersburg (your capital) has assured you that Austria-Hungary, while upset by the assassination, wants peace in the Balkans. On the other hand, maybe Austro-Hungarian leaders will fight even after Russia mobilizes and attacks. That would be dangerous. Austria-Hungary could not have sent such a note without German support. So if Russia fights Austria-Hungary, she will probably have to fight Germany as well. It is important to keep reassuring Germany that Russia has no hostile intentions against Germany.

Russia has modernized its army in the past few years, but the modernization process is several years from being completed. The German army is smaller but much more modern in terms of weapons, supplies, and training. Russian leaders deplore the assassination and do not want a war against Germany. However, Russia cannot allow Serbia, and thereby the whole Russian policy in southeastern Europe, to be crushed.

What will you do about the Austro-Hungarian mobilization and ultimatum against Serbia?

- A. Don't mobilize. There is too much danger that mobilizing will lead to a general war with Germany and the rest of Europe.
- B. Order a partial mobilization just on the Austro-Hungarian border and reassure Germany that Russia has no hostile intentions against Germany. Send a note to Austro-Hungarian leaders that if they attack Serbia, Russia will invade Austria-Hungary.
- C. Order full mobilization and send a note to Austro-Hungarian leaders that if they attack Serbia, Russia will invade Austria-Hungary. The full mobilization will get Germany to put pressure on Austria-Hungary to back off.

OUTCOMES

Student Handout 5

The leaders of Austria-Hungary thought they needed to take strong action against Serbia or their own country, already weakened over the past few decades, would be destabilized to the point of falling apart. They first needed to know if the Germans would support these actions, including war. The German kaiser was a very unstable person, who immediately said that Austria-Hungary should fight Serbia to restore the country's honor. He sometimes referred to himself as the "All Highest Warlord" and was quick to say that Germany must fight for its honor. He and the chancellor, Bethmann-Hollweg, told Austrian diplomats that Germany would fully support Austria-Hungary, "whatever its decision" with regard to Serbia. The German strategy depended on the Austro-Hungarian army defeating Serbia quickly, before the Russian army was mobilized. But the Germans never asked about or checked if the Austro-Hungarian army was capable of a swift attack. Further, the Germans didn't coordinate any political or military strategy with Austria-Hungary. For example, the Germans were not aware when Austria-Hungary sent an ultimatum to Serbia and were not consulted about the demands in the note. The Germans and Austro-Hungarians never discussed what they would do if Russia did attack.

Now that Austria-Hungary had German support, the leaders prepared for war. But one of those leaders insisted on an ultimatum to Serbia first in order to make the attack more justified. The Serbs agreed to some of the demands, agreed to others with reservations, and rejected one (the demand for Austro-Hungarian agents to participate in the investigation of the assassination). This was unacceptable to Austria-Hungary, which declared war and started mobilizing its army. Unfortunately for Austria-Hungary and Germany, it took a long time for the Austro-Hungarian army to actually attack. The whole idea of attacking quickly before the Russians could mobilize didn't work.

In the meantime, the British leader proposed a conference of major powers to settle the dispute between Austria-Hungary and Serbia. The leaders of Austria-Hungary were not interested in a diplomatic solution. A previous conference had forced conditions on Serbia, but only military action by Austria-Hungary against Serbia had enforced the agreement. Besides, Serbs had assassinated the archduke. In the minds of the leaders of Austria-Hungary, Serbia had to be crushed militarily. The proposal for a conference went nowhere. The proposal and the threat of Russian mobilization did, however, get German leaders to reconsider their decision of encouraging Austria-Hungary to attack Serbia. The kaiser sent a note saying that Austria-Hungary should occupy Belgrade (the Serbian capital) only until their demands were met and that Austria-Hungary should not take any Serbian territory. The German chancellor also tried to get Austria-Hungary to limit its demands against Serbia and settle the crisis through negotiations. The leaders of Austria-Hungary decided to defy the German leaders and went ahead with their attack on Serbia anyway. They wanted to defeat Serbia militarily and divide the country (giving parts to Bulgaria and

Albania) so it would never be a threat again. An Austrian diplomat told a German ambassador that Serbia was to be “beaten to the earth.” The head of the military of Austria-Hungary said that the diplomats could “talk all you want, just don’t stop the operation against Serbia.”

The tsar and kaiser also tried to prevent war by writing personal notes. The tsar wrote to the kaiser, “To try and avoid such a calamity as a European war, I beg you in the name of our old friendship to do what you can to stop your allies [Austria-Hungary] from going too far.” Meanwhile, the kaiser wrote, “[W]ith regard to the hearty and tender friendship which binds us both from long ago with firm ties, I am exerting my utmost influence to induce the Austrians to deal straightly to arrive to a satisfactory understanding with you. I confidently hope you will help me in my efforts to smooth over difficulties which may still arise. Your very sincere and devoted friend and cousin. Willy.” The notes did not stop the Austro-Hungarians from attacking Serbia or the Russians from mobilizing.

Russian leaders interpreted (correctly) that the ultimatum was just an excuse for Austria-Hungary to attack Serbia. They also assumed that Austria-Hungary wouldn’t send such an ultimatum without German support. The tsar initially agreed to partial mobilization to scare Austria-Hungary but no mobilization on the Russian border with Germany. Russian military leaders argued that partial mobilization wasn’t workable, as the plans had been made based on the assumption that Russia would be fighting both Austria-Hungary and Germany. Train schedules and troop and equipment movements were too complicated to order only part of the mobilization plan. If Russia started partial mobilization and then had to switch to full mobilization, trains would have to be rerouted and equipment would have to be reshipped. There would be great confusion, which the Germans would certainly exploit with their quick mobilization. In addition, Russia had promised that if there were a general war it would attack Germany on the fifteenth day of mobilization, and the only way to do that was to mobilize fully at the start. Some troops on the German border were, in fact, mobilized without the tsar’s knowledge. Russian diplomats were afraid that Germany was trying to get Russia to delay mobilization until Austria-Hungary had captured Serbia. They also thought that war with Germany was so likely that they needed to mobilize to improve their chances in the war. Eventually, the military and diplomatic leaders convinced the tsar to order full mobilization. The tsar didn’t want war with Germany, but he was afraid to let Serbia be crushed.

Even before the tsar ordered full mobilization, the Germans learned of Russian troops mobilizing on the German border. It looked as if Russia was trying to mobilize secretly. Once the Germans thought Russia was mobilizing, Germany swung into action with its own military plan, the von Schlieffen Plan. The plan called for Germany to defeat France before Russia had fully mobilized. General von Moltke told the kaiser that he had to mobilize, declare war on France, and launch the attack through Belgium (see map). As each day passed, German military leaders pressured the kaiser to start the war. At this point, the German ambassador in London reported (incorrectly) that Britain and France wouldn’t fight if Germany left France alone. The kaiser was ecstatic that Germany would only have to fight Russia. But when he told von Moltke to wheel the army around to the east to fight Russia, Moltke answered that it couldn’t be done. The army had prepared for years to attack France. To change the plan at the last minute would lead to chaos, not an

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organized attack. A few hours later, a telegram from the British king stated that there had been a misunderstanding. The British proposal was only focused on how to prevent a war between France and Germany. The kaiser's hopes for avoiding war with France and Britain were dashed. He called in General von Moltke and told him to go ahead with the von Schlieffen Plan.

The Germans sent an ultimatum to Russia to stop mobilization within 12 hours or Germany would mobilize and declare war. When the Russians did not respond, Germany declared war on Russia and France and launched their attack on Belgium. The British decided to honor their commitment to Belgium and entered the war. And that is how the assassination of a man and woman in a remote area of Europe led to a general war involving all of the major powers in Europe, a war that accounted for the deaths of more than 16 million people. No country wanted a general war, but all of them made decisions that led to war.

OPTIONS TO INCLUDE IN THE ULTIMATUM

Student Handout 6

Which of these options will you include in your ultimatum to Serbia?

In the next 48 hours, Serbia must agree to:

1. Prevent the smuggling of arms and explosives into Austria-Hungary.
2. Punish those who helped the assassins across the border into Austria-Hungary.
3. Suppress anti-Austrian propaganda by censoring newspapers and pamphlets.
4. Break up extremist groups such as the Black Hand.
5. Remove from office any official who participates in anti-Austrian propaganda.
6. Allow Austrian officials to come to Serbia to assist in the investigation of the assassination.
7. Allow Austrian officials to come to Serbia to assist in suppressing subversive activities directed against Austria-Hungary.
8. Pay Austria-Hungary the equivalent of \$500,000 as compensation for the assassination.
9. Allow the army of Austria-Hungary to occupy the Serbian capital as well as areas in Serbia along the border with Austria-Hungary for a period of 10 years.

PRIMARY SOURCE

Student Handout 7

JULY 23, 1914, THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN ULTIMATUM TO SERBIA *(English Translation)*

Vienna, July 22, 1914

... Now the history of the past few years, and particularly the painful events of the 28th of June, have proved the existence of a subversive movement in Serbia, whose object it is to separate certain portions of its territory from the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. This movement, which came into being under the very eyes of the Serbian Government, subsequently found expression outside of the territory of the Kingdom in acts of terrorism, in a number of attempts at assassination, and in murders.

Far from fulfilling the formal obligations contained in its declaration of the 31st of March, 1909, the Royal Serbian Government has done nothing to suppress this movement. It has tolerated the criminal activities of the various unions and associations directed against the [Austro-Hungarian] Monarchy, the unchecked utterances of the press, the glorification of the authors of assassinations, the participation of officers and officials in subversive intrigues; it has tolerated an unhealthy propaganda in its public instruction; and it has tolerated, finally, every manifestation which could betray the people of Serbia into hatred of the Monarchy and contempt for its institutions.

This toleration of which the Royal Serbian Government was guilty, was still in evidence at that moment when the events of the twenty-eighth of June exhibited to the whole world the dreadful consequences of such tolerance.

It is clear from the statements and confessions of the criminal authors of the assassination of the twenty-eighth of June, that the murder at Sarajevo was conceived at Belgrade, that the murderers received the weapons and the bombs with which they were equipped from Serbian officers and officials who belonged to the Narodna Odbrana, and, finally, that the dispatch of the criminals and of their weapons to Bosnia was arranged and effected under the conduct of Serbian frontier authorities.

The results brought out by the inquiry no longer permit the Imperial and Royal Government [Austro-Hungarian] to maintain the attitude of patient tolerance which it has observed for years toward those agitations which center at Belgrade and are spread thence into the territories of the Monarchy. Instead, these results impose upon the Imperial and Royal Government the obligation to put an end to those intrigues, which constitute a standing menace to the peace of the Monarchy.

In order to attain this end, the Imperial and Royal Government finds itself compelled to demand that the Serbian Government give official assurance that it will condemn the propaganda directed against Austria-Hungary, that is to say, the whole body of the efforts whose ultimate object it is to separate from the Monarchy territories that belong to it; and that it will obligate itself to suppress with all the means at its command this criminal and terroristic propaganda. In order to give these assurances a character of solemnity, the Royal Serbian Government will publish on the first page of its official organ of July 26/13, the following declaration:

“The Royal Serbian Government condemns the propaganda directed against Austria-Hungary, that is to say, the whole body of the efforts whose ultimate object it is to separate from the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy territories that belong to it, and it most sincerely regrets the dreadful consequences of these criminal transactions.

“The Royal Serbian Government regrets that Serbian officers and officials should have taken part in the above-mentioned propaganda and thus have endangered the friendly and neighborly relations, to the cultivation of which the Royal Government had most solemnly pledged itself by its declarations of March 31, 1909.

“The Royal Government, which disapproves and repels every idea and every attempt to interfere in the destinies of the population of whatever portion of Austria-Hungary, regards it as its duty most expressly to call attention of the officers, officials, and the whole population of the kingdom to the fact that for the future it will proceed with the utmost rigor against any persons who shall become guilty of any such activities, activities to prevent and to suppress which, the Government will bend every effort.”

This declaration shall be brought to the attention of the Royal army simultaneously by an order of the day from His Majesty the King, and by publication in the official organ of the army.

The Royal Serbian Government will furthermore pledge itself:

1. to suppress every publication which shall incite to hatred and contempt of the Monarchy, and the general tendency of which shall be directed against the territorial integrity of the latter;
2. to proceed at once to the dissolution of the Narodna Odbrana to confiscate all of its means of propaganda, and in the same manner to proceed against the other unions and associations in Serbia which occupy themselves with propaganda against Austria-Hungary; the Royal Government will take such measures as are necessary to make sure that the dissolved associations may not continue their activities under other names or in other forms;
3. to eliminate without delay from public instruction in Serbia, everything, whether connected with the teaching corps or with the methods of teaching, that serves or may serve to nourish the propaganda against Austria-Hungary;

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4. to remove from the military and administrative service in general all officers and officials who have been guilty of carrying on the propaganda against Austria-Hungary, whose names the Imperial and Royal Government reserves the right to make known to the Royal Government when communicating the material evidence now in its possession;
5. to agree to the cooperation in Serbia of the organs of the Imperial and Royal Government in the suppression of the subversive movement directed against the integrity of the Monarchy;
6. to institute a judicial inquiry against every participant in the conspiracy of the twenty-eighth of June who may be found in Serbian territory; the organs of the Imperial and Royal Government delegated for this purpose will take part in the proceedings held for this purpose;
7. to undertake with all haste the arrest of Major Voislav Tankosic and of one Milan Ciganovitch, a Serbian official, who have been compromised by the results of the inquiry;
8. by efficient measures to prevent the participation of Serbian authorities in the smuggling of weapons and explosives across the frontier; to dismiss from the service and to punish severely those members of the Frontier Service at Schabats and Losnitza who assisted the authors of the crime of Sarajevo to cross the frontier;
9. to make explanations to the Imperial and Royal Government concerning the unjustifiable utterances of high Serbian functionaries in Serbia and abroad, who, without regard for their official position, have not hesitated to express themselves in a manner hostile toward Austria-Hungary since the assassination of the twenty-eighth of June;
10. to inform the Imperial and Royal Government without delay of the execution of the measures comprised in the foregoing points.

The Imperial and Royal Government awaits the reply of the Royal [Serbian] Government by Saturday, the twenty-fifth instant, at 6 P.M., at the latest [48 hours]....

Source: Brigham Young University Library, World War I Archives.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. According to the government of Austria-Hungary, what is the reason for the ultimatum?
2. Is the ultimatum just an excuse to justify an attack on Serbia? Is it meant to force Serbia to reject it? Cite evidence from the document to support or refute this claim.
3. With which of the ten demands would Serbia have had the most difficulty agreeing?
4. How reliable is this document as a source?

LESSON 2:

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION, 1905–1920

For Teachers

INTRODUCTION

■ Overview

The Russian Revolution is a complex phenomenon that occurred over a period of years. In this lesson, students will make decisions at four points in the chain of events. Many historians believe the Russian entry into World War I was an important cause of the revolution. However, because that decision is covered in Lesson 1 of this book, it will not be repeated in this lesson. Two of the problems in this lesson are open-ended. Because options are not supplied, students have the opportunity to improve their skills in generating options.

■ Vocabulary

- Nicholas II—tsar of Russia who was overthrown in the Russian Revolution
- peasants—farmers
- Russo-Japanese War—Japan defeated Russia in 1904–1905
- Father Gapon—Catholic priest who presented the tsar with a petition for more rights for workers
- Bloody Sunday—a day in 1905 when hundreds of demonstrators were shot in front of the Winter Palace
- Great War—a war from 1914–1918 between Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey on one side and France, Britain, Russia, and the United States on the other side
- Tannenberg—site of great military defeat of the Russians by the Germans
- inflation—percentage rate at which prices increase per year
- Duma—Russian parliament
- Grigori Rasputin—a spiritual person who held influence with the tsarina
- Provisional Government—Russian government after the tsar, overthrown by Bolsheviks
- Soviet—representative council at the local level
- abdicate—to give up being king or queen of one's country

- Order Number 1—order by the Provisional Government that representatives would be elected from ordinary soldiers for military units
- Vladimir Lenin—leader of the Bolsheviks
- Bolsheviks—Communists who took over the Russian government in 1917
- Karl Marx—political philosopher who believed the workers would overthrow the owners
- collective farms—land held by groups of farmers who share in the crops
- Cheka—Bolshevik secret police
- Treaty of Brest-Litovsk—harsh settlement Germany imposed on Russia in 1917
- War Communism—economic policies to abolish private property, require forced labor, and collectivize farms
- black market—a portion of the economy that involves buying and selling items illegally
- New Economic Policy—brought back market elements, such as private businesses and allowing people to keep their production after they paid their taxes

■ Decision-making Skills Emphasized

- Identify underlying problems
- Identify emotions
- Ask questions about context
- Ask questions about analogies
- Generate options
- Predict unintended consequences

LESSON PLAN A: IN-DEPTH LESSON *(One 50-Minute Class Period)*

■ Procedure

Distribute Student Handout 1 (“Bloody Sunday in 1905”), have students read it, and tell them to write two actions they would take. Have them pair up and discuss their actions. Move around the room to answer possible questions or clear up misunderstandings. You could tell students that the first two problems in this lesson don’t offer any options, so they can focus on the skill of generating good options. Sometimes the best decision depends on generating a creative option. It often comes in the form of a statement such as, “Wait a minute. What if we did it this way instead?” Ask students if they have ever come up with a creative solution to a difficult problem.

Bring students back together to list their options. After discussing the pros and cons of the options generated, have students vote on a maximum of two actions they would take. Read the outcome for this first problem from Handout 4. Do not distribute the handout, as it contains the outcomes of Handouts 2 and 3 also. Sometimes students don't generate many options, which can lead to a dull discussion. If they have not come up with many options, ask them to think about possible underlying problems or about their goals in this case.

Another strategy for Handout 1 is for you to do a think-aloud performance for the class. Tell students you are going to do a role-play in which you are the tsar. They are to evaluate your thinking. Make up your own think-aloud or read this as Nicholas II:

These constant protests and this massacre make me nervous. But I have to think things through before I decide what to do. (Deep breath) I have to make concessions or there will be trouble. But a tsar shouldn't compromise—it will make me look weak. Look what happened when the British gave in and repealed the Stamp Act in the 1760s. The American colonists smelled weakness and thought they could make the British back down on any point. The colonists went on to a full-scale revolution against Britain. I surely don't want a revolution. (Hesitation) I could cut taxes. That would be popular with just about everyone. But wait! I can't cut taxes because we're at war with Japan. The extra spending for the war combined with lower taxes will increase the debt. I remember reading that a large debt led to the French Revolution in 1789. Actually, maybe the war with Japan is the real problem. If we end the war, we could make some reforms, cut taxes, and improve living conditions. I'll get my diplomats and generals to give me the situation on the war and see if we can negotiate an end to it.

Have students pair up and discuss your thinking. Which parts of **P-A-G-E** did you do well and which not so well? Discuss their answers.

Repeat the process for Handout 2 ("Tsar Decisions in 1915 and 1917"), again focusing on generating options and reading the outcomes from Handout 4.

The focus for Handout 3 ("Provisional Government, 1917") is different, because options are provided in the problem. Students choose the options they favor, discuss them in pairs, discuss them as a class, and vote on them. At the conclusion of the discussion of Handout 3, distribute the outcomes as described in Handout 4 and have students comment for homework. They must analyze three different choices. One interesting point to discuss is which of the decisions made by the tsar (Handouts 1 and 2) or the Provisional Government (Handout 3) was most important in their overthrow. This can lead to a lively discussion among students, as it has among historians. For an overview of differing interpretations, see Acton (1990) in the Sources.

Continue the lesson with Handout 5 ("The Bolsheviks in 1918"). Most students will not agree with any of the choices, except the option of dropping out of the war. However, students' discussion of why they disagree with these choices can sharpen their skills at anticipating consequences. You could make this focus more explicit by having the class do a premortem. Ask them to consider that one or more of the proposals in Handout 5 ended up being a disaster. They are to go back to their

pairs and discuss what the disaster could be, what could go wrong, and how likely the problems are. It will be interesting to see how many of the catastrophic consequences described in Handout 6 students can anticipate. Have them comment on what they learned about decision making from the outcomes in Handout 6.

You can also have students analyze the primary source in Handout 7 (excerpts of the “Fundamental Law of Land Socialization”) by answering the Questions for Analysis:

1. Groups that would like the law are landless farm workers, but even they wouldn’t like the article confiscating excess production; factory workers would like getting food but not like forced labor.
2. Farm owners would hate this law for taking land away and for taking away excess production.
3. The law crippled Russian agriculture significantly, as described in Handout 6.
4. This is a primary source and in the sense that it lays out the law. There is no significant reason to lie. But in the way it describes the parts of the law and the causes for the law, it has a reason to lie. The law leaves out the negative sides of the various parts. For example, Article 11 gives the reason for collectivization as equalizing landholdings. But it might also be to increase the popularity and therefore power of the Bolsheviks.

■ Reflecting on Decision Making

Ask students how well they did on decision making on this problem. Which decision-making skills were especially important in making these economic decisions? Which of the letters of **P-A-G-E** applied especially to this problem? (See the “Decision-making Analysis” section below for ideas.) Ask students what they did well or poorly in terms of the **P-A-G-E** analysis of decision making. Discuss their answers.

■ Putting the Actual Decisions into Historical Context

Ask students whether the decisions made at this time in Russia were the result more of historical forces or of decisions made by individual leaders. (Some will argue that decisions made by individual leaders were the key to the revolution. The personalities of Tsar Nicholas [insecure and sometimes indecisive], Kerensky [very insecure and theatrical], and Lenin [paranoid, intolerant, dogmatic] were integral to the events in Russia. Others will say that historical forces were more important. The wars had devastated Russia, and though Russia’s economy was not industrial; and the standard of living was not as high compared to other European states, the country was being changed by industrialization.)

■ Connecting to Today

Ask students what they have learned from the Russian Revolution decision-making outcomes that might help them in a current revolution or potential revolution. What advice would they give to a leader or citizen in a country undergoing revolution?

■ Troubleshooting

Some students may need more historical context for the situation in 1905. They are supposed to ask to get more context information, but they don't always do that. Even when they do ask, there may be holes in the information they have that will make it difficult for some students to make a reasonable decision. You might want to review the context on Russia as well as the ideas of Karl Marx before starting the decision-making problems.

LESSON PLAN B: QUICK MOTIVATOR LESSON (20 to 30 Minutes)

Give Handouts 1, 2, and 3 for homework and have students make their decisions. In class, ask for options from students and a show of hands for those options. Discuss reasons for five minutes. Distribute Handout 4 with the outcomes, and have students write their reactions for homework. Skip Handouts 5, 6, and 7.

TEACHER NOTES FOR EXPANDING DISCUSSION

(For outcomes for students, see Handouts 4 and 6.)

Handout 1 calls Russia's capital city *St. Petersburg*, but the name *Petrograd* is used in the other handouts because the city's name was changed in 1914 when Russia entered the Great War against Germany. Petersburg sounded too German.

Offering students handouts that span several years allowed for inclusion of more decision problems but gave up some historical accuracy in terms of time. Handout 5's questions are not limited to War Communism because the other issues are of great interest. The question about central planning is certainly implied in the actual War Communism elements, though it is not as explicit as it is later in Stalin's Five-Year Plans.

Historians debate whether the necessities of fighting the revolution made it inevitable that War Communism would develop (see Carr 1952) or whether its development was more purposeful due more to the decisions of the Bolsheviks (see Pipes 1995).

Handouts 5 and 6 use the name *Russia* for this lesson's subject country because the country's official name was not changed to the *Soviet Union* until 1922. *Bolshevik* was used in the lesson because the name is specific about party differences.

According to John Boyd (1968), Order Number 1 did not require the election of officers to the Russian army. It is often confused on that point because another proclamation was announced at the same time that did call for the election of officers. The infamous order was intended for only the troops in Petrograd, not the entire army. Order Number 1 did, nevertheless, have a significant impact in weakening and revolutionizing the army.

Under the Provisional Government (Handout 4), the rate of inflation was accelerated. Pipes argues that the Bolsheviks deliberately inflated money in order to abolish it, but Carr is persuasive in

arguing that the Bolsheviks printed more money primarily to pay for materials to fight the civil war against the whites.

■ Decision-making Analysis

P = Problem

Identify any underlying problem(s).

Consider other points of view.

What are my assumptions? Emotions?

A = Ask for information (about)

Historical context (history of this issue; context in the world)

Reliability of sources

Historical analogies

G = Goals

What are my main goals? Are they realistic?

* **Generate options to help achieve these goals. Are they ethical?**

E = Effects

Predict unintended consequences.

Play out the options. What could go wrong?

* Denotes topics emphasized in this lesson. The bold items are skills involved in the lesson.

- **Identify underlying problems:** In the role-play of Tsar Nicholas in 1905 (see lesson plan above), the tsar identifies an underlying problem in the war against Japan and generates an option to overcome that underlying problem (negotiate an end to the war). Similarly, in the other problems (Handouts 2, 3, and 4) an underlying problem was the Great War. The tsar and the Provisional Government decided to fight on, with disastrous consequences, while the Bolsheviks surrendered. Another underlying problem was the effects of industrialization on the people of this traditional society. No matter how much the tsar wanted things to remain the same, they were changing. A Russian official, Sergei Witte, recognized the underlying problem in 1905, saying,

The advance of human progress is unstoppable. The idea of human freedom will triumph, if not by way of reform, then by way of revolution. But in the latter event it will come to life on the ashes of a thousand years of destroyed history. The Russian bunt [rebellion], mindless and pitiless, will sweep away everything, turn everything to dust. What kind of Russia will emerge from this unexampled trial transcends human imagination: the horrors

of the Russian bunt may surpass everything known to history. It is possible that foreign intervention will tear the country apart. Attempts to put into practice the ideals of theoretical socialism—they will fail but they will be made, no doubt about it—will destroy the family, the expressions of religious faith, property, all the foundations of law. (Pipes 1995)

- **Identify emotions:** In the role-play of Tsar Nicholas in 1905 (see lesson plan above), the tsar says the demonstrations make him nervous, which is an emotion. Ask if students felt any other emotion, such as frustration. Did they ever say anything like this? “Fine. Just do that. Whatever.” (a sign of frustration)
- **Ask questions about context:** Students could ask a number of questions, including:
 1. Is the number, frequency, and duration of demonstrations and strikes increasing in 1917? (Yes)
 2. How serious are the demonstrations in Petrograd? (Very serious. One of the tsar’s biggest problems is that he never realized how serious the demonstrations were.)
 3. How bad is the situation on the battlefield against the Germans? (Very bad. The Germans dominate the battlefields.)
 4. Why are there strikes and protests in 1918? (These events might be most clearly related to food shortages, but they are also to protest the government by the Bolsheviks. It should be a warning to students that even the workers are not supportive of the programs of the Bolsheviks.)
- **Ask questions about analogies:** Students should ask if the analogies in the role-play of Tsar Nicholas in 1905 (see lesson plan above) are strong or weak. They should ask about similarities and differences. (The analogy to the American Revolution is weak. While that situation also involved a king versus his subjects, the American Revolution involved colonists, not subjects living in the same country as the king.) The other analogy has mostly similarities, so it is much stronger.
- **Generate options:** The first two handouts focus on generating options. Handout 1 presents the interesting option of ending the Russo-Japanese War, while Handout 2 presents the option of ending Russia’s participation in the Great War. The tsar had several people fired in 1905 and made concessions. Giving land to landless peasants would have made the tsar very popular with that group but would have alienated his base supporters, the landowners.
- **Predict unintended consequences:** There were several unintended consequences of these decisions. First, unfortunately, the consequences of social revolution were death and poverty for millions of Russian people. Second, Bolshevism was identified with violence as a consequence of the terror by Cheka. Other totalitarian governments copied the use of state terror, spreading suffering far beyond Russia.

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LESSON 2:

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION, 1905–1920

VOCABULARY

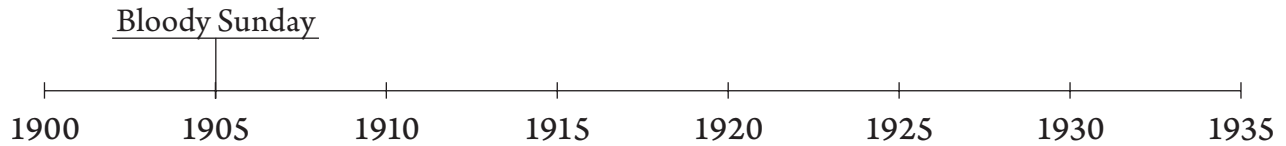
- Nicholas II—tsar of Russia who was overthrown in the Russian Revolution
- peasants—farmers
- Russo-Japanese War—Japan defeated Russia in 1904–1905
- Father Gapon—Catholic priest who presented the tsar with a petition for more rights for workers
- Bloody Sunday—a day in 1905 when hundreds of demonstrators were shot in front of the Winter Palace
- Great War—a war from 1914–1918 between Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey on one side and France, Britain, Russia, and the United States on the other side
- Tannenberg—site of great military defeat of the Russians by the Germans
- inflation—percentage rate at which prices increase per year
- Duma—Russian parliament
- Grigori Rasputin—a spiritual person who held influence with the tsarina
- Provisional Government—Russian government after the tsar, overthrown by Bolsheviks
- Soviet—representative council at the local level
- abdicate—to give up being king or queen of one's country
- Order Number 1—order by the Provisional Government that representatives would be elected from ordinary soldiers for military units
- Vladimir Lenin—leader of the Bolsheviks
- Bolsheviks—Communists who took over the Russian government in 1917
- Karl Marx—political philosopher who believed the workers would overthrow the owners
- collective farms—land held by groups of farmers who share in the crops
- Cheka—Bolshevik secret police

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- Treaty of Brest-Litovsk—harsh settlement Germany imposed on Russia in 1917
- War Communism—economic policies to abolish private property, require forced labor, and collectivize farms
- black market— a portion of the economy that involves buying and selling items illegally
- New Economic Policy—brought back market elements, such as private businesses and allowing people to keep their production after they paid their taxes

BLOODY SUNDAY IN 1905

Student Handout 1



You are Tsar Nicholas II of Russia in 1905. You have been tsar since 1894 and are a firm believer in autocracy (total power for the king/tsar). At this time most Russians are poor peasants (farmers) who have barely enough to eat due to backward farming methods. Russia has expanded its industry, but the living standards of the peasants and workers are still below those of people in Great Britain, France, Germany, and the United States. Taxes are high, the government is corrupt, and strikes are numerous. Conditions in factories are extremely harsh. Workers have tried to organize unions to improve the health, safety, and wages of workers.

Russia has been at war with Japan (Russo-Japanese War) for almost a year. The Russian army has suffered numerous defeats in battle. In addition, the war has caused shortages of food and other goods, and working conditions have worsened. Prices have increased 20 percent faster than wages, so workers are able to buy less.

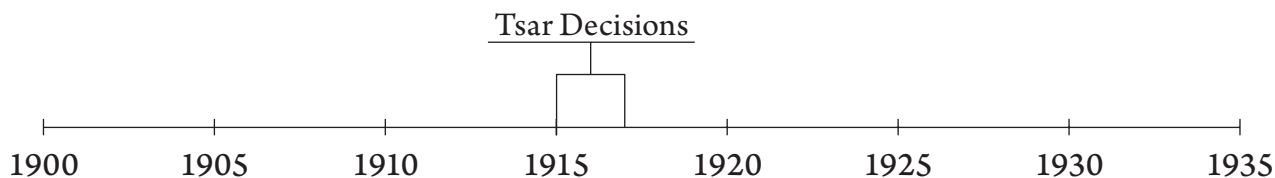
When some members of the workers' union were fired, Father Gapon, a priest in Petrograd, led 110,000 workers in a strike to protest. That is two-thirds of all the factory workers in the city. Last Sunday, January 9, thousands of workers and their families marched on the Winter Palace in Petrograd (you were away), with a petition signed by more than 150,000 people, asking for an eight-hour day; freedom to organize unions; improved working conditions; higher wages for female workers; free medical aid; freedom of speech, press, and religion; and universal suffrage for an elected assembly. The petition was phrased very politely. For example, it stated that the petitioners knew the tsar would do the best for the workers. The petitioners looked to the tsar as their father. The marchers sang religious songs as they walked to the palace.

The soldiers guarding the palace fired on the crowd as it approached, killing about 100 workers and wounding 300 others. The foreign reporters present were shocked at the blood in the snow, labeling the massacre "Bloody Sunday." News of the incident set off strikes and uprisings throughout the country. More than 400,000 people are on strike in the Russian empire in reaction to the massacre and all of the universities are closed due to protests. Government spies also report that socialist councils (called soviets) are organizing the workers and peasants to "protect their rights."

It has been a week since "Bloody Sunday." What will you do? Identify at least two decisions you will make.

TSAR DECISIONS IN 1915 AND 1917

Student Handout 2



You are Tsar Nicholas II of Russia during the Great War. In two different years, 1915 and 1917, you face some difficult decisions.

In 1915, the situation was not going well for Russia. The previous year, the Russians entered into the Great War, attacking Germany to help France, Russia's ally. The attack became one of the most spectacular losses in modern history. At the Battle of Tannenberg, the smaller German force destroyed one Russian army (more than 170,000 soldiers killed or captured) and then nearly destroyed a second army. In 1915, the Germans launched an offensive, capturing a huge amount of territory. They continued moving east, toward Petrograd. The Russian army was short of supplies. For example, about half of the new soldiers didn't have guns. The representatives of the Duma, which you dismissed repeatedly before the war started, kept demanding that they be an active part of the government, making decisions at this time of crisis for the country.

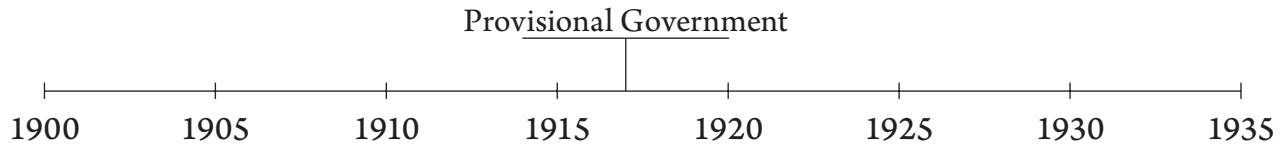
In 1917, Russians are suffering in the cities on the home front, as they have throughout the war. The prices of food and other necessities keep rising. While this inflation helps landowning farmers, who are prosperous in some places, it is leading to hunger and civil unrest in cities. There are strikes and demonstrations in Petrograd and other cities. The Duma (Russian Parliament) is accusing the tsarist government of incompetence and is demanding some control of government officials and the release of political and religious prisoners. In a move toward parliamentary (representative) government, the Duma is demanding that during a war there be restrictions on the tsar's power. The Duma is also charging the prime minister—who has a German last name—with treason. The prime minister has asked you to dissolve (to end permanently) the Duma for these reckless accusations during war.

Many Russians, including members of the Duma, think that your wife, the tsarina, is making too many decisions about appointments of government officials. They think the tsarina and her adviser, Grigori Rasputin, have too much control over the leadership of the government. Rasputin is a priest; he has no authority to influence important decisions. The charge of corruption is in the air. The demonstrations against your government are becoming larger and more frequent.

What will your policy be in 1915 and 1917? Identify at least one decision you will make for 1915 and one decision for 1917.

PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT, 1917

Student Handout 3



The year is 1917 and you are a leader of the Russian Provisional Government. The country is in the middle of a revolution. In the past months, workers went out on strike. The tsarist government called in soldiers, who shot civilians in an effort to end the demonstrations. Many soldiers were sickened to be killing Russian men and women, so they decided to join the revolutionaries. Petrograd was controlled by the revolutionists. Many ordinary soldiers throughout the army supported the revolution. These ordinary soldiers resented their officers, who they felt oppressed them. They had no say in the army. In addition, ordinary soldiers came from the working classes, so they identified with the revolutionaries. When the tsar ordered more soldiers to march to Petrograd and retake the city from the revolutionists, the soldiers disobeyed. Several generals persuaded the tsar that the best way for Russia to win the war was for him to abdicate (give up his position as tsar). Now that the tsar has abdicated, the Provisional Government has taken over running the country until a representative government is elected.

The war against Germany continues to go badly for Russian troops, as the Germans win battle after battle. Army leaders are afraid the revolution will spread to the army itself, which indeed is happening. The military supports the Provisional Government as the best way to continue the war and improve the fighting capacity of the army. The war is also costing the government a tremendous amount of money, more than the government is taking in through taxes. As a result, the government is running up a huge debt.

Meanwhile, the Russian people continue to suffer. The average person is consuming about half the calories he or she did in 1913, before the war. People wait in line for hours to buy food. Farmers don't want to sell food in the cities because inflation makes the money they receive worth less. Workers, meanwhile, spend time traveling to the farm areas to trade clothes for food. As a result, they are missing hours of work. When the workers went on strike in Petrograd, their central demand was for bread. There were other causes, such as poor working conditions and the erosion of their wages due to inflation, but food shortages were the most important cause of the strikes leading to the revolution.

Landless peasants want land. They want the land taken away from the rich landowners and divided among the landless farmers. There are more and more demonstrations in rural areas for land, some of them turning violent. Without effective government in some areas, there is no way to control

Lesson 2: The Russian Revolution, 1905–1920

these violent actions against landowners. The landowners have mortgages on their land, so if it is taken away, landowners won't be able to pay back their loans, and some banks will collapse.

Many peasants and workers also want peace. They want the war to stop for Russia. However, there are problems with stopping the war:

1. Russia has a treaty commitment to keep fighting. France and Britain are depending on Russia to keep part of the German army fighting in the east. If Russia gives up, the Germans will pour their entire army into France. If the Germans win the war, they will keep all the land they've taken in eastern Europe and Russia. Other countries will see Russia as a second-rate power that doesn't honor treaty commitments.
2. Stopping the war denies Russia an opportunity to take the straits from Turkey. Those straits are the only way for the largely landlocked Russia to ship goods on the Black Sea.
3. Demobilizing most of the army will send more working-class men home to further the revolution. If the war continues, the revolutionary soldiers in Petrograd can be sent to fight at the battlefield, where they can't cause as much trouble.
4. Negotiating with the Germans, after their military dominance in the war, will be very difficult. They will make unreasonable demands in terms of Russian land and resources.
5. The Russian people were brought together because of the war. Nationalism is still strong among many Russians. Middle-class and wealthy Russians continue to support the war and look forward to the Russian offensive this summer. If the army turns the tide in the war, Russia will get a better outcome.

The most extreme form of communism, called Bolshevism (its followers are called Bolsheviks), is becoming more popular. Bolsheviks offer peace, land, and bread. These three issues are very much on the minds of Russians.

The members of the Provisional Government have a number of proposals for consideration. Which do you support? You can vote for as many as you think would be best for Russia in general.

- A. Dissolve local governments and hold new elections for self-government.
- B. Dissolve the local police forces to be started again under the new governments.
- C. End the war, negotiating a surrender to the Germans.
- D. Reform the military by holding elections in military units of political committees (made up of ordinary soldiers) to represent the units in the Petrograd Soviet (council) and to control equipment and supplies.
- E. Take away land from rich landowners and divide it among the landless peasants.
- F. Hold an election within a month for a new national government.
- G. Increase taxes to pay for the war.
- H. Print money to pay for the war.

OUTCOMES FOR HANDOUTS 1–3

Student Handout 4

TSAR IN 1905 (*Handout 1*)

In 1905, after Bloody Sunday (*Handout 1*), the tsar made a number of decisions:

1. The tsar blamed the protests on foreign agitators. Posters were put up saying the protests were the work of British and Japanese agents. Many Russians objected to the posters for being obviously false (even the Russian secret police said that the protests were organized by Russians), and the government took them down.
2. The tsar accepted the resignation of the minister of Internal Affairs. Other officials were blamed for the problems and removed from their positions. Some of the new officials took a repressive position against demonstrations, but others did not. There was no official policy. The tsar himself bears much of the blame, however, because if he had met with Father Gapon and made some reforms, there probably wouldn't have been a Bloody Sunday massacre. Based on the tsar's diary, it seems that he never really understood the danger that the protests posed for his monarchy.
3. The tsar met with a group of workers (handpicked because they wouldn't make serious demands) to discuss their grievances. He did this to show that he was listening to workers, but he never intended to make any significant changes. The protesting workers knew the delegation was selected by the government, so no one was fooled by the tsar's trick.
4. Eventually, the tsar put in a prime minister, Pyotr Stolypin, who cracked down on protests, killing thousands of people, while also improving the economic lives of many peasants. The tsar's government kept control, but by agreeing to the formation of a Duma, even a weak one, the tsar no longer had complete control of the government. The activists in Russia knew they had forced compromises from the tsar. They organized a general strike in October 1905, which led the tsar to make concessions in the October Manifesto.
5. In the October Manifesto, the tsar agreed to allow freedom of speech, press, and assembly, and universal male suffrage for election to a representative assembly, called the Duma, the first elected body ever in the Russian national government. He also agreed that all laws must be approved by the Duma. However, after a few months, the tsar ignored the concessions because he said they were made under threat. He dismissed the Duma (sent the representatives home before the session was scheduled to end) several times over the next few years and he announced that he could rule by decree when the Duma was not in session.

Lesson 2: The Russian Revolution, 1905–1920

The tsar did not negotiate an end to the war with Japan in reaction to Bloody Sunday. When he did negotiate an end to the war six months later, the political, economic, and social situation in Russia improved somewhat.

TSAR IN 1915 AND 1917 (*Handout 2*)

As described in Handout 2, the Great War changed the situation for the tsar's government radically. In 1915, the tsar decided not to work with the Duma to set up a stronger representative government. He dismissed the Duma again, sending them home. The tsar's decision not to work with the Duma made revolution much more likely. He also decided to go to the war front to personally take command of the army against the Germans. The tsar was hoping that his presence and leadership at the front would improve morale in the army. However, his absence made the situation at home much worse. The tsarina and Rasputin gained more power and interfered more in the government. Eventually, conservative leaders thought that the monarchy was being threatened by the tsarina and Rasputin. They had Rasputin assassinated.

When the Duma returned in 1916 and began calling the prime minister a traitor, the tsar decided to replace him. He also replaced other government officials in response to demands by the Duma. This concession to the Duma didn't stop the momentum toward revolution. In fact, the action of replacing so many officials the government more unstable and made it difficult to function smoothly. People in the government called the replacement of officials "Ministerial leapfrog."

In response to more strikes and demonstrations in Petrograd in 1917, the tsar ordered the local commander to crack down on protestors. The soldiers fired into a crowd, leading to 40 casualties. The massacre led to a revolt by about 80,000 soldiers who joined the revolutionaries. Petrograd fell under the control of revolutionaries, who set up a Provisional Government. Nicholas was persuaded by his advisers that the revolts at home made it impossible for Russia to win the war. If he abdicated (gave up his position as tsar), the revolts might stop and Russia could still win the war.

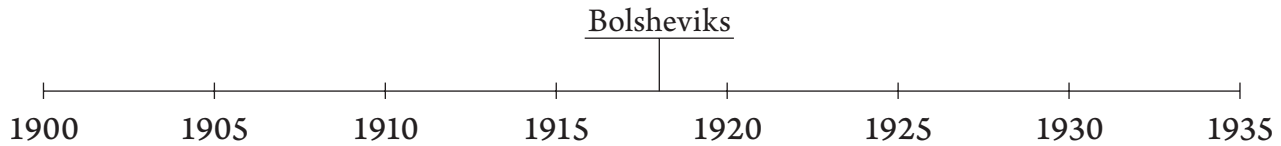
PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT IN 1917 (*Handout 3*)

The Provisional Government chose to dissolve the police forces (Option A) and dissolve local governments (Option B). These decisions had a devastating effect on Russia, because without police and local governments there was no law in many parts of the country. Looting and crime were widespread. The Provisional Government also chose to reform the military (Option D) in the famous Order Number 1. Soldiers could then elect members to a committee in their military unit who were in charge of equipment and who had the authority of the government behind them. Power was taken away from military officers and the military became political. Discipline eroded in the army, which led to more defeats. The Provisional Government decided not to drop out of the war (Option C) for the reasons given in Handout 3. Russia kept fighting and losing and the people at home kept suffering. The government did not divide up the land (Option E), which meant

that poor peasants continued to agitate to get land of their own. The government voted repeatedly on bills to divide land, but the bills never passed. The middle-class members of the government didn't want to take away land from owners because it violated their beliefs in private property. The government decided to print more money (Option H) rather than increase taxes to pay for the war (Option G). The predictable result of more money being released into the Russian economy was a sharp increase in inflation, which further aggravated shortages, strikes, and lower production. Last, the Provisional Government delayed holding elections until the process was set up to ensure a fair election. In the meantime, the government lacked legitimacy, because it wasn't elected. By the time the elections were scheduled, the government was overthrown by the Bolsheviks.

BOLSHEVIKS IN 1918

Student Handout 5



You are Vladimir Lenin, leader of the Bolsheviks in 1918. The Bolsheviks are socialists who believe in social revolution based on the writings of Karl Marx in which the workers (proletariat) overthrow the government and take away control of the country's factories and businesses from the middle class (bourgeoisie). The Provisional Government was overthrown a few months ago, in November 1917, so the socialists are in charge, organized into local councils called soviets. In the election for the Russian assembly, the Socialist-Revolutionary Party received 40 percent of the vote while the Bolsheviks received only 24 percent of the vote. In your view, the leaders of the other socialist parties lack the courage or beliefs to change Russia in fundamental ways to end the poverty and misery. Only the Bolsheviks are ready to make the basic changes needed.

Russia is still fighting Germany, but the army is so disorganized and dispirited that the Germans could march on Petrograd whenever they want. In addition, a civil war has broken out between the Bolsheviks and the people who want to bring back the tsar and return to society as it was before the revolution. Due to the war and the civil war, the Russian people continue to struggle. Hunger has spread further and workers have organized strikes and protests. As described in Handout 3, because of inflation, farmers still aren't selling all of their food to the cities. Bad transportation systems, especially the Russian railroads, make it difficult to get the food to the people who need it. The country is in a very bad state.

Which of the following will you support? You can vote for as many as you would like.

- A. Overrule the election results and take full control of the government. The other parties are not decisive enough. Russia needs a strong party to lead the workers and peasants. People need strong leadership.
- B. End the war, negotiating a surrender to the Germans.
- C. Have the government take over all the factories and transportation in Russia.
- D. Set up a single economic plan for the country, run by the government. The plan will provide unity and common goals for the Russian people.

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- E. Have the government take surplus food produced by farmers and distribute it to people according to their need. Some farms will be collectivized. In a collective farm, many farm families work on a large farm. People will produce for the good of the collective, rather than for their own profit.
- F. Workers are required to work where the government needs them as part of their commitment to the revolution.
- G. Set up a government agency to fight against counterrevolutionary actions and sabotage.
- H. Replace law with revolutionary conscience—courts and lawyers would be eliminated.

OUTCOMES FOR HANDOUT 5

Student Handout 6

The Bolsheviks under Lenin decided to overrule the election results (Option A). It enabled the Bolsheviks to stay in power, but to do that they set up a secret police group (Option G), called Cheka, and abolished law (Option H). It was the first government in history to outlaw law. With no legal constraints, Cheka used terrorism to execute opponents of the government. Terror became a permanent part of the Soviet Union. As one historian stated, “The Terror may have saved Communism, but it totally corroded its soul.” (Pipes 1995)

The Bolsheviks wisely ended the war (Option B), which the tsar and the Provisional Government should have done earlier. The Russian people were sick of the war—peace was their overriding desire. However, when the terms of the surrender to the Germans in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk were made known, the Russian people were outraged. Germany took a large part of Russia territory and many of its resources. According to one historian, Lenin was the most hated man in Russia. And the Great War was immediately replaced by civil war against the white Russians (anti-communists who fought against the Bolsheviks).

The Bolshevik economic policies (Options C–F), called War Communism, were a total disaster for Russia. The Great War had certainly hurt Russian society and economy, which was further aggravated by the civil war. The civil war forced the Bolsheviks to take drastic actions to win. Nevertheless, the economic decisions made by the Bolsheviks made the problems even worse.

Having the government take over the factories (Option C) set up government bureaucracies and eliminated incentives for people to work hard. Workers were paid according to their need rather than for how much they produced. Requiring workers to labor in factories dictated by the government was forced labor, a great irony for a government that emphasized freeing the working class from the oppression of owners. Because the government was confiscating food from farmers to distribute to people in cities (Option E), farmers resisted by cutting production and hiding food. This may have been the most destructive of all the economic policies.

According to historian E. H. Carr, “The peasant was required to deliver everything in excess of his own and his family’s needs. Naked requisition from so-called kulaks [the more prosperous peasantry] of arbitrarily determined surpluses provoked the two traditional replies of the peasant: the short-term reply of concealment of stocks and the long-term reply of refusal to sow more land than was necessary to feed his own family.”

Even socialists at the time recognized that the forced requisitions were causing “a grave decline in agriculture.” Collective farms (Option E) were opposed by peasants, so they didn’t have a great effect. But where they were imposed, they eroded incentives to work hard even further.

Hungry people from cities moved to the countryside to grow their own food. Many cities lost up to one-third of their population and factories lost half their workers. Factory production was 18 percent of the level it had been in 1913 and crop production fell by 50 percent. The single plan for the whole economy (Option D) compounded the problems caused by the other economic policies. Government planning could never keep up with the dynamic changes in markets. The country was constantly faced with surpluses of some items and shortages of others. Necessary government approvals slowed production even more.

The result of these foolish policies, imposed on top of war and civil war, was the greatest non-war-related disaster in European history since the Black Death. More than 5 million Russians died in the famine that followed these economic decisions. If not for the black market of trading goods illegally, many more people would have perished.

The policies of War Communism did not align with the theories of Karl Marx's communism. Under communism, the workers would start collective economic programs naturally, without force. War Communism was all about force—communism was imposed on the population. It brought suffering and death to the Russian people.

In speeches, Lenin admitted that War Communism had been a mistake and moved to replace it with a different policy. The New Economic Policy allowed for some private property. Taxes were fixed, so farmers who grew extra got to keep it. Food production and industrial output increased tremendously, and economic growth returned to the Soviet Union, but, unfortunately, not for long. When Joseph Stalin became the country's leader, he returned to collectivization, confiscation of extra food, elimination of private businesses and factories, forced labor, and Five-Year Plans for the economy. Along with the return to Communist policies came the return of famine.

PRIMARY SOURCE

Student Handout 7

THE FUNDAMENTAL LAW OF LAND SOCIALIZATION

(Excerpt)

Article 1. All private ownership of land, minerals, waters, forests, and natural resources within the boundaries of the Russian Federated Soviet Republic is abolished forever.

Article 2. Henceforth all the land is handed over without compensation (open or secret) to the toiling masses for their use.

Article 3. With the exceptions indicated in this decree the right to the use of the land belongs to him who cultivates it with his own labor.

Article 6. All privately owned livestock, agricultural implements, and buildings of estates that are worked by hired labor shall be taken over by the land departments of the uезд, gubernia, regional, and federal Soviets without compensation.

Article 11. In addition to effecting an equitable distribution of the agricultural land among the toiling agricultural population and a more efficient utilization of the national resources, the local and federal land departments have also the following duties: ... (e) to encourage the collective system of agriculture at the expense of individual farming, the former being more economical and leading to socialistic economy.



Troops Marching, 1917

Article 12. The distribution of land among the toilers should be made on an equal basis and in accordance with the ability to work it: local standards and traditions should also be taken into consideration. Care should be exercised that no one should have more than he can work or less than he needs for a comfortable existence.

Article 15. All incapacitated agriculturists and members of their families who are unable to work are to be taken care of by the Soviet government.

Article 17. Surplus income derived from the natural fertility of the soil or from nearness to market is to be turned over to the organs of the Soviet Government, which will use it for the good of society.

Article 18. The Soviet Government has a monopoly of the trade in agricultural machinery and seeds.

Article 19. The grain trade, both foreign and domestic, is to be a state monopoly.

From: Moser, J. Ashland University [Decree of the Central Executive Committee, February 19, 1918]

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. Which groups in Russia would like this law?
2. Which groups in Russia would not like this law?
3. What effects do you think this law had on Russian agriculture?
4. How reliable is this document as a source?



Tsar Nicholas II

LESSON 3:

THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES AND WEIMAR GERMANY, 1919

For Teachers

INTRODUCTION

■ Overview

The Treaty of Versailles is a key event in the 20th century, setting the stage for the postwar world and providing the context for World War II. It has been the subject of debate about whether the terms of the treaty were too harsh on Germany. In this lesson, students will get to decide what terms they would set for Germany.

■ Vocabulary

- Allies—France, Britain, Russia, Italy, and the United States in the Great War
- Bolsheviks—Communists who took over the Russian government in 1917
- Treaty of Brest-Litovsk—harsh settlement Germany imposed on Russia in 1917
- Treaty of Frankfurt—harsh settlement Germany imposed on France in 1871
- shell shock—psychological difficulties resulting from traumatic events, now called post-traumatic stress disorder
- Ottoman Empire—Turkey; this empire lost much of its territory after the Great War
- self-determination—the right of people to rule themselves
- 14 Points—President Wilson’s plan for building a lasting peace
- League of Nations—international organization proposed by President Wilson to prevent future wars
- 21 Demands—demands imposed by Japan on China during the Great War
- Alsace-Lorraine—areas of dispute captured by Germany in 1871 and returned to France in 1919
- reparations—payments made for damage done
- Ruhr—industrial region of Germany

- Rhineland—region of Germany west of the Rhine River
- war guilt—Germany was blamed for causing the Great War
- mandates—authority granted by the League of Nations for an Allied country to rule temporarily over territories taken from Germany or the Ottoman Empire
- blockade—act of forcefully preventing food, aid, or war materials from entering a country or area
- Treaty of Versailles—treaty ending World War I; President Wilson included the creation of the League of Nations as a part of the treaty
- May 4th Movement—protests in China against the Treaty of Versailles
- Weimar Republic—government in Germany after World War I
- subsidy—government help for business
- deficit—budget condition caused by a government spending more money than it takes in from taxes
- inflation—percentage rate at which prices increase per year

■ Decision-making Skills Emphasized

- Consider other points of view
- Ask questions about context
- Ask questions about analogies
- Set realistic goals
- Play out options
- Predict unintended consequences

LESSON PLAN A: IN-DEPTH LESSON *(One 50-Minute Class Period)*

■ Procedure

Distribute Handout 1 and have students read it. Tell students to pair up and choose which items they will make part of the Treaty of Versailles. Remind them that they can choose as many items as they would like, but some items are paired with other items as choices. Circulate around the room to answer questions or clear up misunderstandings.

Bring the class back together and discuss their decisions. Have them explain why they would include some items but not others. There are a lot of options in Handout 1, so you might want to

focus the discussion on a few key areas. Next, distribute Handout 2 with the outcomes and have students comment for homework. You can also have students analyze part of the actual Treaty by distributing Handout 5 and having them answer the Questions for Analysis. (All three questions ask for opinions.)

1. Answers will vary.
2. The Allies may have deferred the amount of reparations because they didn't have sufficient information. The most important reason they deferred reparations was most likely to avoid controversy. The amount to be set for reparations was too controversial, so the Allies put it off until after the treaty. It was a way to reduce opposition and get the treaty finished.
3. See the teacher notes for information on the historiography of harshness or leniency of the treaty.

Repeat this process with the Weimar Republic problem by distributing Handout 3 and following it with the outcomes in Handout 4.

Option—Premortem: To help students think through their decisions, ask them to consider that one or more of the proposals they chose in Handout 1 or Handout 3 ended up being a disaster. They are to go back to their pairs and discuss what the disaster could be, what could go wrong, and how likely the problems are. Should they change their decision in light of their analysis?

■ Reflecting on Decision Making

Ask students how well they did on decision making on this problem. Which decision-making skills were especially important in making these decisions about Germany? Which of the letters of **P-A-G-E** applied especially to this problem? (See the Decision-making Analysis section below for ideas.) Ask students what they did well or did poorly in terms of the **P-A-G-E** analysis of decision making. Discuss their answers.

■ Putting the Actual Decisions into Historical Context

Ask students whether the decisions made at Versailles were the result more of historical forces or the result of decisions made by individual leaders. (Some will argue that decisions made by individual leaders were the key to the Versailles conference. Personalities, especially that of President Wilson, were also very important, although there isn't much in the outcomes about personalities. Others will say that historical forces were more important. The war had devastated Europe, and leaders were looking for ways to rebuild their countries. Revenge played a role, at least for the French, and the fear of Bolshevism was an important factor in choices made.) There aren't any biographical details in the Weimar decision making, so you may not want to ask this question for that problem.

■ Connecting to Today

Ask students what they have learned from the Versailles Treaty outcomes. What advice would they give to someone in the process of writing a peace treaty today?

■ Troubleshooting

Students could easily be confused about occupation of the Rhineland, which was done for security reasons, versus occupation of the Ruhr in 1923, which was done to collect coal shipments from the Germans. The map should be helpful for some students in keeping these two areas separate.

LESSON PLAN B: QUICK MOTIVATOR LESSON (20 Minutes)

Give Handout 1 for homework and have students make their decisions. They are to make decisions for all 23 options, but tell them the class will be focusing on only some of them for discussion. In class, ask for a show of hands for items 4–12 and 18–20. Discuss reasons for five minutes. Distribute Handout 2 with the outcomes, and have students write their reactions for homework.

TEACHER NOTES TO EXPAND DISCUSSION

(For outcomes for students, see Handouts 2 and 4.)

The Versailles Treaty actually did not give a specific amount for reparations, leaving it to a commission to decide at a later point. It was a hotly debated point, some leaders arguing that a fixed figure would provide more stability to investors, leading to quicker recovery. The lesson is simpler without this distinction.

According to historian Margaret Macmillan (2001), President Wilson was never clear about what he meant by *self-determination*, as explained in Handout 2. His views on Ireland, which was agitating for independence from Great Britain, seems to show that, to him, *self-determination* meant that the people living under a democratic government should obey that government's laws, not be independent. On the other hand, for most people around the world, *self-determination* meant independence, especially from colonial rule.

Macmillan argues, based on the provisions of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, that had Germany won the war, Germany would likely have taken Belgium, northern France, and part of the Netherlands. She forcefully argues that the idea of the Treaty of Versailles as a harsh peace is a myth. If anything, it was too lenient. Marks (1978), Trachtenberg (1979), and Boemeke, Feldman, and Frazer (1998) also argue that the harsh peace is largely a myth. The interpretation of the harsh peace was very much influenced by John Maynard Keynes (1920), who said that the economic parts of the treaty were much too harsh. Evans and other historians support Keynes's view, arguing that the reparations, especially the stipulation that they had to be paid in gold, were shortsighted. The Allies never gained much from them economically, but they paid a terrible price politically, as hatred built against the terms of the Versailles Treaty.

French military leaders tried to stir up the population in the Rhineland to agitate for separation from Germany. Their efforts went nowhere and were an embarrassment for France.

Some areas that the Allies targeted to take from Germany were allowed to vote (plebiscite) on whether to stay inside Germany, become independent, or become part of another country. Some areas stayed within Germany (the Saar) and some didn't (Schleswig).

This lesson focuses on the Versailles Treaty and specific economic decisions of the Weimar government to the exclusion of other issues, such as the Weimar Constitution or the legitimacy of the Weimar government in the eyes of the German public.

■ Decision-making Analysis

P = Problem

Identify any underlying problem(s).

Consider other points of view.

What are my assumptions? Emotions?

A = Ask for information (about)

Historical context (history of this issue; context in the world)

Reliability of sources

Historical analogies

G = Goals

* **What are my main goals? Are they realistic?**

Generate options to help achieve these goals. Are they ethical?

E = Effects

* **Predict unintended consequences.**

* **Play out the options. What could go wrong?**

* Denotes topics emphasized in this lesson. The bold items are skills involved in the lesson.

- **Consider other points of view:** Ask students how they would feel if, after losing a war, the area around Pittsburgh was occupied by foreign troops until war debts were paid in full. How would they feel about giving up territory to Canada or Mexico? It is fascinating that the British delegation had some of their advisers actually role-play the Germans in a simulated negotiation. They learned from this experience that the Germans would use the fear of Bolshevism to scare the Allies, which the Germans did do in the actual negotiations.

- **Ask questions about context:** Students could ask a number of questions, including: How difficult would the reparations be for the Germans? Is \$5 billion reasonable or unreasonable? How much do the Allies rely on trade with Germany and vice versa? What do the people in these various areas want? Do they want to live under Germany or some other country? What is happening in the Soviet Union? Is the country able to threaten countries around them or is it weak? How strong are socialist movements in the various countries in Europe?
- **Ask questions about analogies:** Students should ask if the situations of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (1917) and Frankfurt (1871) are similar to or different from the situation in 1919. They all involve the victor dictating terms to the loser (similarity), but in the other two cases, the Germans had actually invaded the territory of the loser (difference). Since Germany, as the losing side, hadn't been invaded in 1919, the German population might be more inclined to think the terms, no matter how lenient, were too harsh, since leaders could argue that the Germans hadn't lost the war decisively. This is exactly what military leaders said in the infamous "stab-in-the-back" theory.
- **Set realistic goals:** Did students discuss and choose one main goal for the peace treaty? Was the prime goal to get revenge on Germany, build up the economies of the Allies, provide security against Germany in the future, prevent the spread of communism, provide for a strong and stable Germany, retain or increase the empires of the Allies, or build a prosperous international economy? Each of these goals leads to a different set of provisions in the treaty. The German side started out with a very clear goal. Their negotiators agreed that their highest priority was to avoid losing territory. They would make concessions in other areas in order to achieve that goal. Unfortunately, they quickly dropped that goal when they saw the draft of the treaty. At that point they decided on a goal of a complete revision of the treaty, so they opposed all of the major points in it. Given that Germany lost the war, this was not a reasonable goal. Without making reasonable alternatives to the provisions in the treaty, German leaders in the end had to sign it as it was originally presented to them.
- **Predict unintended consequences:** Several consequences are explained in Handouts 2 and 4.
 - Versailles Treaty: Some historians argue that an unintended consequence of bitterness over the Versailles Treaty is the rise of the Nazi Party and other extremist groups. Other historians say that the rise of the Nazis was primarily due to the Great Depression, not Versailles.
 - Versailles Treaty: How would people in the Middle East feel about the Mandate system after they eventually get control of their own countries? That is an unintended consequence of the Treaty.
 - Weimar Economic policies: The rate of theft in Germany tripled during the great inflation (described in Handout 4), as goods became the only things that could keep their value.

- See the premortem option above in the lesson plan for another way to get students to think of consequences.
- **Play out option:** Students should ask about possible problems in drawing borders for new countries and in setting up multi-ethnic countries. Can reparations actually be enforced without troops being present?

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LESSON 3:

THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES AND WEIMAR GERMANY, 1919

VOCABULARY

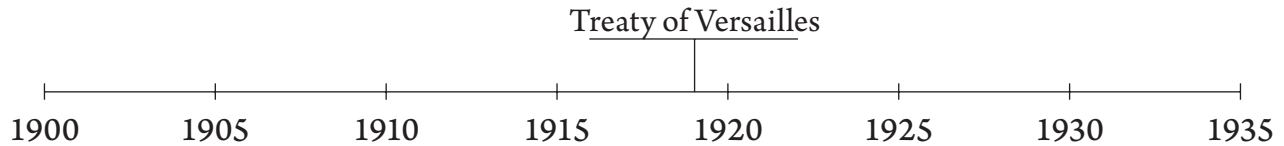
- Allies—France, Britain, Russia, Italy, and the United States in the Great War
- Bolsheviks—Communists who took over the Russian government in 1917
- Treaty of Brest-Litovsk—harsh settlement Germany imposed on Russia in 1917
- Treaty of Frankfurt—harsh settlement Germany imposed on France in 1871
- shell shock—psychological difficulties resulting from traumatic events, now called post-traumatic stress disorder
- Ottoman Empire—Turkey; this empire lost much of its territory after the Great War
- self-determination—the right of people to rule themselves
- 14 Points—President Wilson’s plan for building a lasting peace
- League of Nations—international organization proposed by President Wilson to prevent future wars
- 21 Demands—demands imposed by Japan on China during the Great War
- Alsace-Lorraine—areas of dispute captured by Germany in 1871 and returned to France in 1919
- reparations—payments made for damage done
- Ruhr—industrial region of Germany
- Rhineland—region of Germany west of the Rhine River
- war guilt—Germany was blamed for causing the Great War
- mandates—authority granted by the League of Nations for an Allied country to rule temporarily over territories taken from Germany or the Ottoman Empire
- blockade—act of forcefully preventing food, aid, or war materials from entering a country or area

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- Treaty of Versailles—treaty ending World War I; President Wilson included the creation of the League of Nations as a part of the treaty
- May 4th Movement—protests in China against the Treaty of Versailles
- Weimar Republic—government in Germany after World War I
- subsidy—government help for business
- deficit—budget condition caused by a government spending more money than it takes in from taxes
- inflation—percentage rate at which prices increase per year

PROBLEM

Student Handout 1



The year is 1919, and you are the leader of an Allied country (Britain, France, Italy, or the United States). You are in Paris to participate in negotiating a peace treaty between the Allies and Germany.

At the end of 1918, Austria-Hungary was defeated so is no part of the negotiations at Versailles. Meanwhile, when the Bolsheviks (Communists) took over the government in 1917, they immediately surrendered and dropped out of the war, betraying the other Allied countries in their fight against Germany. The Allies that remained in the war continued fighting Germany, pushing back the German army's front lines in France. Morale in the German army fell dramatically, and hundreds of thousands of German soldiers surrendered. The Germans finally asked for peace, knowing that if they continued to fight, the Allies would eventually invade Germany.

This war has been a catastrophe for Europe. More than 16 million people have lost their lives, and more than 20 million are wounded, often with injuries so severe that they will have to depend on others for the rest of their lives. Many soldiers and civilians are suffering from the psychological effects of shell shock (post-traumatic stress disorder) due to the horrific scenes they have witnessed.

Europe is devastated in other ways from the war. People are hungry, economies are devastated, there are shortages of many items, trade has been disrupted, debts are terribly high, and many governments have collapsed. Now that Bolsheviks (Communists) have taken over in Russia, many Europeans are fearful that Communists will take over their governments as well. After all, the Bolsheviks have said repeatedly that they will eventually take over all countries.

In the Middle East, the Ottoman Empire (Turkey) has collapsed. Various groups want to form independent countries to give their people *self-determination*. President Woodrow Wilson, in his 14 Points, emphasized self-determination and the formation of a League of Nations. Asian countries are also making claims. During the war, Japan issued 21 Demands against China, which forced China to give up land to Japan, including an area of China that had been under German dominance. China was not fighting in the war and China and Japan were not enemies. Japan wants to keep the German area of China, a clear violation of self-determination, while China wants the area back.

In reality, the leaders of the Allied countries had somewhat different views of what should be done about Germany and the other elements of peace. On some leaders' minds were Germany's actions in negotiating its own peace treaties in the past. For example, in the Frankfurt Treaty ending the Franco-Prussian War in 1871, the Germans had taken the disputed areas of Alsace and Lorraine

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away from France and made those areas part of Germany. France had to pay \$5 billion to Germany, and the German army occupied part of France for three years until all the money was paid. In the peace treaty Germany negotiated with Russia when Russia left the war in 1917 (the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk), Germany took away territory that included a quarter of the Russian Empire's population, a quarter of its industry, and 90 percent of its coal mines. However, for this problem, you will not be role-playing to fight for a particular country's interests. Rather, you will be focusing on the broader question: How can we preserve the peace?

Which of the following will you include in the peace treaty in order to create the best chance for an enduring peace? You can include as many as you would like. Note that #5 and #6 are alternative choices. You can pick #5 or #6 (or neither), but not both. The following are also alternatives: #10 and #11; #13 and #14; #18 and #19.

1. Russia, under the Communists, will participate in the peace treaty.
2. Germany will participate in the peace treaty negotiations.
3. Alsace and Lorraine, the disputed area on the border between France and Germany that was controlled by Germany, will be part of France. (See Map A.)
4. The Germans will pay reparations for the losses they caused in France and Belgium to the amount of \$5 billion over a period of 15 years.
5. To ensure payment of the money for damages, the Allies will occupy the Ruhr, the industrial heartland of Germany, until all the money is paid. (See Map A.)
6. To ensure payment of the money for damages, the Allies will move troops into the Ruhr if Germany gets too far behind on payments. They will not occupy the Ruhr from the beginning. (See Map A.)
7. Germany will accept responsibility for causing the war. After all, the Germans declared war on France and invaded Belgium even though neither had provoked Germany.
8. The German army will be reduced to 100,000 men (most armies are at least five times larger) and the navy will be very small. Germany is not allowed to have an air force.
9. Germany will give up its overseas colonies.
10. Groups in the Middle East and Asia will receive self-determination. So, for example, the people of Jordan would form their own independent country, perhaps calling it the country of Jordan.
11. Set up "mandates" in the Middle East in which France and Britain would run the Middle East governments temporarily and supervise a gradual change to self-determination.
12. There will be a League of Nations to resolve international issues and keep the peace.
13. Allow Japan to keep the parts of China that they took during the war under the 21 Demands.

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14. China gets all of its territory back, including the territory Japan took.
15. The Allied armies will occupy all of Germany and run the German government for a period of 15 years. The occupation will prevent Germany from threatening other countries and move Germany toward a democratic government.
16. Germany will be divided into four smaller countries in order to prevent a powerful Germany from arising again to threaten other countries.
17. There will be war crimes trials for accused leaders from all countries.
18. The Rhineland, the part of Germany that borders France, will become part of France. This area will provide France a defensive buffer against a German attack. (See Map A.)
19. Allied troops will occupy the Rhineland, the part of Germany that borders France, for 15 years. (See Map A.)
20. The Germans will not be allowed to have any troops or fortifications in the Rhineland area. (See Map A.)
21. The Allies will continue their blockade of Germany until the Germans sign the treaty.
22. Territory will be taken from Germany, and from Russia, to form the independent country of Poland. Poland had been a country but was divided between Germany and Russia before the war. (See Map B.)
23. The Austro-Hungarian Empire will be divided into several independent countries. Each of these countries contains more than one ethnic group, but their policies toward minorities can be worked out by each government, according to self-determination.

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MAP A

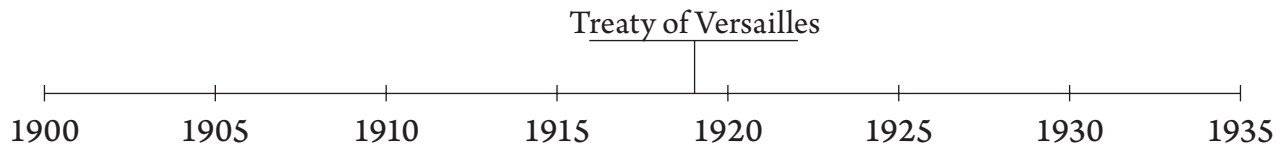


MAP B



OUTCOMES OF TREATY OF VERSAILLES

Student Handout 2



The Allies decided to limit Germany greatly, by limiting the army and navy and eliminating the air force (option #8 on Handout 1), by blaming the war on Germany (#7) and making them pay reparations to the Allied countries (#4), by forcing them to give up Alsace and Lorraine (#3) (See Map A.), by forcing them to give up territory to form Poland (#22) (See Map B.), and by making them give up colonies (#9).

Many historians think the Treaty of Versailles was too harsh on Germany. The country was punished so extensively that it led to the rise of the Nazis. These historians argue that the war guilt clause was ridiculous. How could one country be the sole cause for a complicated world war? Other countries share in some of the blame for causing the war. In addition, the reparations were humiliating to Germany and were much too high. Germany had to recover from the war but had the extra burden of paying money and goods to other countries. Weakening the military, taking away German territory, and taking all of her colonies were degrading, according to these historians. The Allies also conducted war crimes trials (#17). Many people thought the trials were much too punitive on the Germans, because civilians were killed and maimed by all countries, not just by the Germans. The Germans complained that the blockade (#21) itself was a war crime. Germany couldn't sign the treaty until it was ready, some seven months after the end of the war. Meanwhile, thousands of Germans starved to death. It was all too much.

"Hogwash," cry other historians. The treaty was not too harsh. Germany was blamed for the war because the Germans mainly caused the war, plain and simple. They encouraged Austria-Hungary to attack Serbia and then Germany attacked France, drawing the major powers to war. The reparations were modest, not too high for Germany to pay. In fact, the reparations were lower than those Germany charged France after the Franco-Prussian War of 1871. After the war, Britain and France also had huge debts, had lost colonies, and had to rebuild. British and French taxes were higher than German taxes after the war. The British and French chose to pay to rebuild, while the Germans chose to defy the treaty, to everyone's detriment. The war crimes trials were understandable. While both sides committed crimes, German policy, approved by the highest officials in government, was to execute civilians in Belgium. Those crimes needed to be punished.

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Some historians go further, arguing that the Allies were too lenient in the Treaty of Versailles. The Allies decided to occupy the Ruhr only if the Germans got behind on payments (#6) (See Map A.), rather than occupy the region until all the payments were made (#7). There was a lack of enforcement, which allowed the Germans (who were upset by the punishments in the treaty and by being excluded from the negotiations [#2]), to evade many of the treaty's terms and to build up extremist factions within Germany. In 1923, when Germany did get behind on payments and French troops marched into the Ruhr, Germans were outraged. But the Germans had defaulted on coal shipments 34 times. These historians argue that it would have been much better to have the French troops in the Ruhr all along. Germans wouldn't have liked it, but they would have had no choice but to pay. They never would have defaulted on their shipments. The evidence shows that Germans were much harsher in their treaties when they were the victors in war. As explained in Handout 1, the Germans took over a huge portion of Russian industry in the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, and in the 1871 treaty with France, Germany occupied part of France until France made all the payments to Germany. The Allies did not occupy Germany (#15) or divide Germany (#16), as they did at the end of World War II, so they could have been much harsher.

The French wanted to take over the Rhineland, making it part of France (#18) in order to provide a buffer against a future German attack. After extensive negotiations among the Allies, the French settled for occupation of the Rhineland by British, French, and Belgian forces and gradual withdrawal at 5-, 10-, and 15-year intervals (#19). In addition, Germany would not be able to station military forces in the Rhineland (#20). (See Map A.)

In terms of colonial claims, the Allies set up mandates (#11), rather than outright self-determination (#10). The mandate system allowed Britain and France to continue as imperial powers and allowed them to extract and sell valuable natural resources, especially oil. The Allies also allowed Japan to keep the part of China taken during the war (#13). The leaders conceded the territory to Japan to get the country to join the League of Nations (#12). The decision was a clear violation of self-determination and it led to Chinese protests, called the May 4th Movement. The mandate system and concessions to Japan undermined the credibility of the treaty in the eyes of people all over the world, but especially in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa.

The taking of German territory to form Poland (#22) infuriated Germans, especially taking territory for the Polish corridor and the city of Danzig, which separated Germany geographically. (See Map B.) The taking of territories from Germany or from Austria-Hungary (#23) that contained German populations gave the Nazis an excuse to agitate to take those areas back in the 1930s. This was the case in Poland and Czechoslovakia. The decision to form independent countries in central Europe highlighted flaws in the concept of self-determination. Multi-ethnic countries were subject to agitation by minorities for their own countries. Did self-determination mean that every ethnic group could have its own country, or did it just mean that every country was entitled to be democratic (and all groups would have to obey the rules of that country)? How small would the countries become? To further complicate matters, some of these ethnic groups already had achieved a high degree of independence during and after the war and many people

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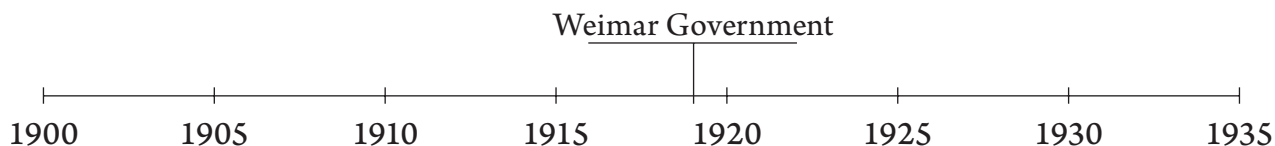
were migrating. The peacemakers couldn't possibly keep up with all these changing circumstances, so they made choices on countries and borders that were deeply resented by groups living in those areas, leading to more border disputes and other clashes. It was a recipe for instability.

A big factor influencing the negotiations over the treaty was the threat of Bolshevism. The Allies decided not to allow the Communists to participate in the treaty (#1), partly because the Russians betrayed the alliance by dropping out of the war. The Allies also feared that the Communists would have disrupted the negotiations and used the talks as a forum to spread Communist ideas to other countries, all of which had socialist movements in them.

The League of Nations (#12) was an important component of the enforcement of the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles and as a mechanism for preserving peace. When the United States rejected the League and the treaty, the basis for the peace was weakened.

WEIMAR GOVERNMENT

Student Handout 3



The year is 1919 and you are a leader of the Weimar government in Germany. Germany has lost the Great War and is in turmoil. There are gun battles, riots, and civil unrest in many parts of Germany. The Allied countries (mainly France, Britain, and the United States) have dictated peace terms to Germany, including reparations (payments) to France and Britain. These reparations, on top of the poverty and devastation caused by the war, are going to hurt Germany a great deal. The German government is already deep in debt from the war. Extra payments to France and Britain will only make the debt worse. Meanwhile, German citizens want the government to help them recover from the war. Wounded soldiers, widows, and orphans need pensions. In addition, the government could pay subsidies (payments to contractors) for housing construction and to keep the cost of bread low (payments to bakers). To keep unemployment down, the government could spend money to keep the number of rail and post office workers high and the price of railroad tickets and mail low. On the tax side, the government could raise taxes to pay for extra spending and for reparations. Or, it could run a deficit, which would lead to inflation. Because reparations are a fixed amount, inflation would make it easier to pay them, as there would be more money in the economy. On the other hand, inflation hurts investors and middle-class people who have savings.

Which will you do? You can check as many as you like:

- ☐ 1. Pay pensions for wounded soldiers, widows, and orphans.
- ☐ 2. Pay subsidies for housing construction.
- ☐ 3. Pay subsidies for bread.
- ☐ 4. Pay to keep the railroad workers employed.
- ☐ 5. Pay to keep the post office workers employed.
- ☐ 6. Increase taxes to pay for all spending and reparations.
- ☐ 7. Increase taxes to pay for most spending and reparations. This would mean running a small deficit.
- ☐ 8. Don't increase taxes significantly to pay for spending and reparations. Deliberately run a large deficit to get the economy growing and to reduce the reparations being paid by promoting inflation (as explained above).
- ☐ 9. Your ideas:

OUTCOME OF WEIMAR GOVERNMENT

Student Handout 4

The Weimar government decided to pay for all the programs for soldiers, widows, and orphans; subsidies for housing; subsidies for bread; subsidies for railroad workers; and subsidies for post office workers. They did not increase taxes significantly, so they deliberately ran a deficit. The deficit led to inflation, which made it easier to pay off the reparations owed to France and Britain. Germans complained bitterly about reparations, but the extra spending on subsidies was actually more important to the inflation that resulted. And what an inflation! By 1923, prices were more than a trillion times higher than they had been in 1914. When workers were paid, they would buy something with it within an hour, because prices were more than doubling every day. A customer at a restaurant who bought a meal would pay a higher price at the end of the meal than was on the menu at the start of the meal. The horror of this hyperinflation hurt Germany's stability greatly, although the government was able to stabilize prices by 1924.

Although after the war many Germans thought of themselves as victims, in many ways the economic situation in Britain was just as bad as that of Germany. The British debt was just as high; the British lost about 22 percent of its territory; there was a new, shaky democratic government; and many people lived in poverty. The British chose to keep prices stable and to pay their debts through taxes, not run a deficit. It hurt British citizens greatly, as unemployment remained high. Economists disagree on which method (deficits and inflation, versus high taxes and unemployment) is better for dealing with war debts, but all economists agree that the level of deficits run by the Weimar government was bad for Germany.

PRIMARY SOURCE

Student Handout 5

PEACE TREATY OF VERSAILLES *(Excerpts)*

Article 45: As compensation for the destruction of the coal-mines in the north of France and as part payment towards the total reparation due from Germany for the damage resulting from the war, Germany cedes to France in full and absolute possession, with exclusive rights of exploitation, unencumbered and free from all debts and charges of any kind, the coal-mines situated in the Saar Basin as defined in Article 48.

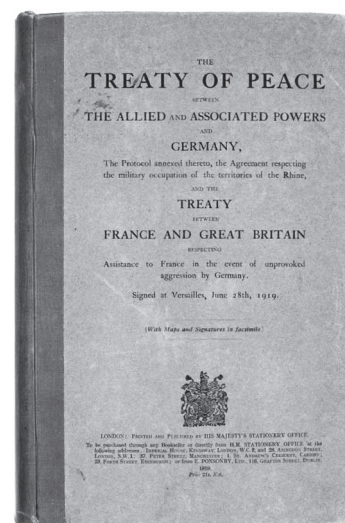
Article 231: The Allied and Associated Governments affirm and Germany accepts the responsibility of Germany and her Allies for causing all the loss and damage to which the Allied and Associated Governments and their nationals have been subjected as a consequence of the war imposed upon them by the aggression of Germany and her Allies.

Article 232: The Allied and Associated Governments recognise that the resources of Germany are not adequate, after taking into account permanent diminutions of such resources which will result from other provisions of the present Treaty, to make complete reparation for all such loss and damage. The Allied and Associated Governments, however, require, and Germany undertakes, that she will make compensation for all damage done to the civilian population of the Allied and Associated Powers and to their property during the period of the belligerency [war]....

Article 233: The amount of the above damage for which compensation is to be made by Germany shall be determined by an Inter-Allied Commission, to be called the Reparation Commission....

Article 428: As a guarantee for the execution of the present Treaty by Germany, the German territory situated to the west of the Rhine, together with the bridgeheads, will be occupied by Allied and Associated troops for a period of fifteen years from the coming into force of the present Treaty.

Article 431: If before the expiration of the period of fifteen years Germany complies with all the undertakings resulting from the present Treaty, the occupying forces will be withdrawn immediately.



Cover of the English version of the Versailles Treaty.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. Which article was probably most difficult for Germany?
2. Why did the Allies leave the amount of reparations to be determined later by a commission?
3. Are these articles too harsh or too lenient on Germany?



Signing the Versailles Treaty in the Hall of Mirrors.

LESSON 4:

CRISIS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA, 1938

For Teachers

INTRODUCTION

■ Overview

This lesson is titled “Crisis in Czechoslovakia,” rather than the “Munich Conference,” because some students might have heard of the Munich Conference. They will know that the British leader, Neville Chamberlain, gave away land to the Nazis in a deal with Adolf Hitler. The student handouts also do not contain the word *appeasement*, because most people believe that appeasement is bad. It wasn’t always so. Before the Munich Conference, *appeasement* meant compromising to keep peace. After Munich, the word became pejorative. No one wanted to be known for engaging in appeasement. This lesson allows students to participate in the Munich Conference and decide for themselves why Chamberlain engaged in appeasement and the extent to which the decision’s consequences were, on balance, negative.

■ Vocabulary

- Neville Chamberlain—prime minister of Britain
- Adolf Hitler—leader of Germany
- Sudetenland—region of Czechoslovakia taken over by Germany
- Versailles Treaty—treaty ending World War I in which Germany was punished for causing the war
- reparations—Germany had to pay France and other countries for damage caused during World War I
- Benito Mussolini—leader of Italy
- Ethiopia—African country conquered by Italy
- Rome-Berlin Axis—a military alliance of the two countries
- Rhineland—demilitarized part of Germany that German troops entered in 1936 in violation of the Treaty of Versailles
- Spanish Civil War—fighting between the Republican (Loyalist) government and Fascist rebels from 1936–1939

- Anschluss—German takeover of Austria
- self-determination—the right of a nation or people to determine its own form of government
- collective security—the idea that countries would unite to stop aggressive countries from taking over smaller countries
- Munich—German city where international leaders met in 1938 to discuss Germany’s seizure of the Sudetenland
- General Beck—German general who resigned in protest over Germany’s demands on Czechoslovakia
- ultimatum—a set of demands with a time limit
- appeasement—Britain and France’s decision at the Munich Conference to allow Germany to take over the Sudetenland

■ Decision-making Skills Emphasized

- Identify underlying problems
- Consider other points of view
- Ask about historical context
- Ask about reliability of sources
- Set realistic goals
- Predict unintended consequences
- Play out options

LESSON PLAN A: IN-DEPTH LESSON *(One 50-Minute Class Period)*

■ Procedure

Distribute Handout 1; have students read it silently and decide what they will do. Next, divide students into groups and have them discuss their choices. Allow time for students to ask questions. Bring the class back together. Have each group report on its decisions and explain them. Have the class vote on the various options. After groups have reported, distribute Handout 2 (which lists the outcomes) or tell the class what actually happened.

Option: To help students ask questions, you could write these four questions on the board and have students vote on which question they would like to have answered, with each student getting one vote. Read the suggested answer to the highest vote getter (Handout 5). Questions:

1. How strong is the British military compared to Germany, Italy, and Japan?

2. Can Britain, France, and Russia defend Czechoslovakia?
3. Are we better off fighting in 1938 or delaying the fight for a year or more?
4. How strong are Czech defenses? Can the Czechs hold out against the Germans?

Option for Primary Source: Have students read the Munich Agreement in Handout 3 and answer the Questions for Analysis:

1. There are several problems with the Munich Agreement. First, no one from the Czech government signed it. Second, it is an agreement for the Czechs to evacuate their own territory. Third, while it looks like an international commission (containing Czech representatives) will decide many of the details, the German army will be occupying the Sudetenland. Thus the commission will be powerless to implement any decisions.
2. Germany wants the fortifications intact so they can use them in defense of Germany.

Note: The vocabulary in the teacher pages includes the term *appeasement*, but the vocabulary for students does not. If students read the definition for *appeasement* before deciding what to do, they will be tipped off about what not to do. Students can always add *appeasement* to their vocabulary list after the lesson is complete.

■ Reflecting on Decision Making

Ask students what they would have done differently, if anything, now that they know the outcomes. Which decision-making skills were particularly important in making decisions about Czechoslovakia? Which of the letters of **P-A-G-E** applied especially to this problem? (See the “Decision-making Analysis” section below for ideas.) Ask students what they did well or poorly in terms of the **P-A-G-E** analysis of decision making. If you used Handout 4, ask students how important framing the problem was. Discuss their answers, or have students write their answers in their journals or in their decision-making logs.

■ Putting the Actual Decisions into Historical Context

Ask: Which played a more important role in influencing the decisions of Neville Chamberlain, historical forces or personal characteristics/choices? (People who feel that it was personal characteristics argue that Chamberlain was naïve in believing Hitler. Chamberlain stressed the point that conflict could be avoided through personal diplomacy. The British people were ready to fight in late September after Hitler demanded all of the Sudetenland. It was Chamberlain who chose to keep negotiating even after Hitler made such unreasonable demands. Other historians stress historical forces. In the 1930s Britain had chosen not to build up its military forces compared to those of Germany. When faced with a crisis, British leaders chose to negotiate because they would likely lose a war due to their military weakness. Another historical force was the fresh memory of the horrors of World War I. Citizens in Britain and France would go to great lengths to avoid a repetition of the carnage of World War I. Thus, leaders in Britain and France in the 1930s

who stressed a policy of negotiation over confrontation were popular. The majority of people in these countries wanted peace. The leaders and their actions simply reflected that preference.)

■ Connecting to Today

Ask students if they have ever heard people use the term *appeasement*. What did the person mean? Was it a positive or negative term for the person to use?

■ Troubleshooting

You might want to review the events leading up to the Sudeten Crisis to help set the context. Some students may also be confused about the Sudetenland being part of Czechoslovakia. Reviewing the map may help.

LESSON PLAN B: QUICK MOTIVATOR LESSON (10–20 Minutes)

Assign Handout 1 as homework. In class, have students pair up and discuss their choices for three minutes or so. Ask for a show of hands for each choice, and briefly discuss students' reasoning. Distribute Handout 2, and for homework have students comment on what they learned from these outcomes.

TEACHER NOTES TO EXPAND DISCUSSION

(For outcomes for students, see Handout 2.)

The actual negotiations over Czechoslovakia were much more complicated than the single conference portrayed in this lesson or described in many history textbooks. Germany demanded the Sudetenland in May 1938 but backed down when Czechoslovakia mobilized. Britain and Germany negotiated throughout the summer. In September, Chamberlain met with Hitler to formalize an agreement on Czechoslovakia, but Hitler increased his demands. Chamberlain left, and all sides started to prepare for war. At this point, Chamberlain made another attempt to negotiate. Hitler accepted, and that is when the Munich Conference was held.

Some historians think Prime Minister Chamberlain was not knowledgeable about Czechoslovakia or the countries around it because he thought the fate of the Czechs was not significant to British national interest. According to them, Chamberlain had conceded dominance over Czechoslovakia long before the Munich Crisis. At a 1937 conference, he stated that “the proper subjects of appeasement [are]: the German areas of Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Lithuania.” Other historians argue that Chamberlain was knowledgeable about central Europe but was willing to concede on Czechoslovakia because it is not near the sea. With a large navy and small army, Britain focused on areas where it could assert naval power.

At the time Prime Minister Chamberlain's aides received Hitler's note, Chamberlain was addressing Parliament and telling its members that war was coming. The aides handed the note to Chamberlain while the audience was clapping. When the applause subsided, Chamberlain told the

crowd that Hitler had postponed mobilization for 24 hours and accepted Chamberlain's request to negotiate. The audience was relieved. Naomi Black (1980) argues that this dramatic note shows that Chamberlain was playing up the crisis atmosphere to get Parliament and the British people to support his policy for avoiding war. She argues that Chamberlain knew two hours before the address to Parliament that Germany had postponed mobilization. He waited to interrupt the meeting for dramatic effect.

Historian Igor Lukes (1999) provides evidence that the Soviets were not going to support Czechoslovakia militarily. There is no evidence in the Czech archives of any plans for Soviet military action to defend the country. The Czech leader asked the Soviet ambassador twice if the Soviets would intervene, and each time the ambassador dodged the question. As mentioned in the lesson, there was no reasonable way to move troops to Czechoslovakia by land. The evidence also shows that there were no plans to move planes into Czechoslovakia. The Soviets would have had to pre-deploy fuel (Soviet planes used different fuel than did Czech planes) before the planes could be moved there. There was no pre-deployment of fuel. In addition, the Czechs wouldn't have wanted the planes before the attack because it would have given the Germans an excuse to attack. German propaganda would have said that Czechoslovakia was building up weapons from the Communists to attack Germany.

■ Decision-making Analysis

P = Problem

- * **Identify any underlying problem(s).**

Consider other points of view.

What are my assumptions? Emotions?

A = Ask for information (about)

Historical context (history of this issue; context in the world)

Reliability of sources

Historical analogies

G = Goals

What are my main goals? Are they realistic?

Generate options to help achieve these goals. Are they ethical?

E = Effects

- * **Predict unintended consequences.**

Play out the options. What could go wrong?

* Denotes topics emphasized in this lesson

bold = skills involved in the lesson.

- **Underlying problem (framing):** Handout 4 focuses on this skill. As problems are framed differently, different perspectives emerge on the best option. For example, Prime Minister Chamberlain thought that Czechoslovakia was not central to British national interest (stated in #6), which contributed to him giving in to Hitler's demands. The other frame that heavily influenced Chamberlain was domestic politics (stated in #3). The British people had elected Chamberlain's party, the Tories, as the peace party, so it was difficult for Chamberlain to make decisions that would provoke war. As students discuss these frames, their perspectives may change on the best decision. Many students are likely to agree with dictator aggression in #1, so they will be inclined to stand up to, rather than compromise with, Hitler.
- **Consider other points of view:** Did students consider the point of view of the Czech people and government? Did they consider the points of view of other countries, such as the Soviet Union and the United States? Did they consider the point of view of German people and non-Nazi leaders?
- **Ask about historical context:** Students should ask many questions, such as:
 1. How strong are Czech defenses? (They are very strong but probably couldn't stand up very long to German air power.)
 2. Could the Germans hold off an attack by the British and French in the west? (No. German generals have said how weak the defenses are.)
 3. Are the Sudeten Germans being mistreated? (No. It is all German agitators. When the Czech leader offered to agree to all German demands, the Sudeten Germans still refused to agree.)
 4. Has compromise worked in the past? (Yes. At the end of nearly every conflict, there has been some compromise. Here, however, the demands have been extremely unreasonable and a compromise would mean giving up principles—such as self-determination and stopping aggression—that are central to the British nation.)
- **Ask about reliability of sources:** Students should consider the reliability of Hitler's promises and arguments, as well as the information from the British spy. Is it true that all Germans in the Sudetenland are being mistreated and want to unite with Germany?
- **Setting realistic goals:** It was probably not realistic for Britain and France to defend Czechoslovakia directly, a point that seemed to weigh heavily in Chamberlain's decisions. An attack on Germany by Britain and France was realistic militarily, because much of the German army would have been tied up in Czechoslovakia. However, it might have been difficult to justify an attack on Germany, leading to full-scale war, to save a part of Czechoslovakia.

- **Play out the options:** When students make decisions on diplomatic matters, they should consider how other countries would respond to those decisions. The other small countries in central Europe adjusted to the reality of German domination, either cutting deals or preparing to fight. Hitler took advantage of the Munich Agreement to take all of Czechoslovakia in March 1939.
- **Unintended consequences:** The appeasement in this crisis led Hitler to think that the allies would never stand up to him (Hitler: “They are little worms”). The outcome was war anyway, but on less favorable terms for Britain and France. As mentioned in Handout 2, the German army was strengthened by Czech factories and equipment. Munich also was a cause of the Hitler-Stalin Non-Aggression Pact, as described in Handout 2. In addition, the long-term unintended consequence of appeasement was that most leaders in subsequent crises had to appear strong and uncompromising, lest they be labeled appeasers.

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LESSON 4:

CRISIS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA, 1938

VOCABULARY

- Neville Chamberlain—prime minister of Britain
- Adolf Hitler—leader of Germany
- Sudetenland—region of Czechoslovakia taken over by Germany
- Versailles Treaty—treaty ending World War I in which Germany was punished for causing the war
- reparations—Germany had to pay France and other countries for damage caused during World War I
- Benito Mussolini—leader of Italy
- Ethiopia—African country conquered by Italy
- Rome-Berlin Axis—a military alliance of the two countries
- Rhineland—demilitarized part of Germany that German troops entered in 1936 in violation of the Treaty of Versailles
- Spanish Civil War—fighting between the Republican (Loyalist) government and Fascist rebels from 1936–1939
- Anschluss—German takeover of Austria
- self-determination—the right of a nation or people to determine its own form of government
- collective security—the idea that countries would unite to stop aggressive countries from taking over smaller countries
- Munich—German city where international leaders met in 1938 to discuss Germany’s seizure of the Sudetenland
- General Beck—German general who resigned in protest over Germany’s demands on Czechoslovakia
- ultimatum—a set of demands with a time limit

PROBLEM

Student Handout 1



You are Neville Chamberlain, the prime minister of Britain, and it is September 1938. You are facing a crisis in Czechoslovakia. You have been prime minister since May 1937. Your political party, the Tory Party, won the election of 1934 by emphasizing a peace platform. The one-sided victory over the Labor Party gave the Tories a huge majority in Parliament, which it still holds in 1938, and ensured that the government would continue to emphasize negotiations to prevent war.

Adolf Hitler, leader of Germany's Nazi Party and that country's dictator, is demanding that the Sudetenland, a mountainous region in Czechoslovakia, be turned over to Germany. (See map) Hitler claims that Germans in the region are being mistreated. The majority of people in the Sudetenland, about 3 million, are German, and there is clearly a great deal of strife and agitation in the Sudetenland between Germans and Czechs.

From the time the Versailles Treaty was finished in 1919, some British leaders wanted to compromise more with the Germans. British leaders were shocked when the French proposed trying German government and military leaders for war crimes. In 1920 when the German government asked to send in troops to stop a Communist uprising in the Rhineland area of Germany, British leaders supported the request, even though the Versailles Treaty prevented German troops from entering the area. When the French sent troops into the Rhineland in reaction to German government moves to stop the uprising, the British saw the French reaction as much too harsh. British leaders also consistently pushed for reductions in the amount of reparations that the Germans should pay (by 75 percent). Increasingly through the 1920s and 1930s, the British public saw the French—rather than just the Germans—as causing problems.

In fact, now many people in Britain, especially the leaders of the *Times* and other newspapers, believe Britain should try to understand Germany. Some British people want to unite with the Germans against Bolshevism. The Nazis have suggested such an alliance. There have been reports of atrocities in Germany, such as the Night of the Long Knives in 1934, when numerous government leaders were killed by the Nazis. However, the editors of the *Times* said, "We may not like his methods, but Hitler is sincere." When Hitler sent troops into the Rhineland (see above) two years ago in violation of the Treaty of Versailles, the French and British decided not to fight. Many people in Britain think Germany was justified in occupying the Rhineland. The London *Times* said, "It's their own back yard. It's a walk in their own garden. Versailles was too harsh."

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Other people in Britain believe in collective security, where countries band together to stop aggression by bully countries. These people are disgusted that the League of Nations, including Britain and France, did so little when Italy attacked Ethiopia in 1935 and when Italy and Germany supported the fascists in Spain in overthrowing the republican government in the civil war there. They point out that in 1935, after the League did nothing to stop Italy in Ethiopia, Italy joined Germany in the Rome-Berlin Axis. Weakness by the democracies may have encouraged the fascist countries to ally together in their policies of aggression.

The French have a treaty commitment to defend the Czechs against outside attacks. Britain doesn't have any formal alliance with Czechoslovakia, but the French won't take a stand against Germany unless the British do. Meanwhile, Germany continues to expand. Earlier this year, in March, Hitler demanded that Austria become part of Germany. The Austrian leader put the question to the Austrian people for a vote. However, the day before the scheduled vote, German soldiers crossed into Austria and took control of the country. It was after the German takeover of Austria, referred to as the Anschluss, that the Sudeten Germans started demonstrating for independence from Czechoslovakia. A British spy said in May that all the agitation in the Sudetenland is due to German agents supplying weapons to the pro-German party there. They are building up supplies for sabotage to help the German army when it attacks Czechoslovakia. The sabotage includes, according to the spy, "destruction of railway lines, main roads and bridges, and armed attacks on frontier posts and Czech sentries." Early in September, the Czech president agreed to all of the demands of the Sudeten Germans, but the Sudeten Germans still wouldn't agree to the acceptance by the Czech President of their own demands.

Hitler says that if he gets the Sudetenland, he won't ask for any more land. He just needs to protect the Germans there. His original demand, earlier this year, was for self-determination for the Germans in the Sudetenland. You had agreed that majority German areas could become part of Germany. However, when you talked with Hitler earlier in September, his new demands were that the German army occupy all of the Sudetenland—not just the majority German areas—within 10 days, making all of it part of Germany. Hitler screamed that Sudeten Germans were being terrorized by Czech authorities. The Czech army must leave within six days and the Czech soldiers cannot destroy any of the fortifications they have built. Czech people also have to leave the area and cannot take any large possessions with them. Further, the demands of Poland and Hungary for parts of Czechoslovakia must also be met. He said he was sorry for the new demands and he would be willing to delay any attack until October 1 out of respect for you. At the time of these new demands, a British public opinion poll showed that 44 percent of those questioned disagreed with the policy of giving in to Hitler's demands, while 18 percent were supportive.

Yesterday, Hitler gave a speech in which he said that the Czechs need to choose between peace and war. "He [the Czech leader] will either accept this offer and now at last give to the Germans their freedom or we will go and fetch this freedom for ourselves. We are determined!"

The Russians are arguing that they would like to stand firm and back Czechoslovakia against Germany. They argue that if Britain, France, and Russia support Czechoslovakia, the Germans may back down. There are three problems with this plan. First, some people in Britain find Stalin and the Russians just as bad as the Germans. Second, the Russian army is weak after Stalin executed many of the top military leaders. According to British intelligence, the Soviets might be able to defend, but they aren't capable of attacking outside the Soviet Union. The Soviets were soundly beaten in a battle against the Japanese this year, showing how poorly prepared the Red Army is. To compound the problem, the Soviets have no reasonable way to get large numbers of troops to Czechoslovakia. Polish leaders won't allow them to move troops through that country, and Rumanian roads and railroads are so poor that the Soviets simply can't move troops through the area. Third, if the Germans don't back down, there will be war. Military advisers say that essentially, Britain would be bluffing to unite with France and Russia to stand up to Germany.

Hitler has stated repeatedly that he will invade the Sudetenland by October 1 if there is no agreement. It is clear that German troops are preparing to attack. At this point, Czechoslovakia, France, and Britain are also preparing for war. People in London are digging trenches for defense, people are stockpiling food, and the London underground is closed to prepare shelters in case the Germans bomb the city. It has been only 20 years since the end of World War I, so most people face the prospect of war with grim memories of the horror of modern warfare.

Nevertheless, there is still time for diplomacy. Talking face to face with Hitler may lead to a negotiated settlement and avoid war. Seventy percent of the British public favors another attempt at diplomacy. Benito Mussolini, the fascist leader of Italy, has made a proposal for a peaceful settlement of the crisis. The German army would be allowed to occupy the Sudetenland in the next 10 days without opposition from Britain or France. The Czech army would withdraw without destroying their fortifications. Other questions about Czechoslovakia would be settled by an international commission.

British intelligence reports that the German army is much stronger than the British army and the German air force is somewhat stronger than the British air force. While the British government has been building up its military since 1936—especially in planes and ships—it isn't an aggressive buildup, as most British people are more concerned about unemployment and recovering from the depression. Britain's mighty navy and puny army has led the government to focus attention on areas near the sea, rather than inland areas such as Czechoslovakia.

On the other hand, the reports also say that the German military is not stronger than the British, French, and Czechoslovakian forces combined. In addition, some intelligence officers are saying that Hitler isn't that strong in Germany; there is a rumor of a plot to arrest and remove the dictator. If Britain and France stand up to Germany, it may encourage the plotters to go ahead and overthrow Hitler. German General Beck has already resigned in protest of Hitler's demands in Czechoslovakia. He thinks the demands will lead to war—one that Germany is incapable of winning. Remember that the Czechs have a strong army of 35 divisions, dug into excellent defenses

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and with tanks that are superior to most German tanks. But they can't fight without the support of Britain and France because the Czech defense line is not complete, especially on the southern border with Austria (newly taken over by Germany). The German air force is much stronger and the German army is much larger. On the other hand, Britain and France can't really defend Czechoslovakia, because they don't have a common border with the Czechs. If Britain and France take a stand to help Czechoslovakia, the only real alternative is for them to attack Germany. Britain and France would essentially be starting a full-scale war with Germany over a minor country in Central Europe.

Hitler is waiting for your reply if you want to negotiate. He has offered to meet with you at Munich, Germany. Which of the following will you do?

- A. Tell the French that your two countries have to stand up to Hitler. Tell them we will back them in honoring their commitment to defend Czechoslovakia. If the French agree, then send a note to Hitler that Britain and France will fight if he invades the Sudetenland.
- B. Do everything in A, but also make a deal with the Soviet Union to fight if Hitler attacks Czechoslovakia.
- C. Meet Hitler at Munich and let him take the Sudetenland without Britain or France defending Czechoslovakia. After all, it is an area that is mostly German, so why start a major war over an area for which the Germans have a reasonable claim and which Britain and France can't really defend?

OUTCOMES

Student Handout 2

The British decided to meet with Hitler and give in to his demands, hoping that he would not demand any more territory. Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain believed personal, face-to-face talks between leaders could prevent war. Many historians condemn Chamberlain for giving in, a policy called *appeasement*. Critics argue that while compromising is a key in negotiations between nations in order to prevent war, giving in to blackmail only encourages aggression, leading to war. Sacrificing principles, such as freedom and national security, for the sake of avoiding any conflict, leads to giving up the values for which nations exist in the first place. Critics charge Chamberlain with being naïve. Cabinet minutes of September 24, 1938, state, “He [Chamberlain] thought that he had now established an influence over Herr Hitler, and that the latter trusted him. The Prime Minister believed that Herr Hitler was speaking the truth.”

The evidence at the time shows Chamberlain should not have believed Hitler. The German leader had given many signals of his intention of continuous expansion and his unwillingness to negotiate in good faith. For example, Hitler said he wanted countries to agree on disarming, while he built German armaments to high levels.

Each German or Italian threat or violation was met by a weak response by other countries. When Italy attacked Ethiopia, the League of Nations did almost nothing. When Germany expanded its army to 550,000 men in violation of the Versailles Treaty, when it moved troops into the Rhineland in 1936, and when it took Austria in 1938, Britain and France did nothing. The British even allowed Germany to expand its navy, including submarines. The Western democracies did nothing when Germany and Italy backed the fascists in the Spanish civil war starting in 1936. Everywhere, Hitler saw weakness in the face of his expansion.

The French leaders were divided, but it is clear that they intended to fight if the British also decided to support Czechoslovakia. Chamberlain’s persuasion of the British cabinet to support appeasement led to the same policy by the French.

Sudeten Germans’ agitation to be returned to Germany was actually begun by Nazi agents who infiltrated into Czechoslovakia. It is true that Czechoslovakia was a multiethnic state made up of territory taken from neighboring countries (Germany, Poland, Hungary). Some British and French leaders saw Czechoslovakia as a failed experiment in self-determination. Nevertheless, although there was some sympathy for reuniting with Germany in the Sudetenland, the agitation was stirred up by German agents rather than a genuine desire by the people of the Sudetenland to unite with Germany. There was little discontent in the Sudetenland in the 1920s and early 1930s up to 1937. Germans could speak their native language, they received a generous share of educational funds, and they were represented in government. Before the German agents stirred up trouble, self-determination in Czechoslovakia was at least somewhat successful. The British spy was correct in

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his assessment that the agitation for independence in the Sudetenland was enflamed and controlled by the German government.

The increased demands by Hitler at the negotiations in mid-September should have been conclusive proof that he was not trying to compromise but was pushing to wipe out Czechoslovakia. Chamberlain angrily told Hitler that the German leader's new demands were an ultimatum. Nevertheless, he continued to negotiate and gave in to those same demands. Chamberlain seemed to believe that German goals were limited to dominating central Europe. He did not want to start a war to prevent such limited domination. But the evidence indicated Hitler wanted much more than central Europe.

The proposal made by Mussolini at the conference was actually not a compromise at all. It included the same demands that Hitler had made all along. In fact, the proposal was made up by the Germans and handed to Mussolini to propose as his own idea. The British and French agreed to the proposal without questioning it.

At one point at the conference, Chamberlain asked Hitler to include the Czechs in the discussion. Hitler said no, and Chamberlain dropped the subject. After the conference, the Czechs were told that the British and French had made a deal with the Germans. A British negotiator told the Czechs that they were to evacuate most of the Sudetenland at once. "If you do not accept [giving up the Sudetenland], you will have to settle your affairs with the Germans absolutely alone."

Czech leaders gave in without a fight. In doing so, they gave up one of the most formidable defensive systems in Europe. In addition, Czechoslovakia gave up 60 percent of its coal, 86 percent of its chemicals, 80 percent of its cement and textiles, 70 percent of its iron and steel, and 70 percent of its electric power. The Germans got the Skoda Iron works, which produced tanks and planes for the Nazis throughout the war. The Germans outfitted 10 new army divisions with equipment from the Czechs. Half the tanks that the Germans used to defeat the French in 1940 were Czech tanks. By giving up Czechoslovakia, the French undermined their chance to defend against German attack.

German generals said that Hitler was not bluffing; he had a plan of attack. Had Britain and France not agreed to give the Sudetenland, Germany would have attacked, starting the war in October 1938. Germany had mobilized its forces and had given the order to attack on October 1. After the Munich Agreement, Hitler was upset that he had been deprived of a military victory that he had been planning for months. Hitler was not a clever negotiator who used his army to threaten Britain into giving him part of Czechoslovakia without having to fight for it. Rather, he wanted war, but when Chamberlain gave in, he took what Britain gave him.

Several German generals stated had the Czech crisis turned to fighting, Germany would have lost a general war very quickly. Germany couldn't break through the Czech defenses easily. General Keitel stated, "We were extraordinarily happy that it had not come to a military operation because . . . we had always been of the opinion that our means of attack against the frontier fortifications of Czechoslovakia were insufficient." General von Manstein said, "Had Czechoslovakia defended

herself, we would have been held up by her fortifications, for we did not have the means to break through.” Meanwhile, Germany could not defend her other borders, especially against France. General Jodl commented: “It was out of the question, with five fighting divisions and seven reserve divisions in the western fortifications, which were nothing but a large construction site, to hold out against 100 French divisions.” Other commentators disagree on how long the Czechs could have held out, ranging from several weeks to three months.

The British, French, and Soviets could not aid Czechoslovakia directly as none of them bordered Czechoslovakia. The Soviets mobilized in September 1938 but couldn’t move troops through Rumania or Poland to support the Czechs primarily because of the poor railroads and roads in Rumania and opposition in Poland. The Soviet Army chief of staff said in 1935, “[A]t the present moment the Soviet Union would be unable to bring any military aid to Czechoslovakia in case of German attack.” It was still true in 1938. France and Britain could have attacked Germany, but not being able to fight directly to defend the Czechs may have been a factor in Britain and France deciding to appease Germany. The French, particularly, were thinking mostly of defending themselves rather than attacking Germany. They had built the Maginot line to defend against the Germans, so their mind-set was defense, not offense. In addition, British leaders were afraid of being bombed by the Germans. For these reasons, they believed negotiating was better than fighting. Some British leaders thought that because fighting was useless, they should persuade the Czechs not to fight. After all, war would lead to bloodshed and the bombing of civilians in Prague and other Czech cities.

Giving the Sudetenland to Germany at the Munich Conference was a catastrophe for Britain and the Western allies in general. Chamberlain was popular at first, arguing that he had brought “peace for our time.” However, Winston Churchill did not agree. He stated, “[W]e have suffered a total and unmitigated defeat.... Silent, mournful, abandoned, broken, Czechoslovakia recedes into the darkness.” Other members of Parliament were as upset by the deal. Hitler, of course, was encouraged by the weakness of the British and French. He told his generals a year later, “Our enemies are small worms. I saw them at Munich.” Churchill summarized his view of appeasement at Munich, “The government had to choose between war and shame. They [sic] chose shame and they will get war, too.”

When Germany took the rest of Czechoslovakia a few months later in March 1939, British public opinion changed. Appeasement was no longer popular. After the Munich Conference, the *Manchester Guardian* called appeasement “a clever plan of selling off your friends in order to buy off your enemies.” The country had begun to rearm before 1938, but after the Munich Agreement, appeasement was replaced by rearming as the dominant British policy. When Germany started threatening Poland later in 1939, the British were ready to fight. The British leader, Lord Halifax, stated, “The absorption of Czecho-Slovakia has clearly revealed Germany’s intentions ... and there is every reason to suppose that the treatment applied [there] will be extended to other countries, notably Rumania and Poland....” British leaders had learned from their disastrous mistake at Munich.

Lesson 4: Crisis in Czechoslovakia, 1938

Another unintended consequence of the Munich Agreement was the effect on Soviet policy. Stalin and other Soviet leaders were suspicious that the British and French were giving in to Hitler so Germany would move east, toward the USSR, hoping the Nazis would fight the Russians instead of the Western democracies. After all, the British and French disliked Bolsheviks (Soviet Communists) as much as they disliked Nazis. In 1936, British Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin told Parliament, “If there is any fighting in Europe to be done, I should like to see the Bolshies (Bolsheviks) and the Nazis doing it.” This heightened suspicion of the Western democracies was an important factor in the Soviets signing the Hitler-Stalin Non-Aggression Pact in 1939, not with Britain and France, but with Nazi Germany. If Stalin couldn’t trust Britain and France, he would take his chances by siding with Germany.

PRIMARY SOURCE

Student Handout 3

THE MUNICH AGREEMENT

Germany, the United Kingdom, France and Italy, taking into consideration the agreement, which has been already reached in principle for the cession to Germany of the Sudeten German territory, have agreed on the following terms and conditions governing the said cession and the measures consequent thereon, and by this agreement they each hold themselves responsible for the steps necessary to secure its fulfillment:

1. The evacuation will begin on 1st October.
2. The United Kingdom, France and Italy agree that the evacuation of the territory shall be completed by 10th October, without any existing installations having been destroyed and that the Czechoslovak Government will be held responsible for carrying out the evacuation without damage to the said installations.
3. The conditions governing the evacuation will be laid down in detail by an international commission composed of representatives of Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Italy and Czechoslovakia.
4. The occupation by stages of the predominantly German territory by German troops will begin on 1st October. The four territories marked on the attached map will be occupied by German troops in the following order: the territory marked No. I on the 1st and 2nd October, the territory marked No. II on the 2nd and 3rd October; the territory marked No. III on the 3rd, 4th and 5th October; the territory marked No. IV on the 6th and 7th October. The remaining territory of preponderantly German character will be ascertained by the aforesaid international commission forthwith and be occupied by German troops by the 10th October.
5. The international commission referred to in paragraph 3 will determine the territories in which a plebiscite is to be held. These territories will be occupied by international bodies until the plebiscite has been completed. The same commission will fix the conditions in which the plebiscite is to be held, taking as a basis the conditions of the Saar plebiscite. The commission will also fix a date, not later than the end of November, on which the plebiscite will be held.

Lesson 4: Crisis in Czechoslovakia, 1938

6. The final determination of the frontier will be carried out by the international commission. This commission will also be entitled to recommend to the four Powers, Germany, the United Kingdom, France and Italy, in certain exceptional cases minor modifications in the strictly ethnographical determination of the zones which are to be transferred without plebiscite.
7. There will be a right of option into and out of the transferred territories, the option to be exercised within six months from the date of this agreement. A German-Czechoslovak commission shall determine the details of the option, consider ways of facilitating the transfer of population and settle questions of principle arising out of the said transfer.
8. The Czechoslovak Government will, within a period of four weeks from the date of this agreement, release from their military and police forces any Sudeten Germans who may wish to be released, and the Czechoslovak Government will within the same period release Sudeten German prisoners who are serving terms of imprisonment for political offences.

Adolf Hitler

Neville Chamberlain

Edouard Daladier

Benito Mussolini

Munich, September 29, 1938

Source: Avalon Project, Yale Law School

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

4. Many people see the Munich Agreement as a terrible blunder by the British and French. The agreement itself doesn't look that terrible. What in the agreement shows it to be a great defeat for Britain, France, and Czechoslovakia?
5. Why does Germany not want the fortifications to be destroyed?

UNDERLYING PROBLEM

Student Handout 4

When making decisions on complicated matters, you need to be able to identify the problem at the heart of the issue. In 1938, Prime Minister Chamberlain faced an international crisis. It was important for him to define the underlying problem and keep it in mind when making decisions. Read the following “frames” for the international crisis in Europe in 1938. Which one best describes the underlying problem?

1. It's really about dictators in Germany, Italy, and Japan. These dictators aren't willing to negotiate—they plan on going to war and conquering as much of the world as possible.
2. It's really about the military weakness of Britain and France. The western democracies are so weak militarily that they have to compromise to buy time to build up strength to confront dictators later.
3. It's really about politics in Britain. The British people elected leaders to avoid war. They still remember the horrors of the Great War and they don't want to go through it again.
4. It's really about resources—especially oil. There aren't enough resources for all the countries that need them, so the aggressor nations intend to take what they can from weaker countries.
5. It's really about the breakdown of diplomacy. If countries were willing to negotiate, they could solve most—or all—of these problems peacefully.
6. It's really about Britain's national interest. Czechoslovakia really isn't important to the national security of Britain, so it isn't worth fighting a war over the Sudetenland.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Student Handout 5

1. How strong is the British military compared to Germany, Italy, and Japan?

Report by British Chiefs of Staff. "Comparison of the Strength of Great Britain with that of Certain Other Nations as of January 1938," Cabinet Minutes and Conclusions, 8 Dec. 1937.

"We cannot foresee the time when our defence forces will be strong enough to safeguard our territory, trade and vital interests against Germany, Italy and Japan simultaneously. We cannot, therefore, exaggerate the importance, from the point of view of Imperial defence, of any policy or international action that can be taken to reduce the numbers of our potential enemies and to gain the support of potential friends."

2. Can Britain, France, and Russia defend Czechoslovakia?

British Cabinet minutes, 22 Mar. 1938. Statement by cabinet members.

"Even if we had the strength, we could not protect a country in the geographical position of Czechoslovakia. Neither could the French, and the Russians were separated from Czechoslovakia by the territory of Poland and Rumania. No one could help in time. After the fall of Czechoslovakia, the French would remain behind the Maginot lines.... At least two months would elapse before the United Kingdom could give any effective help to France.... It would be a mistake to plunge into a certain catastrophe in order to avoid a future danger that might never materialize."

"The Military Implications of German Aggression Against Czechoslovakia." Report by British Chiefs of Staff. Cabinet minutes, 22 Mar. 1938.

"No pressure that we and our possible allies can bring to bear, either by sea, on land or in the air, could prevent Germany from invading and over-running Bohemia and from inflicting a decisive defeat on the Czechoslovak Army."



Czech reaction to German occupation of Prague, March 1939.
National Archives.

3. Are we better off fighting in 1938 or delaying the fight until 1939?

Report on Military Strength. Cabinet minutes, 22 Sept. 1938. Quoted in Kuhlmann (1992).

General Hastings Ismay said that postponing a conflict for a year would allow the Germans to increase their relative land strength due to completion of their western fortifications and additional training, and British prestige might suffer a severe blow if Czechoslovakia was abandoned. However, for him, relative air strength was the critical issue. He believed that Germany was currently in a position to launch a successful strategic air attack on Britain. In six or twelve months' time, British air power would be improved enough to prevent such an attack from succeeding. Therefore, he concluded that "from a military point of view, time is in our favor, and ... if war with Germany has to come, it would be better to fight her in say six to twelve months' time than to accept the present challenge."

4. How strong are Czech defenses? Can the Czechs hold out against the Germans?

The Czech forts are strong, but they are not deep at some points. The Czech border with Germany is now five times as long as the French border with Germany, and the French have spent 30 times more money on their defenses. There are numerous weak points in the Czech defense system that the Germans could exploit. The Czech tanks are superior to almost all



Map of the Sudetenland

German tanks. Many German tanks are lightly armored and have no cannon, only machine guns. The Czech tanks would be susceptible to attack by planes, but the Czech air force, while smaller than the German air force, could put up solid resistance. Even the Czech generals concede that they could not hold out for a long time against Germany. The whole strategy is to delay the Germans long enough for the French to attack and draw off most of the German army. If France doesn't get involved, the Czechs will lose.

The British military attaché to Czechoslovakia says the Czechs are strong and can hold out for three months. French General Eugene Faucher also says the Czechs can hold out for months. Other experts say that the Czechs can only hold out for a few weeks at the most.

British diplomats in Germany and Czechoslovakia give conflicting reports. The British diplomat in Germany says, after traveling between Prague and Berlin, that Czech morale is low and they will likely not fight. Meanwhile, the British diplomat in Czechoslovakia says that Czech defenses have improved in the past three months and the Czechs are preparing for war, resolved to fight.

LESSON 5:

GREAT LEAP FORWARD, 1957

For Teachers

INTRODUCTION

■ Overview

The Great Leap Forward was the greatest man-made peace time famine in history. It is a study in unintended consequences and the danger of unchecked power. This lesson gives students the opportunity to see the unfolding tragedy from the perspectives of those who caused it.

■ Vocabulary

- Mao Zedong—Communist leader of China
- Jiang Kai-shek—Nationalist leader in China against the Communists
- Joseph Stalin—Communist leader of the Soviet Union up to 1953
- Nikita Khrushchev—Communist leader of the Soviet Union after Stalin
- *Sputnik*—first satellite to go into space
- collective farm—a farm on which the land, machines, tools, and crops are owned by all the farmers in the collective, rather than privately by one farmer
- Great Leap Forward—program by Mao Zedong that caused the greatest human famine in history
- Three Gorges Dam—dam in China built largely by human labor rather than machines

■ Decision-making Skills Emphasized

- Identify underlying problems
- Consider points of view
- Identify assumptions
- Ask about context
- Ask questions about analogies
- Predict unintended consequences
- Play out options

LESSON PLAN A: IN-DEPTH LESSON *(One 50-Minute Class Period)*

■ Procedure

Distribute Handout 1, have students read it, and decide which two actions they would take. Have them pair up and discuss their actions. Move around the room to answer possible questions or clear up misunderstandings. Bring the class back together. Have each group report on its decisions and explain them. Have the class vote on the various options.

At the conclusion of the discussion of Handout 1, distribute Handout 2 with the outcomes, and have students comment for homework. They must make at least two comments analyzing two different choices.

Option: To help students anticipate unintended consequences, have them engage in a premortem activity. Pick one of the options, such as Option C (higher production quotas for steel production), and tell students that it turned out to be a disaster. They are to write out why it was a disaster. What factors may have led to such a bad outcome?

Option: You can help students remember to ask questions by asking them if more information would help them make better decisions. How will they get that information, right now, in class? The **P-A-G-E** analysis below addresses possible answers to three questions on collectivization. After the outcomes are read and discussed, you could also ask if these three questions would have helped students make a better decision. What questions, in general, would have helped?

You can also have students analyze the primary source in Handout 3 by answering the Questions for Analysis:

1. The trees may have been cut down to get food, to provide fuel for heating homes, or to get fuel for the steel furnaces.
2. Answers will vary.
3. Many parts are surprising, so there could be many answers.
4. This is a primary source but it is public. Some of the story is shocking, so she might not have a reason to lie. On the other hand, she never says her family was involved in the shocking behavior, so she might be covering up something there. Without giving her name, she is less reliable, because we can't blame her for inaccuracies. The interview was conducted at least 30 years after the event, so the reliability of her memory is an important issue.

■ Reflecting on Decision Making

Ask students how well they did on decision making on this problem. Which decision-making skills were especially important in making these economic decisions? Which of the letters of **P-A-G-E** applied especially to this problem? (See the “Decision-making Analysis” section below for ideas.)

Ask students what they did well or poorly in terms of the **P-A-G-E** analysis of decision making. Discuss their answers.

■ Putting the Actual Decisions into Historical Context

Ask students whether the decisions made at this time in China were the result more of historical forces or the result of decisions made by Mao. (Some will argue that decisions made by Mao were the key to the tragic Great Leap Forward, as he initiated these changes. His unique skills as a leader, along with his desire to change China, led to the famine. He pushed for the changes before there was widespread public pressure for those changes. In 1927, he stated, “We must create a short reign of terror in all parts of the countryside.” [Becker 1996] His willingness to use violence was the key to the tragedy. Others will say that historical forces were more important. China was behind in production. In addition, any of the changes, such as collective farms, were part of Communist ideology.)

■ Connecting to Today

Ask students to consider a country today that has a low standard of living due to low agricultural and industrial output. What advice would students give to the leaders of that country, based on the case of the Great Leap Forward? What does the Great Leap Forward tell us about the role of leaders and people in the world today? What lessons are there in regard to the way that reforms get translated into practice by ordinary people?

■ Troubleshooting

For most of the options, students will likely be unanimous in their opposition, which could lead to a dull discussion. If that happens, ask students instead to predict unintended consequences. You could also engage students in the premortem activity, described above, as an option in the lesson plan.

LESSON PLAN B: QUICK MOTIVATOR LESSON *(20 Minutes)*

Give Handout 1 for homework. In class, focus on only one option in industry—such as C—and in farming—such as H. Discuss reasons for five minutes. Distribute Handout 2 with the outcomes, and have students write their reactions for homework.

TEACHER NOTES TO EXPAND DISCUSSION

(For outcomes for students, see Handout 2.)

Mao also changed the work incentive system in agriculture from work points (workers would receive more work points for working harder) to payment based on need (size of family). Because there was less incentive for working hard, production of food dropped.

Even historians who praise the Great Leap Forward for alleged growth in industry recognize the failure of agriculture in China. Historian Choh-Ming Li (1963) argues that the increased

communalization of farms was the key factor in reducing agricultural output. As described in Handout 2, without incentives for extra work (work points), farmers did not increase production. Wei Li and Dennis Tao Yang (2005), on the other hand, argue that most of the loss of agricultural output was due to resource diversion (working on dams and other large construction projects) and excessive procurement (confiscating food).

Victor Lippit (1975) argues in an article in the 1970s that the economic context in the 1950s constrained what could be done in terms of economic growth. After the Lippit article was published, and as the unprecedented scale of the famine became known, historians put more emphasis on the human tragedy involved.

Historian Jasper Becker (see 1996) argues that the backyard steel production described in Handout 2 was a relatively minor cause of the famine compared to increased quotas, collectivization, and others. Even if he is right that it is not an important cause, it is an instructive unintended consequence of ordering increased steel production in the countryside.

The lesson oversimplifies the process of collectivization, which actually started in 1956 in what some historians call “the Little Leap Forward.” The process of collectivization is telescoped in order to put the question of collectivization to students in a succinct way.

■ Decision-making Analysis

P = Problem

- * **Identify any underlying problem(s).**
- Consider other points of view.**
- What are my assumptions? Emotions?**

A = Ask for information (about)

- Historical context (history of this issue; context in the world)**
- Reliability of sources**
- Historical analogies**

G = Goals

- * **What are my main goals? Are they realistic?**
- Generate options to help achieve these goals. Are they ethical?**

E = Effects

- * **Predict unintended consequences.**
- Play out the options. What could go wrong?**

* Denotes topics emphasized in this lesson

- **Identify underlying problems:** One underlying problem was the ideology of Leninism that focused on the role of leadership to bring about change.
- **Consider other points of view:** A lack of empathy for ordinary people in China by the leadership allowed the Great Leap Forward to start and to continue despite the widespread suffering.
- **Identify assumptions:** A central factor in the whole tragedy was the assumption by Mao that he knew what was best for millions of people more than they did themselves. The arrogance of this assumption is breathtaking.
- **Ask about context:** These are some questions students could ask:
 1. How do farmers feel about owning their own land? How will they feel about collectivization of land? (A survey in 1918 showed that a higher percentage of Chinese farmers [about 74 percent] owned their land than in Germany, Japan, or the United States. Land ownership is highly desired among farmers. A Chinese character in the book *The Good Earth* declared, “Land is one’s flesh and blood.” Based on this information, it is likely that farmers will hate collectivization of land.)
 2. How did collectivization work out in the Soviet Union? (It always led to a decline in food and it usually led to famine, which killed millions of people.)
 3. Are there critics in China of the policy of collectivization? (Yes. The Communist leader Liu Shaoqi had seen the horrors of famine in the USSR when he was there in the 1920s. He said that the peasants’ desire to own their land “cannot be checked ... hiring labor and individual farming should be unrestricted ... no collectivization before mechanization....” (Becker 1996) He was supported by other senior leaders, such as Bo Yibo, who said that collectivization was sheer fantasy because farmers would oppose it. Nikita Khrushchev also warned of the bitter consequences of collectivization. At that time the USSR was in the process of abandoning collectivization. As collectivization went forward, other critics, such as Zhou Enlai, charged that it was a failure and China should retreat from it. Scientists also criticized most parts of the Great Leap Forward, saying that, based on research, increased quotas and collectivization would not work. Mao, unfortunately, read arguments by untrained scientists that supported his views, and he said science should support Communist arguments. Science should be political, not neutral.)
- **Ask questions about analogies:** One analogy in Handout 1 is the spirit of the people in the 1930s against the Japanese. Students should ask how similar the analogy is to the situation in the 1950s. A crucial difference is the earlier case happened during war. It is easier to get the population to make extreme sacrifices when they are faced with an enemy who is threatening their homeland than it is to increase economic growth in peacetime.

- **Play out the option:** In the short run, reforms were bound to get resistance from party leaders at the highest levels as well as from lower-level officials who were in danger of losing their special privileges. In the 1980s in the USSR, Gorbachev did a good job of appointing top-level officials to help pass his reforms, but he had much more difficulty in overcoming resistance by lower-level officials at the local level and at factories and farms. In China, Deng Xiaoping was able to overcome some of this resistance by giving them advantages in the new market system, such as giving them good land for farms or favorable factories to run.
- **Predict unintended consequences:** There are several unintended consequences of these decisions, as described in Handout 2. Were students able to anticipate some of these consequences?

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LESSON 5: GREAT LEAP FORWARD

VOCABULARY

- Mao Zedong—Communist leader of China
- Jiang Kai-shek—Nationalist leader in China against the Communists
- Joseph Stalin—Communist leader of the Soviet Union up to 1953
- Nikita Khrushchev—Communist leader of the Soviet Union after Stalin
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- Great Leap Forward—program by Mao Zedong that caused the greatest human famine in history
- Three Gorges Dam—dam in China built largely by human labor rather than machines

CHINA'S ECONOMY, 1958

Student Handout 1

China's Economy



The year is 1958, and you are Mao Zedong, leader of China. Your leadership began in 1949 when the Communist Party took power in China. All through the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, the Chinese communists in general, and you in particular, have operated in the shadow of the USSR. In the 1930s, Joseph Stalin kept forcing you to make deals with your capitalist enemies under Jiang Kai-shek. When you travelled to meet Stalin in 1949, you were forced to wait several weeks to meet him. In the Korean War, Stalin promised airplanes to support Chinese soldiers but few of the planes were actually delivered, as hundreds of thousands of Chinese troops died.

When Nikita Khrushchev took over the Soviet Union in 1956, you were hopeful that relations between the USSR and China would improve. Relations did improve, as Khrushchev needed support in his struggle for control of the Soviet Communist Party. You gave him support and he promised delivery of nuclear weapons to China. The weapons never came, however. So now there is tension between you and Khrushchev. He is a crude man who likes to boss you around. Last year, the USSR launched the satellite *Sputnik* into space, showing that the USSR is ahead of the United States in rocket technology. Khrushchev boasted, "Within the next fifteen years, the Soviet Union will be able not only to catch up with but also to surpass the present volume of output of important products (such as steel and textiles) in the USA." China will not be able to catch up to the United States in the foreseeable future, but it could catch up to Britain in production of important products, such as steel, perhaps in 15 years. It's clear at this point that the Soviet Union and China are competing for leadership of the Communist countries. If the Soviets advance further in economic power and China doesn't, it will be obvious to everyone that China is not really a leading Communist country.

According to some of your advisers, one way China could catch up, despite a lack of capital equipment, is through the spirit of the people. The Chinese people survived and triumphed in the 1930s against the Nationalists under Jiang Kai-shek and against the Japanese, despite having less equipment and inferior weapons. These advisers argue that there is no limit to the spirit of the people—they can work miracles and increase production in China by a huge amount. Hard work can be substituted for machines. All the people need is strong leadership to drive up production.

There are two areas in need of increased production, industry and farming. Almost all industry, including steel, is run by the government. There are many small and medium-sized factories and a

Lesson 5: Great Leap Forward, 1957

few large factories. While some laborers are working hard, laborers in general could be inspired by Communist leadership to work much harder.

A small number of farms are collectivized. These are state-run farms, where the equipment, seed, and animals are owned by the collective in general, rather than privately by individual farmers. The land itself is still owned by the individual farmers, but the farmers work in teams under the supervision of a Communist Party official. Most collective farms are small, consisting of about 10 families or medium in size, comprising about 30 families. There are few large farms. If the farms were larger, more tractors and other machines could be used, which would increase production. In addition, if the land itself were owned by the state, farmers would be forced to work for the good of the community, rather than their own selfish interests. At this point, the collective farms take the food produced and distribute it back to workers based on work points. Laborers who work harder get a larger share of the food. Like industrial workers, farm laborers could work harder and longer to stamp out hunger and help increase factory production.

What will you do to increase industrial production, for example, of steel? You can choose one or two options.

- A. Combine the factories into larger units so they can be more efficient.
- B. Do away with state-owned factories and allow them to be owned and run privately. When factories have to compete (and go out of business if they don't compete successfully), they will become more efficient. They will also produce more when they get to keep the profits of their production.
- C. Set higher quotas for production. The simplest way to increase production is to require more production. Call for the people, even in small villages, to produce steel for the expansion of industrialization.
- D. Keep the factory system as it is now. Don't change anything.

What will you do to increase farm production? You can choose one, two, or three options.

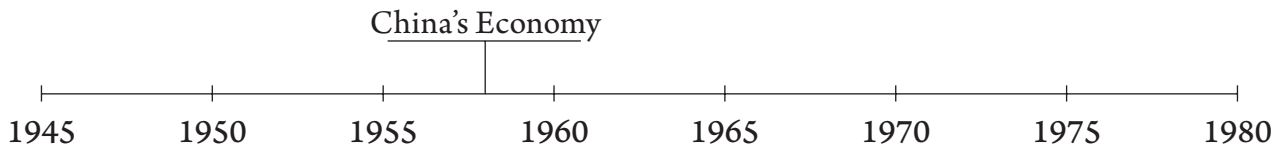
- A. Expand collectivization (everything is owned by the collective), which will combine farms into larger units. This will allow the farms to use modern machinery (most farmers can't afford expensive machinery) so they can be more efficient.
- B. Do away with state-owned farms and allow the land to be owned and run privately. When farms have to compete (and go out of business if they don't compete successfully), they will become more efficient. They will also produce more when they get to keep the profits of their production.
- C. Set higher quotas for production of food. The simplest way to increase production of food is to require more production.

- D. Use farm labor to build dams and irrigation projects and make farmers use more fertilizer. These two changes will help increase food production.
- E. Change the way food is distributed on the farms. Instead of people being paid by work points (how hard they work), they will be paid based on need (the size of their families).
- F. Keep the farm system the way it is now. Don't change anything.

What do you think Mao actually did on this problem? Explain.

OUTCOMES

Student Handout 2



Mao stated in 1958 that China would catch up to Britain in steel production within 15 years in a policy called the “Great Leap Forward.” He decided mostly on Option C (higher quotas) for factories and Option A (collectivization), Option G (higher quotas), Option H (irrigation projects and fertilizers), and Option I (pay based on need, not work) for farms. He set much higher production quotas for both factories and farms. He made collective farms much larger, with between 100 and 300 families per farm, up from about 10 families per farm before the Great Leap. Crucially, he also extended collectivization to the land, eliminating private ownership.

The unintended consequences were profound. Farm production declined by 31 percent in three years. The Great Leap Forward led to the greatest man-made, peacetime famine in world history; between 30 and 45 million people died in excess of normal death rates, about 5 percent of the total Chinese population. (To give some perspective: it has been estimated that 17 million people (civilian and military) died in World War I and 63 million in World War II.) In China during the Great Leap, the death rate doubled, from 12 per thousand in 1958 to 25 per thousand in 1960. By 1962 even the leaders of the Chinese Communist party recognized the disaster and changed the policy. The decisions made in the Great Leap Forward make excellent examples of the law of unintended consequences, among which are the following:

- The higher production quotas led district officials to work people extra hard, even if some of them died. Each district official had to submit 10 large projects to the central government. Once approved, the officials had to make people work on those projects, no matter how stupid those projects were. Hundreds of thousands of workers died.
- The collective farms hurt farmers and farm output tremendously. Farmers were very upset at giving up their land. They had less incentive to work hard. When they found out the state was going to take their farm animals, they slaughtered the animals and ate them in a few days. The lack of meat and animal power for work led to a further drop in food output. The communes neglected machines, houses, and animals, because no individuals owned them.
- Eliminating the work point system for distributing food on collective farms reduced the incentive to work hard. People were fed from the communal mess halls for free. They received food based on need, rather than on how hard they worked. If a farmer worked hard in a market economy, he could sell the excess food after taxes and make a profit. Even in the work point system, producing more food meant more food and prosperity. In this collective mess

hall system, however, it didn't matter how hard the farmer worked. As a result, farmers didn't work as hard and food production declined.

- Farmers were used as laborers for large-scale projects, such as the Three Gorges Dam. Tens of millions of farmers worked on irrigation projects, taking time away from farm work. This extra work also weakened farmers for their own work on crops. As a result, food production dropped. The dam and the irrigation projects failed, falling into disrepair. For example, the Gansu canals filled with silt and turned to mud. The Ming Tomb Reservoir was built in a desert. It dried up and was abandoned.
- Officials in industry lied, rather than be punished for failing to meet production quotas. Thus, the central government never knew the actual production figures.
- Officials in farming also lied, rather than be punished for failing to meet production quotas. As the inflated figures for food production came in, the top Communist leaders in Beijing boasted that China had more than enough food, conquering the problem of hunger. They exported food—to get money to buy machinery—and told the Chinese people to eat five meals each day. Rice and steamed buns were thrown away. By the time the officials realized that the figures on food production were not accurate, it was too late. Much of the food was gone and famine spread widely.
- Once farmers realized that all their production was being taken away, they produced just enough food for their families, figuring that officials would at least leave them that much food. Food production dropped significantly.
- The farmers were wrong in assuming the officials would leave enough food to feed their families. Because strict food quotas were enforced in order to feed workers in the cities, local officials went to farms and took everything they could find, leaving many farmers to starve. The officials looked everywhere for food hidden away for the family, including food buried in backyards or hidden in lofts.
- The emphasis on fertilizer led farmers to tear down many of their homes, which were made out of rich soil, useful as fertilizer. Some historians report that dead bodies were dug up to use the remains for fertilizer. Bricks were also needed for construction of factories and other projects, so brick homes were torn down for that reason, too. Forty percent of homes disappeared.
- The emphasis on steel production in the villages and countryside led to backyard steel furnaces. Farmers were forced to produce steel. They built the furnaces and then melted down their farm tools into steel ingots (bars). As a result, the farmers were able to produce less food, making the famine worse. Meanwhile, the steel was not useful for any sort of construction. It appeared that China was producing more steel, but less than one-third of the steel produced in the countryside was useful. In addition, farmers cut trees for firewood to fuel the furnaces, so the furnaces also produced environmental damage.

Lesson 5: Great Leap Forward, 1957

- The state took over the sale and distribution of grain. However, that meant bottlenecks in the transportation system for moving such a large amount of food. Storage costs increased due to losses from rats and rot.
- To increase food production, the government wiped out sparrows, which eat grain. As a consequence, the insect population exploded, and much of the grain was wiped out anyway.
- Officials used various methods of fraud to make sure their families were fed during the famine. The people themselves also used a variety of methods—not as effective as those methods used by Communist officials—to survive. They used dead people’s names to inflate their rations. They also bartered goods for food and exchanged money and goods illegally on the black market. Without these dishonest methods, many more people would have died.
- In desperation during the famine, some people sold their children for food and others engaged in cannibalism. Sawdust and wood pulp were added to food to make it go further.

The Great Leap Forward showed the power of ideology over science. Experts raised concerns over the changes to be made. But Communist leaders said that politics is more important than science. Experts had to work in the factories or farms in order to understand their areas of expertise from the worker point of view. A working perspective was more important than knowledge from books. Experts were now “red experts.” They had to tailor their expertise to meet the beliefs (ideology) of communism. Without free debate about the merits of the proposals, the decision makers were bound to miss the negative aspects of their choices, especially the unintended consequences.

PRIMARY SOURCE

Student Handout 3

An unidentified Chinese woman was interviewed in the 1990s, reflecting back on her life during the Great Leap Forward. She did not want to give her name or the name of her village, but in 1959–1960, she lived near Fengyang on the Huai River:

In the first year [1958–1959], we earned work points and the communes distributed grain to each family. This we kept at home. But in the second year [1959–1960], there was nothing left at home, it had all been taken away. Nevertheless, the village cadres [Communist officials] came to every household to search for food. They searched every street and every building. They took away everything they could find....

Our family still had one jar of food and we had to hide it behind the door. This jar was full of sweet potatoes which we had dried and ground up. When the cadres came, Second Aunt sat on the jar pretending to sew clothes and so they missed it. This jar helped us a lot. I think it saved our lives because in our household no one died. You could not cook the dried sweet potato but if you were very hungry, you just grabbed some of it with your

hands. Almost every day the cadres came. They searched every home for nine consecutive days. Later, we buried the jar underground but the cadres came and poked the ground with iron rods to see if we buried anything. Then we hid it somewhere else. This went on until February.

The communal canteen did not serve any proper food, just wild grasses, peanut shells and sweet potato skins. Because of this diet we had terrible problems. Some were constipated but others had constant diarrhea and could not get beyond the front door....

All the trees in the village had been cut down. Any nearby were all stripped of bark. I peeled off the bark of a locust tree and cooked it as if it were rice soup. It tasted like wood and was sticky.



Backyard furnaces.

Lesson 5: Great Leap Forward, 1957

At the time the villagers looked quite fat and even healthy because they were swollen but when they were queuing up at the canteen to eat, they would suddenly collapse and could not get up. Some could only walk using a stick....

More than half the villagers died, mostly between New Year [1960] and April or May. In one of our neighbor's houses, three boys and a girl starved. In one brother's family two children died. Another family of sixteen died. Many families disappeared completely with no survivors at all. The production team chief's daughter-in-law and grandson starved to death. He then boiled and ate the corpse of the child but he also died. When the village teacher was on the verge of death, he said to his wife, "Why should we keep our child? If we eat him, then I can survive and later we can produce another child." His wife refused to do this and her husband died.

When people died, no one collected the bodies. The corpses did not change color or decay because there was no blood in them and not much flesh. After people died, the families would not report the death to the production team. This was because they could get another portion of food. One family had three children and they died. The father hid the bodies and claimed their rations. In the whole village only seven or eight families did not suffer any deaths but some fled....

Document Source: Becker

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. Based on what you learned in the lesson, why were all the trees in the village cut down?
2. Were the villagers justified in hiding food or not reporting that family members had died to get more rations of food?
3. What surprised you the most in this lesson?
4. How reliable is this document as a source?

LESSON 6: MARGARET THATCHER'S ECONOMIC POLICIES, 1979

For Teachers

INTRODUCTION

■ Overview

The economic issues that Margaret Thatcher faced are enduring. Students will face the same questions as citizens: How large a role should government play in society? What role should labor unions play in the economy? What should the government do about inflation and unemployment? Thatcher herself represented a conservative perspective, and her decisions sparked controversy. This lesson gives students an opportunity to decide for themselves on the very same issues that Prime Minister Thatcher confronted.

■ Vocabulary

- GDP—the measure of all the goods and services produced in a country in one year
- productivity—a measure of how much, in goods, one worker produces in one hour
- unemployment—the percentage of workers who are out of work and are actively looking for jobs
- deficit—the government spends more money than it takes in from taxes
- tax rate—the amount a person owes in taxes as a percentage of each dollar earned
- inflation—percentage rate at which prices increase per year
- interest rates—the percentage borrowers are charged on the unpaid portion of their loan
- recession—a mild drop in the size of the economy, paired with higher unemployment
- nationalized—description of government-owned business
- privatised (British spelling, used in this lesson)—selling off government business to be run privately
- National Health Service—government-run health care in Britain
- Winter of Discontent—numerous strikes and union troubles in the winter of 1979–1980
- Falkland Islands War—Britain sent a fleet to take back the islands in 1982 after Argentina forcibly took them from Britain

- national sales tax—a tax on the sale of most products, also called a Value Added Tax
- rent control—regulation on rents so that they cannot be raised above a fixed amount per month
- sympathy strike—union members in one industry join a strike in a different industry
- closed shop—a company where all workers must join the union

■ Decision-making Skills Emphasized

- Identify underlying problems
- Consider other points of view
- Consider assumptions
- Ask questions about context
- Set realistic goals
- Play out options
- Predict unintended consequences

LESSON PLAN A: IN-DEPTH LESSON (30–40 Minutes)

■ Procedure

Distribute Handout 1 and have students read it. Tell them to pair up and choose what they will do for each of the five areas. Circulate around the room to answer questions or clear up misunderstandings.

Bring the class back together and discuss their decisions, as Prime Minister Thatcher, for Decision A on inflation and unemployment. How many would focus on inflation? How many would focus on unemployment? After discussing Decision A, have students go back into pairs to see if they would change any of their choices. Bring the class back together and begin discussing Decisions B, C, D, and E in turn. How many students changed their decisions? Why? Distribute Handout 2 with the outcomes for Prime Minister Thatcher and have students comment for homework.

In their deliberations for Decision A, if students ask questions about the inflation rate or unemployment rate, give them Handout 3, which contains a chart of inflation rates and a graph of unemployment rates. If students ask about public opinion, have them go to this website, which is a poll taken by the *Daily Express* in February 1979, just before Margaret Thatcher's election as prime minister in May 1979: <http://www.ipsos.mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/2465/British-Public-Opinion-February-1979.aspx>.

Option: Use the primary source in Handout 4 to analyze Prime Minister Thatcher's arguments for her economic program.

Suggested answers to Questions for Analysis:

1. The Prime Minister's program included privatizing government businesses, controlling inflation, and reducing the size of the government.
2. Prime Minister Thatcher used arguments that a lack of incentives, especially for producers, was hurting the British economy in the long run.
3. Prime Minister Thatcher was a primary source, but her speech was public and she had a reason to exaggerate the negative characteristics of the Labour Party to motivate the members of the Tory Party. It doesn't mean that the prime minister was lying, just that we can't accept what she said without questioning it.

Option: To help students think through their decisions, ask them to consider that one or more of these economic proposals ended up being a disaster. They are to go back to their pairs and discuss what the disaster could be, what could go wrong, and how likely the problems are. Should they change their decision in light of their analysis?

■ Reflecting on Decision Making

Ask students how well they did on decision making on this problem. Which decision-making skills were especially important in making these economic decisions? Which of the letters of **P-A-G-E** applied especially to this problem? (See the "Decision-making Analysis" section below for ideas.) Ask students what they did well or poorly in terms of the **P-A-G-E** analysis of decision making. Discuss their answers.

■ Putting the Actual Decisions into Historical Context

Ask students whether the economic programs of Prime Minister Thatcher were the result more of historical forces or the result of decisions made by Prime Minister Thatcher and a few key advisors. (Some students will argue that Prime Minister Thatcher and her advisors represented a distinct group of conservative leaders and consequently were instrumental to the Thatcher Revolution. Others will say that historical forces were more important. Many people in Britain wanted conservative economic policies after their disappointment with Labour governments and the power of unions. They thought Britain was falling behind other countries. The inflation rate was also unusually high in the late 1970s, which was crippling the economy. Thatcher's election simply reflected this change in public opinion, a change in the historical forces.)

■ Connecting to Today

Ask students what positions the current US president should take on government spending, defense, taxes, regulations, and balancing the budget today.

■ Troubleshooting

Macroeconomic policies on spending and taxation are abstract and confusing for some students. You might want to review the economic concepts listed in the vocabulary section above with students before starting the readings and decisions.

LESSON PLAN B: QUICK MOTIVATOR LESSON *(20 Minutes)*

Assign Handout 1 for homework and have students make their decisions. In class ask for a show of hands for each of the five proposals. Discuss reasons for five minutes. Distribute Handout 2 with the outcomes, and have students write their reactions for homework.

TEACHER NOTES TO EXPAND DISCUSSION

(For outcomes for students, see Handout 2.)

According to historian Eric Evans, the increase of North Sea oil and gas saved the Thatcher government from bankruptcy from 1979 to 1981, when her economic policies slowed the economy to reduce inflation.

In an effort to keep unemployment numbers lower, the Thatcher government changed the way it measured unemployment rates 31 times. Even with these doctored numbers, however, the average unemployment from 1979–1989 (under Thatcher) was 9.1 percent, compared to 3.4 percent from 1973–1979.

Indexes of freedom went up in Britain after Margaret Thatcher became prime minister. Britain moved up from eleventh in the Use of Markets in 1980 to fifth in 1999, and in Freedom in Financial Markets, Britain moved from seventh in 1980 to first in 1999.

The topic of rent control (Handout 2 on outcomes, under privatisation) might be worth discussing with students further. Many students may think that rent control is a good policy, keeping rents low for poor people, thus making their lives easier. Removing rent control invariably leads to higher rents. The conservative counterargument is that with rent control, owners aren't making a profit, which means fewer rental units are built or converted for rent. Rent control leads to housing shortages. It also leads—due to low or no profits—to fewer repairs and deterioration of housing.

In addition to not making dramatic changes in the health system, Thatcher did not make many changes in the welfare system. She wanted to reduce welfare because she thought that welfare had a debilitating effect on people who received it, reducing their incentives to work and make their own way. She did make efforts to reduce unemployment payments by the government, which may have reduced unemployment by providing incentives (lack of money) to find work. But, other than unemployment payments, the prime minister made few other initiatives to reduce welfare.

■ Decision-making Analysis

P = Problem

Identify any underlying problem(s).

Consider other points of view.

- * **What are my assumptions? Emotions?**

A = Ask for information (about)

- * **Historical context (history of this issue; context in the world)**

Reliability of sources

Historical analogies

G = Goals

What are my main goals? Are they realistic?

Generate options to help achieve these goals. Are they ethical?

E = Effects

- * **Predict unintended consequences.**

Play out the options. What could go wrong?

* Denotes topics emphasized in this lesson

bold = skills involved in the lesson.

- **Identify underlying problem(s):** One underlying problem was the increasing growth of government compared to the size of the economy. Another underlying problem was the increasing complexity of the economy as people become more specialized in their work. Does a more complex economy require more government regulation?
- **Consider other points of view:** Students should consider the points of view of other groups, such as taxpayers, poor people, investors, women, Labour Party supporters, Tory Party supporters, people in other countries, farmers, workers, and so forth.
- **What are my assumptions?** Some or all of the prime minister's advisors made the assumption that lower taxes on rich people would lead to increased investments and economic growth. This assumption may be true, but students shouldn't accept it without asking for evidence to see if there is support for this assumed effect of tax cuts for rich people. For example, maybe tax cuts for poor people would drive up demand, perhaps improving the economy even more than cuts for rich people. Students need to seek evidence to test these assumptions.

- **Ask questions about context:** Students could ask a number of questions, including: What is causing the growth in government? Why are people so supportive of the NHS? How large are deficits in other countries? How did unions get to be so strong? How do the majority of British people feel about unions, privatisation, government deficits, tax rates on income versus sales taxes, and so forth?
- **Set realistic goals:** Did students discuss and choose one main goal for the economy? Was it growth? fairness? security?
- **Predict unintended consequences:** Several consequences are explained in Handout 2.
- **Play out the options:** Prime Minister Thatcher apparently played out the option for radically changing National Health Service and decided it would be too difficult politically. She seems to anticipate that the high support for the NHS would lead to a defeat of a proposal for radical change. Note that she did not back away because she thought the changes were a bad idea or that the changes would bring about negative unintended consequences. Her concern seems to have been with opposition to changes in the short run. Students should consider these short-term difficulties also.

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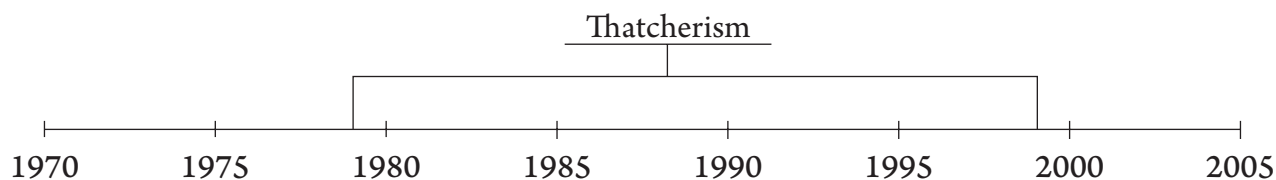
LESSON 6: MARGARET THATCHER'S ECONOMIC POLICIES, 1979

VOCABULARY

- GDP—the measure of all the goods and services produced in a country in one year
- productivity—a measure of how much, in goods, one worker produces in one hour
- unemployment—the percentage of workers who are out of work and are actively looking for jobs
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- sympathy strike—union members in one industry join a strike in a different industry
- closed shop—a company where all workers must join the union

PROBLEM, 1981

Student Handout 1



You are Margaret Thatcher, and you have just become prime minister in 1979. Great Britain seems to be in decline compared to other industrial countries, which are growing faster economically than Britain. For example, in the 1960s the French economy grew at a rate that was about twice as fast as that of the British economy. From 1969–1973, the annual rate of gross domestic product (GDP) per employee for European Economic Community countries was 4.63 percent, while in Britain it was 2.79 percent. Productivity (output per worker per hour) is 50 percent higher in the United States and 25 percent higher in Germany than in Britain. You face a number of important issues on the economy. For each issue, decide which of the following choices you will make.

A. INFLATION/UNEMPLOYMENT

Inflation is very high in Britain, averaging more than 10 percent in each of the past few years. This year it stands at 13.4 percent. It is damaging to the British economy because people have started building expectations of inflation into their economic decisions. For example, people start speculating in products with prices that are increasing fastest, rather than in areas that have the greatest economic benefit. And inflation is very unfair. It hurts most ordinary people, especially people on fixed incomes, while it brings prosperity to people who can move their money into growth areas. Most economists believe that significant government deficits—spending more each year than it takes in from taxes—are a major cause of inflation. The extra money the government spends can cause prices to rise. The second cause of inflation is low interest rates. As more people borrow, with such low interest rates, demand for products and services rises, increasing prices. According to your advisors, the solution to the inflation problem is to cut the government deficit (primarily by cutting government spending) and to raise interest rates.

Meanwhile, the country is also moving into a recession, with unemployment increasing to more than 5 percent. Unfortunately for your decisions, the normal action to take to relieve unemployment is to increase government spending or cut taxes, the opposite of what you would do to slow down inflation. Deficits, through the extra money spent by the government or spent by businesses or individuals due to tax cuts, cause businesses to hire workers, which lowers unemployment.

Lesson 6: Margaret Thatcher's Economic Policies, 1979

The previous government run by the other political party, the Labour Party, cut the government budget in order to pull down inflation. But the budget cuts increased unemployment and didn't decrease inflation. Public disenchantment with the Labour government contributed to your party's victory in the recent election. It is a major reason you are prime minister.

What will you do about high inflation and high unemployment?

1. Focus on bringing down inflation. Cut government spending to reduce or eliminate government deficits. Once the government stops putting extra money into the economy (which it has been doing with deficit spending), the rate of inflation will be reduced. This high level of inflation hurts workers (who lose 13 percent of the value of their paychecks each year) and investors (who lose 13 percent of the value of their profits). Reducing inflation will clearly provide a more stable economic environment for growth. Once the government brings the rate of inflation under control, it can turn to expanding the economy (possibly through more government spending) to bring down unemployment.
2. Focus on bringing down unemployment by increasing government spending or cutting taxes, leading to larger government deficits. The recession is the main problem. Once the economy starts expanding, people will start businesses to meet increasing demand, which will pull down unemployment. At that point, the government can turn to slowing down inflation (possibly through cutting government spending).
3. Don't do either. The economy will naturally correct the problems of inflation and unemployment. As a conservative, you believe that government is causing the problems. So why take further government action? It will only make matters worse.

B. TAXES

Taxes in Britain are high (the standard rate is 33 percent) and they are especially high for rich people (the wealthiest people pay at an 83 percent rate). According to your advisors, rich people are the greatest investors. High taxes on the rich are, therefore, slowing down investments. If the government cuts taxes, the entrepreneurial spirit of investors will be unleashed and the British economy will grow at a faster pace. Increased economic growth will provide job opportunities for people, reducing unemployment. It will also bring in more tax revenue, which will eventually reduce the budget deficits.

On the other hand, some advisors are nervous that cutting taxes on rich people will increase budget deficits, which will add to inflation. If we cut the tax rate for rich people, these advisors want to increase the sales tax from 8 percent to 15 percent to replace the loss of tax revenue. This increase in the sales tax would be a broad-based tax that would affect buying, rather than investing.

What will you do about taxes?

1. Cut taxes for rich people to increase investing, while keeping other taxes the same.

2. Cut taxes for rich people to increase investing and replace it with an increase in the sales tax, as suggested by some of your advisors.
3. Don't cut taxes for rich people.

C. PUBLICALLY OWNED BUSINESSES AND HOUSING

A large number of businesses in Britain—such as steel companies, airlines, and petroleum—are nationalized, that is, they are owned and run by the government. Conservatives believe the government runs businesses inefficiently. They believe that these nationalized businesses should be privatised (sold to the public to be run privately and have to compete for people's purchases). People who tend to vote for the Labour Party, on the other hand, feel publically owned companies operate for the good of the whole nation rather than just to make money.

A large amount of housing in Britain is also owned and run by the government. Again, conservatives feel the housing is run inefficiently by the government and should be privately owned. Renters have less incentive to take care of property than do owners, and owners take more pride in their property. People who lean toward the Labour Party think government housing protects renters from being gouged by high prices charged by greedy owners.

What will you do about publically owned businesses and housing?

1. Have the government sell off most of the government businesses, but not the housing.
2. Have the government sell off most of the government housing, but not the businesses.
3. Have the government sell off both.
4. Don't have the government sell off either businesses or housing.

D. NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE

In Britain everyone has health care coverage (called universal health coverage) provided by the government through an agency called the National Health Service (NHS). Doctors work for the government and are paid a salary. When people need a check-up or are sick, they go to the doctor or hospital for free. Of course, it is not really free. People pay for health care through their taxes. And the costs for health care keep rising. It is one of the reasons that the British government has a deficit. Nevertheless, the NHS is very popular. Opinion polls show that 65 percent of people favor the NHS.

What will you do about government health care?

1. Change the NHS to a market system. Doctors and hospitals would charge fees for services and compete for customers. People would pay for their own health needs. Having to pay out of pocket would make health customers pay attention to costs. With people shopping

Lesson 6: Margaret Thatcher's Economic Policies, 1979

around for the best prices, the costs of health care would slow down. Privatising health care would also eliminate government inefficiency and reduce the government deficit, because the government would be spending much less.

2. Don't make dramatic changes in the NHS. It's not perfect, but the public likes it.

E. UNIONS:

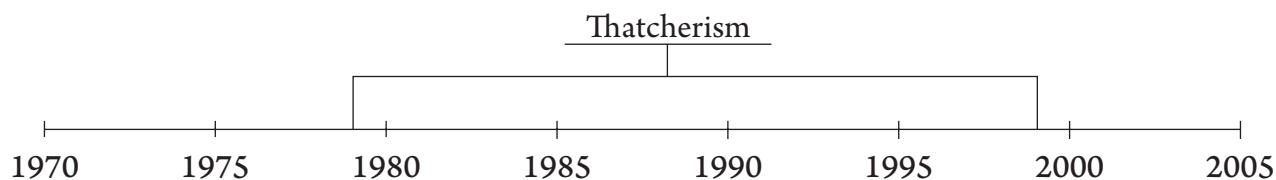
Many people in Britain believe labor unions are too strong and are preventing necessary changes. In the winter of 1978–1979, there were numerous labor strikes and riots—labeled the “Winter of Discontent”—making many people more fearful of the power of unions. Critics of unions argue that they protect workers who aren't always working hard, which prevents increases in productivity. Unions keep wages unnecessarily high, which makes prices higher, increases unemployment (with wages higher, businesses hire fewer workers), and makes Britain less competitive in the world economy. Supporters of unions argue that unions make sure that workers get their fair share of the economic pie. If businesses prosper, workers should also. Without unions, older, higher-paid workers would be fired to bring in younger, lower-paid workers. There would be no protection against discrimination or abuse by managers or owners.

What will you do about unions?

1. Take a hard line to provoke strikes. A confrontation between government and unions will allow you to break the power of unions, which will lead to greater investment in business, higher productivity, more competitive businesses in the global market, and higher economic growth.
2. Don't provoke the unions. They legitimately represent workers. Also, if you are seen as forcing a confrontation, the Labour Party will become more popular and you could be voted out of office.

OUTCOMES

Student Handout 2



Prime Minister Thatcher decided to take these actions:

A. INFLATION/UNEMPLOYMENT:

She chose Option 1, focusing on inflation, by raising interest rates to 17 percent and attempting to cut spending. The government budget was cut in many places, especially for subsidies to businesses. British companies were forced to compete more on their own. As companies were cut loose, thousands of workers were laid off. The higher interest rates slowed the economy and thereby slowed inflation significantly. By 1983, the inflation rate was cut by more than half, to 5.4 percent, the lowest level since 1970. The lower inflation rate did help provide stability to the economy, which probably increased investments. (The inflation rate rose again in the late 1980s to around 9 percent, but there are several possible causes for that relapse.)

On the other hand, as the economy slowed (it contracted by 3.2 percent in 1980–1981), and as companies were removed from government subsidies, the unemployment rate soared from 5.3 percent in 1979 to 12 percent in 1981 (it eventually hit 13.1 percent in 1985). The worsening recession made Margaret Thatcher the most unpopular prime minister in Britain's history. There were riots in the inner-city areas of London and other major cities. She said at the time that she could only make this unpopular decision at the beginning of her term, while she had a solid Conservative majority in Parliament. The recession also forced the government to spend more for unemployment payments. This increased spending made the budget deficits worse in 1980–1981.

Eventually, however, the economy improved and the unemployment rate dropped to around 6 percent. When the economy started to grow in 1982, Margaret Thatcher's popularity rose with it. In 1982, her actions in sending a British fleet to take back the Falkland Islands were even more important to her increasing popularity. Many voters saw Mrs. Thatcher as a strong leader who made Britain more powerful in international affairs.

B. TAXES:

She chose Option 2, to cut taxes on rich people from 83 percent to 60 percent—and eventually to 40 percent in 1988—and to cut the standard tax from 33 percent to 30 percent. She replaced the lower

Lesson 6: Margaret Thatcher's Economic Policies, 1979

income taxes by raising the national sales tax (called a Value Added Tax or VAT) from 8 percent to 15 percent and by raising compulsory National Insurance payments (worker payments for illness, unemployment, and pension benefits). She believed that people really didn't like direct taxes on their income but didn't object as much to indirect taxes, such as the VAT. She was right that people didn't object as much. Supporters of this decision say that the reduced taxes on investors led to increased economic growth in the 1980s. Although Britain's economy didn't grow as fast as economies in most other European countries in the 1980s, it did grow faster (about 3 percent per year after 1981) than it had in the 1970s, and the standard of living of workers, measured as real wages, grew faster under Margaret Thatcher than under any previous Prime Minister in British history. In addition, self-employment rose by 50 percent. Thatcher helped create a pro-business climate in Britain.

Critics point out that the overall tax burden went up under Prime Minister Thatcher, from 31 percent of a taxpayer's income in 1979 to 37 percent in 1997. They see it as a powerful criticism, because she proclaimed that she would cut taxes. In addition, economic growth in Britain was very weak compared to in other countries and compared to what it had been in Britain in the 1970s. They argue that because other countries' economies grew faster than Britain's, it must have been other factors than Thatcher's policies that led to British growth. They argue that there was no benefit to the economy as a whole, while poor people took the brunt of the VAT and compulsory insurance payments. Both of these taxes are regressive, taking a larger percentage of money from poorer people than richer people. Meanwhile, executives of large companies, including former government companies that had been privatised (see the next section), made obscenely large salaries even as the situation became more difficult for the poor. Critics contend that the main effect Prime Minister Thatcher had on Britain was increasing inequality. Britain became a greedier, more unequal country in the 1980s.

C. PUBLICALLY OWNED BUSINESSES AND HOUSING:

She chose Option 3, selling off businesses and housing. She privatised many of the main government-owned businesses, such as British Steel, British Petroleum, Rolls Royce, British Telecom, and British Airways. Supporters argue that the privatized businesses were more efficient and made Britain more competitive in the world marketplace. The new private businesses were forced to compete to stay in business. Government bureaucracy and the burden on taxpayers were reduced. As a result of the selloffs of these government businesses, the country started making progress in reducing the government deficit. The public supported selling off the businesses and eagerly participated in buying shares, in what Prime Minister Thatcher called "Popular Capitalism." The percentage of the public owning shares rose from 7 percent in 1979 to 25 percent in 1990.

Critics argue that most of the businesses simply became private monopolies. Consumers were getting gouged by private owners with no government oversight to prevent unreasonable prices or poor service. In addition, corruption resulted. Some government officials who helped establish privatised companies soon retired from government to become board members, at very high salaries, of those very same profitable companies.

The prime minister also sold off public housing to renters who wanted to buy. Because the properties were sold at less than the market price, renters were eager to buy. The percentage of home ownership in Britain increased significantly, from 56 percent to 66 percent, and the program was very popular. Again, the selloff also reduced the burden on taxpayers. Mrs. Thatcher also ended the practice of rent control (which kept rents artificially low), allowing owners and renters to negotiate market prices for rents. Some local governments resisted selling off public housing, which was a source of patronage jobs. Thatcher used the power of the national government to force the local governments to sell off some public housing. So, one effect of Thatcherism was to increase the power of the national government over local governments.

Prime Minister Thatcher thought that privatisation was good economics but also the right decision morally. She said, "It [privatisation] was one of the central means of reversing the corrosive and corrupting effects of socialism.... Through privatisation—particularly the kind of privatisation which leads to the widest possible share ownership by members of the public—the state's power is reduced and the power of the people enhanced...." She wanted to replace dependency on government and force people to stand on their own feet, building an entrepreneurial culture. The share of government spending to the whole economy (GDP) dropped from 50 percent in 1975 to 40 percent in 1990. Britain was moving toward smaller government.

D. NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE:

She decided not to make dramatic changes in the health care system (Option 2), even though she thought it was inefficient and bureaucratic. The NHS was too popular for her to take on this challenge in addition to the other changes she made in the economy.

E. UNIONS:

She took a very hard line against unions (Option 1), and succeeded in reducing the power of unions, especially in national politics. The Employment Act prevented sympathy strikes (striking in support of workers at other companies) and closed shops (where every worker had to join the union). It also forced unions to hold periodic elections and to hold secret ballots by union membership before striking. In 1984–1985, backed by public support for the government, she opposed and defeated the coal miners' strike. The governments under John Major and Tony Blair, which followed the Thatcher government, took less notice of unions in deciding their policies.

Productivity increased dramatically in Britain—in part due to weaker unions—and price increases slowed, benefitting consumers. Critics argue that productivity increased primarily because jobs shifted from manufacturing (which were crippled by the prime minister's hostile policies) into services, where productivity was already higher. Meanwhile, these new jobs in the service industries were characterized by lower pay, higher rates of part-time work, and lower job security.

INFLATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT

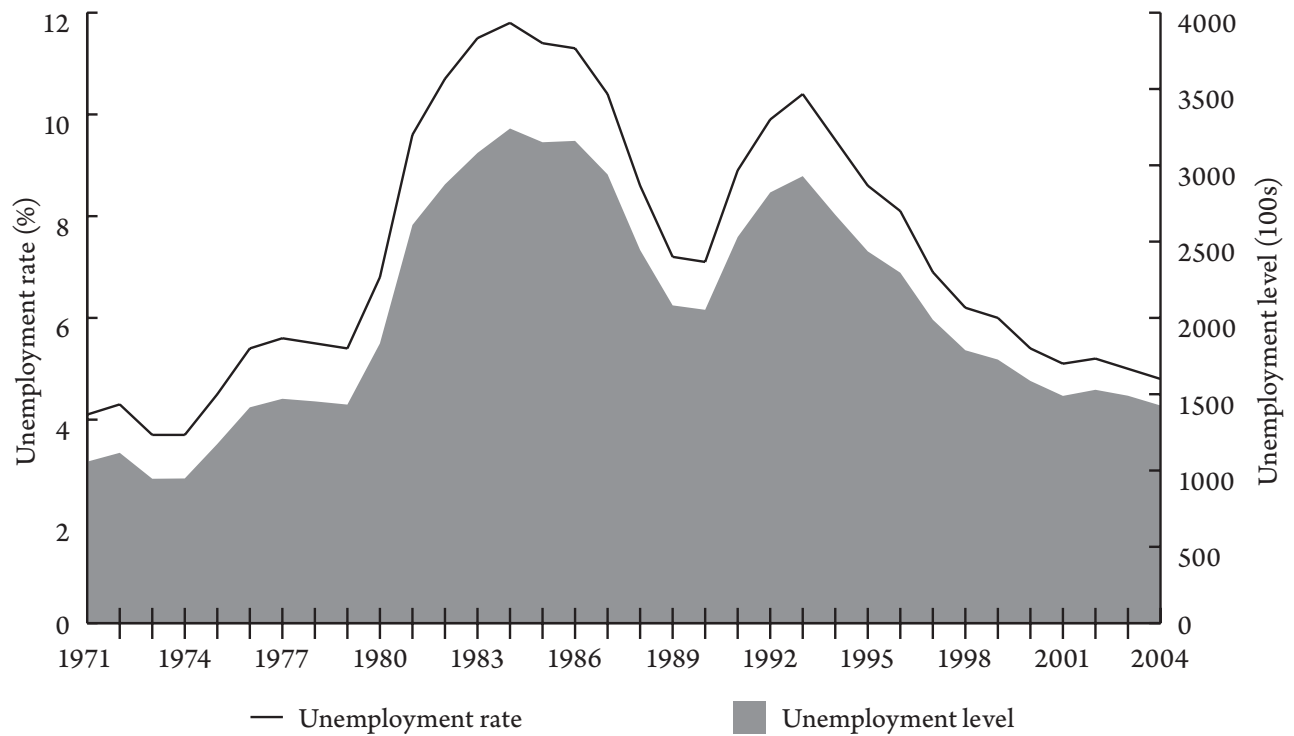
Student Handout 3

INFLATION RATES IN BRITAIN, 1970–1990

1990	7.00%
1989	5.20%
1988	4.90%
1987	4.20%
1986	3.40%
1985	6.10%
1984	5.00%
1983	4.60%
1982	8.60%
1981	11.90%
1980	18.00%
1979	13.40%
1978	8.30%
1977	15.80%
1976	16.50%
1975	24.20%
1974	16.00%
1973	9.20%
1972	7.10%
1971	9.40%
1970	6.40%

Source: Adam Stevens, "What's The Cost?" <http://www.whatsthecost.com>.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN GREAT BRITAIN, 1971–2004



Source: Office for National Statistics, <http://www.ons.gov.uk>.

PRIMARY SOURCE

Student Handout 4

MARGARET THATCHER

SPEECH TO CONSERVATIVE PARTY CONFERENCE *(Excerpt)*

October 10, 1980

...In its first seventeen months this Government has laid the foundations for recovery. We have undertaken a heavy load of legislation, a load we do not intend to repeat because we do not share the Socialist fantasy that achievement is measured by the number of laws you pass. But there was a formidable barricade of obstacles that we had to sweep aside. For a start, in his first Budget Geoffrey Howe began to rest incentives to stimulate the abilities and inventive genius of our people. Prosperity comes not from grand conferences of economists but by countless acts of personal self-confidence and self-reliance....

[We] have begun to break down the monopoly powers of nationalization ... British Aerospace will soon be open to private investment. The monopoly of the Post Office and British Telecommunications is being diminished. The barriers to private generation of electricity for sale have been lifted....

Free competition in road passenger transport promises travelers a better deal. Michael Heseltine has given to millions—yes, millions—of council tenants the right to buy their own homes....

But all this will avail us little unless we achieve our prime economic objective—the defeat of inflation. Inflation destroys nations and societies as surely as invading armies do. Inflation is the parent of unemployment. It is the unseen robber of those who have saved...

[T]he level of unemployment in our country today is a human tragedy. Let me make it clear beyond doubt. I am profoundly concerned about unemployment. Human dignity and self respect are undermined when men and women are condemned to idleness. The waste of a country's most precious assets—the talent and energy of its people—makes it the bounden duty of Government to seek a real and lasting cure....

If spending money like water was the answer to our country's problems, we would have no problems now. If ever a nation has spent, spent, spent and spent again, ours has. Today that dream is over. All of that money has got us nowhere but it still has to come from somewhere. Those who urge us to relax the squeeze, to spend yet more money indiscriminately in the belief that it will help the unemployed and the small businessman are not being kind or compassionate or caring....

But it is not the State that creates a healthy society. When the State grows too powerful people feel that they count for less and less. The State drains society, not only of its wealth but of initiative, of energy, the will to improve and innovate as well as to preserve what is best. Our aim is to let people feel that they count for more and more. If we cannot trust the deepest instincts of our people we should not be in politics at all. Some aspects of our present society really do offend those instincts...

I have always known that that task was vital. Since last week it has become even more vital than ever. We close our Conference in the aftermath of that sinister Utopia unveiled at Blackpool. Let Labour's Orwellian nightmare of the Left be the spur for us to dedicate with a new urgency our every ounce of energy and moral strength to rebuild the fortunes of this free nation....

From: The Margaret Thatcher Foundation at Margaretthatcher.org

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What are Prime Minister Thatcher's economic proposals and how will they help the country, according to her?
2. What arguments does Prime Minister Thatcher make to support the economic programs she proposes? How strong are these arguments?
3. How reliable is Prime Minister Thatcher's speech as a source?

LESSON 7: FALL OF THE USSR, 1980s

For Teachers

INTRODUCTION

■ Overview

The fall of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR, or Soviet Union) was a surprise for most people and a momentous change in the world. This lesson gives students the opportunity to make decisions during that watershed moment in the Soviet Union.

■ Vocabulary

- Mikhail Gorbachev—Communist leader of the USSR, 1985–1991
- bureaucracy—layers of government officials that make government inefficient
- black market—a portion of the economy that involves buying and selling items illegally
- ration—a fixed amount of food per person
- subsidies—government help for business
- *perestroika*—restructuring of the economy
- inflation—higher prices
- *glasnost*—openness with government information
- barter—trade goods without money
- Boris Yeltsin—president of Russia, 1991–1999
- Berlin Wall—wall built in the city of Berlin to prevent East Germans from escaping into West Berlin
- Cold War—diplomatic and political struggle between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States, 1946–1991

■ Decision-making Skills Emphasized

- Identify underlying problems
- Consider points of view
- Ask questions about analogies
- Identify goals
- Predict unintended consequences
- Play out options

LESSON PLAN A: IN-DEPTH LESSON (40–50 Minutes)

■ Procedure

Distribute Handout 1, which asks students to decide up to three actions they would take in regard to the Soviet economy in 1987. Have them pair up and discuss their actions. Move around the room to answer possible questions or clear up misunderstandings. Bring the class back together, and have each group report on its decisions and explain them. Then have the class vote on the various options. Students can also discuss the question on the handout on what they think Gorbachev actually chose.

Repeat the same process for Handout 2 (Soviet Political System in 1987), and Handout 3 (Soviet Empire in 1987). Remind students that for each of these handouts, they can choose only one option.

At the conclusion of the discussion of Handout 3, distribute Handout 4 (Outcomes), and tell students to comment for homework. They must analyze three different choices.

You can also have students analyze the primary source in Handout 5 (Gorbachev's description of *perestroika*) by answering the Questions for Analysis:

1. Answers will vary.
2. Government workers will think that they might lose their jobs, so they will feel threatened.
3. This is a primary source but it is public and clearly aimed to gain support for the new policy. The document leaves out the negative sides of *perestroika*, such as the increase in unemployment among government workers or the likelihood of shortages in the short run.

■ Reflecting on Decision Making

Ask students how well they did on decision making on this problem. Which decision-making skills were especially important in making these economic and political decisions? Which of the letters of **P-A-G-E** applied especially to this problem? (See the “Decision-making Analysis” section below

for ideas.) Ask students what they did well or poorly in terms of the **P-A-G-E** analysis of decision making. Discuss their answers.

■ Putting the Actual Decisions into Historical Context

Ask students whether the decisions made at this time in Russia were the result more of historical forces or choices made by Gorbachev. (Some will argue that decisions made by Gorbachev were the key to the downfall of the Soviet Union, because he initiated these changes. His unique skills as a leader, along with his desire for reform, were the key to transforming the Soviet Union. He pushed for the reforms before there was widespread public pressure to change the system, which shows he was the key to change. Others will say that historical forces were more important. The Soviet Union was being left behind by all the changes in the world, and most Russians supported reforms. In addition, for decades the Communist Party's reformist wing had been looking at the New Economic Policy period of the 1920s for guidelines on how to change Communism. Had Gorbachev not risen to the top, there were other reformers who might have made dramatic changes as well.)

■ Connecting to Today

Ask students what the case of the USSR in the late 1980s tells us about reform today in the United States or other countries? How quickly should reforms take place? How much should opposition be taken into account? What lessons are there in regard to the way that reforms get translated into practice by ordinary people?

■ Troubleshooting

Some students may need a review of such concepts as socialism, capitalism, bureaucracy, and rationing.

LESSON PLAN B: QUICK MOTIVATOR LESSON *(20 Minutes)*

Assign Handouts 1–3 for homework and have students make their decisions. In class, ask for options from students and a show of hands for those options. Discuss reasons for five minutes. Distribute Handout 4 with the outcomes, and have students write their reactions for homework.

TEACHER NOTES TO EXPAND DISCUSSION

(For outcomes for students, see Handout 4.)

Gorbachev was very interested in machine tools, which he thought could help the USSR expand its industry and make workers more productive. He kept importing machine tools even after the USSR had run up a large government deficit and had been taking in less money from exports, due to lower prices for oil. Some historians think there was too much emphasis on machine tools.

The government decided in 1986 to tax unearned income in order to cut down on corruption. Naturally, most corrupt people got around the tax by bribing tax officials. However, for law-abiding people, the new law had the unintended consequence of reducing incentive to make more money, as it could be taxed as unearned. So the tax reduced production and economic growth.

Gorbachev worked to end the Soviet war in Afghanistan, which saved military spending and saved lives.

■ Decision-making Analysis

P = Problem

- * **Identify any underlying problem(s).**

Consider other points of view.

What are my assumptions? Emotions?

A = Ask for information (about)

Historical context (history of this issue; context in the world)

Reliability of sources

- * **Historical analogies**

G = Goals

What are my main goals? Are they realistic?

Generate options to help achieve these goals. Are they ethical?

E = Effects

- * **Predict unintended consequences.**

Play out the options. What could go wrong?

* Denotes topics emphasized in this lesson

- **Identify underlying problems:** Gorbachev recognized that the Soviet economy was in bad shape because the bureaucracy was too large. According to critics, he failed to recognize a more central underlying problem: the basic underlying principles of Communism itself were causing the problems with bureaucracy and the economy. These critics point out that reforming the Communist system was not going to solve the problems.
- **Consider other points of view:** It is important for students to think how various groups will react to reforms. These include foreign countries in general, other Communist countries, farmers, workers, possible investors, managers, the military, and consumers. One group they must consider is government officials in the Soviet bureaucracy, who would likely resist reforms. See “Play out the Options” below.

- **Ask questions about analogies:** Students should ask how strong the analogy is between the situation in the Soviet Union in 1987 and China's reforms a few years earlier. The two cases are similar in that they took place during roughly the same time period, they both had had very oppressive governments previously, they both were struggling with poor economic growth, and they both were dealing with changes in information technologies that were leaving them behind in the world. The situations are different in that China had become Communist more recently, so more Chinese people had experience with participating in markets, such as starting businesses or investing. Overall, this looks like a good analogy, which could have provided the Soviets with guidelines for what to do in reforming their system. Another analogy that might have occurred to students was the anti-alcohol campaign in Russia and the Prohibition era in the United States. It is similar in that many people like to drink alcohol and would hate government interference with it. A difference is Americans have had a long tradition of resisting government interference, whereas Russians in the 1980s did not.
- **What are my goals:** Goals are very important to this topic. If the goal is to provide a better economy for the Soviet people, then scrapping the whole Communist system is a likely option. Gorbachev's main goal was reforming the Communist system, which undermined the goal of improving the system.
- **Play out the options:** In the short run, party leaders at the highest levels as well as lower-level officials who were in danger of losing their special privileges would both resist the reforms. Gorbachev did a good job of appointing top-level officials to help pass his reforms, but he had much more difficulty in overcoming resistance by lower-level officials at the local level and at factories and farms. In China, Deng Xiaoping was able to overcome some of this resistance by giving government officials advantages in the new market system—for example, giving them good land for farms or lucrative factories to run.
- **Predict unintended consequences:** There are several unintended consequences of these decisions, as described in Handout 4. One consequence of *glasnost* was the exposure of social problems in the Soviet Union, such as alcoholism, poverty, homelessness, violence, crime, prostitution, child abuse, and corruption. One film, *Little Vera*, dealt with many of these issues and was watched by millions of Soviet viewers. These topics of investigation in newspapers, interviews, films, and TV documentaries started moving people to question whether communism was such a good system.

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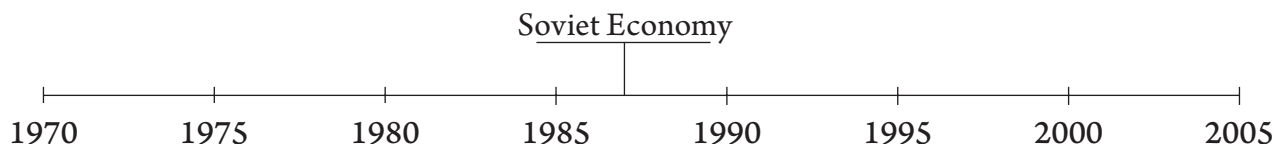
LESSON 7: FALL OF THE USSR, 1980s

VOCABULARY

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- Cold War—diplomatic and political struggle between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States, 1946–1991

SOVIET ECONOMY, 1987

Student Handout 1



The year is 1987 and you are Mikhail Gorbachev. As the leader of the Soviet Union (USSR), you are facing growing problems. The economy of the USSR is falling behind the economies of the West (Europe and the United States). The Soviet Union has only 2 percent of world trade, less than the Russian share before 1914. Economic growth is very small, averaging less than 2 percent per year. State-run factories are very inefficient; at least 15 percent (24,000 businesses) are run at a loss. Losses don't mean anything to the factories, because they are subsidized by the government—they still get government money even when they are not efficient. The factories don't need to change because they don't go out of business. Workers are supposed to be paid more if they work hard, but in reality, they are paid according to a set salary or they are often paid months late. There is little monetary incentive to work hard. A joke among workers is, "We pretend to work and they pretend to pay us."

State planning often plans for the wrong production, ending up with too many boots and not enough shoes, for example. It also leads to rampant corruption. Managers give jobs to relatives. Senior officials in government-owned factories keep their positions for life. They answer to no one and live comfortable lifestyles with luxury items. They are resented by almost everyone else in the USSR. There are way too many workers and managers, which leads to unnecessary costs and bureaucracy. Endless forms need to be filled in and people often need to be paid off in order to get things done. Poverty and alcohol abuse are widespread throughout the USSR. People in the USSR buy about half the goods per person that people in Western Europe buy. Sugar is rationed throughout the USSR, and meat is rationed in many places. People have to stand in long lines to buy almost anything.

These inefficiencies have led to a shadow economy. The black market may be as large as 40 percent of the whole economy. When people need some product badly, they go to the black market to get it.

The government spends about 20 percent of the total GDP on the military, a tremendous sum that causes large government deficits. By comparison, the United States spends about 6 percent of its GDP on the military.

A few years ago, China made reforms that broke away from the Communist system economically while keeping the Communists in charge politically. About half the economy was taken away from the government and given to private owners. Eventually, even more will be privatized. Since the reforms, China has experienced very high economic growth, about 10 percent per year (3–4



percent is considered good). Some officials also recall that in the 1920s the Soviet government privatized factories and farms and used more market solutions to problems, which also led to greater economic growth.

Which of the following will you do? You can do no more than three of these options. Explain your choices.

- A. Root out corruption within the state-run factories by putting in independent government inspectors. These inspectors would check goods to make sure they are of good quality. In addition, give managers incentives to fire unnecessary workers by giving them bonuses if they cut their budget costs. If we can make the factories efficient, we will increase economic growth and solve our economic problems.
- B. Sell off some state-run factories and businesses. Allow the rest of the state-run businesses to sell what they produce to consumers after they fill government orders for goods. This limited competition will improve the Communist system. If businesses have to compete, they will become more efficient without the government having to watch over them.
- C. Start an anti-alcohol campaign to stop drinking by both workers and managers. When workers are sober, they will produce more per hour and conditions will improve in the USSR.

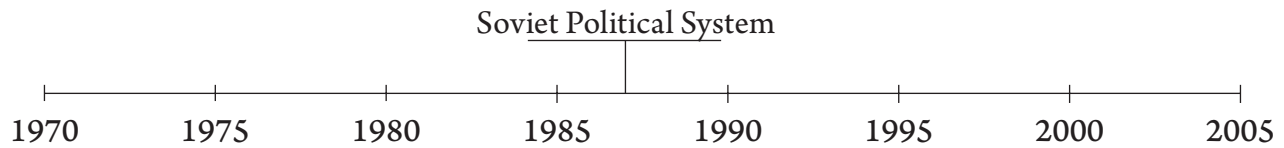
Lesson 7: Fall of the USSR, 1980s

- D. Fire managers at state-run factories and replace them with people who will devote themselves to increasing efficiency. At the very least, the new managers will work hard because they will know that they can be fired.
- E. Require managers to be elected by workers. This will make managers accountable.
- F. End all state-run factories and collective farms, making them all privately owned. They would all have to compete to get business. The government would not give any more subsidies.

What do you think Gorbachev actually did on this problem? Explain.

SOVIET POLITICAL SYSTEM, 1987

Student Handout 2



The year is 1987 and you are still Mikhail Gorbachev. The USSR is a one-party union. There are elections, but only people from the Communist Party can run. The Party chooses one candidate for each position. The state controls all the news, censoring information that would make the USSR look bad. People who protest are arrested and sent to prison. The control by the party makes for a very stable country – there aren't a lot of demonstrations or criticisms. Unfortunately, the lack of open information is hurting the USSR economically. In the West, computers, fax machines and open access to information are making businesses change rapidly, constantly improving in order to stay competitive. Without open access to information and the latest information technology for people, the Soviet economy is falling further and further behind.

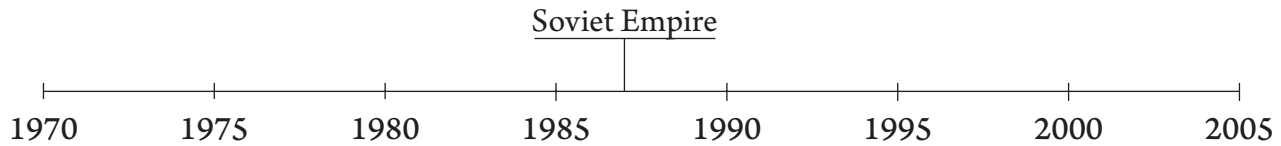
Which of the following will you do about information? Choose only one. Explain.

- A. Start a new policy to open the USSR to free speech, including telling the truth about government mistakes, and to new information technologies. Stop censoring the news.
- B. Don't open the USSR to new information, but allow new technologies.
- C. Don't open to new information or allow new technologies.
- D. Allow competitive elections (with several candidates running) and secret ballots.

What do you think Gorbachev actually did on this problem? Explain.

SOVIET EMPIRE, 1987

Student Handout 3



The year is 1987 and you are still Mikhail Gorbachev. The USSR consists of Russia and 14 other republics, made up of many ethnic groups. The people in the Baltic republics (Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia) are pushing for independence. Meanwhile, the USSR has control over satellite countries (countries controlled by a stronger country) in Eastern Europe. Many of these people also desire independence. There have been protests in Czechoslovakia and ongoing protests in Poland, led by workers in a group called Solidarity. In the past, Soviet leaders have used military force to crush such protests and calls for independence. For example in Hungary in 1956, protesters were killed by Soviet troops.

Which of the following will you do? Choose only one. Explain.

- A. Send troops to crush the protesters.
- B. Don't send troops. Try to settle the controversies by negotiations.

What do you think Gorbachev actually did on this problem? Explain.

OUTCOMES FOR HANDOUTS 1–3

Student Handout 4

PROBLEM 1: THE SOVIET ECONOMY IN 1987

Mikhail Gorbachev decided to focus at first on Options A, C, and D. The reforms in Option A did bring about more efficiencies, but there was no clear way to remove managers, who had political power (which also prevented Option D from being effective). The inspectors did remove low-quality goods, but that meant about 20 percent of production was rejected, leading to more shortages in the short run. Managers and workers could not meet their production targets, so they missed their bonuses. The inspectors were so hated that the whole inspection system was dropped after two years.

The anti-alcohol campaign (Option C) was a complete failure. Many Russians enjoy drinking vodka and they deeply resented the government taking it away. As in Prohibition in the United States in the 1920s, a large black market mushroomed to avoid the law. The public anger at Gorbachev for this foolish law probably hurt him on his other reform efforts.

In 1987, Gorbachev focused more on Option B, in a policy called *perestroika*, or restructuring. This policy was a reform of both the political and economic systems, but here we are focused only on the economic system. *Perestroika* introduced some competition, but it was designed to make socialism work more efficiently, not convert socialism to capitalism. The reforms allowed government-run factories to sell what they produced to consumers after they filled government orders for goods. Unprofitable factories were closed rather than bailed out. Government planning moved from the central planning board (Gosplan) to the local level or even to the factories themselves. Meanwhile, privately owned restaurants, shops, and factories were added to the mix of businesses. For the first time in more than 60 years, private businesses were part of the Soviet Union.

There was hope for an improved economy, but it actually got worse. Government planners didn't want factories selling on their own—they wanted to keep their power and privilege. Factory owners, meanwhile, found it much easier to keep selling almost everything to the government. Because prices were still controlled by the government on most goods, price signals from the market weren't working. Without price signals, shortages appeared everywhere. Shortages in one industry meant that supplies of raw materials for another were gone, dropping production still further. The government continued to subsidize most products (to keep prices to the level set by the government). Lines got longer for scarce goods in the stores, civic unrest mounted and black-market trading increased.

Unfortunately, the price of oil, the USSR's main export, dropped significantly in the late 1980s. The reduction of taxes from oil, combined with increased imports (which were bought by the government) led to increased budget deficits. In addition, as the 15 republics became more

Lesson 7: Fall of the USSR, 1980s

independent of the USSR, they decided to send less tax revenue to the central government. Tax revenues were only 36 percent of expected revenue in 1990–1991. This loss of tax money further aggravated the deficits. The government paid for these deficits essentially by printing more money, which led to inflation. The government also cut imports of consumer goods, making them scarce and further driving up their prices. Inflation was about 53 percent in 1990 and 650 percent in 1991. The inflation, in turn, caused people to produce fewer goods and engage more in barter. At least when someone trades a product for another, neither product loses value as they would if they had been paid for with nearly worthless rubles.

Gorbachev also chose to have workers elect their managers (Option E) in the Enterprise Law of 1987. Because managers wanted to keep their employees happy to get reelected, they gave in to wage demands. The increased wages led to even more inflation.

Overall, Gorbachev tried reforms, but most were limited and he kept changing his mind. For example, he said that people could set up cooperatives (moving away from state-run businesses), but then he said that only people on pensions or students could form cooperatives (which made them an insignificant part of the economy). In addition, the prices in cooperatives were usually higher than the prices charged by state-run businesses, which were heavily subsidized to keep prices artificially low. He never really committed to a wholesale change to markets (Option F) because he wanted to reform communism. Because of Gorbachev's mixed signals, the people of the USSR, who had very little experience in making business decisions in the Soviet system, wouldn't take risks in starting private businesses or taking over private farms. Foreign investors couldn't be sure of a stable economic environment, so they refrained from investing in the USSR.

Gorbachev removed much of the planning from the Soviet economy, but he didn't replace it with a market structure. This vacuum left the Soviets without a coherent economic system. Perestroika was a central cause of the demise of the Soviet Union.

PROBLEM 2: THE SOVIET POLITICAL SYSTEM IN 1987

Mikhail Gorbachev decided on Option A. This policy of *glasnost* opened the USSR to free, uncensored speech and allowed new information technologies. Soviet citizens lined up to get news and very quickly demanded changes in their society. Within a year, former Soviet leaders such as Stalin and Brezhnev were revealed as brutal dictators. History textbooks were shown to be so inaccurate that the national exams in history were cancelled in 1988. The abolition of the Communist Party's leading role, the failure of *perestroika*, and the possibility of multiparty democracy were openly discussed in the Soviet media.

Gorbachev also pushed for competitive elections among several candidates within the Communist Party, as well as secret ballots so voters could not be coerced (Option D). Real, competitive elections, albeit within the Communist Party, became more common. These elections were threatening to those who held power under the old system and raised a measure of accountability.

The Communist Party was still important, but its complete dominance of politics was broken—it was a major change in only a few years. Boris Yeltsin won the election for the Russian presidency in May 1990, despite Gorbachev's active support for the other candidate. Gorbachev wanted to slow the changes that his policies had unleashed. Yeltsin supported more radical reforms, including more focus on market restructuring as well as independence for Russia (breaking up the USSR).

PROBLEM 3: THE SOVIET EMPIRE IN 1987

Mikhail Gorbachev decided not to send troops (Option B) to crush the protestors in the various republics or Eastern European satellites (although there were a few exceptions). In 1988, the Estonians started popular fronts, which were actually political parties in disguise, to oppose the Communist Party (only the Communist Party was legal at the time). The political systems in most republics were thrown open to real debate over their futures. National flags were shown in public. The Baltic Republics (Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia) argued for independence because the Soviet takeover in 1939 was never legitimate. The Communist leader in Estonia asked for troops to stop the protests. Gorbachev fired him and negotiated with the protestors. In 1989, people lined up and held hands across the whole length of the three Baltic Republics as a protest against Soviet control. Other republics were also agitating for independence from the USSR. Gorbachev didn't want the republics to break away, but he decided not to use violence to stop them.

Meanwhile, the Eastern European satellite countries (Poland, East Germany, Hungary, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, Albania, and Bulgaria) broke with the Soviet Union in dramatic fashion, culminating with the tearing down of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

In 1991, Russia's leader, Boris Yeltsin, argued that Russia should also be independent of the USSR. It spelled the end of the Soviet Union. On December 25, 1991, the USSR broke up into 15 independent republics. The USSR disappeared and the Cold War was over.

PRIMARY SOURCE

Student Handout 5

Gorbachev's explanation of *perestroika*:

Perestroika means overcoming the stagnation process, breaking down the braking mechanism, creating a dependable and effective mechanism for acceleration of social and economic progress and giving it greater dynamism.

Perestroika means mass initiative. It is the conference of development of democracy, socialist self-government, encouragement of initiative and creative endeavor, improved water and disciplined, more *glasnost*, criticism and self-criticism in all spheres of our society. It is utmost respect for the individual and consideration for personal dignity.

Perestroika is the all-round intensification of the Soviet economy, the revival and development of the principles of democratic centralism in running the national economy, the universal introduction of economic methods, the renunciation of management by injunction and by administrative methods, and the overall encouragement of innovation and socialist enterprise.

Perestroika means a resolute shift to scientific methods, an ability to provide a solid scientific basis for every new initiative. It means the combination of the achievements of the scientific and technological revolution with a planned economy.

Perestroika means priority development of the social sphere aimed at ever better satisfaction of the Soviet people's requirements for good living and working conditions, for good rest and recreation, education and health care. It means unceasing concern for cultural and spiritual wealth, for the culture of every individual and society as a whole.

Perestroika means the elimination from society of the distortions of socialist ethics, the consistent implementation of the principles of social justice. It means the unity of words and deeds, rights and duties. It is the elevation of honest, highly-qualified labor, the overcoming of leveling tendencies in pay and consumerism....

I stress once again: perestroika is not some kind of illumination or revelation. To restructure our life means to understand the objective necessity for renovation and acceleration. And that necessity emerged in the heart of our society. The essence of perestroika lies in the fact that *it unites socialism with democracy* [italics in the original] and revives the Leninist concept



Mikhail Gorbachev in 1987.

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of socialist construction both in theory and in practice. Such is the essence of perestroika, which accounts for its genuine revolutionary spirit and its all-embracing scope.

The goal is worth the effort. And we are sure that our effort will be a worthy contribution to humanity's social progress.

Quoted from: The History Guide

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. Which arguments were most convincing about *perestroika* being worth the effort?
2. Which groups in Russia would not comply with *perestroika*?
3. How reliable is this document as a source?

