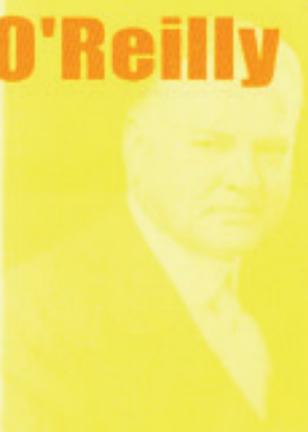


# World War I & the 1920s

Decision Making in U.S. History

By Kevin O'Reilly

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*Decision Making in U.S. History*

**World War I & the 1920s**

By Kevin O'Reilly

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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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This book is dedicated to Brian, of whom I am so proud.

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# HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

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Think of this book, and the other books in this series, not as a text, but as a menu. As a teacher, you select lessons from the menu. It was never intended that you would have everything on the menu—that would be overeating. [Take a look at the table of contents.] When choosing a lesson, look first at the problems on the student handout(s), and then at the student handout describing these problems’ historical outcomes. If you like what you see, take a look at the lesson plan for ideas on using the handouts. You can teach all of the lessons by giving students a problem handout, having them discuss what they would do, and finally distributing the outcomes handout. You may also consult the “Quick Motivator” section of a lesson plan to use the handouts as a short introduction to class.

On the other hand, you can think of this book as a “how-to” guide for teaching specific decision-making skills while also covering significant events in United States history. The book posits a general guideline of ten distinct skills, organized under the acronym **P-A-G-E** to help students remember these skills. Take a look at the explanation of **P-A-G-E** in the introduction to this book, under the section titled “Guide to Thoughtful Decision Making.” This section explains each of the ten skills and includes examples.

Every lesson in this series analyzes the historical topic in terms of **P-A-G-E**. Each lesson targets specific skills, letting the content and the actual decision in history determine the skills emphasized in the lesson. Take a look at the skills grid for each lesson on page 1 of this book. Handouts are frequently used to focus students on using specific skills. For example, many lessons include a list of questions designed to provoke more questions from students, as well as to give them ideas of the types of questions to ask. Other lessons give students a list of assumptions and ask which they assumed in making their decisions. The other skills have similar handouts.

Whether you try the problem-discussion-outcome approach or concentrate more on specific decision-making skills, I hope these books will help make you a more effective teacher and help your students learn United States history in a way that will help prepare them to make more thoughtful decisions as citizens.

Kevin O’Reilly

# INTRODUCTION

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## **RATIONALE: Hindsight versus 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, analyzing causes and effects, and many other strategies are vital to history courses. The lessons here on decision making are meant to support and enhance these other methods of studying history, not replace them with a more "practical" type of history.

# OVERVIEW

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The lessons in *Decision Making in U. S. History* are to be used independently within a standard U.S. history course in middle school, high school, or college. Each book in this series comprises between eight and thirteen lessons. Each lesson includes the following:

1. Introduction: includes an overview of the topic, content vocabulary, and decision-making skills emphasized in the lesson.
2. Lesson plan: includes suggestions for how to use the handouts, how to focus on decision-making skills, how to connect the decision to the larger historical context, how to use video and other supplementary sources, and how to troubleshoot problems, should any arise.
3. Suggested answers: this section features teacher notes about outcomes (student versions of the outcomes are also provided—see number 6 below), references to historians’ interpretations of the topic, decision-making analysis, and suggestions for further research.
4. Sources: includes the specific sources used in the lesson.
5. Problem(s): reproducible handouts used by students to read and analyze the problem.
6. Historical outcome of the problem: what people in history actually did and the consequences thereof.
7. Primary sources and visuals (if any): these are integrated into the lesson itself and are not included merely as window dressing.

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 handouts for each lesson are reproducible; teachers can also decide to use only selected parts of the handouts, if so desired.

While decision making is the main point of the books, historical content is also very important. These lessons focus on real historical problems that convey powerful lessons about U.S. history. The problems involve important issues relevant both to America’s past and its present: 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, African Americans, business owners, Native Americans, and women. Including problems from the perspectives 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 lasting no more than ten minutes. Even with the shorter problems, however, the outcomes can often be quite complex, running on for several pages. The problems may appear deceptively simple, but analyzing them can be complicated. You can best judge how much analysis to include for each problem, and for how long to run each problem and discussion.

On the other hand, some problems are more complicated. These problems deal with crucial turning points in the 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 New Deal. Students learn about the basic New Deal programs, including their advantages and disadvantages, while simultaneously working to improve their decision-making skills.

## **DECISION MAKING**

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### **What is Decision Making?**

As explained in Student Handout 1, decision making involves making a choice when there is no clearly correct answer. Students can derive important lessons about decision making from encountering "messy" problems like these. Even where outcomes do not show a particular choice to be clearly right or wrong, students will still be surprised by some aspects of the outcomes and thereby gain insight into decision making.

### **Decision Making as Experience**

As argued in Student Handout 1, the most powerful way to teach good decision making is through 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, but that isn't stressed in Student Handout 1. Examples from the teaching profession illustrate this negative-reinforcement aspect of decision making. Teachers who just put students into groups without giving specific directions quickly learn not to do it again. Lessons that don't work well are dropped or modified the next time around. Good teaching is basically good decision making, and good decision making is shaped rapidly by previous decisions.

Ordinary people, including students, have an optimistic 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 these probabilities, due in part to their greater experience with the types of problem with which they often deal. Experience teaches us to be more realistic about outcomes.

Just encountering the problems and outcomes in these books, therefore, can help students improve their decision-making skills in general.

### **Targeting Decision-Making Skills**

As mentioned in Student Handout 1, these books go beyond just decision-making problems and their outcomes. They also provide teachers with a decision-making model and strategies for teaching the skills involved in decision making. Students learn a simple

model that provides basic guidelines for making decisions. This model goes by the acronym **P-A-G-E** (as explained below and in Student Handouts 2 and 3), and it 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.

It's crucial for the teacher to act as a coach and guide students as they encounter the decision-making problems, in what Reuven Feuerstein refers to as "mediated learning." The teacher's guidance and questions can help students make sense of what they are thinking when they make decisions about historical situations.

The debate among researchers about the relative power of experience versus instruction on decision making is not crucial to these books. Rather, the problems and lessons in these books allow teachers to combine experience and instruction in the form of mediated learning (coaching).

### **Repetition in Order to Master Skills**

These books are based on the hypothesis that several repetitions of decision-making problems and outcomes help improve decision making. That is, a person who has tried 50 problems will most likely have improved his/her decision-making skills more than a person who has tried only ten problems, simply because he or she has had more experience making decisions. There are many problems included in these books, and teachers are encouraged to use them regularly (once or twice per week, perhaps) as warm-ups to start classes or units. It isn't expected, however, that teachers will necessarily use all the problems.

Having experience with a large number of problems also provides students with more historical analogies upon 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, since 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 teachers coach students (mediated learning) and have time to reflect on their thinking during decision-making problems. Metacognition (thinking about our own thinking) is vital for improving thinking skills, according to numerous writers. Teachers should therefore allow "postmortem" time after each experience for students to reflect on their thinking, either verbally or in writing (see the section on evaluation for ideas). Teachers are also encouraged to use some of the lessons for lengthier (1–3 class periods), 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 the importance of underlying forces (for example, African Americans fighting in World War II, the Cold War, etc. as important causes of the civil rights movement). Students often miss the significance of these underlying forces and do not always recognize the extent to which historical context has constrained the actions of people in the past.

By focusing on decisions by individuals and by groups, the books in this series may seem to perpetuate an overemphasis on the individual vs. historical forces. However, the lessons in these books help students see more historical context, not less. In order to make good decisions, students need to learn a great deal of historical context. All lessons in this book 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? Which 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 historic decision was similar to or different from the decision they made; this emphasizes the role of context in shaping individual choices.

## STRATEGIES

The basic format of the lessons, as explained in the overview, is problem, decision, outcome, discussion. However, many of the subskills of decision making are difficult for students to master. In order to assist students, many lessons put these subskills in a sort of 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 the ones they wish to ask. 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 into different roles (for example, not just looking at labor strike problems from the point of view of the workers, but from the point of view of the owners as well).

## GOALS

The books in this series 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 figures actually did. It’s dynamic, open-ended learning. 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 where 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 see many negative consequences 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 ethical arguments and understandings. Please note, however, that these lessons are not aimed primarily at ethical reasoning. Teachers who want to focus primarily on this should consult *Reasoning with Democratic Values* (2 volumes; 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:**

As much as students can improve their decision making through experience, they will develop it that much more if they learn specific subskills, which can then become guidelines for thinking through decision-making problems more carefully. The instruction in these books is based on the skills of the **P-A-G-E** model. The specific elements of **P-A-G-E** are described in the section "Guide to Better Decision Making," and the strategies for teaching those skills are explained below in the section "Teaching Specific Decision-Making Skills."

One of the teaching strategies emphasizes journal writing, in which students reflect on the problems they encounter, including how they could improve their own decision making. If teachers can get them to reflect on how to improve upon decisions they've just made, students will learn to be more reflective in general.

Ideally, we want to train future citizens to approach decision-making problems 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.

## **EXPLANATION OF P-A-G-E FOR TEACHERS**

(See Student Handouts 1–3)

Good decision making involves a number of subskills. The more students can use the subskills, the more complex their thinking will be when they make decisions. In order to help students recall the subskills involved in decision making, these books offer a simple acronym—**P-A-G-E**. The acronym is only meant to help students recollect the subskills rather than 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 will need to focus on envisioning unintended consequences, while in another, historical context will be more important. Research indicates that expert decision makers don't follow step-by-step models. The **P-A-G-E** acronym consists of guidelines only, not specific steps or points that must be followed.

## **PROBLEM**

Student Handout 3, “P-A-G-E Explanations and Examples,” discusses the specific parts of **P-A-G-E**. The first section 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?” in order to help students uncover underlying problems.

According to Gary Klein, 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! In making these recognitions, experts draw upon analogies they’ve learned through experience. 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 could remember the placement no better than novices. But when the pieces were arranged in a way similar to placements in a game, experts could remember the placements with a single glance and project ahead 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 get the problem worded using positive language, while the other half gets it worded with negative language. After students make their decisions, the class can discuss the effects of different wording on their decisions. Was it a big factor?

Political Scientist James Voss believes that the way people perceive problems in foreign policy acts as a key variable in the decisions they make. He believes 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 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 sources and context, the better they will understand the real problem.

The “Guide to Thoughtful Decision Making” also 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.” Probing for personal or historical analogies, teachers should ask students where they got their ideas about what is really going on in a problem.

## **GOALS**

The section on goals includes setting clear, realistic goals and generating numerous options for accomplishing those goals. Questions about ethicality have also been included in this section, since ethics are 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 argues that the ability to run mental simulations—that is, to envision 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.

## **EVALUATING STUDENTS**

There are numerous ways to evaluate student progress in both content and decision-making skills. Here are a few examples:

- Quiz students on the vocabulary included in the relevant lesson(s)
- Have each student keep a decision-making log, as outlined in Student Handout 3. It's a good idea to copy the handout onto colored paper: you can then tell students after analyzing the outcome of a problem to turn to their green (for example) decision-making log sheet and record their thoughts. The right column requires students to reflect on their thinking.
- Have students keep a journal in which they comment on:
  - the decision actually made in history
  - what the actual decision makers did well or poorly
  - historical constraints on the decision makers
  - what the outcome of the decision reveals about that time period
  - the decision made by the student and what he/she did well or poorly
  - the "lessons" of this decision-making problem
- Have students write a "history" of an event after the class has participated in a decision-making problem on that event and has discussed the outcome. I've required students to include at least two elements of **P-A-G-E** in their historical analysis.
- As a test question, have students make a decision about a problem you haven't used in class. Give them the problem and instruct them to make a decision and explain their thinking according to **P-A-G-E**. You have criteria in the suggested answers for grading their work.

# EVALUATION TIPS FOR STUDENT HANDOUT 5

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Have students complete Student Handout 5, in which they must evaluate a sample historical decision. Below are some criteria to consider while grading student responses to the thinking of Warren G. Harding on agricultural policy in 1922. Students need only suggest ideas for five criteria. For example, I give full credit to students who consider any possible underlying problem or ask any reasonable question.

- **Underlying problem:**
  - Overproduction due to the technological innovations of the Industrial Revolution
  - Farmers are overrepresented in Congress, so they have considerable political clout. It's going to be hard to stand by as some of them go out of business.
  - Farming is associated in the minds of many with the "good old days." According to this view, people were more equal and happier then.
  - Maybe the problem isn't too many farmers, but too much land devoted to farming. Reframing the problem for too much land shifts the focus to limiting land.
  - Perhaps farmers don't sufficiently cooperate to keep prices up. If that's the case, we should help farmers organize to limit production.
- **Other points of view:**
  - How would bankers see this problem? (Don't let farmers go bankrupt, because banks will lose money when the farmers default on their loans.)
  - Consumers? (Don't let food prices rise.)
  - Immigrant workers? (Don't let food prices rise.)
  - Foreign farmers? (Don't subsidize farming.)
  - Taxpayers? (Don't subsidize farming.)
- **Recognize assumptions or emotions:**
  - Am I assuming the problem revolves around the supply and demand of farm products? Instead it may concern monetary policy—that is, the supply of goods may be increasing faster than the money supply, forcing prices down.
  - Maybe I have an emotional attachment to the "family farm," in that it represents real Americanism to me—hard work, honesty, etc.
  - Maybe \$8 billion is normal, and \$14 billion is unusual. Maybe farmers were just unusually prosperous during the war.
  - Am I assuming anything should be done? Maybe nothing is best.
  - Am I assuming that food is like other products? (A person can only eat so much; however, farmers have to contend with the effects of weather in addition to prices.)
- **Ask questions about context:**
  - What's happening to the supply of food? (It's growing as Europe recovers from the war.)

- What’s happening to the demand for food? (It’s not as high as during the war, since European countries are producing their own food and therefore don’t need food from the U.S.).
- What’s happening to farming productivity? (It’s going way up—increasing by more than 1% per year.)
- Are the prices of American crops competitive with other countries? (Yes.)
- What are American beliefs about farms and government help? (Generally, Americans would rather that people succeed on their own, as opposed to with government help. Americans also distrust radical ideas right now, owing to the recent revolution in Russia.)
- **Ask questions about sources:** Since there are no sources for the information given in the problem, there is nothing to ask in this problem
- **Ask questions about analogies:**
  - When the government subsidized railroads in the 19th century, the railroads boomed. (This case is completely different: In the railroad case, the country needed something to be done, so the government provided land as an incentive. Here, there are too many farmers not making enough money to prosper. A greater number of farmers would only make the situation worse.)
  - Under government regulation of certain industries, such as railroads, the businesses in those industries gained control of the agency set up to regulate them. The regulating agency consequently served more to help the interest of the businesses than the country in general. (This could definitely happen in this case, since the government program would be set up specifically to help farmers. However, there are millions more farmers than railroads, so it might be harder for farmers to organize well enough to take control of the agency.)
- **What are my goals, and are they realistic?**
  - To help farmers or the economy as a whole
  - To increase the general prosperity of the U.S. Will subsidies, other government programs for farmers, or the market bring about the best solution for the economy as a whole?
  - To help the farmers no matter the cost to the country
  - To get Republicans reelected so we can do more good things for the country in other areas
- **Generate alternative options:**
  - Subsidize farm prices by having the government buy farm surpluses
  - Help farmers to form associations and cooperatives in order to save money and increase prices
  - Set up educational and retraining programs to ease some farmers into other industries
  - Increase exports of farm products by subsidizing them
  - Subsidize science labs to develop new uses for farm crops
  - Institute tariffs on farm products from other countries
  - Give incentives to farmers to take land out of production. (Allowing farmers to go out of business may not work because they may be bought

out by other farmers whose ever-larger farms would produce the same excess of crops. It may be more effective to reduce the land under cultivation to reduce the supply.)

- **Play out the options:**
  - States that don't depend as much on farming will want subsidies for their own industries in order to support the passage of any bill favorable to farmers. This could lead to a sizeable increase in spending.
  - Tariffs may lead to retaliatory tariffs on American exports
  - Taxpayers may pressure their congressmen to vote against any use of their tax money for subsidies
  - By doing nothing at all, Congressmen from farming states may raise a fuss and withdraw support for non-farming bills. Doing nothing may also lead to a food shortage. But with a surplus, a food shortage is unlikely. Besides, a food shortage would still help farmers by increasing prices and would be corrected by increased supply.
  - How would limiting production work? (Would it entail a new bureaucracy? Would farmers violate limits placed on their farms? How will these limits be enforced?) If farmers are paid to take land out of production, what happens then? (Will they ever be able to produce on it? What happens to tenants on that land? Will owners be limited on what they can do with the land otherwise?)
- **Anticipate consequences/effects (long-term):**
  - Subsidization may cause farmers and possibly the whole country to accept and expect subsidies for troubled industries. Subsidies could become a way of life for the country.
  - Complete inaction may lead to the economic decline of the country's rural areas.
  - How would national security be affected if the country doesn't produce enough food to sustain its population? If current trends continue, the U.S. may have to import a large portion of its food supply.
  - Subsidies will probably lead to slower economic growth in the long run.

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# GUIDE TO THOUGHTFUL DECISION MAKING

## Student Handout 1

### Welcome to “Foresight” History!

The problems in the *Decision Making in U. S. History* series will challenge you to make choices about events in United States 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 as 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” used car that would have wasted thousands of dollars, you can thank your history teacher for helping you build up 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.

## **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 you can use to 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 U.S. history. Every single **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 these 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 a lot 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 in order to see what's really significant. In history, you do this by making 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 that 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 causing his problems?

#### 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 with 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 are 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 the situation through 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?

<b>ASK</b>
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**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 both 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 ten 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 \$2000.*

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 what the sources of our information are 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 no disagreements seem to exist. It might mean your advisers are engaging in "groupthink," where they all get pulled to the same option without thoroughly thinking through other options or considering what could go wrong. Always try to find people who disagree 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 in the section on underlying problems, 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, since 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. Nevertheless, important decisions should spur us to take the time to consider a number of options. We should also consider whether the options we come up with are ethical.

Example:

*You are 25 years old, single, work full-time ten 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:

*Suppose you are 35 years old and have a son and a daughter, ages five and two. 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 it have on you and your family in ten 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 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.*

If you take the job, what might happen? List two or more things that could go wrong.

# DECISION-MAKING LOG

## Student Handout 4

Topic	Actual decision	My decision	Why different/similar?	What I learned about P.A.G.E. from this topic (2 examples)

# EVALUATING DECISION MAKING

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## Student Handout 5

It is 1922, and you are President Warren G. Harding. The economy's agricultural sector has fallen apart since the end of World War I. For example, income from farming dropped from a high of \$14.5 billion in 1919 to \$8 billion in 1921. Congress is feeling pressure to set a new policy on agriculture, and the Republican congressmen are looking to you for leadership on the issue.

Decide on your agriculture policy using at least five of the criteria from **P-A-G-E** (listed on Handout 2). These are not the main four letters of **P-A-G-E**, but the ten criteria under the main letters. For example, you wouldn't be using "Problem," but one of the three criteria under "Problem," such as "What are my assumptions?" Write each of the criteria as a separate paragraph.

After you have written your analyses based on five or more criteria, write your overall decision on agricultural policy and explain your decision.

# WORLD WAR I AND THE 1920s

## Introduction

### OVERVIEW

This volume on World War I and the 1920s consists of eight lessons: four focused on World War I, and four on the 1920s. As in the other volumes, no effort is made to cover all the major topics in this time period. Rather, lessons were chosen around interesting decision-making problems.

### SKILLS GRID FOR THIS VOLUME

X = part of lesson

E = emphasized in the lesson

Skill	Lesson							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Underlying problem	E			X	X	E		
Point of view	X			X	E		X	
Assumptions/emotions	E			X				
Ask—context	E	X		X	E	X	X	
Ask—sources						E		
Ask—analogies	E		X					
Goals? Realistic?	X	X	E	E			E	E
Options. Ethical?				E	X	X		
Unintended consequences	X	E	E			X	E	
Play out option							X	

# LESSON 1: AMERICAN NEUTRALITY AND THE GREAT WAR

## Teacher Pages

### OVERVIEW

The U.S. was very slow to enter World War I. Between the start of the war in 1914 and his war message in April 1917, President Wilson wrestled with the question of how the United States should respond to events in Europe. This lesson presents students with the same challenging questions Wilson faced as the U.S. moved from neutrality to war. Some historians have argued that the U.S. should have joined the Allies sooner, and many students may agree as they consider the problems. They may decide to enter the war at an earlier point than President Wilson did. This would present you with an opportunity to ask students what role emotions played in their decisions. Did they believe that it was in the best interests of the U.S. to enter the war, or were they simply frustrated (as students often are during this lesson) by the continuous negotiations with the German government over submarines?

This is a long, intricate lesson with many handouts. You can pick and choose which handouts to use and how long to make the lesson. Note the ideas in the “Quick Motivator” section on the Lesson Plan page.

### VOCABULARY

- Allies—Britain, France, and Russia
- Central Powers—Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey (Ottoman Empire)
- Submarines—Underwater ships (U-boats) that shoot torpedoes to sink ships without warning
- Western Front—The war in France and Belgium
- Eastern Front—The war in Russia and Austria-Hungary
- Trenches—Long ditches dug to protect soldiers against attack
- Naval mines—Floating bombs that detonate when ships bump into them
- War zone—The zone surrounding Britain in which Germany declared it would sink ships
- Kaiser—The German head of state (from “Caesar”)
- *Lusitania*—British passenger ship sunk by a German submarine
- *Sussex*—French passenger ferry torpedoed by a German submarine
- Sussex Pledge—Assurance by Germany that it would not sink merchant ships without warning and would not sink passenger ships at all
- Unrestricted submarine warfare—German decision to sink all ships in the war zone around Britain
- Zimmermann telegram—Note sent by a German leader proposing that Mexico ally with Germany against the United States. In return, Germany would help Mexico reclaim land in the southwestern U.S.

## **DECISION-MAKING SKILLS EMPHASIZED**

- Identify underlying problems
- Consider other points of view
- Recognize assumptions and emotions
- Ask about historical context
- Ask about analogies
- Set realistic goals
- Predict unintended consequences

# LESSON PLAN

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## A. IN-DEPTH LESSON (two 40-minute class periods)

### Procedure:

Distribute Handout 1 and have students individually consider Problem 1. Divide students into groups to discuss their choices and decide which two questions they think are the most important. Students should then come to the teacher's desk to get the printed answers (Handout 2) to their two chosen questions out of the seven for Problem 1. (Make copies of Handout 2 and have the answers separated into piles by numbers, with at least five in each pile if there are five groups of students, seven if there are seven groups, etc.) With the additional information provided by the answers, have groups decide what they will do about Problem 1. Will they allow loans and sales to the countries fighting in the war? Circulate around the room in case students have follow-up questions. Bring the class together to discuss their decisions. How many groups chose to allow loans? How many allowed sales of goods? What are the arguments for and against each decision? What do students predict the results will be of giving loans and trading with the warring countries?

After groups have reported on Problem 1, tell the class what actually happened (Handout 3). Ask students what they learned from hearing the real outcome. Repeat the process for Problems 2–6. It is best to read the outcome for each problem at the end of that problem, before moving on to the next problem. After discussing all the problems and their outcomes, distribute Handout 3 with all the outcomes on it, so students have a printed copy of what really happened for reference.

### 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 especially important in making decisions about these issues? Which letters of **P-A-G-E** were particularly relevant to this problem? (See the "Decision-Making Analysis" section below for ideas.) Ask students what they did well or poorly with 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.

You could focus on specific decision-making skills by asking questions. For example:

1. **Ask questions:** In this case, which questions were most helpful in making good decisions?
2. **Point of view:** How would an American farmer have likely viewed the war in Europe? What about a banker? A worker in a steel factory? A German American?
3. **Emotions:** Did the students get frustrated at any point with all the decisions they had to make? Did they experience any other emotions? How did their emotions influence their decisions?

You could also use Handout 5, part A, to help students consider analogies with other historical events. Have students explain what they feel is helpful about the analogies they choose, and more importantly, have them evaluate the analogies by looking for similarities and differences in the situations. There are important differences between World War I and the situations described in the analogies, but this doesn't mean that they can't be useful. The Barbary Wars, for example, did not involve a world war into which the U.S. might be drawn. The War of 1812 did not involve the killing of American civilians. When other countries supplied the South in the Civil War and the Native Americans against the U.S. government, they were getting involved in internal or regional wars, not all-out world wars. In the French and Indian War, the Americans were already naturally and legally committed, as colonies of Britain, to the British side, so trading with the French during that war was far more traitorous than trading with Britain in World War I. On the other hand, the analogies help us see context of trade restrictions and the consequences of particular responses to such restrictions. The Barbary Wars, for instance, show the negative effects of negotiating rather than taking strong action against people who restrict U.S. trade. The War of 1812 shows us both positive and negative effects of taking strong action to assert our trading rights.

Using Handout 5, Part B, you can help students think more clearly about framing the problem. Ask follow-up questions to test the importance of the frames provided. For statement 2, you could ask: If Germany had not been so powerful, would the U.S. have joined the war? For statement 5, you could ask: If Germany had been a democracy, would the U.S. have joined the war?

#### Putting the Actual Decisions into Historical Context:

Ask students: Did the United States enter World War I because of factors such as international trade, or was Woodrow Wilson's leadership more important? (Historian Robert Zieger argues that President Wilson's personality had a tremendous effect on the U.S. entry into the war. Wilson had Christian-based morals and ideals and believed that America was exceptional and could save Europe from the disastrous war. Other historians maintain that economic and social factors, such as the power of the United States and its reliance on international trade, were more important than President Wilson's personal values.)

One way of helping students understand historical context is to have them write their own war message—or an outline of a message—to Congress in April 1917, giving at least three reasons why the U.S. should go to war in light of what students learned in this lesson. (Or, if students feel the U.S. still did not have sufficient reason to go to war, they could write a speech explaining why the U.S. should *not* go to war.) After students write and share their war messages, have them read and analyze Wilson's war message (Handout 7). Wilson's message first details how submarine warfare drove the country to enter the war, since it took lives and violated rights. He then makes other significant points: the U.S. tried every other avenue, but had no choice left except to fight or submit; the U.S. did not blame the German people, only their leaders; the Germans sent spies to the U.S. and tried to incite Mexico to fight against the U.S.; the U.S. needed to make the

world safe for democracy; the U.S. did not want to fight, but “the right [to conduct trade] is more precious than peace.” Clearly, Wilson took pains to explain the causes, the justification, and the goals of the war. How do students rate the war message? One historian (Zieger) argues that the goals of the speech are too vague and unrealistic.

Troubleshooting:

Some students may have difficulty with the loans in Problem 1. They may focus on the loans themselves, rather than understanding them as a means to allow Britain and France to buy war goods. If this confuses students, it would probably help to explain how the loans would work. American banks would give credit to the British government. Representatives of the British government in the U.S. would then buy American goods on the credit they have in American banks.

Some students in my classes gave the loans primarily to make a profit through the interest payments, but prosperity came to the U.S. mainly through increased demand for goods financed by the loans, not through the amount of interest the Allies paid. American policymakers in 1914 were not concerned with how much the banks made in interest. This can be a difficult concept for some students and might require further explanation.

<b>B. QUICK MOTIVATOR (20–40 minutes)</b>
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There are several ways to shorten the lesson. You could just do Problems 4–5. As quick background, explain to students that the U.S. chose to grant loans to the Allies and allowed them to buy goods for the war. The U.S. allowed the Germans to buy goods also, but the British navy effectively prevented trade with Germany. Now the war trade is almost completely with the British and French. Germany has been sinking ships off the coast of Britain, and some American lives have been lost.

Instead of splitting the students into groups, you could have the larger class decide which questions to ask. Out of questions 5–7 and 13–18, you could have students vote to choose three questions. You could then read the answers to the top three.

# TEACHER NOTES FOR EXPANDING DISCUSSION

(For outcomes for students, see Handout 3)

## **PROBLEM 1—LOANS AND EXPORTS IN SEPTEMBER 1914**

Most U.S. leaders recognized that granting loans and selling goods to the Allies were bringing prosperity to the country. Secretary of the Treasury William McAdoo said, “To maintain our prosperity, we must finance it. Otherwise it may stop, and that would be disastrous.” President Wilson also wanted to maintain American prosperity, but he was reluctant to give more wealth and power to the same elite bankers he had tried to control through reforms in the pre-war years.

## **PROBLEM 2—BRITAIN PREVENTING TRADE WITH GERMANY IN EARLY 1915**

As mentioned on Handout 3, President Wilson recognized that American prosperity depended more on trade with Britain and France than on trade with Germany, so he dropped his objections.

## **PROBLEM 3—GERMAN WAR ZONE AROUND BRITAIN IN FEBRUARY 1915**

Historians count different numbers of German submarines at various times. This number of 21 submarines in 1915 comes from Ernest May (see sources).

## **PROBLEM 4—LUSITANIA IS SUNK IN MAY 1915**

Throughout 1915 and 1916, Colonel House, an adviser to Wilson, tried to pursue a peace plan, but it went nowhere. The Allies blamed the Germans for starting the war, and both sides were proceeding with their war aims, making secret plans for taking territory after they won the war. The Germans wanted major concessions from the Allies, while the Allies were more interested in totally overthrowing the German government than they were in negotiations.

A week after the sinking of the *Lusitania*, Britain released the Bryce Commission Report on German atrocities in Belgium. The report surely exaggerated some stories, but James Bryce was a respected historian who had received honors and degrees from Germany. People had a hard time seeing him as particularly biased against the Germans. The report detailed German rapes and murders in Belgium, including the burning of the town of Louvain, and the execution of hundreds of civilians.

## **PROBLEM 5—SUSSEX IS TORPEDOED IN MARCH 1916**

Some historians point out that the Germans still did not have many submarines at this point, so it was in their interest to back down.

With the 1916 election approaching, Wilson joined the preparedness campaign by marching in a preparedness parade and speaking about military reforms. However, he stopped short of fully endorsing preparedness, lest the voters think he was moving the country toward war. Wilson won the 1916 election.

## **PROBLEM 6—GERMANY DECLARES UNRESTRICTED SUBMARINE WARFARE IN FEBRUARY 1917**

Keegan (see sources) says Germany had 148 submarines at the time of its decision for unrestricted submarine warfare.

In addition to unrestricted submarine warfare and the Zimmermann telegram, the British were running out of credit (money) to buy munitions and other supplies. The British needed loans from the U.S. government in order to continue the war.

The cabinet meeting on March 20, 1917, showed that, because of Germany's decision to break its pledge not to sink ships and kill American civilians, all of Wilson's advisers were united in their belief that the U.S. must go to war.

## **DECISION-MAKING ANALYSIS:**

### P = Problem

- \* - **Identify any underlying problem**
- \* - **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 = Goal

- \* - **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

- **Identifying the underlying problem:** This skill is pinpointed on Handout 5, Part B, which gives students possible underlying problems from which they can choose. Students are unlikely to have thought of all these ways to view the problems on their own, so they will benefit from seeing these possibilities.
- **Point of view:** This skill is dealt with in the Lesson Plan under “Reflecting on Decision Making.”
- **Identify assumptions:** Handout 4 gives students assumptions from which to choose to help them expand their thinking about possible assumptions.
- **Emotions:** As noted in the introduction to the lesson, students may become frustrated when they learn that, despite Germany’s numerous provocations, President Wilson delayed U.S. entry into the war until 1917. (One student of mine exclaimed, “All he does is send notes!”) This is a teachable moment for exploring the role of emotions in decision making. Did emotions change the decisions students made? Should they?
- **Ask about context:** Questions are integrated into the problems on Handout 1 and suggested answers to the questions are on Handout 2.
- **Analogies:** Handout 5, part A, gives students possible analogies from which they can choose. As with the underlying problems, students are unlikely to have thought of all these analogies on their own, so they will benefit from seeing these possibilities.
- **Determine goals:** President Wilson initially had two goals: to maintain American prosperity and to keep America out of the war. As the problems with trade escalated, he found it harder to maintain the first goal, and when Germany chose unrestricted submarine warfare, Wilson felt he had to abandon his second goal. Wilson then established a third goal: to help end the war by influencing the peace process.
- **Consider effects/consequences:** President Wilson anticipated the consequences of going to war. He recognized the horrors of modern warfare and knew that the U.S. would suffer tremendous casualties. He also anticipated that large corporations would increase their power as the country mobilized, and he realized that the fact that the war required the U.S. to unify against a common enemy might result in the proliferation of propaganda and the suppression of outside ideas and individual thought. He went to war with—or despite—these reservations. Students should consider the consequences of their choices, some examples of which are listed on Handout 3 (Outcomes).

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# LESSON 1: AMERICAN NEUTRALITY AND THE GREAT WAR

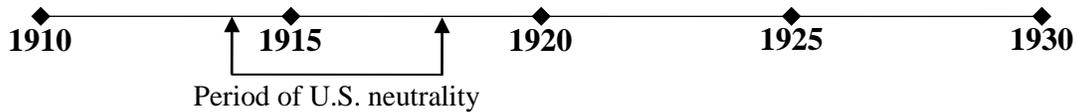
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## Vocabulary

- Allies—Britain, France, and Russia
- Central Powers—Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey (Ottoman Empire)
- Submarines—Underwater ships (U-boats) that shoot torpedoes to sink ships without warning
- Western Front—The war in France and Belgium
- Eastern Front—The war in Russia and Austria-Hungary
- Trenches—Long ditches dug to protect soldiers against attack
- Naval mines—Floating bombs that detonate when ships bump into them
- War zone—The zone surrounding Britain in which Germany declared it would sink ships
- Kaiser—The German head of state (from “Caesar”)
- *Lusitania*—British passenger ship sunk by a German submarine
- *Sussex*—French passenger ferry torpedoed by a German submarine
- Sussex Pledge—Assurance by Germany that it would not sink merchant ships without warning and would not sink passenger ships at all
- Unrestricted submarine warfare—German decision to sink all ships in the war zone around Britain
- Zimmermann telegram—Note sent by a German leader proposing that Mexico ally with Germany against the United States. In return, Germany would help Mexico reclaim land in the southwestern U.S.

# LESSON 1: AMERICAN NEUTRALITY AND THE GREAT WAR

## Student Handout 1



August 1914: War has just broken out in Europe involving two great alliances: the Allies (Britain, France, and Russia) on one side, and the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey) on the other. Millions of soldiers are involved, both on land and at sea. It isn't clear which side has the strongest armies, but it is clear that Britain has the strongest navy. The United States isn't involved in the war, but since the war is affecting international trade, that may change. At this point, the U.S. is neither allied with nor committed to any countries involved in the war. Before anything happens in the war, you, as President Wilson, need to establish what the goals of the United States are. List three goals for the U.S. to keep in mind as the war progresses.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

### **PROBLEM 1—LOANS AND EXPORTS IN SEPTEMBER 1914**

The U.S. has about \$825 million of trade with the Allies and \$170 million with the Central Powers. Both sides are requesting loans and increased trade. The British and French can get some goods from Canada and other countries, but only the United States can supply the huge amounts of goods they need. The Germans are especially interested in cotton (for explosives) and copper (for ammunition). Both sides need food and textiles.

Explain why you, as President Wilson, would or would not do each of the following:

- A. Allow American banks to loan money to the warring powers. The countries getting the loans would have to pay the money back with interest. This is the only reasonable way countries can get enough money to buy the goods they need to fight the war.
- B. Allow American companies to sell goods directly to the warring countries.

You can ask the teacher any two of the following questions, or you can ask one and then come up with one question of your own:

1. Is it legal, under international law, to grant loans and sell goods to warring countries?
2. Is Britain able to prevent the U.S. from selling goods to Germany?
3. Is Germany able to prevent the U.S. from selling goods to Britain? How many submarines does Germany have?
4. What is the state of the U.S. economy, and what effect might the loans and sales of goods have on it?
5. Which side started the war?
6. How does the American public feel about the war and trading with the warring countries?
7. Is it ethical to trade with warring countries? What if more trade goes to one side than the other?

### **PROBLEM 2—BRITAIN PREVENTING TRADE WITH GERMANY IN EARLY 1915**

The U.S. government decided in Problem 1 to allow loans and the sale of goods to the warring countries. As a result, trade has increased enormously, especially with Britain and France.

Meanwhile, the nature of the fighting has dashed early hopes that this would be a short war. Both sides have dug hundreds of miles of trenches on the Western Front in France and Belgium, and estimates indicate that the war could last at least another year.

Now a new challenge faces the U.S.: British ships are preventing U.S. ships from going to German ports or even from going to neutral ports to sell materials that could be used for weapons or munitions. The British argue that materials sold to neutral countries are being resold to Germany. For example, since the war started, Holland is importing eight times as much copper as it normally does. Much of that is being resold to Germany. The

British are also preventing deliveries of food, but cotton is not restricted. The British ships stop American vessels and often take them to ports to be searched. These searches can take weeks or months, during which time perishable goods spoil. When they seize cargoes, the British usually pay compensation to the shipper.

In addition, the British navy has laid mines in the North Sea between Britain and Norway. These mines will further cripple American trade with the Central Powers and may result in the death of Americans.

As President Wilson, how will you respond to British interference in U.S. trade with Germany and neutral countries?

You may ask one of the following questions or create a question of your own:

1. Is giving loans and selling goods to warring countries legal under international law?
2. How does the American public feel about the war, trading with the warring countries, and the British interference with American trade?
3. Is it ethical to trade with warring countries? What if more trade goes to one side than the other?

### **PROBLEM 3—GERMAN WAR ZONE AROUND BRITAIN IN FEBRUARY 1915**

Germany has declared the waters around Britain a war zone. All British transport ships will be attacked without warning. According to the declaration, Germany “will endeavor to destroy every enemy merchant ship that is found in this area of war, without its always being possible to avert the peril that thus threatens persons and cargoes. Neutrals are therefore warned against further entrusting crews, passengers and wares [goods] to such ships.” Also, since the British government often flies the flag of neutral countries on their ships, neutral ships (including American ships) should avoid the war zone or risk being sunk.

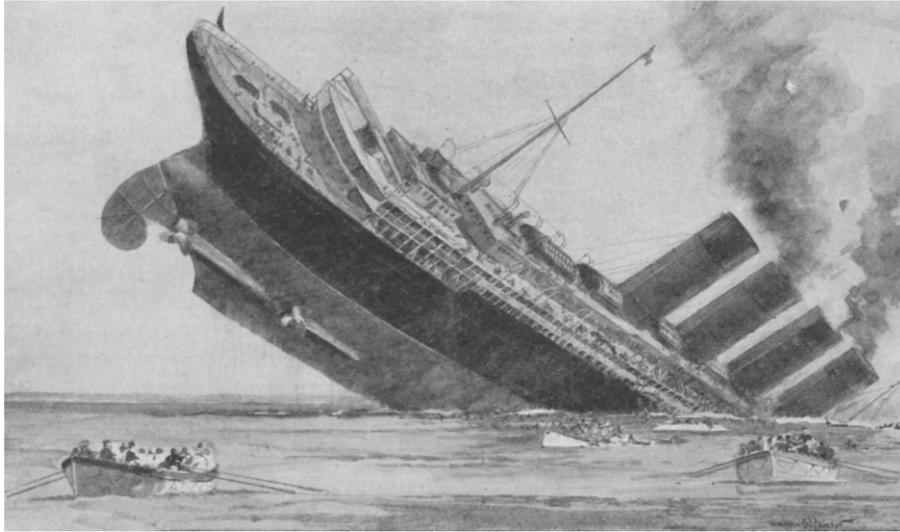
As President Wilson, how will you respond to the German declaration of a war zone around Britain?

You can ask one of the following questions or formulate a question of your own:

1. What does the American public think of Germany’s declaration of a war zone?
2. What is happening politically within Germany? What are the German leaders thinking?
3. What has happened to the U.S. economy as a result of the war trade?
4. How is the war going militarily? How strong is the U.S. military?

### **PROBLEM 4—LUSITANIA IS SUNK IN MAY 1915**

On May 7th, the British passenger ship *Lusitania* was torpedoed and sunk in the war zone off the coast of Ireland. Nearly 1200 passengers died, including 124 Americans. The Germans claimed the ship was carrying ammunition and other prohibited cargo to Britain.



As President Wilson, how will you respond to the sinking of the *Lusitania*?

You can ask two of the following questions, or one of them can be a question of your own:

1. How is the American public reacting to this event?
2. What is happening politically within Germany? What are the German leaders thinking?
3. Was the ship actually carrying ammunition, as the Germans claim?
4. What does international law say about the sinking of passenger ships?

### **PROBLEM 5—SUSSEX IS TORPEDOED IN MARCH 1916**

On March 24, 1916, an explosion heavily damaged the *Sussex*, a French passenger ferry. Eighty casualties, including 50 deaths, were reported, and several Americans were among the casualties. A German submarine was firing in the area, but the Germans claimed that the submarine was firing at a minesweeper, not at the *Sussex*, and that the *Sussex* must have struck a British mine. However, when the ship made it into port, evidence showed that a torpedo, not a mine, caused the damage. American newspapers and the American public are outraged. Other passenger liners, such as the *Arabic*, have been sunk in the past year.

As President Wilson, how will you respond to the sinking of the *Sussex*?

**PROBLEM 6—GERMANY ANNOUNCES UNRESTRICTED  
SUBMARINE WARFARE IN FEBRUARY 1917**

After torpedoing the *Sussex*, the Germans announced in May 1916 that submarines would not sink merchant ships without warning and would not sink passenger ships at all. They have mostly followed this policy for the past ten months. But now Germany has announced a policy of unrestricted submarine warfare. Any type of ship from any country will be sunk in the war zone around Britain.

The United States has learned that British agents discovered a secret message sent from Germany to Mexico. This message, known as the Zimmerman telegram, proposed that Mexico ally with Germany in a war against the U.S. Once again, the American public is outraged.

As President Wilson, how will you respond to the new German policy of unrestricted submarine warfare and the discovery of the Zimmerman telegram?

# LESSON 1: AMERICAN NEUTRALITY AND THE GREAT WAR

## Student Handout 2

### ANSWERS

#### **PROBLEM 1—LOANS AND EXPORTS IN SEPTEMBER 1914**

**1. Is making loans and selling goods to warring countries legal under international law?**

Yes. Making loans and selling goods to warring countries is legal according to international law.

**2. Is Britain able to prevent the U.S. from selling goods to Germany?**

Yes. Britain has the largest navy in the world and can effectively prevent ocean trade with Germany.

**3. Is Germany able to prevent the U.S. from selling goods to Britain? How many submarines does Germany have?**

Germany is likely to try to prevent U.S. trade with Britain, but it probably won't succeed. Current intelligence indicates that the Germans only have a small number of submarines at this time, and they are not very effective yet.

**4. What is the state of the U.S. economy, and what effect might the loans and sales of goods have on it?**

The U.S. has the largest economy in the world and is the number one producer of steel, coal, wheat, and petroleum (oil) products. The U.S. makes up more than 11% of all world trade, ahead of all other countries, and it exports (sells) more than it imports (buys). It has the resources to sell whatever food, munitions, textiles, or other products the warring countries need and stands to make a tremendous profit on the sales.

In the months preceding the war, the U.S. economy had not grown significantly, and prior to August, some economists were anticipating a recession in 1914. The GDP (total of goods and services) had decreased, while unemployment and bankruptcies increased. But since the war began in August, trade has increased tremendously, particularly with the Allies. The economy is once again growing, and prosperity seems to be returning to the United States, due in large part to the war trade.

**5. Which side started the war?**

Most of President Wilson's advisers think that Germany is mainly responsible for starting the war. Germany gave the green light for Austria-Hungary to attack Serbia, which led to the initial fighting. Then, after Russia mobilized to attack Austria-Hungary and Germany, Germany attacked France (moving its troops through neutral Belgium) as part of its military plan. Russian mobilization was a mistake, and both sides should have put more effort into diplomacy, but the general consensus within the U.S. government places the blame on Germany for starting the war.

**6. How does the American public feel about the war and trading with the warring countries?**

Almost all Americans want to stay out of the war and are grateful not to be involved in this brutal conflict. Most Americans, though, have an unfavorable view of Germany. They see Germany as militaristic and feel that Germany bears most of the blame for starting the war. British anti-German propaganda has also reached the United States, and many are horrified by the reports of German brutality in Belgium. On the other hand, about 10% of the U.S. population is of German descent, and many German Americans have great sympathy for their former country. So Americans are not united in their opinions on the war itself, but they do agree that the U.S. should not become involved.

A vast majority of Americans feel that the U.S. should be able to trade with any country, even in wartime.

**7. Is it ethical to trade with warring countries? What if more trade goes to one side than the other?**

There is no simple answer to this question. Most Americans feel they should be able to trade with whomever they choose, even in wartime. Some people with pacifistic views feel the U.S. should not do anything to favor one side over the other. The chief concern of most Americans is that the U.S. not take any action that may drag it into the war.

**PROBLEM 2—BRITAIN PREVENTING TRADE WITH GERMANY IN EARLY 1915**

**1. Is making loans and selling goods to warring countries legal under international law?**

See the answer to question 1, above.

**2. How does the American public feel about the war, trading with the warring countries, and the interference in their trade?**

See the answer to question 6, above.

**3. Is it ethical to trade with warring countries, even if more trade goes to one side than the other?**

See the answer to question 7, above.

**PROBLEM 3—GERMAN WAR ZONE AROUND BRITAIN IN FEBRUARY 1915**

**1. What does the American public think of Germany's declaration of a war zone?**

An overwhelming majority of the American people has an unfavorable view of Germany regarding the war. The German invasion of Belgium and the alleged atrocities the Germans committed against Belgian citizens have horrified Americans. Germany's policy of sinking civilian ships has further angered the American public. Even before the declaration of the war zone, Republican leaders in Congress were charging that President Wilson had not taken a hard enough line against the German threat. With the declaration of the war zone, the clamoring has gotten even louder.

On the other hand, almost all Americans want to avoid being drawn into the war.

**2. What is happening politically within Germany? What are the German leaders thinking?**

According to the American ambassador in Berlin, the German navy wants to engage in unrestricted submarine warfare to stop trade altogether and starve Britain into submission. But Chancellor Bethmann, the next most important leader in Germany after the Kaiser, opposes any submarine warfare that would pull the United States into the war. For example, he opposes any order to sink passenger ships that might carry Americans. The final decision rests with the Kaiser.

Germany is not entirely a democracy (since the Kaiser is unelected), but public opinion there still matters. So far, the German public has had little to cheer about in the war. Trench warfare has bogged down the invasion of France. On the Eastern Front, the army has the upper hand versus the Russians, but it is a long, slow struggle. The only bright spot is the submarine campaign against shipping to Britain. Headlines cheer the numbers of ships sunk, and the success of the submarines compensates for the defeat in the Battle of the Marne. Submarines offer the hope that Britain will be forced to surrender, and many Germans do not understand why there is any hesitation to unleash the submarines on Britain. Most of the newspapers, except for the more-restrained, government-controlled papers, call for unrestricted submarine warfare.

### 3. What has happened to the U.S. economy as a result of the war trade?

The war has helped bring prosperity to the United States. Exports to the Allies have risen dramatically, from \$2 billion in 1913 to almost \$6 billion in 1916. New factories are springing up all over the country, and orders for machine tools have increased greatly. Wheat sales are driving prices up, bringing prosperity to American farmers. American banks, especially J. P. Morgan Bank, are making huge profits by loaning money to the British.

### 4. How is the war going militarily? How strong is the U.S. military?

The German invasion of France was ineffective. After its defeat in the Battle of the Marne, the German army became bogged down in trench warfare. The Germans defeated the Russians at the Battle of Tannenberg, so the war is going better on the Eastern Front. Still, it is a long, slow struggle against Russia. Austria-Hungary is falling apart. The Austro-Hungarian army has been defeated and is no longer a significant factor in the war. Its government is having difficulty controlling the country. So it looks like Germany alone will have to defeat the Allies (Britain, France, and Russia). It isn't impossible, but the odds are against the Germans. Regardless of who wins, the war seems certain to be a long, bloody struggle.

The U.S. has a strong navy, but its army is very weak, currently ranked 19th in the world. It has few soldiers and no recruiting system. It also has very little equipment. Many Americans want to ensure that the navy and army are prepared for war, but others are suspicious of the military and oppose the preparedness campaign.

## **PROBLEM 4—LUSITANIA IS SUNK IN MAY 1915**

### 1. How does the American public react to this event?

The American public is outraged by Germany's actions and appalled by the civilian casualties, especially the American ones. Most Americans believe that the government must respond assertively. Republicans are ready to accuse President Wilson of weak leadership if he does not take a strong stand against Germany.

### 2. What is the political situation within Germany? What are German leaders thinking?

First, see the answer to question 2 in Problem 3.

In the months between the declaration of the war zone and the sinking of the *Lusitania*, German support for unrestricted submarine warfare has strengthened, both in public opinion and within the Reichstag (the governing body similar to the U.S. Congress). Right-wing (nationalistic, pro-military) factions argue that submarines will quickly knock Britain out of the war, and that the U.S. is too weak militarily to be a major factor. They further accuse anyone who questions the effectiveness of the submarine campaign of

being unpatriotic. Moderate and even some left-wing Germans now support the unrestricted use of submarines.

German Chancellor Bethmann stands in the way of all-out submarine warfare. He has some support from the Chief of the Army, who fears that if the U.S. enters the war, other countries, such as the Dutch and the Balkan states, will also join the Allies. The Chief of the Army knows that the German army can't stretch its troops much further and may be unable to guard against the additional enemies.

**3. Was the ship carrying ammunition?**

Evidence shows that the ship was carrying ammunition from the Du Pont Chemical Company in Delaware.

**4. What does international law say about the sinking of passenger ships?**

The sinking of passenger ships without warning, and the killing of civilians on those ships, are strictly against international law.

# LESSON 1: AMERICAN NEUTRALITY AND THE GREAT WAR

## Student Handout 3

### OUTCOMES

#### **PROBLEM 1—LOANS AND EXPORTS IN SEPTEMBER 1914**

President Wilson allowed Americans to grant loans and sell goods, including weapons, to the warring countries. American prosperity and its right to freedom of the seas were at stake. Britain, France, Germany, and other European countries were among America's leading trading partners, and if the U.S. allowed that trade to be cut off, the effects on the economy could be catastrophic. To avoid accusations of taking sides, the Wilson administration made a clever distinction. It said that short-term "credits" used for trade were acceptable, while long-term loans to help a particular country were not.

The decision to grant loans for the Allies to buy goods brought great prosperity to the U.S. Led by J. P. Morgan, banks loaned billions of dollars and established systems in which British and French representatives could buy goods with the loans.



J.P. Morgan

#### **PROBLEM 2—BRITAIN PREVENTING TRADE WITH GERMANY IN EARLY 1915**

President Wilson proposed that Britain abide by a 1909 agreement against interfering with trade and therefore allow cotton, food, metals, and even nitrates for explosives to be sold to neutral countries, understanding that these goods would be resold to Germany. When the British did not agree to the proposal, however, Wilson dropped his objections to British interference in American trade with neutrals and Germany. He also did not make strenuous objections to the British mines in the North Sea. Wilson recognized, as did most Americans, that American prosperity depended more on trade with the Allies than on trade with Germany. British interference in trade with Germany did not seriously hurt American exports, but any dispute that resulted in an interruption of trade with Britain would have badly damaged the American economy. The British helped alleviate American concerns somewhat by allowing cotton to be sold to neutral countries.

### **PROBLEM 3—GERMAN WAR ZONE AROUND BRITAIN IN FEBRUARY 1915**

President Wilson sent a note to Germany in which he said that the United States saw very serious consequences to the declaration of a submarine war zone around Britain. Should American ships or lives be lost, he said in the note, the United States “would be constrained to hold the Imperial German government to a strict accountability.” Those last two words threatened the possibility of war.

Bethmann, the German Chancellor, foresaw the danger of war with the U.S. He convinced the Kaiser to prohibit submarine attacks on neutral ships. Instead of attacking the ships, the submarines would surface and search for cargoes, allow all the people to disembark, and only then sink the ships. However, the number of ships sunk under this policy was small (Germany was thought to have only 21 submarines at this time, not enough to seriously affect trade), and one sub was rammed and sunk when it surfaced to stop a ship. As a result, submarine commanders gradually disregarded the policy, sinking ships without surfacing and not worrying about neutral flags.

### **PROBLEM 4—LUSITANIA IS SUNK IN MAY 1915**

The American people were outraged by the sinking, comparing it to the sinking of the *Maine* in 1898 prior to the Spanish-American War. Many saw it as no different than outright murder: one *New York Times* editorial referred to the Germans as “savages drunk with blood.”

Secretary of State Bryan wanted to compromise with Germany. He thought the United States should secure a pledge from both Britain and Germany to stop violating American trading rights. However, President Wilson had made up his mind to take stronger action to stop submarine attacks on Americans. He sent several notes to the German government in which he implied that the U.S. would go to war if Germany didn’t stop sinking passenger liners. The first note said that the U.S. would hold the German government to “strict accountability” for such acts, the same phrase used previously in regards to the German war zone around Britain. (Your teacher has copies of excerpts of the first note.) Wilson knew that Americans demanded he take a strong stand, and he felt that the United States’ position in the world was at stake. If the U.S. stood by while Germany killed its citizens and limited its trade, how would it stop other countries from doing so in the future?

### **PROBLEM 5—SUSSEX IS SUNK IN MARCH 1916**

President Wilson demanded Germany stop sinking unarmed ships or risk the U.S. breaking diplomatic relations (which is usually the first step toward war). German leaders were surprised by the firmness of the U.S. response. Chancellor Bethmann was able to convince the Kaiser to stop such submarine attacks. In May 1916, in what was called the

“Sussex Pledge,” Germany announced that submarines would not sink merchant ships without warning and would not sink passenger ships at all.

### **PROBLEM 6—GERMANY ANNOUNCES UNRESTRICTED SUBMARINE WARFARE IN FEBRUARY 1917**

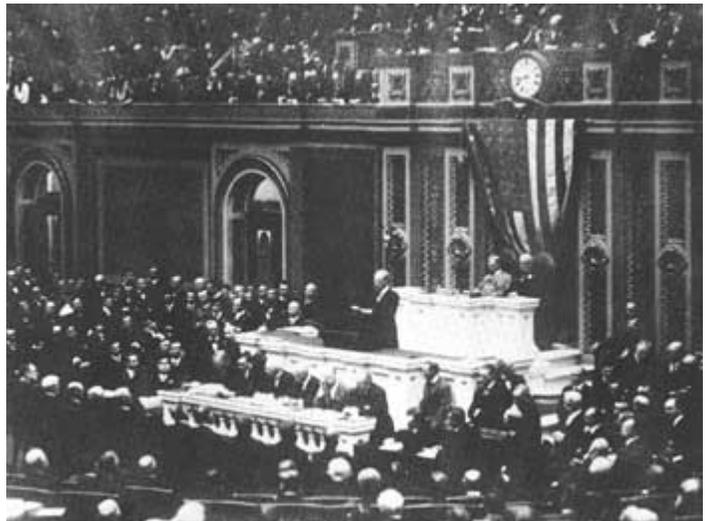
The U.S. had little choice but to break relations with Germany. Still, President Wilson hoped that German leaders would change their minds, as they had twice before, concerning the war zone around Britain and the Sussex Pledge. As he was considering his options, the President and the American public learned of the Zimmermann telegram, in which the Germans proposed an alliance between Germany and Mexico against the U.S. The note demonstrated that German leaders were willing to risk war with the U.S. and would not give up submarine warfare under any circumstances. President Wilson asked Congress for a declaration of war in response to Germany’s decision for unrestricted submarine warfare.

In the month preceding the announcement of unrestricted submarine warfare, German Chancellor Bethmann tried to start peace negotiations with the Allies, using Wilson as an intermediary. But German military leaders, convinced that submarine warfare would force Britain to surrender, deliberately made excessive demands in order to stop the negotiations before they started.

Unfortunately for Germany, its military leaders made a serious miscalculation. At first, submarine warfare was an effective strategy. By 1917, Germany had over 100 modern submarines, possibly as many as 148 (compared to 23 older submarines in 1914), and initially they sank a large number of ships. But in response to the threat, the Allies organized their ships into convoys and the rate of sinkings dropped dramatically.

#### Unintended consequences:

Unrestricted submarine warfare did not help Germany win the war. Instead, it helped push the United States into the war, overwhelming the already-strapped German military. Bethmann’s predictions proved correct: by pursuing policies that drew the U.S. into the war, Germany ensured its own defeat.



President Wilson’s war declaration to Congress

**EFFECTS OF THE U.S. ENTRY INTO THE WAR**

In April 1917, the U.S. declared war on Germany. The American entry into the war was a major factor in the Allied victory, but it also had significant effects within the U.S.:

- Over 320,000 Americans were killed or wounded in the war
- The war is estimated to have cost \$26 billion at the time, or the equivalent of about \$200 billion today.
- The U.S. government expanded its size and influence over the American economy. The government now had much more control over farming, industry, energy, and labor. It imposed much higher taxes and ran the railroads.
- The U.S. government expanded its influence on American society. For example, the government became involved in gathering, distributing, and controlling information with the aim of winning the war. The increased control of information gave the government more political power over individuals; some critics considered this the rise of the national security state. The government expanded its powers of investigation, surveillance, and punishment. The FBI (then known as the Bureau of Investigation) became much stronger. Critics worried that the government now had the ability to manipulate information and spy on American citizens.
- Americans became caught up in what was called “100% Americanism.” Americans were less tolerant of Germans, foreigners, and those who questioned the war, and this intolerance did not end with the war. Many Americans continued to be suspicious of foreign ideas and foreign people. In the 1920s, this intolerance was seen in the Immigration Quota Acts.
- The 18th Amendment (Prohibition) was passed during the war and ratified in 1920. It was certainly an example of increased government influence over the lives of individuals. The arguments that many brewers were German and that the U.S. needed to conserve grain for the war helped to get the amendment passed.
- The 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote, was passed partly in recognition of the contribution of women to the war effort. This one amendment doubled the number of potential voters.
- Progressive programs to help workers and the poor were halted during and following the war. Reforms unrelated to the war effort were deemphasized. The decade after the war was a bad time for organized labor. Historians debate whether the poor and workers were better off in the 1920s, but it is clear that organized labor and government programs for the poor declined.
- The war led to a significant migration of Americans, especially of African Americans from the South to Northern cities. The increased demand for goods and the shortage of workers to produce those goods (because many workers left to fight in the war) created jobs, which drew blacks from the rural South. Racial tension increased, leading to race riots in the postwar years.

# LESSON 1: AMERICAN NEUTRALITY AND THE GREAT WAR

## Student Handout 4

### ASSUMPTIONS

With which of the following assumptions do you agree?

- 1. The war will be short, probably lasting about six months.
- 2. The Allies will win the war.
- 3. The Germans started the war; they are more militaristic than the British or French
- 4. Both the Allies and the Central Powers will stop at nothing to win the war.
- 5. Both sides see the U.S. as very powerful, too powerful to risk violating U.S. rights.
- 6. The war will help the U.S. economy.
- 7. America is a great force for democracy in the world.
- 8. Most Americans sympathize with Britain and France.
- 9. Most Americans want to join the war to help the Allies win.
- 10. War will halt, at least temporarily, the adoption of progressive reforms (including government regulation of big business, the improvement of working conditions, and direct election of senators).
- 11. The Germans will violate the laws of war (such as not attacking civilians and not killing prisoners of war) more often than the Allies will.
- 12. War will unite Americans and increase patriotism.
- 13. The U.S. has too much trade and other involvements with the world to stay out of the war. Eventually it will have to fight.

# LESSON 1: AMERICAN NEUTRALITY AND THE GREAT WAR

## Student Handout 5

### A. ANALOGIES

Pick the historical analogy that seems most relevant to the situation in World War I. Explain how this analogy helps you understand the current situation.

1. During the French and Indian War (1756–1763), American colonists traded with the French as well as the British, even though the colonists were on Britain’s side in the war
2. The Barbary States in North Africa interfered with American trade in the Mediterranean Sea in the 1790s and early 1800s and captured American soldiers
3. The British interfered in American trade with France in the early 1800s. At the time, Britain was fighting against France in the Napoleonic Wars.
4. The British supplied guns to Native Americans on the western frontier of the United States in the early 1800s
5. The North blockaded the South in the American Civil War in the 1860s, preventing Britain and other countries from trading with the South
6. The *Maine* was blown up in Havana Harbor in 1898, angering Americans and leading to the Spanish-American War

### B. WHAT IS THE UNDERLYING PROBLEM?

When looking for an underlying problem, try to “frame” it by determining what’s most important. Which of these statements best describes this problem concerning U.S. neutrality during World War I?

1. This problem on World War I is really about trade
2. This problem on World War I is really about the increasing power of Germany over other countries, which could eventually threaten the United States
3. This problem on World War I is really about the right of persons to travel where they please. German submarines threaten this right.
4. This problem on World War I is really about the lives of Americans. The British may interfere with trade, but they don’t kill American citizens like the Germans do with their submarines.
5. This problem on World War I is really about democracy versus autocracy (rule by a single individual—the Kaiser, in this case)
6. This problem on World War I is really about nothing of importance to the United States

# LESSON 1: AMERICAN NEUTRALITY AND THE GREAT WAR

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## Student Handout 6

**Primary Source: First *Lusitania* Note of Protest, May 13, 1915 (excerpt)**

**—Woodrow Wilson:**

“In view of recent acts of the German authorities in violation of American rights on the high seas which culminated in the torpedoing and sinking of the British steamship *Lusitania* on May 7, 1915, by which over 100 American citizens lost their lives, it is clearly wise and desirable that the government of the United States and the Imperial German government should come to a clear and full understanding as to the grave situation which has resulted....

The government of the United States has been apprised that the Imperial German government considered themselves to be obliged by the extraordinary circumstances of the present war and the measures adopted by their adversaries in seeking to cut Germany off from all commerce, to adopt methods of retaliation which go much beyond the ordinary methods of warfare at sea, in the proclamation of a war zone from which they have warned neutral ships to keep away.

This government has already taken occasion to inform the Imperial German government that it cannot admit the adoption of such measures or such a warning of danger to operate as in any degree an abbreviation of the rights of American shipmasters or of American citizens bound on lawful errands as passengers on merchant ships of belligerent nationality; and that it must hold the Imperial German government to a strict accountability for any infringement of those rights, intentional or incidental....

American citizens act within their indisputable rights in taking their ships and in traveling wherever their legitimate business calls them upon the high seas, and exercise those rights in what should be the well-justified confidence that their lives will not be endangered by acts done in clear violation of universally acknowledged international obligations, and certainly in the confidence that their own government will sustain them in the exercise of their rights....

It confidently expects, therefore, that the Imperial German government will disavow the acts of which the government of the United States complains, that they will make reparation so far as reparation is possible for injuries which are without measure, and that they will take immediate steps to prevent the recurrence of anything so obviously subversive of the principles of warfare for which the Imperial German government have in the past so wisely and so firmly contended.”

## QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What is President Wilson telling the Germans will happen as a result of sinking the *Lusitania*?
2. How do you think German leaders reacted to the note?

# LESSON 1: AMERICAN NEUTRALITY AND THE GREAT WAR

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## Student Handout 7

**Primary Source: President Wilson's War Message, April 2, 1917 (excerpt)**

"I have called the Congress into extraordinary session because there are serious, very serious, choices of policy to be made, and made immediately, which it was neither right nor constitutionally permissible that I should assume the responsibility of making.

On the 3rd of February last, I officially laid before you the extraordinary announcement of the Imperial German government that on and after the 1st day of February it was its purpose to put aside all restraints of law or of humanity and use its submarines to sink every vessel that sought to approach either the ports of Great Britain...or...Europe....

Vessels of every kind, whatever their flag, their character, their cargo, their destination, their errand, have been ruthlessly sent to the bottom without warning and without thought of help or mercy for those on board, the vessels of friendly neutrals along with those of belligerents....

I am not now thinking of the loss of property involved, immense and serious as that is, but only of the wanton and wholesale destruction of the lives of noncombatants, men, women, and children, engaged in pursuits which have always, even in the darkest periods of modern history, been deemed innocent and legitimate. Property can be paid for; the lives of peaceful and innocent people cannot be....

With a profound sense of the solemn and even tragical character of the step I am taking and of the grave responsibilities which it involves, but in unhesitating obedience to what I deem my constitutional duty, I advise that the Congress declare the recent course of the Imperial German government to be in fact nothing less than war against the government and people of the United States; that it formally accept the status of belligerent which has thus been thrust upon it; and that it take immediate steps, not only to put the country in a more thorough state of defense but also to exert all its power and employ all its resources to bring the government of the German Empire to terms and end the war.

What this will involve is clear... It will involve the organization and mobilization of all the material resources of the country to supply the materials of war and serve the incidental needs of the nation in the most abundant and yet the most economical and efficient way possible....

It will involve also, of course, the granting of adequate credits to the government, sustained, I hope, so far as they can equitably be sustained by the present generation, by well-conceived taxation....

Our object now, as then, is to vindicate the principles of peace and justice in the life of the world as against selfish and autocratic power and to set up among the really free and

self-governed peoples of the world such a concert of purpose and of action as will henceforth ensure the observance of those principles...

We have no quarrel with the German people. We have no feeling toward them but one of sympathy and friendship. It was not upon their impulse that their government acted in entering this war. It was not with their previous knowledge or approval...

A steadfast concert for peace can never be maintained except by a partnership of democratic nations. No autocratic government could be trusted to keep faith within it or observe its covenants. It must be a league of honor, a partnership of opinion...

One of the things that has served to convince us that the Prussian autocracy was not and could never be our friend is that from the very outset of the present war it has filled our unsuspecting communities and even our offices of government with spies and set criminal intrigues everywhere afoot against our national unity of counsel, our peace within and without, our industries and our commerce....

...But they have played their part in serving to convince us at last that that government [Germany] entertains no real friendship for us and means to act against our peace and security at its convenience. That it means to stir up enemies against us at our very doors the intercepted note to the German minister at Mexico City is eloquent evidence.

We are accepting this challenge of hostile purpose because we know that in such a government, following such methods, we can never have a friend; and that in the presence of its organized power, always lying in wait to accomplish we know not what purpose, there can be no assured security for the democratic governments of the world. We are now about to accept gage of battle with this natural foe to liberty and shall, if necessary, spend the whole force of the nation to check and nullify its pretensions and its power. We are glad, now that we see the facts with no veil of false pretense about them, to fight thus for the ultimate peace of the world and for the liberation of its peoples, the German peoples included: for the rights of nations great and small and the privilege of men everywhere to choose their way of life and of obedience.

The world must be made safe for democracy. Its peace must be planted upon the tested foundations of political liberty. We have no selfish ends to serve. We desire no conquest, no dominion. We seek no indemnities for ourselves, no material compensation for the sacrifices we shall freely make. We are but one of the champions of the rights of mankind. We shall be satisfied when those rights have been made as secure as the faith and the freedom of nations can make them...

We have borne with their present government through all these bitter months because of that friendship—exercising a patience and forbearance which would otherwise have been impossible. We shall, happily, still have an opportunity to prove that friendship in our daily attitude and actions toward the millions of men and women of German birth and native sympathy who live among us and share our life, and we shall be proud to prove it toward all who are in fact loyal to their neighbors and to the government in the hour of test. They are, most of them, as true and loyal Americans as if they had never known any other fealty or allegiance...

It is a distressing and oppressive duty, gentlemen of the Congress, which I have performed in thus addressing you. There are, it may be, many months of fiery trial and sacrifice ahead of us. It is a fearful, thing to lead this great peaceful people into war, into the most terrible and disastrous of all wars, civilization itself seeming to be in the balance. But the right is more precious than peace, and we shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts--for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own governments, for the rights and liberties of small nations, for a universal dominion of right by such a concert of free peoples as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world itself at last free.

To such a task we can dedicate our lives and our fortunes, everything that we are and everything that we have, with the pride of those who know that the day has come when America is privileged to spend her blood and her might for the principles that gave her birth and happiness and the peace which she has treasured. God helping her, she can do no other.”

### **QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS**

1. What are three arguments President Wilson makes in his war message?
2. What, if anything, does President Wilson leave out?
3. What are the goals of joining the war, according to this speech? Are the goals clear, and do they seem realistic?
4. As an American citizen in 1917, how would you react to President Wilson’s war message?

# LESSON 2: DOMESTIC ECONOMIC POLICIES DURING WORLD WAR I

## Teacher Pages

### OVERVIEW

During World War I, the United States government had to deal with more than just military concerns abroad: it also had to make important decisions on economic matters at home. Students will be asked to keep the war effort on track by finding ways to finance the war and by balancing the often-conflicting interests of big business and the labor movement. Since the economic decisions made during this period profoundly affected the U.S. both during the war and for years afterwards, this lesson focuses on the intended and unintended consequences of those decisions.

### VOCABULARY

- Shortage—Demand exceeds supply
- Arbitration—Two conflicting sides employ an impartial third party to help them reach an agreement on a dispute
- War Industries Board (WIB)—Established to increase production of war goods in the U.S. during World War I
- Oligopoly—A handful of sellers able to influence prices in an industry
- “Military-industrial complex”—President Eisenhower’s term for the close connections between businesses that sell goods and the military officials that buy them, leading to higher prices and the cheating of taxpayers
- GNP—Measure of all the goods and services produced by a country in a year
- Black market—Selling goods and services illegally for higher prices
- Socialism—The government runs the businesses and farms
- Standardization—Products and the parts for products are of a specific size and materials so they can be made more cheaply and replaced easily
- Deficit—When the government spends more in a year than it receives in taxes
- Debt—The total of a government’s past deficits
- Bond—A note given to a person who loans money to the government. The government will later pay back the money, with interest.
- National War Labor Board—Established during World War I to reduce strikes by requiring business and labor to settle disputes by arbitration
- Real wages—Wages minus inflation

### DECISION-MAKING SKILLS EMPHASIZED

- Ask questions about historical context
- Set realistic goals
- Predict unintended consequences

# LESSON PLAN

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## **A. IN-DEPTH LESSON (one 40-minute class period)**

### Procedure:

Distribute Handout 1, and have students decide what they will do for each problem and explain their decisions. Have them discuss their choices in small groups. Alternatively, you could have each group of students take one of the three problems and come to a group decision. As the groups discuss, circulate around the class to answer questions. Handout 3 contains common student questions and their answers.

Bring the class back together and discuss the three problems. Then distribute Handout 2, which contains the outcomes of the problems. What did the students learn from comparing the real outcomes to what they did? Would they change any of their choices after seeing the outcomes?

### 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 these issues? Which 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 students: Which influenced the United States’ decisions more in regard to business, finance, and labor during World War I—historical forces or the choices of individuals? (Students will probably choose historical forces, since the lesson doesn’t give them any major personalities. Historical forces such as American traditions of democracy, anti-government attitudes, faith in business, and the nature of the war each played a part in shaping American choices. One strong personality was Bernard Baruch, the head of the WIB after March 1918. Students could research his actions to see how much he personally shaped the WIB. As mentioned in the teacher notes below, President Wilson also was important in limiting the power of the WIB.)

### Troubleshooting:

In order to evaluate these three problems, students need to have some understanding of basic economic concepts, such as supply and demand, prices, deficits, debt, wages, etc.

## **B. QUICK MOTIVATOR (15–20 minutes)**

Assign Handout 1 for 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 in Problem 1, and briefly discuss the students' reasoning. Repeat this process for Problems 2 and 3. Distribute Handout 3 and ask students to comment on what they learned for homework. Another option is to do only one or two of the problems.

# TEACHER NOTES FOR EXPANDING DISCUSSION

(For outcomes for students, see Handouts 2 and 3)

## **PROBLEM 1—GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS**

The U.S. government established the War Industries Board (WIB) in July 1917, but it was largely ineffectual at first. In March 1918, Bernard Baruch took over as chairman of the agency, and under his leadership, the WIB was reorganized and given more power. Even with this additional power and Baruch's strategy of using threats and compromises to get businesses to cooperate, the WIB met with limited success. For example, Baruch threatened the automobile industry that he would cut off shipments of raw materials if the companies didn't switch more of their production to military equipment, but was unable to persuade them to significantly cut production of passenger vehicles. Despite these limitations, the WIB did influence the way business was conducted during the war. It helped focus production on the war effort and increased efficiency and conserved resources by promoting standardization. It also increased business cooperation under government supervision, which led to oligopolies and higher prices. Businesses would meet and decide on prices, wages, and other arrangements that in peacetime were illegal.

For reasons detailed on Handout 2, the policies of the WIB often benefited business: for example, in accordance with the wishes of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the WIB helped businesses stop antitrust actions. The WIB attempted to implement some anti-business policies, but the agency backed down when businesses protested. For instance, the WIB declared some businesses nonessential, thereby denying them unlimited access to the railroads. But when the affected businesses (particularly the automobile companies) complained, the WIB relented. The WIB also experimented with planning in the shoe industry, attempting to produce a small number of shoes under government supervision and price controls. But the shoe industry protested, labeling the plan "socialistic," and the WIB discovered that, given the difficulties of the shoe experiment, planning for a whole industry would be impractical: no agency could monitor such widespread activity. So the WIB scrapped such planning schemes. Protests from businesses also thwarted the government's attempts to implement price controls. Without price controls, unstable prices could undermine planning, since changes in price could drive production into new (and therefore unplanned) areas or out of old (planned) ones. To overcome this disadvantage, the WIB stressed the cost-plus-fee contracts referred to on Handout 2. The WIB also struggled with the military's supply system. The business end of the supply chain was hindered by the inadequate organization of the military's end, especially the army. For over a year, the poorly organized supply bureaus of the military caused backlogs and shortages of materiel for the troops.

The WIB's inability to completely control businesses was unsurprising: President Wilson never intended it to have such far-reaching powers. He did not want his conservative opponents to charge him with using the government to dominate business, and he himself

was more concerned about the negative effects of big government than he was about the negative effects of big business. The same held true for other areas of the war effort: President Wilson could have tried to control the food supply with rationing, as the European powers did. Preferring to limit governmental power when possible, he instead appealed to Americans' patriotism, urging them to help fight the war at home by voluntarily conserving food. There were also outside factors at work: European countries were fighting for their very survival, and invasion was a constant threat. The U.S. did not face the threat of invasion, so it did not have to resort to the extreme measures of governmental control taken by the European powers. President Wilson therefore had more latitude than the other Allied leaders did to balance the war effort and his resistance to big government.

The story of government agencies' involvement in World War I is much more complicated than this lesson indicates. Other agencies played huge roles, including the National Defense Advisory Commission and the Council of National Defense. This simplified version allows students to tackle some of the policy issues without becoming overwhelmed by complications and details.

## **PROBLEM 2—GOVERNMENT AND FINANCING**

The U.S. Treasury did not want people to withdraw money from their savings in order to buy bonds, since this would hurt investments. So it kept the interest rate on the bonds lower than the market rate. The Treasury hoped that instead of taking money out of their investments, people would buy bonds with money they would normally spend on non-essential goods and services. This, in turn, would conserve resources by reducing consumption and check inflation by keeping prices low.

## **PROBLEM 3—GOVERNMENT AND LABOR**

The government aimed, above all, to prevent strikes. If the morale of laborers could be kept up and strikes prevented by correcting industrial wrongs, then it could be justified as a war measure. Wages increased overall slightly faster than inflation (that is, real wages increased), but the situation varied wildly from industry to industry. Some workers lost as much as 30% in real wages, while others gained more than 20% in real wages. For many workers, inflation outstripped wage increases.

Some historians argue that labor morale increased during the war, while others say that the limited nature of the wage increases disappointed workers.

## DECISION-MAKING ANALYSIS:

### P = Problem

- Identify any underlying problem
- 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 = Goal

- \* - **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

- **Ask about context:** Handout 4 provides possible questions and suggested answers. A key question for Problem 2 is how much the war will cost compared to the federal budget and GDP. Once it becomes apparent that the war expenses will be much larger than the U.S. budget can handle, the government will obviously need to borrow most of it. Either the U.S. considers the war to be worth fighting or it doesn't. If it's worth it, then the government will have to secure the necessary funds to fight to victory. If it isn't worth it, the problem isn't financing the war, it's the decision to go to war in the first place.
- **Is the goal realistic?** Students should consider whether the government was capable of carrying out the supervision of businesses as described in Problem 1. As explained on Handouts 2 and 3 (Outcomes), the government did not have this ability, so businesses were able to exert a great deal of control over the WIB. Whether this was good or bad is for students to decide. Either way, students should anticipate that it could happen.
- **Consider effects/consequences:** Unintended consequences are outlined on Handouts 2 and 3.

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# LESSON 2: DOMESTIC ECONOMIC POLICIES DURING WORLD WAR I

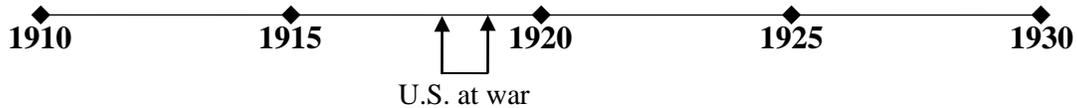
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## Vocabulary

- Shortage—Demand exceeds supply
- Arbitration—Two conflicting sides employ an impartial third party to help them reach an agreement on a dispute
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- Real wages—Wages minus inflation

# LESSON 2: DOMESTIC ECONOMIC POLICIES DURING WORLD WAR I

## Student Handout 1



You are President Wilson in 1917. The United States is at war on the side of Britain and France with Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey. The stakes couldn't be higher—victory is essential for the sovereignty of your allies and your own political survival. To achieve victory, you have make more than just military decisions—your economic policies will also help determine the outcome.

### PROBLEM 1—GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS

You need to make sure your soldiers have enough equipment and supplies. However, the government does not have the ability to produce these goods itself—it must rely on American businesses. Which of the following will you do in terms of government and business? You can choose more than one.

- A. Let the market determine the production of goods. If demand is high for some products, such as artillery shells, the price will go up. Businesses, wanting to make big profits, will supply the needed shells.
- B. Establish a government agency to work with businesses. Together, the agency and businesses would decide how much of each product should be made and at what price. The agency would also help businesses decide which products they should not manufacture during wartime so they can focus on war-related production.
- C. Offer generous government contracts and award the contracts to the companies that offer the best deals to the government
- D. Have the government take over the production of goods needed for war. The government would take control of relevant business and convert them over to war production until the end of the war.

### PROBLEM 2—GOVERNMENT AND FINANCING

Government spending has drastically increased since the war started. Which of the following will you do to help finance the war? If you choose a combination of A and B, what percentage of the financing will be raised by A, and what percentage by B?

- A. Increase taxes
- B. Appeal to the public's patriotism and encourage people to lend the government money by purchasing war bonds
- C. Do nothing—the problem isn't that serious. The government should buy materials for the war with its current budget. It shouldn't increase taxes or borrow money.

**PROBLEM 3—GOVERNMENT AND LABOR**

The production of the additional supplies needed for the war requires a tremendous amount of manpower. But a huge percentage of the workforce is leaving to fight the war. As a result, there is a shortage of workers when you need them most. What will you do about this labor shortage?

- A. Let the market work it out. Wherever there are labor shortages, wages will go up; higher wages will attract workers.
- B. Take the side of workers. Establish policies making sure wages go up enough to attract sufficient workers to fill all the military's needs.
- C. Take the side of business owners. Establish policies keeping wages down to entice enough businesses to fill all the military's needs.
- D. Set up a government board to oversee labor issues. Workers would be given the right to organize and bargain collectively. In exchange, workers would take a pledge not to strike during the war. The board would help settle labor disputes.
- E. Assume that workers know how to maximize production fairly, and help them to take over businesses in the industries most important to the war effort.

# LESSON 2: DOMESTIC ECONOMIC POLICIES DURING WORLD WAR I

## Student Handout 2

### OUTCOMES

#### PROBLEM 1—GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS

The government chose both B and C. As in choice B, President Wilson and Congress established a government agency called the War Industries Board (WIB). The WIB helped businesses to focus production on the war effort, and it increased efficiency and conserved resources by promoting standardization. However, the WIB didn't have the personnel or knowledge to make independent decisions, and its policies were heavily influenced by businesses. One reason for this was that the U.S. government at that time was small and, excluding the Post Office, had fewer employees (as few as 50,000) than many large businesses. Businesses had much more information about their own industries than the WIB could ever hope to learn on its own. So the War Industries Board relied on business for information (production levels, wages, costs, prices, etc.), which led to several **unintended consequences**:

- Businesses controlled much of the agency and used it for their own benefit. Several thousand businesses made over 50% profit during the war, and 20,000 more made over 20% profit. Two thousand corporations made over 100% profit. The four largest meatpacking companies increased their profits by an average of more than 600%.
- The largest businesses dominated the WIB, so the agency made decisions that favored big business over small businesses. Many smaller businesses felt cheated.
- In order to entice businesses to cooperate, the government offered contracts that guaranteed a profit (choice C—offer favorable contracts). These “cost-plus-fee” contracts reimbursed a business for the cost of making a product and added a fee for making it. The government continued to use cost-plus-fee contracts for decades. Eventually taxpayers complained about the excessive payments of these contracts.
- The government also enticed businesses by introducing subsidies, relaxing antitrust laws to allow businesses to cooperate with each other (resulting in higher prices), and restricting market entry (keeping the number of businesses down so prices would be higher). As a result, a small number of huge corporations (called oligopolies) wielded a great deal of control over the market and prices. This undid many of the reforms of the progressive movement, which sought to limit the size and regulate the power of big business.
- The increased power of large businesses was compounded by the expansion of well-organized special-interest lobbying groups. After all, the WIB was helping to organize each industry. It was a small step to use the organization for lobbying to get what they wanted (for businesses, farmers, etc.) from government. Later,

- President Eisenhower would call the increased cooperation between government and business for military goods the “military-industrial complex.”
- The government grew, relative to the economy as a whole. War spending was less than 1% of the GNP in 1915; it rose to 23% of the GNP in 1918. The government was heavily involved in many areas of the economy.
- By establishing large programs to oversee businesses, the government also created a larger bureaucracy. World War I drew more people to Washington DC for employment and created jobs for economists.
- The WIB’s push for increased standardization led to much greater industrial efficiency, and that efficiency continued after the war. Consequently, more goods were produced at lower costs, and the American standard of living increased.
- Businesses learned to use planning to produce sufficient goods. After the war, businesses continued to incorporate more planning, and their efficiency increased.
- Government controls over production led to a black market. The government told businesses not to produce certain products in order to focus on goods necessary for the war effort. Soon shortages of non-essential goods appeared, and when the prices of those goods rose, some people began producing them illegally, “under the table.” All of the countries involved in World War I experienced significant black-market activity, including the U.S.

A free-market approach (choice A) might have been more efficient in the long run, but production might not have increased quickly enough to meet the needs of the war effort. If a significant shortage had appeared and the demand had not been met quickly, the U.S. could have lost the war before the market corrected itself to meet the demand. Whatever the imperfections of choices B and C, they worked: businesses supplied enough goods for the U.S. to fight and win the war.

Choice D describes socialism. Perhaps it would have worked in wartime, but what would have happened when the war ended? The track record of government-run businesses in the 20th century was not very good, as the collapse of the Soviet Union and poorly run countries in Eastern Europe demonstrated. Private businesses seem more efficient and productive over the long term.

## **PROBLEM 2—GOVERNMENT AND FINANCING**

The government did both A and B. It increased taxes (doubling the income tax from 1% to 2%, raising the surcharge on incomes over \$20,000 to 13%, increasing taxes on alcohol and tobacco, imposing more taxes on corporations, and increasing the inheritance tax to 10% on amounts over \$50,000). At the outset of the war, the Secretary of the Treasury stated that the government would raise taxes enough to pay for 50% of the cost of the war. But the war became so expensive (from an initial estimate of \$3.5 billion to \$15 billion) that the government realized the cost would place an undue burden on taxpayers. Instead, the government would need to borrow heavily to pay most of the costs. Appealing to the patriotism of the American public, the government asked people to loan it money by purchasing war bonds. After the war, the government would pay back these loans, with interest. These decisions had several **unintended consequences**:

- The deficit that the government was running (by spending more than it was taking in through taxes) rose to about \$1 billion per month, an amount greater than the yearly federal budget before the war.
- The federal debt was 20 times greater after the war. The government had to rely on either future taxes or spending cuts on other programs (or both) to pay back the debt.
- Prices almost doubled during the war as result of shortages of goods and expansion of the money supply due to all this borrowing.
- The bond drives especially helped the rich, who benefited from a tax exemption on the interest on the bonds. (Since the rich are taxed at a higher rate, the exemption helps them more.)
- During the war, the burden of taxation shifted to wealthier people, who paid more income, luxury and estate taxes. On the other hand, the rich benefited greatly from lending money to the government, and many rich people made tremendous profits during the war.



The final choice, choice C, would have prevented the U.S. from fighting the war effectively. The war proved to be very expensive, and if the government had not come up with new strategies to raise money, the U.S. and its allies may have lost the war.

### PROBLEM 3—GOVERNMENT AND LABOR

The government formed an agency (Choice D) called the National War Labor Board (NWLB), which included five members each from business and labor. The NWLB gave workers the right to organize unions and bargain collectively with owners. In exchange, the government wanted workers to pledge not to strike. Union leaders, especially Samuel Gompers, encouraged unions to avoid strikes, but there



Striking miners on parade in Pennsylvania

were thousands of strikes nevertheless. If unions refused to work after consulting the NWLB, the government often took strong action against them, arresting workers and threatening to send them into the army. These labor policies had several **unintended consequences**:

- Despite the efforts of the NWLB, strikes increased greatly during the war, from 979 in 1914, to 4233 in 1917. Some historians believe the increased number of strikes during the war was inevitable. With a smaller supply of workers and increased demand for goods, workers were bound to demand higher pay and strike if they didn't get it.
- Union membership increased almost 50% during the war
- Wages almost doubled, but real wage rates (correcting for inflation, which nearly doubled also) only increased 4%. This 4% was much less than the tremendous profits made by many businesses, but it was still an increase.
- Moderate unionists became more influential and numerous than radicals, since workers' wages and working conditions were somewhat improved. Whether the move toward moderation helped or hurt workers is a matter of interpretation.

# LESSON 2: DOMESTIC ECONOMIC POLICIES DURING WORLD WAR I

## Student Handout 3

### QUESTION 1—WHAT DID OTHER GOVERNMENTS DO?

#### PROBLEM 1—WHAT DID OTHER GOVERNMENTS DO TO GET BUSINESSES TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE WAR EFFORT?

- Germany—The government and business together decided how to best use resources. The government was to limit business profits. The system became bureaucratic and inefficient (lots of paperwork; takes a long time to get things done), which resulted in bribery, corruption, and a black market. It also led to shortages and inflation. By 1918 there were many strikes and protests in Germany due to the rampant corruption and the government's favoritism towards some businesses.
- Austria-Hungary—The government forced businesses and farmers to sell some of their goods to the government at prices it determined to be "fair." As a result, Hungarian farmers didn't supply all the food required. Also, the forced sales to the government led to shortages of certain products in Austria-Hungary.
- Britain—Offered price incentives, promising to pay high prices to businesses that sold goods to the government. Many businesses made huge profits. The government also used price controls to keep prices stable. This was especially helpful for workers, whose wages didn't increase enough to keep up with inflation.
- France—Offered price incentives. Many people resented these incentives and accused the businesses that were making huge profits of war profiteering.

#### PROBLEM 2—HOW DID OTHER GOVERNMENTS FINANCE THEIR WAR EFFORTS?

**Borrowing:** All the countries involved in the war borrowed, appealing to the patriotism of their citizens to get them to buy bonds. Germany held bond drives, promising people they'd get the money back from the enemy after winning the war. Britain and France held bond drives and also borrowed from the U.S.

**Taxes:** Britain used income taxes and excess-profits taxes on businesses. No other government relied heavily on taxes.

#### PROBLEM 3—WHAT DID OTHER GOVERNMENTS DO ABOUT LABOR?

All the warring countries struggled with the same problem of labor shortages: such a large percentage of the workforce leaving to fight the war made it difficult to meet the increased demand for war-related goods. As a result, wages for

workers rose, and in many cases, working conditions improved. On the other hand, inflation often eroded the wage gains. The governments in all the countries feared strikes during the war, and most raised wages and forced companies to negotiate with laborers to avoid strikes. In Russia and Italy, however, governments heavily favored businesses and allowed them to treat workers like forced labor, so those two countries experienced even more conflict and disruption. In Germany, the government favored workers over farmers, a policy resented by the farmers.

### **QUESTION 2—WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING ECONOMICALLY IN THE U.S. DURING THIS PERIOD?**

By the early 20th century, ever-larger corporations were dominating the U.S. economy. The progressive movement attempted to limit the power of big business using two methods:

1. Using antitrust legislation and cases to prevent a small number of businesses from gaining too much control over an industry
2. Passing laws to regulate the conduct of big business

These techniques met with limited success. At this time the government was small, particularly in terms of personnel, compared with many of the large businesses; in many cases the government was unable to reign in powerful businesses.

For the last 40 years, as industrialization spread throughout the economy and American life in general, the economy has been expanding rapidly. In 1893, a severe depression gripped the U.S., and in 1914, the economy was probably in recession. Otherwise, the U.S. has experienced rapid economic growth and has the largest economy in the world.

### **QUESTION 3—WHAT IS THE SITUATION OF SUPPLIES AT THIS POINT IN 1917?**

Shortages are very common, and prices for goods such as food and fuel are skyrocketing. Even when the supply of goods is sufficient, the supply system is so disorganized that it is often difficult to get the goods where they are needed most, such as to soldiers on the front lines.

### **QUESTION 4—HOW STRONG IS ORGANIZED LABOR AND HOW LIKELY ARE STRIKES?**

Organized labor is relatively weak at this time. It has strengthened since the late 1800s, but most workers still do not belong to unions, and unions are especially weak in heavy industries, such as steel. The labor movement has been further weakened by the divide between radicals (who promote socialism and seek to change the whole system) and moderates (who simply seek better conditions and higher pay).

Strikes are very likely. Workers are patriotic and will want to do their part to help the country win the war. So there will be pressure to avoid strikes, which would disrupt war production. Nevertheless, with a shortage of workers, the urge to finally get some improvements in pay and working conditions will be tough to resist. If workers go on strike, they will more likely be successful, since there won't be a supply of strikebreakers to take their place. Businesses that are making big profits will more likely give in to worker demands in strike situations. Workers will reason: Why shouldn't we share in the increased profits during the war?

# LESSON 3: GOVERNMENT CONTROL OF INFORMATION DURING WORLD WAR I

## Teacher Pages

### OVERVIEW

This lesson asks students to consider the extent to which the U.S. government should be allowed to control information during World War I (Problem 1) and balance the needs for national security and free speech (Problem 2). Students will learn about the Committee on Public Information, commonly called the “Creel Committee,” and see how it both successfully increased morale during the war and also raised troubling issues about government manipulation of the public.

### VOCABULARY

- Espionage Act—Made it a crime to spy, sabotage, refuse military service if drafted, or obstruct military recruitment
- Sedition Act—Made it a crime punishable by imprisonment to say anything “disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive” about the government or the armed forces
- Committee on Public Information (CPI)—Government agency that selected what information Americans would see and hear; this information was favorable towards the United States and unfavorable towards the Germans
- George Creel—Head of the CPI
- “100% Americanism”—Phrase meaning that citizens should be loyal to the United States and completely committed to the war effort
- Four-minute men—Community volunteers who delivered speeches to keep morale high
- *Schenck v. United States*—The Supreme Court upheld the conviction of Schenck under the Espionage Act, calling his actions a “clear and present danger”

### DECISION-MAKING SKILLS EMPHASIZED:

- Ask about analogies
- Set realistic goals
- Predict unintended consequences

# LESSON PLAN

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## **A. IN-DEPTH LESSON (one 40-minute class period)**

### Procedure:

One way to start the lesson is to use Handout 3, the excerpt of an espionage act from an unnamed country. Ask students what effect this act might have had. Is it reasonable to pass such an act during wartime? Students should account for factors such as how important the war is to the country's survival, and think about how to balance the rights of citizens with the threat from the enemy. As students will see, this act is from the United States. Did they think it was from another country? If so, did that affect the way they saw the act?

Distribute Handout 1 and have students read it silently and decide what they will do for both problems. Next, divide students into groups and have them discuss their choices. Bring the class back together. Ask each group to report on and explain its decisions. After groups have reported and the class has discussed both problems, distribute Handout 2 or tell the class what actually happened. Give students the definition of propaganda. (The following definition is paraphrased from Gary [see sources]: Propaganda—The organized manipulation of words or symbols to persuade a mass audience to take a particular position on a controversial matter.) Ask students if the U.S. used propaganda during World War I. Do they have objections to the use of propaganda? The government used different methods of controlling information; do students see a difference between using propaganda, for example, and punishing citizens who speak out against the war? Were some of these methods necessary to win the war, even if they limited free speech? What is the danger in suppressing free speech? Follow up by examining the primary sources: the acts on Handout 5 and the recruiting poster on Handout 6. Discuss whether the acts and the poster are examples of propaganda.

### Reflecting on Decision Making:

Ask students what they would have done differently, if anything, now that they know what really happened. Which decision-making skills were most important in making decisions about these issues? Which 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 students: Did certain historical factors cause the U.S. to use propaganda, or was it more the decisions of leaders such as President Wilson and George Creel?

You could conclude the lesson by reading this quote from Harold Laswell in his book, *Propaganda Techniques in the World War* (1927): “In the Great Society it is no longer possible to fuse the waywardness of individuals in the furnace of the war dance; a new and subtler instrument must weld thousands and even millions of human beings into one amalgamated mass of hate and will and hope. A new flame must burn out the canker of dissent and temper the steel of bellicose enthusiasm. The name of this new hammer and anvil of social solidarity is propaganda. Talk must take the place of drill; print must supplant the dance. War dances live in literature and at the fringes of the modern earth; war propaganda breathes and fumes in the capitals and provinces of the world.” Is this quote true for the United States in World War I? If so, is what Laswell describes a danger to the country? Was the CPI essentially part of the change from the “war dance” to mass propaganda in the industrial age?

Troubleshooting:

In order to understand this lesson, students need to have a firm grasp on the First Amendment. After students have made their preliminary decisions, you could have a student read the amendment. Answer any questions, then have the groups continue their deliberations.

<b>B. QUICK MOTIVATOR (10–20 minutes)</b>
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Assign Handout 1 for 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 in Problem 1, and briefly discuss the reasons behind the choices. Repeat this process for Problem 2. Distribute Handout 2, and have students comment for homework on what they learned from these outcomes.

# TEACHER NOTES FOR EXPANDING DISCUSSION

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(For outcomes for students, see Handout 2)

George Creel, head of the CPI, felt that most people already favored the war, so the committee's task was largely to consolidate and invigorate that support. The few people with dissenting views couldn't threaten such a strong base of support. Creel was adamant that the CPI provide only truthful information to the public, but exaggeration and outright lying inevitably crept in.

President Wilson favored a draft instead of a volunteer army. In Britain, many of the most important industrial workers volunteered for the army, crippling key industries. Wilson hoped the U.S. could avoid the same fate.

The American press was most concerned about the part of the Espionage Act that threatened its rights.

## DECISION-MAKING ANALYSIS:

### P = Problem

- Identify any underlying problem
- 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 = Goal

- \* - **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

- **Ask about analogies:** Handout 4 offers students two analogies for analysis. Students should consider that the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798 were passed at a time when the country was not yet at war; when the government passed the Espionage and Sedition Acts of 1917–1918, the U.S. was at war, and for that reason the need for them was probably greater. In the second analogy, students

should recognize that the Civil War was an internal rebellion rather than some faraway war. Interestingly, President Wilson consciously recognized the analogies to the Alien and Sedition Acts and Civil War actions of President Lincoln.

Students may also want to discuss the Patriot Act. As a research project, they could examine any of these other acts.

- **Goals:** This problem is largely about the difficulty of balancing free speech and security during wartime. Ideally, the government would be able to preserve both.
- **Predict consequences:** Handout 2 describes these consequences. Did any of them surprise students?

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# LESSON 3: GOVERNMENT CONTROL OF INFORMATION DURING WORLD WAR I

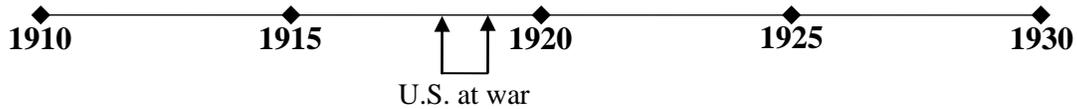
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## Vocabulary

- Espionage Act—Made it a crime to spy, sabotage, refuse military service if drafted, or obstruct military recruitment
- Sedition Act—Made it a crime punishable by prison to say anything “disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive” about the government or the armed forces
- Committee on Public Information (CPI)—Government agency that selected what information Americans would hear; this information was favorable towards the United States and unfavorable towards the Germans
- George Creel—Head of the CPI
- “100% Americanism”—Phrase meaning that citizens should be loyal to the United States and completely committed to the war effort
- Four minute men—Community volunteers who delivered speeches to keep morale high
- *Schenck v. United States*—The Supreme Court upheld the conviction of Schenck under the Espionage Act, calling his actions a “clear and present danger”

# LESSON 3: GOVERNMENT CONTROL OF INFORMATION DURING WORLD WAR I

## Student Handout 1



It is 1917. You are President Wilson, and under your leadership, the United States has just entered World War I. An atmosphere of patriotism pervades much of the country, and most people want to unite to fight the Germans. However, the war will not be easy. American soldiers will lose their lives, and citizens at home will face shortages and hardships. The war is far away, and some people question whether Germany poses enough of a threat to the United States to warrant American involvement in such a difficult struggle. As President Wilson, you realize that continued public support is essential to fighting the war, and you want to bolster Americans' patriotism and morale using information and ideas. In Problem 1, you will consider ways the government can control information to help the war effort. In Problem 2, you will decide how to deal with Americans you believe to be disloyal.

### PROBLEM 1

As President Wilson, one of your priorities is to maintain public support for the war. You worry that people with dissenting views will become more vocal as the war drags on, and you want to make sure that no one inside the U.S. provides information to the enemy. Here are some proposals that may help you control information. Choose as many of these as you'd like and explain your choice(s):

- A. Suspend the First Amendment until the war is over. It is vitally important that the U.S. win the war, and anyone who criticizes the government and causes other Americans to doubt the war effort should be put in jail.
- B. Set up the Committee on Patriotic Perspectives to issue reports on the war for the public. These patriotic reports will keep morale high and encourage people to buy war bonds. The reports will be selective, describing the good and heroic deeds of Americans and the terrible deeds of the Germans. When necessary, the committee will go beyond selective reporting and use exaggerations and lies. It will justify this as a necessary measure, saying that the enemy countries lie constantly in their own propaganda.
- C. Set up a committee to select information that is favorable to America and unfavorable to the Germans. If at all possible, it will not lie and will minimize exaggeration. It will commission images for posters designed to inspire patriotism, and will use celebrities, songs, speeches, and pamphlets to keep morale high.

- D. Censor the newspapers, allowing them to print only positive news about the American war effort and negative news about the enemy. Also, censor the mail to prevent people from passing information to the other side; arrest those who attempt it.
- E. Don't do anything to control news and information. The First Amendment, granting Americans the right to free speech, is far too precious to throw away, despite the difficulties of wartime.

## **PROBLEM 2**

As President Wilson, how will you deal with Americans you suspect of being disloyal during wartime? This perceived disloyalty could manifest itself in many ways, from expressing anti-war sentiments to spying for the enemy, to refusing military service when drafted. Below are descriptions of two possible acts: would you support one or both of these acts? You can object to some parts of an act and not to others.

- A. Espionage Act: Makes it a crime to spy, sabotage, refuse military service if drafted, or obstruct military recruitment. It also authorizes the postmaster general to prevent the mailing of subversive newspapers and magazines.
- B. Sedition Act: Makes it a crime punishable by prison for citizens to say anything "disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive" about the government or the armed forces.

# LESSON 3: GOVERNMENT CONTROL OF INFORMATION DURING WORLD WAR I

## Student Handout 2

### OUTCOMES

#### PROBLEM 1

The government felt that it needed to take an active role to convince the people of the war's importance. It chose C and formed the Committee on Public Information (CPI), often referred to as the Creel Committee after its leader George Creel. Similar propaganda agencies in Britain and France used strict censorship to suppress the news, but Creel wanted the CPI to be less heavy-handed in its tactics. Instead of censoring every piece of information, the Creel Committee emphasized the positive news of the war, hoping that enough positive information would drown out any criticisms. It put out patriotic posters, pamphlets, and movies, and had its own volunteer "army" of 75,000 "four-minute men"—respected community leaders who delivered pro-war speeches at local gatherings. Creel hoped that so much positive information would render censorship unnecessary.

In many ways, the CPI was successful: Americans remained mostly supportive of the war effort, and morale remained high. However, some felt that the CPI's practice of releasing only carefully selected information was in itself a form of censorship. Movies depicted the Germans as evil, and CPI-issued pamphlets warned Americans to beware of German spies. George Creel, who had stated that he wanted the agency to be completely truthful, was caught lying at least once, when he exaggerated the difficulty of U.S. soldiers going to France. "Creeling" became a common word for lying.

The actions of the Creel Committee had numerous **unintended consequences**:

- George Creel claimed that he wanted the CPI to be truthful and not create rumors. However, the CPI's emphasis on the danger of German spies helped create a climate of fear. This made life particularly difficult for German Americans, many of whose neighbors regarded them with suspicion.
- The committee stressed "100% Americanism," meaning that people should be entirely committed to the war effort and completely loyal to the U.S. This attitude led to discrimination against dissenters and nonconformists. For example, some colleges and universities fired professors who had opposed American entry into the war.
- "100% Americanism" also encouraged a distrust of immigrants. Foreigners and foreign ideas became suspect. Many high schools dropped German from their curriculums.
- Suspicion of foreigners and foreign ideas did not end with the war. But instead of focusing on Germans, Americans' fear and suspicion shifted their targets to

Russians and communists. The government deported members of radical labor unions in Seattle and strikers in West Virginia. The Palmer Raids from 1918 to 1921 and the anti-immigration laws passed in the 1920s further demonstrated the extent to which the government was willing to censor and punish foreigners and those who promoted “foreign” ideas.

- Some Americans became more skeptical of the government and questioned its willingness to manipulate public opinion. They worried that the government’s ability to promote one-sided versions of issues would undermine democracy.
- The “four-minute men” who delivered speeches at local gatherings were often already well-educated, prominent members of their communities. This is why people were so willing to listen to them; however, it also meant that the speeches often came from the perspective of the middle class and business owners. The speeches further cemented the places of these wealthier men in society and marginalized people from the working class and immigrant communities.
- Many historians volunteered their services to the CPI and wrote academic articles promoting the idea that Germany caused the war and that the U.S. was justified in fighting it. Working for an agency that endorsed a particular point of view undermined the reputation of many of these people as independent, objective scholars.
- These restrictions upset leftists, many who found themselves harassed and in some cases prosecuted for criticizing the government or the war. These leftists tended to belong to the Democratic Party—President Wilson’s party. The notion that Wilson had turned his back on his party by supporting these restrictions came back to haunt him later. When he asked Democrats to support his League of Nations (see Lesson 4), some party members opposed him.

## **PROBLEM 2**

At the urging of President Wilson, the government passed the Espionage Act in 1917 and the Sedition Act in 1918. Wilson feared that any dissent would undermine the war effort. He fought for censorship of the press, even writing a letter to the New York Times explaining why he thought it was necessary. The Espionage Act made it a crime to spy against the U.S., sabotage the U.S., refuse military service if drafted, or obstruct military recruitment. It also prohibited the mailing of subversive newspapers. The Sedition Act prohibited “uttering, printing, writing, or publishing any disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive language, or language intended to cause contempt” towards the government, as well as any “words or acts supporting or favoring the cause of any country at war with us.”

Many considered the acts violations of the First Amendment, particularly the rights to free speech and a free press. Civil libertarians denounced them and blamed both the acts and the Creel Committee for creating a vigilante atmosphere. People worried that the acts would be used not just for the war effort, but against anyone whose interests opposed those of the government.

- The acts were enforced: for example, many newspapers, especially socialist newsletters and German American papers, lost the right to issue their

- publications. Also, while the vast majority of men who were drafted accepted their military service, the few who refused were arrested.
- The Espionage Act led to one of the most famous Supreme Court cases in U.S. history: *Schenck v. United States*. Schenck, a socialist with anti-war views, published a pamphlet opposing the draft. The Supreme Court upheld his conviction for violating the Espionage Act, stating that Schenck's pamphlet presented a "clear and present danger" to the country during wartime. The justices used the following analogy in upholding Schenck's conviction: if a person is wrong to yell, "Fire!" in a crowded theater when there is no fire, then Schenck was wrong to criticize the war effort.
  - Even during the war, civil libertarians' fear that the government would use the acts against other groups became a reality when the government used the acts to target socialists and unions. Many socialist newspapers were denied use of the mail, for example.
  - **Unintended consequence:** After the war ended, the laws remained in force. Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer used them in what became known as the "Palmer Raids" of 1918–1921, in which suspected radicals were arrested and deported. These radicals were not German spies: instead, they were socialists, communists, and suspected anarchists.
  - The Sedition Act was repealed in 1921, but the Espionage Act remained in effect for decades after the war, and parts of it are still in effect in the 21st century.

# **LESSON 3: GOVERNMENT CONTROL OF INFORMATION DURING WORLD WAR I**

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## **Student Handout 3**

Every country that fought in World War I faced the problem of spies (espionage). Below is an excerpt from an espionage act from one of the countries; some of the words have been changed to obscure its country of origin. Read the excerpt and determine whether you think the act is reasonable. How do you think the act would help protect the country? Do you think it could threaten free speech or other freedoms? What do you think its effects would be?

“If the Nation is at war, anyone who deliberately writes or makes false statements that either interfere with the military operations of the Nation or support the Nation’s enemies, shall be fined or imprisoned for up to twenty years, or both. Furthermore, any type of mail, document, or printed material, including letters, photos, books, and newspapers, any part of which advocates treason, insurrection, or forcible resistance to the Nation’s laws shall be confiscated and not mailed, and the sender will be subject to a large monetary fine or five years’ imprisonment or both.”

# **LESSON 3: GOVERNMENT CONTROL OF INFORMATION DURING WORLD WAR I**

## **Student Handout 4**

### **ANALOGIES**

Read each of the following three analogies, and evaluate whether each one is relevant to the way the government controlled information in World War I. Explain how each analogy is helpful or unhelpful.

1. In 1798 a war was looming between the U.S. and France over French interference with American trade. The Federalist-controlled Congress passed the Alien and Sedition Acts, which the Federalist president then signed. The Alien Act allowed the president to deport immigrants who might be a danger to the country, and it increased the time required before an immigrant could become a citizen from five years to 14 years. The Sedition Act made it a crime for a person to publish “false, scandalous, and malicious writing” against the government or its officials. The acts were very controversial and hurt popular support for the Federalists. Many suspected that the Federalists had an ulterior motive in increasing the amount of time before an immigrant could be naturalized: most immigrants at that time joined the other party when they became citizens.
2. “Habeas corpus” is a right guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution requiring the government to show that it is lawfully holding a prisoner. During the Civil War, President Lincoln suspended the writ of habeas corpus, allowing him to imprison people without having to present a reason. The Constitution says that the writ can be suspended during times of insurrection or rebellion; Lincoln argued that since the Civil War was a rebellion, he was lawful in suspending habeas corpus.
3. Britain and France strictly censored newspapers and the mail during World War I.

# **LESSON 3: GOVERNMENT CONTROL OF INFORMATION DURING WORLD WAR I**

## **Student Handout 5**

### **Primary Source: The Espionage Act (excerpts)**

“Whoever, when the United States is at war, shall willfully make or convey false reports or false statements with intent to interfere with the operation or success of the military or naval forces of the United States or to promote the success of its enemies and whoever when the United States is at war, shall willfully cause or attempt to cause insubordination, disloyalty, mutiny, refusal of duty, in the military or naval forces of the United States, or shall willfully obstruct the recruiting or enlistment service of the United States, to the injury of the service or of the United States, shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$10,000 or imprisonment for not more than twenty years, or both.”

Title III: “Every letter, writing, circular, post card, picture, print, engraving, photograph, newspaper, pamphlet, book, or other publication, matter or thing, of any kind, containing any matter advocating or urging treason, insurrection, or forcible resistance to any law of the United States, is hereby declared nonmailable.”

### **Primary Source: Trading With the Enemy Act (excerpt)**

Subsection 3d: “Whenever, during the present war, the President shall deem that the public safety demands it, he may cause to be censored under such rules and regulations as he may from time to time establish, communications by mail, cable, radio or other means of transmission passing between the United States and any foreign country... Any person who willfully evades or attempts to evade the submission of any such communication to such censorship or willfully uses or attempts to use any code or other device for the purpose of concealing from such censorship the intended meaning of such communication...shall, upon conviction, be...fined not more than \$100,000, or imprisoned for not more than ten years or both.”

### **Primary Source: Sedition Act (excerpt)**

“...and whoever, when the United States is at war, shall willfully utter, print, write or publish any disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive language about the form of the government of the United States or the Constitution or the military or naval forces of the United States or the flag of the United States...to the injury of the service or of the United States, shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$10,000 or imprisonment of not more than twenty years, or both...”

## **QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS**

1. How could each of the four sections help defend the U.S. and the war effort?
2. How could each of the four sections threaten free speech or other freedoms?

# LESSON 3: GOVERNMENT CONTROL OF INFORMATION DURING WORLD WAR I

## Student Handout 6



### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What is the point of this poster, and what is its underlying message?
2. Is this poster an example of propaganda? Do you find anything suspect about it?

# LESSON 4: THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS DEBATE

## Teacher Pages

### OVERVIEW

This lesson asks students to examine President Wilson’s proposal for a league of nations. In the first problem, students will decide, as U.S. senators in 1919, whether the U.S. should join the league and what the league should look like. Students will examine the second problem from the perspective of President Wilson, and think about what strategies they can use to ensure its passage by the Senate.

### VOCABULARY

- League of Nations—International organization proposed by President Wilson to prevent future wars
- Treaty of Versailles—Treaty ending World War I. Wilson included the creation of the League of Nations as a part of the treaty
- Ratify—Treaties must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the Senate
- Henry Cabot Lodge—Powerful Republican senator who hated President Wilson
- Monroe Doctrine—U.S. policy begun in the 19th century discouraging European powers from further colonizing the Western Hemisphere
- Article X—Provision of the League of Nations committing member countries to help defend other member countries against attack

### DECISION-MAKING SKILLS EMPHASIZED

- Identify underlying problems
- Consider other points of view
- Recognize assumptions
- Ask questions about context
- Set realistic goals
- Generate options. Are they ethical?

# LESSON PLAN

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## **A. IN-DEPTH LESSON (one 40-minute class period)**

### Procedure:

Distribute Handout 1. Have students read Problem 1 silently and decide what they will do. Next, divide students into groups and have them discuss their choices. Students can ask questions. You may want to make sure they consider the stance that American leaders took on international conflicts prior to World War I (see Teacher Notes). Bring the class back together. Each group should report on its decisions and explain. Repeat the process for Problem 2. After groups have reported, distribute Handout 2 or tell the class what actually happened. At some point, focus their attention on the quote from Article X. Just how much of a commitment does Article X demand from member countries?

You can extend the lesson by asking students how the question of international involvement at the time of the League of Nations applies to American involvement in world affairs today. Are the ethical issues the same? Are the practical issues (such as technology, world trade, and international diplomacy) the same?

### Reflecting on Decision Making:

Ask students what if they would have done differently, if anything, now that they know what really happened. Which decision-making skills were most important in making decisions about these issues? Which 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 students: Why didn't the U.S. join the League of Nations? Which were more influential, historical factors or the personalities of Wilson and Lodge? (Students should note the animosity between Lodge and Wilson and the decisions by Wilson that, in retrospect, appear to be mistakes. On the other hand, they should also note historical factors such as the feeling of war weariness, the American tradition of staying out of foreign entanglements, Republican gains in the 1918 elections, the constitutional requirement for a two-thirds majority in the Senate for ratification of a treaty, and so forth.)

### Troubleshooting:

Students may need to be reminded how treaty ratification works.

## **B. QUICK MOTIVATOR (10–30 minutes)**

Of the two problems, Problem 1 is more relevant to today's events, and thus students are able to discuss it more passionately. If you want to shorten the lesson, limit it to Problem 1, and assign it for 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 the students' reasoning. Distribute Handout 2, and for homework have students comment on what they learned from these outcomes. It's often hard to cut off the discussion, since the problem raises so many interesting and enduring questions that are relevant to America's role in the world today.

# TEACHER NOTES FOR EXPANDING DISCUSSION

(For outcomes for students, see Handout 2)

## PROBLEM 1—POWERS OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

The United States has always struggled with the question of when to get involved in international conflict. George Washington advised that the U.S. not make any commitments to other countries that might result in the U.S. being dragged into a war; he called these “entangling alliances.” Some historians argue that Washington’s stance was impractical: the simple fact that the U.S. trades internationally means that it will inevitably become involved in international politics.

The question of whether countries or international bodies should get involved to stop genocides was controversial in 1919 and remains controversial today. Many believe that countries have an ethical obligation to step in and prevent genocides. Others feel that such interventions are impractical: it is impossible to intervene every time people are being mistreated, and internal conflicts within countries are often too complex for an outsider to understand. Many believe that the League of Nations would have been too weak to effectively deal with these problems.

## DECISION-MAKING ANALYSIS:

### P = Problem

- \* - Identify any underlying problem
- \* - 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 = Goal

- \* - 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

- **Underlying problem:** Nations were not willing to provide sufficient military support to make the League of Nations strong enough to stop wars or implement collective security. Senator William E. Borah revealed this underlying problem when he asked, “What will your league amount to if it does not contain powers that no one dreams of giving it?”

Another underlying problem was built into Article X, which stated that the league would prevent one country from attacking another. Critics of Wilson’s plan had an immediate, post-World War I example of why Article X was so problematic: the Japanese takeover of the part of China that the Germans had previously controlled. If China attacked Japanese forces in China, then the league would fight against China, even though China was only trying to regain the land that it considered unjustly taken by Japan. Critics cited this as a problem with the ideals of the league.

President Wilson’s dream of “self-determination” was another underlying problem. What did “self-determination” mean? Did it mean that each nation would rule itself? Did it require democratic self-government? Or did it mean that any people who called themselves a nation should get their own state? Did the Serbs deserve their own nation? Did the Croats? What would happen, for example, if the Irish sought independence from Great Britain, but Great Britain asserted that this was a domestic matter? Was Wilson naïve in promoting “self-determination”? Had he simply not thought through the complexities of the definition? Or was he simply ahead of his time? Many historians disagree about the extent to which the world has accepted the concept of self-determination and the extent to which the world has benefited from its acceptance.

- **Points of view:** The leaders of each country had to consider the League of Nations in general, and Article X in particular, in terms of their own national interest. Nations had to decide if membership in the league was worth relinquishing some of their autonomy. Many Americans, including many senators, felt that the United States should focus on building its own power. The U.S., they said, should serve as a democratic example to the world, and not be weakened by meddling in others’ affairs. Wilson, on the other hand, wanted the U.S. to take an active role in spreading democracy throughout the world and preserve peace through collective security.
- **Assumptions:** Students can use Handout 3 to identify and discuss their assumptions. President Wilson tended to agree with assumptions 1, 3, 4, 6, and 8. He felt the United States was unique and had a responsibility to spread its ideals. He felt that a new international order based on a community of nations, rather than on a balance-of-power scheme, could bring about lasting peace. The United States had an obligation to this new order, but he also felt, perhaps paradoxically, that America must preserve its independence of action. Critics, such as Henry Cabot Lodge, worried that the League of Nations as Wilson proposed it would limit the country’s independence of action.

Some historians see Wilson as a visionary. His dreams of a community of nations, self-determination, and general disarmament rather than balance-of-power politics were a revolutionary way to see the world. According to these historians, if Wilson had been able to create a strong League of Nations, the world

would not have reverted to the old system, and the devastating wars of the 20th century would not have occurred. Others, however, believe that Wilson was hopelessly idealistic and failed to appreciate the complexities of world politics.

- **Ask about context:** World War I had just ended. The victorious nations wanted to make sure their victory over Germany was definitive, and they wanted to ensure that Germany would never rise up again to attack. The European powers had lost millions of men, as well as untold wealth. Many people had only hatred for Germany.

The Russian Revolution was another significant factor in the decision-making of the nations involved. The Allied leaders feared the threat of communist (Bolshevik) expansion in 1919. As a result, they made the stability of their own countries a high priority. The leaders never joined forces to decide how they would deal with the communists in Russia, and for the next seventy years, Russian communism was a destabilizing force around the world.

U.S. leaders in 1919 were operating within the context of the American tradition of staying out of international conflict and of not obligating the U.S. to help defend other countries. George Washington warned against these kinds of “entangling alliances.” Some people felt that the U.S. entry into World War I was itself a break from this policy. Could the U.S. withstand a commitment to the League of Nations?

- **Is the goal realistic?** Any debate about the League of Nations must address this question. If the league could bring about collective security, then the whole basis of international relations would change. War would become less likely. But many saw this notion as hopelessly idealistic. Is it realistic to think that countries would give up their sovereignty for the League of Nations? The United States, it turned out, refused to give up its independence of action to the league when it had no guarantee that the league would be effective. But perhaps if the U.S. had committed to the league, it would have been more effective. Some historians see the league as a necessary first step to a more effective organization (the United Nations) after World War II. But the United Nations is itself controversial. Was the league an unrealistic dream, or a revolutionary vision?
- **What could go wrong?** The League of Nations plan had numerous potential flaws. What would happen if the league couldn’t decide which member country to support and defend, as in the Japan/China conflict? Before nations gave up any of their sovereign power to the league, they wanted assurances that the league would be effective; however, the fact that some countries, particularly the U.S., refused to join might have weakened the league significantly. Perhaps the most fundamental flaw was the likelihood that countries would continue to pursue their own national interests, which would undermine the effort toward collective security.

## **PROBLEM 2—STRATEGIES TO GET THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS PASSED BY THE SENATE**

Some historians have stressed the role of Henry Cabot Lodge in the Senate's failure to ratify the treaty. Since this lesson focuses on decision making from the point of view of President Wilson, it tends to emphasize Wilson's role. You may want to mention this bias to students.

### **DECISION-MAKING ANALYSIS:**

#### P = Problem

- Identify any underlying problem
- 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 = Goal

- \* - **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

- **Points of view:** In order to get the treaty ratified, President Wilson needed to take into account the opinions of the senators from both parties. He made compromises in an effort to win them over to his side, but after he suffered a stroke, he stopped compromising.
- **Ask about context:** Students should ask about how the United States viewed international conflict throughout its history, starting with George Washington's opinion that the U.S. should avoid "entangling alliances." The very notion of the League of Nations was a break with this tradition. Wilson realized that he might have to make compromises on the issue of international involvement, and stated, perhaps contradictorily, that he wanted the United States to maintain its sovereignty.
- **What could go wrong?** Wilson anticipated that Republicans would have reservations about the plan, and up to a point, he was willing to compromise in order to address those reservations. He mounted a speaking tour to win over the

public to his cause, against the advice of his wife and doctor. But the tour went horribly wrong when the exhausted president suffered a stroke.

Wilson instructed the Democrats, his own party, to vote against the league because of the reservations the Republicans had included in it. He said that the 1920 election should serve as a referendum on the league. This was a huge risk—other issues, such as the state of the economy, resulted in a Republican victory, ending any hope of U.S. participation in the league. If Wilson had played out this option, perhaps he would have compromised further when the Senate was considering the League of Nations plan.

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# **LESSON 4: THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS DEBATE**

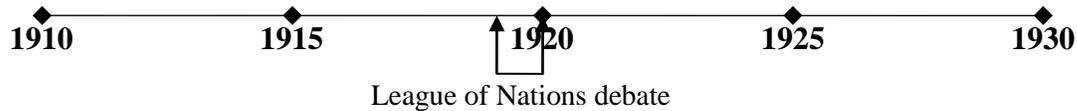
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## **Vocabulary**

- League of Nations—International organization proposed by President Wilson to prevent future wars
- Treaty of Versailles—Treaty ending World War I. Wilson included the creation of the League of Nations as a part of the treaty
- Ratify—Treaties must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the Senate
- Henry Cabot Lodge—Powerful Republican senator who hated President Wilson
- Monroe Doctrine—U.S. policy begun in the 19th century discouraging European powers from further colonizing the Western Hemisphere
- Article X—Provision of the League of Nations committing member countries to help defend other member countries against attack

# LESSON 4: THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS DEBATE

## Student Handout 1



### PROBLEM 1—POWERS OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

You are a U.S. Senator in 1919. After its victory in World War I, the United States has found itself in a leadership role, shaping the peace process and determining what, if anything, can be done to stop another bloody worldwide conflict. President Wilson has proposed a league of nations in which countries would form an international decision-making body and pledge to preserve peace and protect one another. The Treaty of Versailles includes this proposal—if the U.S. signs the treaty, it will thereby join the league. But it isn't President Wilson's decision: treaties must be ratified by a two-thirds vote of the Senate, and debate rages within the Senate and amongst the American people.

The main issue is under what conditions should the U.S. involve itself in international disputes. Is there a way that the U.S. can join the league and still maintain its independence, or is that impossible? What is best for the U.S.? What is best for the world? Which of those things is more important? As a senator, you are in the position to help shape American involvement in the League of Nations. Below are some proposals for what a League of Nations agreement could look like. Circle the ones you support and explain your thinking below.

- A. The scope of the league:
1. One league for all member countries, including countries from all over the world. Member countries would each get one vote—majority rules.
  2. A league set up by and for the major Allied powers from World War I. These major powers would decide policies (one vote per great power—majority rules). Other countries could comment on these policies at league meetings.
  3. A league in which the major powers would form a special council. These major powers would all have to agree, unanimously, on important proposals. All member countries could vote on proposals, but a vote by any major power against a proposal defeats it.
  4. Two leagues—one for Europe, Asia, and Africa; a second league for North and South America. Each country would have one vote in its league—majority rules.
  5. No league at all—any involvement would undermine American independence

- B. President Wilson wants the League of Nations to ensure collective security. This means that if one country attacks another, the rest of the member countries will band together to support the country being attacked. This implies that the members of the league may need to use military force against the attacking country. But this notion is highly controversial. Many fear that it would obligate the U.S. to get involved in complicated international conflicts that don't directly affect it. Below are some proposals for how the League of Nations could approach this issue. Which do you support and why?
1. When the league votes to stop one country's aggression towards another, member countries should have a legal obligation to use force to enforce the league's decision.
  2. Member countries have no legal obligation to fight: they should be able to check with their own governments (their own congresses or elected officials) to decide when to support a country being attacked.
  3. Member countries should all contribute soldiers (in proportion to their population) to an international army under the control of the league. The league would decide when to use the army.
  4. The league will not get involved if one country invades another. The countries involved should work out their own conflicts.
- C. If a country mistreats its own citizens, league members would have several options. Below are some proposals for how the League of Nations could approach this issue. Which do you support and why?
1. When the league votes to stop a country from mistreating its own citizens, member countries should have a legal obligation to use force to enforce the league's decision.
  2. Member countries have no legal obligation to fight: they should be able to check with their own governments (their own congresses or elected officials) to decide when to prevent a country from mistreating its citizens.
  3. Member countries should all contribute soldiers (in proportion to their population) to an international army under the control of the league. The league would decide when to use the army to stop a country from mistreating its citizens.
  4. The league will not get involved if a country mistreats its citizens.

**PROBLEM 2—STRATEGIES TO GET THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS PASSED BY OTHER COUNTRIES AND BY THE U.S. SENATE**

You are President Woodrow Wilson in 1919. World War I ended in November of last year, and the leaders from the countries involved are about to begin negotiating a peace treaty in Europe. You are in the position to influence and shape this peace treaty. You believe that the best way to prevent another devastating world war is for countries to form a league of nations. The member countries would have a forum to discuss disputes, and the league could band together to stop aggressor nations. However, the idea of a league of nations is controversial, especially in your own country.

1. Will you make the league part of the peace treaty? Americans and Europeans are weary of war. They want peace so badly that they are much more likely to join the League of Nations if it is part of the peace treaty. Explain your answer.
2. Will you attend the peace treaty negotiations yourself? You are immensely popular in Europe, so you will have a lot of power in negotiating with the other leaders. On the other hand, at this point in time it's almost unheard of for a U.S. president to visit Europe on this kind of diplomatic mission. Also, if you are present for the negotiations, you might be forced to take a position on the numerous smaller issues you had hoped to avoid, lest your positions invite controversy.
3. As a Democrat, will you appoint a prominent Republican to the U.S. delegation to the peace conference? The Republicans, as the opposition party, are naturally wary of your proposals, and in the 1918 congressional elections, they gained a majority in the Senate. Moreover, a key Republican, Henry Cabot Lodge, dislikes you intensely for personal reasons; you hold him in similarly low esteem. Perhaps Republicans will be more likely to ratify the treaty if they are involved in negotiations.
4. Japan has taken over the part of China that Germany once controlled. The Japanese say they will eventually relinquish control of the territory, but for now they argue that they have a claim to it since they helped defeat Germany in the war. Will you compromise with Japan? On the one hand, Japan is a valuable ally, and you want it to join the League of Nations. On the other hand, if you allow Japan to act aggressively towards China, people may accuse you of compromising the ideals of the league.
5. The Republican-controlled Senate has expressed several reservations about the League of Nations, and therefore about the treaty. They want certain provisions included in the treaty.
 

Will you compromise and include some of these provisions?

  - a. Member nations should be able to withdraw from the league
  - b. The internal affairs of each country should not be the business of the league. The league should concern itself only with affairs between countries.
  - c. The Monroe Doctrine (preventing European countries from colonizing the Western Hemisphere) must be recognized as legitimate policy by the league
  - d. The United States assumes no obligation to help preserve the political independence of any other country unless Congress approves such an obligation



President Wilson's negotiating team at Versailles

6. Will you bypass the Senate by speaking directly to the American people in a speaking tour around the country? Opinion polls show that a majority of Americans support the treaty and the league. If public support increases even more, senators will feel pressure from their constituents to support the league.

# LESSON 4: THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS DEBATE

## Student Handout 2

### OUTCOMES

#### PROBLEM 1—POWERS OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

Many countries around the world, including Great Britain, France, and Japan, joined the League of Nations. However, the U.S. Senate never reached a two-thirds majority to ratify the Treaty of Versailles and thereby join the league. Senators cited the organization and powers of the league as the main reasons why they didn't vote to join.

**Part A:** As in #3, a council of major powers had to agree unanimously on any proposal. Other countries formed an assembly that ran according to majority rule. The idea of a council was practical, since the league was part of a peace treaty set up by the major Allied powers. It made sense to give them veto power (since proposals required unanimous votes) and to combine that council with an assembly that included the other member countries. In execution, however, the plan was ineffective. The council operated with 15 members (six permanent and nine rotating), so the chances of the council being able to unanimously approve any proposal were very low. Despite having several opportunities (for example, the Polish occupation of Vilnius, Lithuania, in 1920 and the Italian invasion of the Greek island of Corfu in 1923), the league never took military action against aggressor nations. It did, on occasion, impose economic sanctions, but these were ineffective, as the sanctioned countries could simply trade with non-member nations. Thus the idea of collective security didn't work under the league.

Some senators advocated #2, in which the major Allied powers would have significant power. Other senators, called "Irreconcilables," wanted no part of the league. Joining the league, they warned, would undermine American independence. They wanted the U.S. to follow its tradition of avoiding any obligations that could draw it into war; George Washington himself, they reminded the nation, warned against forming "entangling alliances."

**Part B:** To prevent countries from attacking one another, the league operated according to #2. Countries could consult their own legislatures before deciding to use force against aggressors. The commitment to use force to stop aggression via collective security was in Article X of the League, which stated that

"The Members of the League undertake to respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all Members of the League. In case of any such aggression or in case of any threat or danger of such aggression the Council shall advise upon the means by which this obligation shall be fulfilled."

According to Wilson, the fact that the U.S. would be able to consult Congress before joining the league in the use of force should have alleviated the fears of many senators, who worried that the league would drag the U.S. into conflicts and determine when to send American troops to war. But Wilson also stated that even though the U.S. didn't have a legal obligation to participate in armed conflicts, it had a moral obligation to do so. This statement made people uncertain. What exactly did a moral obligation mean? To Wilson, a moral obligation was very real. If each nation wasn't willing to defend a member country from attack, the league would be ineffective and the world would revert to an imperialist system in which strong countries take over weak countries.

**Part C:** Leaders chose to set up the league so that it would not interfere with countries' internal affairs. Therefore the league would not get involved even if it believed that one country was mistreating its own citizens. Leaders knew that the notion of the league stepping in to prevent international conflicts was controversial enough; it seemed prudent not to get involved in the internal affairs of its member countries.

**PROBLEM 2—STRATEGIES TO GET THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS PASSED BY OTHER COUNTRIES AND BY THE U.S. SENATE**

President Wilson did the following:

1. He made the league part of the Treaty of Versailles. Since the European powers were desperate for peace, Wilson's decision may have pushed them to join the league. Wilson hoped that the same would be true within the U.S.: that people would want the U.S. to sign the treaty so badly that they would accept the League of Nations along with it. However, the ratification of the treaty required a two-thirds vote by the senate, and Wilson couldn't get the necessary votes. The U.S. neither signed the Treaty of Versailles nor joined the League of Nations.
2. Wilson attended the peace conference himself. His presence allowed him to take a prominent role in shaping the nature of the league. However, if he had not attended, he might not have gotten involved in the details of the negotiations. For example, when he compromised with Japan (described in #4 below), he faced criticism from both his opponents and his supporters. They accused him of compromising the ideals of the league, namely, the notion that each country should rule itself without interference from outside countries. The damage to Wilson's personal reputation and the idea that the league would compromise its ideals to appease powerful nations may have hurt passage of the league.
3. Wilson did not take any prominent Republicans with him to the peace conference. Many historians question this decision: Republicans held a majority in the Senate, and ratification of the treaty depended largely on them. Perhaps if Wilson had allowed Republicans to help shape the treaty, it would have increased the treaty's chances for ratification.

4. Wilson compromised with Japan over its control of the German area of China. He felt that if he didn't compromise with Japan, Japan wouldn't join the league and would weaken the league by its absence. Wilson managed to get the Japanese to verbally promise that they would eventually return the area to China, but he failed to get anything in writing. Wilson's unwillingness to take a firm stance against the Japanese occupation caused critics to charge him with compromising his own high ideals for the league: he failed to support China's right to self-determination. Wilson's compromise with Japan also led to demonstrations in China and may have caused some Chinese to turn away from the ideals of Western democracy and toward the ideals of communism. Many Chinese felt that the U.S. had bargained away China's independence.
5. Wilson agreed to compromise on (a), (b), and (c). He seemed to be moving towards a compromise on (d) when he said that any decision by the league calling for force to stop an aggressor was merely advice and that each country would be free to either act on or disregard the advice (although he had previously said that each country had a moral obligation to combat aggression if the league requested action). It was amazing that he would not compromise further about this reservation when it was so close to his own opinion, but he did not. He had a massive stroke in September 1919. According to historian Kendrick Clements, a possible psychological characteristic of a stroke is unwillingness to compromise. The United States may have failed to join the League of Nations due to the President's medical condition.
6. Wilson decided to appeal directly to the American people and embarked on a speaking tour. Some senators were angered that Wilson would attempt to undermine their authority by appealing to public opinion instead of to them, but public pressure did move other senators to support the league. However, Wilson's speaking tour was medically unwise. The President was exhausted and weakened by the tour and suffered a stroke. Some historians believe that the stroke impaired his judgment.

In some ways, Wilson's policies during the war itself may have weakened prospects for the League of Nations. During the war, Wilson approved the use of propaganda and the Espionage and Sedition Acts, which allowed for the prosecution of Americans for expressing ideas contrary to U.S. policy. These policies affected anti-war leftists and socialists, who tended to vote Democratic and who had helped reelect Wilson in 1916. By the time the League of Nations debate arose after the war, many leftists had abandoned Wilson. They wouldn't forgive him for violating their rights to free speech and freedom of the press during wartime, and now they refused to support his League of Nations.

In the end, President Wilson told Democrats to vote against the Treaty of Versailles, including the league, because Henry Cabot Lodge and the other Republicans had included too many reservations that would weaken the league. Some Democratic senators defied the President and voted for the league anyway, but there weren't enough votes for passage. Wilson stated that instead of acquiescing to the Republicans' demands and

accepting a weaker league, he wanted the 1920 election to serve as a referendum on the league: if the public voted Democratic, it would send a clear message to the Senate that the people supported the league. Since Wilson's wartime policies had angered many of his traditional constituents, this was a strategic mistake. (As mentioned in #5, Wilson's stroke may have impaired his judgment.) Americans elected Republican Warren G. Harding president in 1920, and the United States never joined the league.

# LESSON 4: THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS DEBATE

## Student Handout 3

### ASSUMPTIONS

With which of the following assumptions do you agree?

- 1. The United States is unique in the world. Other people are drawn to the American democratic system and want the freedoms it provides.
- 2. The U.S. should preserve its democracy so it can be an example to the world. This means doing everything in its power to maintain strength and prosperity at home. Involvement in international disputes will only weaken the U.S. and limit its ability to serve as a beacon of democracy.
- 3. The United States cannot avoid being involved in world affairs at this time (1919). Since the U.S. trades with other countries and is so powerful, it is already involved.
- 4. The United States can influence other countries by promoting ideals such as democracy, international law, self-determination, free trade, and individual rights
- 5. Each country decides how to deal with situations based on its own self-interest. Countries don't make decisions based on ideals, but rather on practical assessments of military and economic power, alliances, balance of power, and opportunities for gain. The U.S. should operate by looking at the world realistically, not according to policies based on idealism.
- 6. The United States has a duty to bring about a lasting peace by getting involved in international diplomacy and organizations, such as the League of Nations
- 7. The United States should stay out of the world's disputes. It should isolate itself from the world, at least in terms of politics.
- 8. The United States should be able to decide policies independently of other countries or international organizations

# LESSON 5: THE CHICAGO RACE RIOTS OF 1919

## Teacher Pages

### OVERVIEW

This lesson uses the Chicago race riots of 1919 to get students to use two decision-making skills: asking questions and seeing the problem from other points of view. On Handout 1, students will put themselves in the place of the mayor of Chicago and decide what to do about the race riots. On Handout 2, students will think about racial issues from the points of view of other Chicagoans—white homeowners, African American strikebreakers, and others. This approach will help them appreciate the complexities of racial tensions in the summer of 1919.

### VOCABULARY

- Strikebreaker—Person hired during a strike to take a striking worker’s job
- Bolshevism—Movement in Russia that sought to violently overthrow the Tsarist government and replace it with a communist government
- Prohibition—18th Amendment banned the sale or transportation of alcohol
- Lynchings—Killings (by any method, not just by hanging) in which a group of people murders someone publicly; most commonly used to refer to the murders of African Americans by whites

### DECISION-MAKING SKILLS EMPHASIZED

- Identify underlying problem
- Consider other points of view
- Ask about historical context
- Generate options

# LESSON PLAN

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## **A. IN-DEPTH LESSON (40 minutes)**

### Procedure:

Using both handouts allows you to start with a decision-making problem (Handout 1) before following up by focusing on point of view and context (Handout 2). Have students decide what they will do as mayor of Chicago, and have them discuss their responses in small groups. Ask students which four questions (I suggest limiting question asking to four, but that's up to you) from the bottom of Handout 1 they would like to ask, but don't read the answers at this point. If you'd prefer not to use the questions, just photocopy the top of the handout, leaving out the bottom portion. Possible answers are on Handout 5. Make sure each group writes out what it will do about racial tensions. Ask groups to explain what options they generated and list those on the board, but don't have students argue for their decisions yet. It might be difficult for students to generate many options. If they are struggling, distribute Handout 6 (containing options).

Now distribute Handout 2, and assign the members of each group to answer a different problem. You can then have all the students who have Problem 1, all who have Problem 2, etc., meet together to discuss their choices. Or, you could just have students explain what they would do for each problem without the small-group discussions. Give students Handout 4, which details the outcomes of the five situations.

After students have discussed these five point-of-view problems and read the outcomes, have each of the original small groups reflect again on their decisions as mayor (Handout 1). At this point, read the answers to the four questions students voted to ask. See if, having heard the answers to those questions, they would change or add to their responses, or if they generate any new options. Have the groups explain their decisions and whether they changed their choices after the problems from Handout 2. Distribute Handout 3 with the Mayor's actual decisions and the outcome.

Newspaper accounts of the riot can be found in the Chicago Commission Report at the website listed under the "Further Research" section below.

### Reflecting on Decision Making:

Ask what decision-making skills were most important to the decisions students made as mayor. Which 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 decision-making logs.

Putting the Actual Decisions into Historical Context:

Ask students: To what degree was the extent of the riot the fault of decisions made by the mayor of Chicago? (The mayor did hesitate before taking action, but students should not underestimate the importance of historical factors in causing these riots.)

Troubleshooting:

Some students may have difficulty switching from one point of view to another. Explain to students that they will be switching “glasses” so they can view the situation from various points of view.

**B. QUICK MOTIVATOR (10 minutes)**

Give Handout 1 for homework. You could also include Handout 5, so students would have background information to help make their decision. If you use Handout 5, you could delete the questions at the bottom of Handout 1, or tell students to disregard them. In class, have students pair up and discuss for three minutes or so what they will do as mayor. Write the various proposals on the board. Ask for a show of hands for each option, and briefly discuss their reasons. Distribute Handout 3 and have students comment on what they learned from this outcome for homework.

# TEACHER NOTES FOR EXPANDING DISCUSSION

(For outcomes for students, see Handouts 3 and 4)

The Chicago Commission made 59 recommendations at the end of its lengthy report. Students can view these at the O'Brien website listed on the Sources page.

## DECISION-MAKING ANALYSIS:

### P = Problem

- \* - **Identify any underlying problem**
- \* - **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 = Goal

- 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

- **Underlying problem:** This issue is all about the underlying problem of racial tension. Understanding the nature of this tension and its causes will guide students on how to proceed as mayor and help them understand the points of view of different groups.
- **Other points of view:** Handout 2 encourages the students to see the issues from various points of view.
- **Ask about context:** Context is key to understanding why the riots happened. For an issue as complex as this one, students must learn to think about race relations not from the perspective of today's society, but through the eyes of people living in that time. The questions on Handout 1 and the answers on Handout 5 attempt to focus student attention on asking questions to determine context. As Handout 2 shows, there was significant hatred and fear by whites of African Americans, and vice versa. African Americans had great difficulty getting into white-controlled unions or white neighborhoods. They endured violence at the hands of whites

even though many had fought bravely in World War I. Whites, meanwhile, feared that blacks would take their jobs, hurt their unions, and decrease the values of their homes by moving into their neighborhoods. The animosity over African American strikebreaking, segregation, and white violence provided fuel for a confrontation between races.

World War I still exerted a powerful influence over the United States in 1919. The huge number of soldiers returning from the war and looking for work and housing drove up the unemployment rate and caused housing shortages. The sense of patriotism inspired by the war was dissipating in the face of high unemployment and rising prices. The numerous strikes after the war frightened Americans: they had watched the Russian Revolution of 1917 with apprehension and now feared the spread of revolution or anarchy to the U.S.

African Americans were among the soldiers returning from the war. Many had fought bravely and expected to be appreciated for their contributions. Black civilians had sacrificed to buy war bonds just as whites had, and they too were proud of their roles in the war effort. More African Americans expected to get the equal rights they deserved: after all, they had proudly stood up for the United States in wartime and saw no reason why the United States shouldn't support them in turn.

On top of the issues that the entire country faced in 1919, Chicago was experiencing some of its own changes. During the war, African Americans migrated in large numbers to Chicago, increasing the black population of the city from 32,000 to 92,000. About 90% of blacks lived in segregated neighborhoods. The migrants faced different problems than did the established black residents of Chicago. The newcomers had much higher unemployment, and since they had come from the rural South, they had trouble adjusting to the customs of this northern city. Consequently there was far more friction between the new migrants and whites than there was between established black residents and whites.

- **Generate options:** There is no simple answer to this complicated problem, and students need to think of several options that might help resolve the crisis. Handout 6 offers some examples of options; see if students can generate some of their own when given more information.

# SOURCES

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Chicago Commission on Race Relations, *The Negro in Chicago: A Study of Race Relations and a Race Riot*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1922.

O'Brien, Ellen and Lyle Benedict. "1919: Race Riots." Chicago Public Library. Available at [http://www.chipublic.org/004chicago/disasters/riots\\_race.html](http://www.chipublic.org/004chicago/disasters/riots_race.html)

Tuttle, William M. *Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919*. New York: Atheneum, 1970.

# LESSON 5: THE CHICAGO RACE RIOTS OF 1919

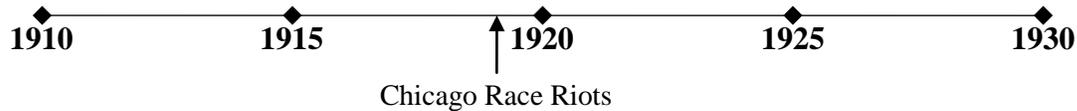
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## Vocabulary

- Strikebreaker—Person hired during a strike to take a striking worker's job
- Bolshevism—Movement in Russia that sought to violently overthrow the Tsarist government and replace it with a communist government
- Prohibition—18th Amendment banned the sale or transportation of alcohol
- Lynchings—Killings (by any method, not just by hanging) in which a group of people murders someone publicly; most commonly used to refer to the murders of African Americans by whites

# LESSON 5: THE CHICAGO RACE RIOTS OF 1919

## Student Handout 1



You are the mayor of Chicago. It is July 27, 1919: a hot day, with temperatures soaring above 90 degrees. The scorching weather has drawn people to the beaches. You just received a report that a white man threw a rock at an African American boy who was swimming in Lake Michigan. The rock struck the boy in the head and he drowned. The black boys who had been with the boy that drowned notified a black policeman, and together the boys and the policeman ran to the white beach. They identified the rock thrower and pointed him out to the white policeman on duty, who refused to arrest the man and would not allow the black officer to arrest him either. As word of the incident spread, large groups of both blacks and whites ran to the beach area. A black man was arrested in the ensuing chaos, and blacks threw rocks at the patrol wagon brought in to take the man away. A black man shot and wounded a policeman, and he was then shot and killed by a black policeman. Some in the crowd fired many more shots. Police eventually succeeded in regaining order on the beach, but violence and rioting have begun to spread throughout the city.

As the mayor, what, if anything, will you do about this situation at the beach and the spreading violence?

Before deciding, you may want to gather other relevant information. Look at the questions below, and choose the four that seem most important.

### QUESTIONS

1. What is the status of race relations in Chicago?
2. Has the city recently experienced racial trouble?
3. Have other cities in the U.S. experienced race riots?
4. Have riots ever broken out before in Chicago?
5. Can the police handle a large-scale outbreak of violence?
6. Is there a way to bring more law enforcement to the city? How?
7. What's happening in the country that may affect events in Chicago?
8. Are there African American leaders you could work with?
9. What is the press like in Chicago?
10. What is the political situation in Chicago?

# LESSON 5: THE CHICAGO RACE RIOTS OF 1919

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## Student Handout 2

### **A. You're a black man in Chicago in 1919. Should you be a strikebreaker?**

Jobs in Chicago are hard to come by, especially for African American men. You get a notice from the Armour Company that it needs workers in the stockyards. Do you take the job, even though by doing so you may be breaking a strike by white workers?

### **B. You're a white member of a striking union. What should you do about African American strikebreakers?**

If your company can hire other workers to do your job, it reduces your bargaining position and takes away any power you may have in the strike. Should you do something to stop African Americans strikebreakers from taking your job and helping to defeat your strike? If so, what?

### **C. You're a black man. Should you buy (or rent) a house in a white neighborhood?**

You're looking for the best place to raise your family. The African American neighborhood is rundown, and crime is rampant. There has been a housing shortage in Chicago since the war ended, but you have the opportunity to rent an apartment or buy a house in a white neighborhood. Should you move your family?

### **D. You're a white homeowner. What should you do about African Americans moving into your neighborhood?**

African Americans are moving into white neighborhoods in Chicago, and whites fear that the presence of blacks will reduce the values of their homes. There are two black families in your neighborhood already, and more are looking to rent or buy there. Should you do anything to stop African Americans from moving in? If so, what?

### **E. You're an African American former soldier. What should you do about white violence against blacks?**

You are an African American man who fought in World War I and earned medals for bravery. You know that white gangs come into black neighborhoods to commit violence, often throwing objects at black homes or setting fire to them. Sometimes, the gangs even murder blacks—lynchings have dramatically increased since the war ended, and some of the victims were former black soldiers like you. You have a gun and are trained in how to use it. If whites come into your neighborhood to commit violence against blacks, will you fight back?

# LESSON 5: THE CHICAGO RACE RIOTS OF 1919

## Student Handout 3

### OUTCOMES

Mayor William (“Big Bill”) Thompson sent the police out to patrol the neighborhoods, but the police force was not large enough to cover the entire city. The mayor could have called in state troops immediately, but he and the governor of Illinois disliked each other, and he didn’t want to admit that his city administration couldn’t handle the situation without the governor’s help. Thompson might have failed to appreciate the depth of the frustration and resentment between blacks and whites, and therefore stood by while the incident at the beach escalated quickly into one of the worst race riots in American history. He finally realized the seriousness of the situation and requested the governor’s help; 6,000 Illinois National Guard troops came to Chicago. By the time the riot ended four days later, 38 people were dead (including 23 blacks and 17 whites), 537 were injured, and approximately 1000 were left homeless.

The riots in Chicago were followed by riots in Omaha and Arkansas.



Houses damaged during the riot

# LESSON 5: THE CHICAGO RACE RIOTS OF 1919

## Student Handout 4

### OUTCOMES

#### **A. You're a black man in 1919 in Chicago. Should you be a strikebreaker?**

Over a period of decades, many blacks decided to take jobs as strikebreakers. Business owners often hired blacks deliberately: they wanted to increase the tension between white workers and black workers so that the two groups wouldn't unite against the owners and unionize. This tactic was very effective in increasing white racism towards blacks.

#### **B. You're a white member of a striking union. What should you do about African American strikebreakers?**

White strikers often used violence against African American strikebreakers, which only made the tension between the races worse.

#### **C. You're a black man. Should you buy (or rent) a house in a white neighborhood?**

Some African Americans became victims of harassment and violence when they moved into white neighborhoods. The housing shortage aggravated the tension as whites resented blacks who could get housing. Many blacks who moved into white neighborhoods regretted the move.

#### **D. You're a white homeowner. What should you do about African Americans moving into your neighborhood?**

Instead of accepting their black neighbors, whites formed associations to keep blacks out of their neighborhoods. These associations asked real estate agents and white homeowners not to sell to African Americans. When these white associations couldn't convince people not to sell homes to black families, many whites resorted to violence in an attempt to intimidate blacks into leaving.

#### **E. You're a former African American soldier. What should you do about white violence against blacks?**

When the riots erupted, African Americans in Chicago fought back against white violence. Unlike almost all other race riots in the United States, in which the victims were predominantly black, the Chicago riots killed and injured a significant number of whites. Seventeen whites and 23 blacks lost their lives.

# LESSON 5: THE CHICAGO RACE RIOTS OF 1919

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## Student Handout 5

### 1. What is the status of race relations in Chicago?

The African American population in Chicago has doubled in the past five years, as blacks have migrated from the South looking for work. Blacks now make up 4% of the city's population. The newcomers have higher unemployment rates than the more established black residents of Chicago, and they are finding it difficult to adjust to the customs of the city. As a result, tensions have increased.

The scarcity of jobs has created conflict. Most unions are controlled by whites and won't let blacks join. Often they make blacks form separate unions. Business owners regularly hire blacks as strikebreakers, a tactic which infuriates white workers. Striking white workers have often attacked black strikebreakers.

Conflicts over housing are also apparent. About 90% of blacks live in segregated neighborhoods, and whites have organized groups to keep it that way. They believe that the presence of blacks will drive down the value of their homes. This is true, not because blacks aren't good neighbors, but because when blacks move in, whites start to sell their homes and move away, lowering housing prices in the neighborhood. Angry whites have attacked black homeowners and renters in an attempt to drive them out and discourage others from moving in.

### 2. Has the city recently encountered racial trouble?

Yes. Gangs of whites have taken to the streets, committing acts of violence against blacks. In June, police chose not to arrest a white man accused of murdering a black man, angering the black community. Even though the beaches are not segregated by law, it is commonly accepted that some beaches are "white" and others are "black." Recently, blacks were driven out of a white beach, and a larger group of blacks came back and threw rocks at the whites, forcing them to leave. Then an even larger group of whites returned and took back the beach. Reports from local schools describe fights and frequent incidents of name calling between students of different races.

### 3. Have other cities in the U.S. experienced race riots?

Yes. In the last few years race riots have occurred in Charleston, South Carolina, Longview, Texas, and Washington DC. Closer to Chicago, a race riot erupted in East St. Louis, Illinois. In all the riots, whites attacked blacks in their neighborhoods, and many more blacks than whites died. In East St. Louis, 40 African Americans and nine whites were killed. Whites damaged property as well, setting fire to black homes.

**4. Have riots ever broken out before in Chicago?**

No. But the city has experienced racially motivated violence, as explained in #1 and #2.

**5. Can the police handle a large-scale outbreak of violence?**

Probably not. The police force is just too small to cover all the possible trouble spots in the city. Moreover, blacks perceive the police force as biased: few whites, even when there is strong evidence against them, are ever arrested for committing crimes against blacks. African Americans are arrested far more frequently. Only 2% of the police force is African American.

**6. Is there a way to bring more law enforcement to the city? How?**

The state militia could provide thousands of troops. But that would mean you would have to ask the governor of Illinois for help, and you have despised him since he betrayed you in a previous election. The two of you can barely be civil to one another.

**7. What's happening in the country that might affect events in Chicago?**

The U.S. is still reeling from World War I. The country united in a patriotic effort to defeat Germany, but since the war ended, much of that unity seems lost. The return of the soldiers has caused a shortage of housing and jobs, and inflation has increased dramatically, raising prices and squeezing family budgets. Americans made huge sacrifices for the war, sending their sons to the battlefield and buying war bonds to help finance it, and the postwar troubles have left them frustrated. African Americans contributed to the war effort in the same way whites did: they fought as soldiers in the war, and they bought war bonds. Many are therefore unwilling to accept the same discrimination they faced before the war. They proudly demonstrated their patriotism during wartime, and now they expect America to support them.

When the Bolshevik Revolution occurred in Russia in November 1917, fear and hatred of the Germans were transferred towards communists. The threat of communism, along with several bombings in the country this year, have created a general atmosphere of fear. This fear has only grown due to the increased number of strikes in the country after the war ended. To compound matters, Prohibition just went into effect, making regular drinkers feel deprived. Poor people feel that Prohibition will keep them from getting alcoholic beverages, but they suspect that the rich will still get their alcohol somehow. The people of Chicago voted by a margin of more than two to one against prohibition.

Racial violence in general has increased since the end of the war in November 1918. Lynchings of African Americans have risen by more than 50% in the U.S. in the past two years.

**8. Are there African American leaders you could work with?**

There are African American leaders in Chicago, and you could certainly talk with them. Blacks voted overwhelmingly in your favor in the last election, which was very close. You are popular amongst African Americans, and they will probably be open to your ideas. On the other hand, the black leaders represent Chicago's established black community, not the new migrants. Most of the trouble concerns the new migrants, so the black leaders may not be able to provide much help.

**9. What is the press like in Chicago?**

There is a white press and an African American press. Both print inaccurate stories and perpetuate stereotypes of the other race. Headlines are particularly misleading and incendiary, encouraging violence.

**10. What is the political situation in Chicago?**

Whites hold almost all the power in the city, as only a small minority of residents is African American. However, you are popular in the black community. Blacks voted overwhelmingly for you in the last election, and without their votes, you might not have won.

You and the governor don't get along, so you are reluctant to ask him to send in state troops.

# LESSON 5: THE CHICAGO RACE RIOTS OF 1919

## Student Handout 6

### OPTIONS

Here are some possible ways the mayor could address racial tension in Chicago and stop the riots:

1. Have the person who threw the rock arrested and prosecute him to fullest extent of the law. Make sure this action is publicized throughout the city by holding a press conference to inform people of your intentions.
2. Meet with leaders of the African American and white communities, such as church and business leaders. You may even want to include the leaders of the gangs that are perpetuating much of the violence.
3. Reform the police force so that white and black police officers will abide by the same rules. For example, if a black officer identifies someone as having committed a crime, such as the rock thrower on the beach, a white officer cannot refuse to arrest that person.
4. Arrest the white officer who refused to take action at the beach
5. Put the police on alert and disperse them into the more dangerous neighborhoods to stop violence
6. Bring in the Illinois National Guard to stop the violence
7. Do nothing and wait for peace to return

# LESSON 6: NATIONAL SECURITY, 1919–1920

## Teacher Pages

### OVERVIEW

This lesson focuses on the Palmer Raids and the first Red Scare. Handouts 1–4 ask students to consider the problem of communism in the United States from the perspective of the attorney general. The catch is that each student will receive one of four different handouts, but they will not know that their handouts are different. Based on their handouts, students will decide what to do about the problem. When they share their thoughts with the class, the students’ solutions will likely be very different from each other. Students will learn how different perspectives (or “frames”) on the same problem may lead them to make different choices.

### VOCABULARY

- Attorney General—Head law-enforcement official in the United States
- Bolsheviks—The communists who took over the Russian government in 1917
- Seattle strike—Unsuccessful 1919 strike by shipyard workers
- May Day—May 1st celebration day for communists and socialists
- Communist International—Meeting of communists to promote the spread of communism worldwide
- Communism—State ownership of all businesses and farms, with the use of force to suppress all opposition
- Socialism—State ownership of businesses and farms, but not necessarily through force
- Anarchism—A belief that all government is unnecessary and wrong

### DECISION-MAKING SKILLS EMPHASIZED

- Identify underlying problems (framing)
- Ask about historical context
- Ask about reliability of sources
- Generate options. Are they ethical?
- Predict unintended consequences

# LESSON PLAN

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## **A. IN-DEPTH LESSON (40-minute class period)**

### Procedure:

This lesson is designed to help students to realize the importance of how a problem is framed. They will learn to consider the reliability of their information before making decisions. To accomplish this goal, different students will receive different explanations of the situation, though they will think they all have the same explanation. Distribute Handout 1 to 25% of the students, Handout 2 to the next 25%, Handout 3 to the next 25%, and Handout 4 to the last 25%. Students should silently read their handouts and decide what they will do, if anything. Try to distribute the handouts in such a way that students do not realize they are getting different information. Put students into small groups, making sure the members of each group have the same handout. (Group A members all have Handout 1, group B members all have Handout 2, etc.) Give time for students to ask questions.

Students may need help with generating ideas for what to do. If students seem to be struggling even after meeting in groups, distribute Handout 5, which provides possible options. Next, have each group report on its decisions and explain. After groups have reported, distribute Handout 6 with the outcomes or tell the class what actually happened.

You can focus on the skill of “framing the problem” by identifying which students had Handouts 1, 2, 3, and 4 for all students to see. Ask how many students saw this situation in 1919 as a serious threat to security in the country. How many felt revolution was imminent? Have the class note which students raised their hands and compare that to the versions of the problem they had. (Handout 1 provides a somewhat neutral explanation; Handout 2 is a hysterical view that connects the events into a single conspiracy; Handout 3 is meant to be so hysterical in tone that students should question its reliability; Handout 4 is skeptical, providing reasons why the situation is not a conspiracy.) Did students with Handout 2 take more drastic action? Were students skeptical of Handout 3? Did those with Handout 4 take less drastic action? How did each handout frame the problem? Have students share the key points in each handout or put copies of all four handouts on your desk for students to collect and read. You could also have students read Handout 7, the primary source excerpt from Palmer’s argument in defense of the raids. It is most similar in tone and emphasis to Handouts 2 and 3.

You could approach the lesson differently by giving students Handout 2 or 3 (or a combination of 1, 2, and 3) and asking them to decide on a course of action. Then distribute Handout 4 to everyone and ask students to decide again. Did any students change their decisions? How are these handouts different? Which decision-making skills does this activity highlight? Important skills include framing, identifying the underlying problem, determining the reliability of information, and recognizing the role of emotion.

You can extend the lesson by asking students how the case of the Palmer Raids compares to the Patriot Act of 2001 and the treatment of suspected terrorists by the Justice Department under John Ashcroft and Alberto Gonzales. Are the issues and situations the same or are there important differences? Another analogous situation is the McCarthy-era Red Scare of the 1950s. You could assign a student, or the entire class, to research the 1950s Red Scare and identify similarities and differences with the 1920s Red Scare.

#### 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 most important in making decisions about these issues? Which letters of **P-A-G-E** applied especially to this problem? Emphasize the reliability of information and the way a problem is framed in your discussion of decision-making skills. (See the “Decision-Making Analysis” section below for ideas.) Have students write a short reflection on the importance of framing, perception, emotion, or reliability of information to making good decisions. 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 students: Were the Palmer Raids a case of one man (Attorney General Palmer) taking strong action and thereby changing the history of the country, or were historical factors more important?

#### Troubleshooting:

Some students may need a refresher on communism and the Russian Revolution of 1917.

### **B. QUICK MOTIVATOR (20–30 minutes)**

Give students Handouts 2 and 5 for homework. In class, have students pair up and discuss their choices (from the options on Handout 5) for 3 minutes or so. Ask for a show of hands for each choice. Now distribute Handout 4, the more skeptical view of the situation, and have students go back and discuss decisions again. Did any students change their decisions? If they did, why did they? Emphasize the importance of having reliable information and understanding the way a problem is framed in your discussion of decision-making skills. Distribute Handout 6 on outcomes and have students comment for homework on what they learned from these outcomes.

# TEACHER NOTES FOR EXPANDING DISCUSSION

(For outcomes for students, see Handout 6)

Handout 4 offers reasonable explanations for the events that caused anti-communist hysteria and suggests that the threat of revolution was small. The sources listed below agree that the Palmer Raids were excessive because the threat to the United States was vastly exaggerated. These sources can be used to support the claim that Handout 4 is the most accurate of the handouts.

## DECISION-MAKING ANALYSIS:

### P = Problem

- \* - **Identify any underlying problem**
  - 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 = Goal

- 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

- **Underlying problem:** The underlying problem is the fear and reflexive patriotism generated by World War I and the Russian Revolution. The lesson is designed to show that hysteria and a lack of reliable information compounded the problem and exaggerated it. Students will learn to recognize that different sources can put different emphasis, or “spin,” on the same issue.
- **Ask about context:** The only way students are going to get the information in the other handouts is by asking questions. Keep a copy of Handout 4 with you during the question-asking period. This handout has information that will put many of the claims from the other handouts into context. For example, while the other handouts create fear that radicals are infesting every area of American life,

Handout 4 points out that the size and power of radical groups are actually declining.

- **Ask about reliability of sources:** The main lesson students should learn from this problem is to question the reliability of the information they receive. They should realize, in retrospect, that they should not have accepted the information on Handouts 1, 2, and 3 at face value. They should also note the sloppy use of vocabulary on Handouts 2 and 3. Communism, socialism, and anarchism are used almost interchangeably, though they are different (see vocabulary).
- **Generate options:** If you don't use Handout 5 (options), students will have to generate their own options. This can lead to some creative proposals.
- **Identify the most ethical option?** In approving the Palmer Raids, the government weighed the violation of the targets' rights against the possibility of catching bombers and preventing future attacks. Students need to appreciate the difficulty of such a trade-off. Is it ethical for leaders to trade rights for increased protection?
- **Consequences:** Handout 6, on the outcomes of the Palmer Raids, addresses some of the consequences. Since the government had effectively legitimized suppression of immigrants and radicals, suppression of these groups increased.

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# **LESSON 6: NATIONAL SECURITY, 1919–1920**

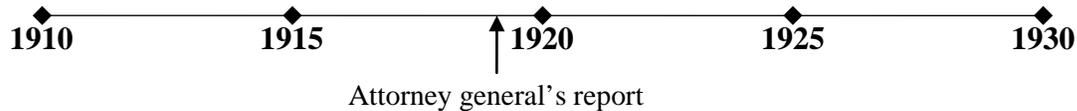
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## **Vocabulary**

- Attorney General—Head law enforcement official in the United States
- Bolsheviks—The communists who took over the Russian government in 1917
- Seattle strike—Unsuccessful 1919 strike by shipyard workers
- May Day—May 1st celebration day for communists and socialists
- Communist International—Meeting of communists to promote the spread of communism worldwide
- Communism—State ownership of all businesses and farms, with the use of force to suppress all opposition
- Socialism—State ownership of businesses and farms, but not necessarily through force
- Anarchism—A belief that all government is unnecessary and wrong

# LESSON 6: NATIONAL SECURITY, 1919–1920

## Student Handout 1



### PROBLEM

You are U.S. Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer in November 1919. Your job is to protect the country and enforce the law. Read the report below, and decide what kinds of action, if any, you will take to safeguard the nation's security.

#### REPORT TO THE ATTORNEY GENERAL ON THE SECURITY OF THE UNITED STATES

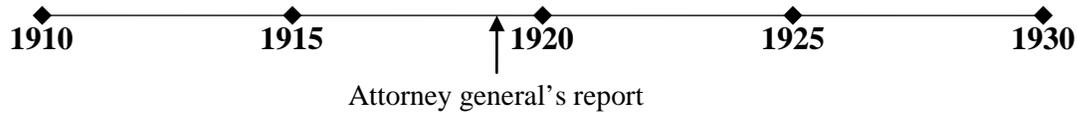
Here is the state of the country with regard to security:

- World War I is over, and Americans are eager to return to the normal lives they led before the war.
- In 1917 communists (called Bolsheviks) overthrew the Russian government. The communists are currently fighting a civil war against non-communists, and the outcome is unclear. The United States has troops in northern Russia fighting the communists. Communists advocate the overthrow of capitalist countries' governments, including that of the United States.
- In the past year, the U.S. has experienced 3600 strikes, a much higher number than usual.
- The largest strike, in Seattle, began with shipyard workers and quickly spread to other industries. The strike forced the city to virtually shut down. Eventually, the strikers gave up and lost the strike, but the strike caused significant disruption to the city.
- There are about 70,000 communists in the United States.
- Voters have elected socialists to legislatures. The New York State Legislature, for example, includes five socialists.
- Last year, radicals bombed the homes of several businessmen, a police officer, and a state judge.
- In April, postal workers intercepted 34 mail bombs addressed to prominent people, including a senator, J.P. Morgan, John D. Rockefeller, and you. One slipped through, however, and injured the maid who opened it.
- In May, communists marched in parades to celebrate communism and the Bolshevik Revolution, causing riots in several cities.

- In June, bombs exploded in eight cities, including one that damaged your home. Fortunately, your family escaped unharmed.
- In September, police in Boston went on strike, leaving the city in chaos. Meanwhile, steelworkers throughout the country went on strike. Just last week, coal miners also went on strike.
- Congress has criticized you and your department for not taking bold action to stop these problems.
- On October 2nd, President Wilson suffered a stroke. This has left the United States effectively without a president.

# LESSON 6: NATIONAL SECURITY, 1919–1920

## Student Handout 2



### PROBLEM

You are U.S. Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer in November 1919. Your job is to protect the country and enforce the law. Read the report below and decide what kind of actions, if any, you will take to safeguard the security of the country.

#### REPORT TO THE ATTORNEY GENERAL ON THE SECURITY OF THE UNITED STATES

The security of the United States is under a serious threat. Communists are using terrorism to bring about revolution in the United States.

In 1917 communists (also called Bolsheviks) overthrew the Russian government. The communists are currently fighting a civil war in Russia against non-communists, and the outcome is unclear. The United States has troops in northern Russia fighting against the communists, trying to stop the spread of their dangerous ideas and barbaric practices. Communists in Russia have executed thousands of innocent people. Their goal is to create a dictatorship in Russia and take away the rights of its people. Communists advocate the violent overthrow of all capitalist countries' governments, including that of the United States. This year, the communists established the Third Communist International, an organization that aims to spread the revolution across the globe. The revolution has already spread to Germany, Poland, and Hungary.

Evidence shows that a revolution is impending in this country as well. Last year, radicals bombed the homes of numerous businessmen, a police officer, and a state judge. This year, American businesses have experienced 3600 strikes, a number many times what is normal. One of the largest strikes, in Seattle, began with shipyard workers, who were quickly joined by workers from other industries. Many people blame communists for leading the strike. A newspaper headline screamed, "REDS DIRECTING SEATTLE STRIKE—TO TEST CHANCE FOR REVOLUTION." General strikes, in which all types of workers strike, rather than just workers in one industry, are a favorite communist tactic used to shut down an entire region of a country and encourage revolution.

Keep in mind that the Communist Party in the United States numbers at least 70,000 people. But there could be hundreds of thousands more: communists operate in secret, so

it is impossible to know how many there are. During the war, the communists continually opposed the war effort and tried to undermine it. Many communists are immigrants who brought their foreign ideas with them to the United States. You have the ability to break up their conspiracy by deporting them back to their own countries.

In April, postal workers intercepted 34 mail bombs addressed to prominent people, including J.P. Morgan, John D. Rockefeller, a senator, and even you. One slipped through, however, and blew the hands off the maid who opened it. The bombs were all wrapped in the same type of paper and addressed in the same way, strong evidence that the bombs were part of a conspiracy by the Reds to weaken the government.

On May 1st, the day on which Russian communists celebrate their revolution, communists marched in the U.S., causing riots in many American cities. Police arrested hundreds of communists for rioting. The simultaneous May Day riots demonstrate the advanced organization of the communist radicals.

On the evening of June 2nd, bombs exploded in eight cities, including one that damaged your home. The radical that carried the bomb intended for you apparently tripped and blew himself up before he reached your door. The explosion scattered body parts in the street and in nearby yards. If the man had made it to your house, the bomb might have killed your entire family. The fact that the bombs exploded in one evening shows that the coordinated conspiracy of terrorism continues to spread. The man outside your house also carried a copy of an anarchist magazine.

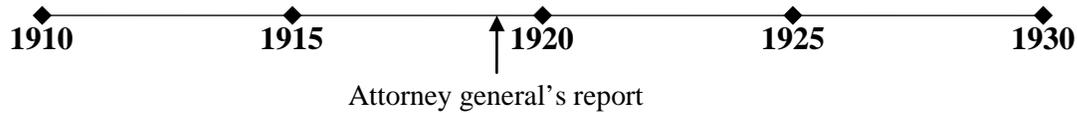
In September, police in Boston went on strike, leaving the city in chaos. Meanwhile, steelworkers throughout the country went on strike. Then in November, just last week, coal miners also went on strike. Newspapers reported that all three strikes were conducted under Bolshevik leadership.

Congress has criticized you and your department for not taking bold steps to stop these revolutionary actions.

On October 2nd, President Wilson suffered a stroke, leaving the United States effectively without a president at this crucial time. The communist conspiracy for revolution is at its height.

# LESSON 6: NATIONAL SECURITY, 1919–1920

## Student Handout 3



### PROBLEM

You are U.S. Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer in November 1919. Your job is to protect the country from its enemies—foreign and domestic—and enforce the law. Read the report below and decide what kind of action, if any, you will take to protect the American way of life and ensure the security of its citizens.

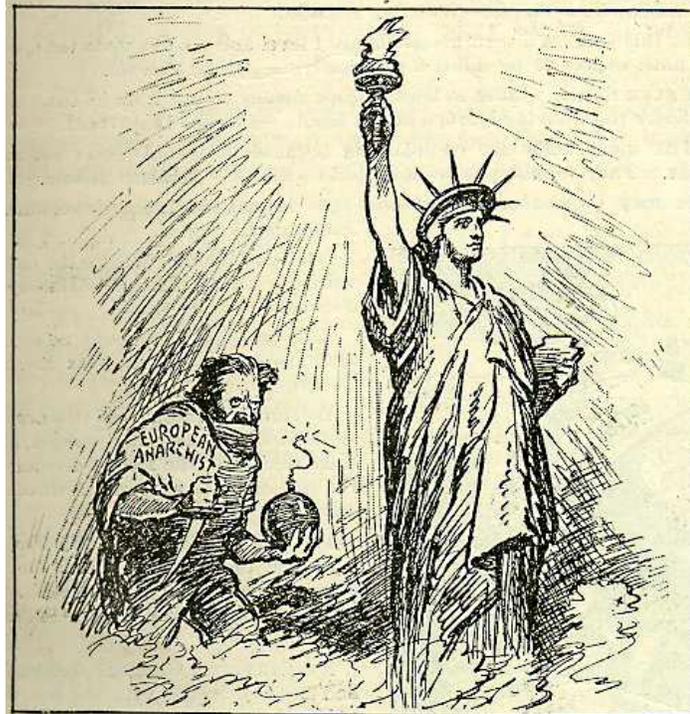
#### REPORT TO THE ATTORNEY GENERAL ON THE SECURITY OF THE UNITED STATES

The security of the United States is under a terrible threat: communists are using terrorism to bring about revolution in the United States. Communists are evil and must be stopped.

In 1917 communists (called Bolsheviks) overthrew the Russian government. The communists are currently fighting a civil war in Russia against non-communists. While your military advisors claim that it is unclear which side will win, there is obviously little hope for the anti-communist forces, since the communists will commit any crime and stop at nothing to achieve their goals. Patriotic American soldiers are in Russia fighting against the communists in an effort to stop the spread of their dangerous ideas and barbaric practices. Russian communists have butchered thousands of innocent people as they seek to establish a ruthless dictatorship over Russia and take away the rights of its people. Communists advocate the violent overthrow of all capitalist countries' governments, especially that of the United States. This year the communists established the Third Communist International, an organization whose stated goal is to spread revolution throughout the globe. The worldwide revolution has already spread to Germany, Poland, and Hungary, and communism is rapidly gaining popularity in Italy and France.

This political cartoon shows how anarchists are threatening our ideals of liberty, and evidence from recent events demonstrates that their campaign is already in full force. Last year, radicals bombed the homes of a police officer, a state judge, and countless business owners. Communism, which aims for the violent overthrow of business owners, is clearly at work: this year alone, American businesses have experienced 3600 strikes, a frightening number many times larger than normal. One of the largest strikes, in Seattle,

began with shipyard workers and rapidly spread to all types of other workers. Communists clearly orchestrated the strike: general strikes like these, which include workers of all types, rather than just workers from a single industry, are a favorite tactic of communists because they can shut down entire regions and pave the way for a violent, bloody revolution. Newspapers also believe that the communists were responsible for the Seattle strike: one headline screamed, “REDS DIRECTING SEATTLE STRIKE—TO TEST CHANCE FOR REVOLUTION.” Other papers called the Seattle strike “Marxian” and referred to it as “the stepping stone to a bolshevized [communist] America.” Seattle Mayor Ole Hanson, a true patriot, stood up to the communists and successfully ended the strike. His actions prove that individual freedom-loving Americans can stop the communist revolution.



“COME UNTO ME, YE OPPREST!”

—Alley in the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*.

Political cartoon capturing the fear of subversion by anarchists,

At the end of April, Mayor Hanson received a package that purported to congratulate him for stopping the Seattle strike. The unopened package started leaking acid, and when inspectors examined it, they found a bomb inside. Mayor Hanson, a brave man who stood up against the Red revolution, was rewarded by becoming a target for terrorists. The next day, a package arrived at the home of a senator. His innocent maid opened it, and the bomb inside exploded and blew off her hands. The senator’s wife also suffered ghastly injuries, including burns to her face. When Charles Kaplan, a clerk in the New York City post office, read the headlines reporting the bombings, he turned white with fear. He got off the subway at the next stop and took the next train back to the post office. He had set aside 16 packages just like the ones described in the reports. The police confirmed that all contained bombs addressed to other prominent people—including a senator, a Supreme Court Justice, J.P. Morgan, John D. Rockefeller, and even you yourself. They were all wrapped in the same type of paper and addressed in the same way—there is no doubt that these bombs were part of a Red conspiracy to weaken the government before the revolution. Newspaper headlines declared, “REDS PLANNED MAY DAY MURDERS.”

Keep in mind that the Communist Party in the United States numbers at least 70,000 people. Since communists are devious and operate in secret, there may be hundreds of

thousands more of them—in fact, every person you see on the street may be a communist. One author estimated that there are as many as five million Reds in the U.S. These people are not patriots—they opposed American entry into World War I and did everything in their power to undermine the war effort. Many are immigrants who brought their untrustworthy foreign ideas to the U.S. You have the power to deport them, and you probably should: sending them back to their home countries would break up their conspiracy against the United States.

On May 1st, the day Russian communists celebrate their revolution, communists in this country marched and caused riots in many American cities. In Cleveland alone, 40 were wounded and one innocent American citizen was killed. Police arrested hundreds of communists, most of them aliens, for rioting. Newspapers report the ominous news that communists staged these riots as mere “dress rehearsals” for the approaching Red revolution.

On the evening of June 2nd, bombs, including one that damaged your home, exploded in eight cities. Fortunately, the man who carried the bomb intended for you apparently tripped and blew himself up before he reached your door. The explosion scattered body parts in the street and into nearby yards. If he had made it to your house, the bomb might have killed your entire family. The fact that all of these bombs exploded in the same evening demonstrates that the communist conspiracy of terrorism continues to spread. The man who died outside your house carried a copy of an anarchist magazine with the following ominous words: “There will have to be bloodshed...We are ready to do anything and everything to suppress the capitalist class...[signed,] THE ANARCHIST FIGHTERS.” Newspaper headlines read, “BOMB THROWERS RENEW TERRORISM.”

Disturbingly, law enforcement has failed to catch even one person in either terrorist bombing case. You must consider the possibility that the communist conspiracy has infiltrated the government and that some of your own law enforcement officials have suppressed the identity of the bombers.

In July, race riots occurred in Washington DC and also in Chicago, killing more than forty people. Communist propaganda inspired these riots. A newspaper headline captured the situation well when it declared: “REDS TRY TO STIR NEGROES TO REVOLT.”

In September, police in Boston went on strike, leaving the city in chaos. Meanwhile, steelworkers throughout the country are on strike. Then in November, just last week, coal miners also went on strike. Newspapers reported that all three strikes were conducted under Bolshevik leadership.

The conspiracy is vast and has infiltrated all segments of society. Communists are taking over education: people refer to Wellesley and Radcliffe colleges, for example, as “hotbeds of Bolshevism.” Other radical colleges assign the writings of Karl Marx as required reading. High schools also often brainwash students with radical ideas, comparing Bolshevism with democracy. Patriotic schools have dismissed numerous professors and teachers for their radical views and activities, but thousands more radicals

could be indoctrinating America's youth right now. Bolshevism has reared its ugly head in churches as well, as clergymen take the side of labor unions. Well-known people, such as Charlie Chaplin, Jane Addams, and Clarence Darrow, have used their fame to preach the gospel of communism. Of course, many radical newspapers and magazines, such as *The Nation*, also promote revolution.

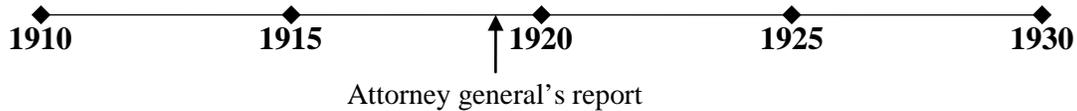
Congressional investigations confirm the danger of a Red revolution. Witnesses in these investigations explained that the Red Army in Russia is composed mostly of criminals and that New York City Jews controlled the Russian Revolution. The witnesses described communism as "the Antichrist." Newspapers refer to Russian communists as "assassins and madmen," "human scum," and "beasts." A typical headline blares, "RED PERIL HERE."

The American public is demanding that the government do something to stop the Reds. Congress has criticized you and your department for not taking bold action to stop these revolutionary plots.

On October 2nd, at the moment when the United States most needed a wise leader, President Wilson suffered a stroke. America is effectively without a president right when the communist conspiracy of revolution is reaching its peak. It is up to you to take action to stop the Red menace.

# LESSON 6: NATIONAL SECURITY, 1919–1920

## Student Handout 4



### PROBLEM

You are U.S. Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer in November 1919. Your job is to protect the country and enforce the law. Read the report below and decide what kinds of action, if any, you will take to ensure the security of the country.

#### REPORT TO THE ATTORNEY GENERAL ON THE SECURITY OF THE UNITED STATES

Here is the state of the country with regard to security:

- World War I is over and Americans are eager to return to the normal lives they led before the war.
- In 1917 communists (called Bolsheviks) overthrew the Russian government. Now the communists are fighting a civil war against non-communists in Russia, and the outcome is unclear. The United States has troops in Russia fighting against the communists. Communists advocate the overthrow of capitalist countries' governments, including that of the United States.
- The U.S. has experienced 3600 strikes in the country in the past year (a much higher number than normal). These strikes are due mostly to the high rate of inflation: workers are asking that business owners raise their wages to keep up with rising prices.
- In the largest strike, in Seattle, workers in shipyards demanded higher wages and shorter hours. Workers from other industries joined them. The strike basically shut down the city's transportation and industrial production, but it did not affect food, coal, water, heat, or electricity. Garbage trucks, laundry trucks, milk wagons, and other essential vehicles continued making their deliveries. The strike was entirely peaceful. The strikers eventually gave up and lost the strike because they didn't have the support of the public or of the American Federation of Labor, a mainstream labor union.
- Communists in the United States number about 70,000, meaning that membership in the Communist Party has declined since the war. Communists are only a tiny minority compared to the millions of people who belong to the other political parties. During the war, internal disputes and government repression weakened radical groups.

- On occasion, voters have elected socialists to legislatures. Socialists believe in democratic change, whereas Communists believe in the violent overthrow of the system. The New York State Legislature, for example, includes five socialists.
- Last year, radicals bombed the homes of a handful of businessmen, a police officer, and a state judge.
- In April, postal workers intercepted 34 mail bombs addressed to prominent people—including a senator, J.P. Morgan, John D. Rockefeller, and you. One slipped through, however, and injured the maid who opened it. Radicals were believed to be responsible, but oddly, some of the people targeted were supportive of workers and immigrants.
- In May, communists marched in parades to celebrate communism and the Russian Revolution. Riots broke out in several cities. In each case, the violence began when anti-communist crowds heckled the marchers and threw things at them. Police arrested hundreds of marchers, despite clear evidence that anti-communist crowds started the violence.
- In June, bombs, including one that damaged your home, exploded in eight cities. The targets included a mayor, a state legislator, a jeweler, a silk manufacturer, a local judge, and two federal judges. They were all prominent people, but not all were political leaders.
- In September, police in Boston went on strike when the police commissioner refused to negotiate over low pay and poor working conditions. Meanwhile, steelworkers throughout the country went on strike when owners refused to renew their contract. Then in November, just last week, coal miners also went on strike to protest the continuation of the wartime contract, which is keeping their wages low without compensating for inflation. Newspapers in all three cases tried to label the strikers as Bolsheviks (communists).
- Congress has criticized you and your department for not taking bold action against these various problems.
- On October 2nd, President Wilson had a stroke, leaving the United States without effectively without a president.

# **LESSON 6: NATIONAL SECURITY, 1919–1920**

## **Student Handout 5**

### **OPTIONS**

As Attorney General Palmer, you are in a position to influence how the government deals with the communist threat to American security. Here are some possible options for you to consider:

- A. Close off all the borders, preventing any immigrants or illegal aliens from entering the country.
- B. Start an anti-radicalism unit within the government to investigate and spy on suspected radicals. These groups could be already be spying on the government.
- C. Send more U.S. troops to Russia. If the communists are defeated in Russia, they will not be able to spread their ideas throughout the world.
- D. Raid radical organizations to collect information about the groups and arrest suspected terrorists. Imprison American citizens that belong to the groups, and deport the immigrants.
- E. Make it illegal to support communism. The government will arrest people who join the Communist Party or who make statements supporting the communists or criticizing the government.
- F. Remembering the riots from this past May Day (1919), put police on high alert to prevent a revolution on the next May Day (1920).

### **QUESTION FOR ANALYSIS**

1. Which of these options do you think the attorney general actually chose? What makes you think so?

# LESSON 6: NATIONAL SECURITY, 1919–1920

## Student Handout 6

### OUTCOMES

Attorney General Palmer established a special anti-radicalism division within the Justice Department under the leadership of J. Edgar Hoover. In November 1919, on the second anniversary of the Russian Revolution, Palmer ordered raids on radical organizations without obtaining search warrants or arrest warrants. The raids turned up very little evidence. One set of blueprints seized by officers turned out to be drawings for a phonograph. Palmer had thousands arrested, but had to release most of them. Two hundred ninety-four people were deported without trial to Finland, on a ship named the “Soviet Ark.” In January 1920, Palmer ordered larger raids on communist meetings. Law enforcement jailed over 4,000 people and had many of them deported. Again, these raids turned up no evidence of bomb making.

Palmer appealed to American public’s widespread fear of communism, a fear he may have shared due to the attack on his home. Some historians, however, believe he staged the raids to increase his public profile and thereby improve his chances for a successful presidential run. But he overstepped his bounds when he predicted that radicals would try to overthrow the government on May 1, 1920. He put police on high alert all over the country to stop the impending revolution. When nothing happened, most Americans, who were already uncomfortable with Palmer’s apparent willingness to violate civil liberties, lost interest in his tactics. When a bomb killed 38 people on Wall Street and injured many more in September 1920, the public did not place the blame on a radical communist conspiracy. By the spring of 1920, most Americans wanted to put the chaos and turmoil of the war behind them. Newspaper headlines paid more attention to baseball and fashion than to threats from abroad. Communism had failed to run rampant throughout Europe and the rest of the world, and the fact that communists in the United States numbered only in the thousands comforted Americans; the threat no longer seemed so great. In the 1920 election, Americans elected President Warren G. Harding on the platform of “normalcy,” confirming that their priority was prosperity, not anti-communism.

It is important to look at the Palmer Raids in the context of post-World War I America. The war had caused Americans to unite and wage war against a powerful, hated enemy—the Germans. The policies of the Committee on Public Information during the war encouraged Americans to be suspicious of foreigners and foreign ideas, such as communism and anarchism. Radical leftists tended to promote deeply unpopular anti-war views, and the resentment that Americans felt towards these “unpatriotic” groups continued after the war. After the Russian Revolution, communism seemed to pose the next great threat to American peace and security. The bombings heightened American fears that a revolution within the United States was imminent. Palmer encouraged this view, warning Congress that communists planned “to rise up and destroy the government

at one fell swoop.” He contributed to the paranoia that communists were lurking in all segments of society, declaring that “tongues of revolutionary heat were licking the altars of the churches, leaping into the belfry of the school bell, crawling into the sacred corners of American homes, seeking to replace marriage vows with libertine laws, burning up the foundations of society.”

Interestingly, as Handout 4 points out, the strength of radical groups was on the decline in 1919. The Communist Party had only about 70,000 members (it had had more members before the war) and internal disputes and government repression during the war had weakened radical groups. Given the declining strength of these groups, the raids hardly seemed necessary and only served to increase American paranoia.

Attorney General Palmer’s actions significantly increased fear in the United States in the early 1920s and had **unintended consequences**:

- Palmer’s targeting of foreigners established a precedent for restrictions on immigration. People feared foreign ideas, and these fears spilled over to foreigners in general. One of the groups pushing for 100% Americanism and immigration restriction was the Ku Klux Klan, with 4.5 million members. The increased strength of the KKK proved detrimental not only to immigrants but also to African Americans.
- This atmosphere of resentment towards foreigners affected the Sacco and Vanzetti case. Sacco and Vanzetti were two Italian immigrants charged with the 1920 murder of two men during a robbery. They were found guilty and sentenced to death. Many people thought the evidence against them was inconclusive and that they should not have been convicted. But the judge in the case had a clear bias against the men, having stated, “Wait until you see what I do to those anarchist (expletive)!”
- Support for labor unions waned. Business owners took advantage of the public’s fears of communism and labeled strikes “Bolshevist.” They called unionism a “subversive foreign concept,” and when they wanted to promote their own “open shop” policy, in which workers would decide whether to join unions instead of joining them automatically, they called the policy the “American plan.”
- Schools required teachers in many parts of the U.S. to take a loyalty oath. Textbooks were examined and taken out of schools if their content was thought to be “un-American.” Pressure groups pushed for “patriotic instruction,” in which teachers would emphasize the greatness of the U.S. and not provide any information that might criticize its leaders.
- The fear of foreign ideas made the U.S. more isolationist in the 1920s, and the hatred of Bolshevism led the U.S. to a policy of non-recognition of the Soviet Union. The necessity for trade relations eventually overcame the fear, and the United States recognized the Soviet Union in 1933.
- By appointing J. Edgar Hoover head of his anti-radicalism division, Palmer raised Hoover’s profile. Hoover helped found the FBI in 1924 and served as its director until his death in 1972. Critics have accused Hoover of disregarding the civil rights of American citizens throughout his tenure. In one notable example,

- Hoover encouraged the FBI's practice of monitoring and keeping records on civil rights leaders and Vietnam War protestors.
- The Red Scare of 1919–1920 was a precursor to a second Red Scare of the late 1940s and early 1950s. Senator Joseph McCarthy utilized many of the same scare tactics as Attorney General Palmer before him.

# LESSON 6: NATIONAL SECURITY, 1919–1920

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## Student Handout 7

**Primary Source: A. Mitchell Palmer, “The Case Against the ‘Reds’” (excerpt)**

“In this brief review of the work which the Department of Justice has undertaken, to tear out the radical seeds that have entangled American ideas in their poisonous theories, I desire not merely to explain what the real menace of communism is, but also to tell how we have been compelled to clean up the country almost unaided by any virile legislation....

Like a prairie-fire, the blaze of revolution was sweeping over every American institution of law and order a year ago. It was eating its way into the homes of the American workmen, its sharp tongues of revolutionary heat were licking the altars of the churches, leaping into the belfry of the school bell, crawling into the sacred corners of American homes, seeking to replace marriage vows with libertine laws, burning up the foundations of society....

By stealing, murder and lies, Bolshevism has looted Russia not only of its material strength but of its moral force. A small clique of outcasts from the East Side of New York has attempted this, with what success we all know. Because a disreputable alien (Leon Bronstein, the man who now calls himself Trotsky) can inaugurate a reign of terror from his throne room in the Kremlin, because this lowest of all types known to New York can sleep in the Czar’s bed, while hundreds of thousands in Russia are without food or shelter, should Americans be swayed by such doctrines...?

**WILL DEPORTATION CHECK BOLSHEVISM?**

...I have been asked, for instance, to what extent deportation will check radicalism in this country. Why not ask what will become of the United States Government if these alien radicals are permitted to carry out the principles of the Communist Party as embodied in its so-called laws, aims and regulations?

There wouldn’t be any such thing left. In place of the United States Government we should have the horror and terrorism of bolsheviki [Bolshevik] tyranny such as is destroying Russia now. Every scrap of radical literature demands the overthrow of our existing government...

It is my belief that while they have stirred discontent in our midst, while they have caused irritating strikes, and while they have infected our social ideas with the disease of their own minds and their unclean morals we can get rid of them! and not until we have done so shall we have removed the menace of Bolshevism for good.”

**QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS**

1. How did Palmer define the threat to America that required the raids and deportations?
2. Why were deportations justified, according to Palmer? What is your reaction to Palmer's arguments?

# LESSON 7: ECONOMIC POLICIES IN THE 1920s

## Teacher Pages

### OVERVIEW

This lesson concerns economic policies in the 1920s. In the first problem, students face the dilemma of how to curb inflation without sending the economy into recession in the process. In the second problem, they will debate whether to increase or cut taxes, and will then read about the famous tax cuts of Secretary of the Treasury Andrew Mellon.

### VOCABULARY

- Inflation—Increase in prices
- Deficit—The government spends more money in a year than it takes in through taxes
- Interest rate—The amount (as a percentage) that banks charge for loaning money; also the amount paid to customers for keeping deposits at a bank
- GNP (gross national product)—The measure of all the goods and services in an economy in one year
- Depression—Sharp decline in the GNP accompanied by high unemployment
- Unemployment rate—The percentage of potential workers without jobs
- Income tax—Taxes paid based on one's income earned (subtracting expenses) in a given year
- Andrew Mellon—Secretary of the Treasury under the Republicans in the 1920s; called for tax cuts
- Recession—Decline in the economy; less severe than a depression
- Progressive tax—Requires the rich to pay a higher percentage of their income

### DECISION MAKING-SKILLS EMPHASIZED

- Consider other points of view
- Ask about historical context
- Examine goals
- Predict unintended consequences
- Play out options

# LESSON PLAN

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## **A. IN-DEPTH LESSON (20–40 minutes)**

### Procedure:

Distribute Handout 1 and have students read it silently and decide what they will do for both problems. Next, divide students into groups and have them discuss their choices. Give the students time to ask questions. Then bring the class back together and have each group report on its decisions and explain. After groups have reported, distribute Handout 2 with the outcomes, or tell the class what actually happened.

### Reflecting on Decision Making:

Ask students what they would have done differently, if anything, now that they know what really happened. Which decision-making skills were most important in making decisions about these issues? Which 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 students: Did any historical factors limit their options in these two economic decisions? Were the decisions made in the 1920s about inflation and taxes due primarily to the actions of the individuals involved or more to historical forces?

### Connecting to Today:

Ask students if tax cuts are a good idea today. Why is the debate over tax cuts and tax increases such an enduring issue?

### Troubleshooting:

In order to make intelligent decisions on these problems, students must understand several basic economic concepts, including supply, demand, deficits, taxes, spending, interest rates, and how all these interact. Students often find it quite challenging to make decisions based on economics, so you might want to provide a quick overview of these concepts before beginning the lesson.

## **B. QUICK MOTIVATOR (10–20 minutes)**

Give Handout 1 for 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 in Problem 1 and briefly discuss their reasons. Repeat this process for Problem 2. Distribute Handout 2 and have students comment on what they learned from these outcomes for homework.

# TEACHER NOTES FOR EXPANDING DISCUSSION

(For outcomes for students, see Handout 2)

The problem on taxes is much more complicated than this lesson indicates. The Treasury considered many other kinds of taxes, such as excess-profits taxes and capital-gains taxes. Tax cuts were the subject of ongoing debate throughout the 1920s. This simplified lesson will allow students to focus on the key elements of the tax question: Will taxes bring economic growth? Who should pay? Should taxes be based on the ability to pay?

The outcomes on Handout 2 are divided into conservative and liberal views because the outcomes are contested. Secretary Mellon is seen as a conservative, but he wasn't completely so, depending on your point of view. He advocated tax cuts for poorer people and in 1931 pushed for the tax increases passed by Congress. He wanted a balanced budget and was willing to push for the increase to get it.

## DECISION-MAKING ANALYSIS:

### P = Problem

- Identify any underlying problem
- \* - **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 = Goal

- \* - **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

- **Other points of view:** Inflation did not strongly affect groups such as farmers and stock investors, because as prices increased, so did their incomes. But inflation devastated people living on fixed incomes from bonds, hourly wage workers, and white-collar workers on salaries. For Problem 2, poorer people might be upset by supposed tax cuts for the rich.

- **Ask about context:** Students should ask about how and why inflation increased so dramatically. Possible causes included the excess demand built up during the war, demands by labor for higher wages during wartime, the government's extensive borrowing through liberty-bond drives (with more spending with borrowed money, prices naturally went up since there were more dollars bidding on the same number of goods). For Problem 2, students should ask if the government has tried tax cuts in the past (there has never been an income-tax cut, since the income tax is so new) and what the effects were.
- **Goals:** Students should consider the goals of taxation. Are taxes used to expand government services? Pay down the debt? Balance the budget? Promote economic growth? Are they based on the ability to pay (so that the rich pay more), or on services used (such as the gasoline tax)?
- **Play out options, looking for problems:** Students should anticipate the short-term negative consequences of raising interest rates, raising taxes, and cutting spending. All three would tend to slow down the economy. Some students may propose that the government adopt one or more of these policies, but on a gradual basis (small interest-rate hikes, moderate tax increases, or moderate spending cuts). That way, the short-term effects won't be so severe.
- **Consequences (long-term):** The short-term depression may have benefited the economy in the long run, since it forced a quick transition away from wartime production. It is possible, though not certain, that the high rates of growth experienced in the 1920s resulted partially from the policies of 1920. The possible effects of the tax cuts are listed on Handout 2.

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# LESSON 7: ECONOMIC POLICIES IN THE 1920s

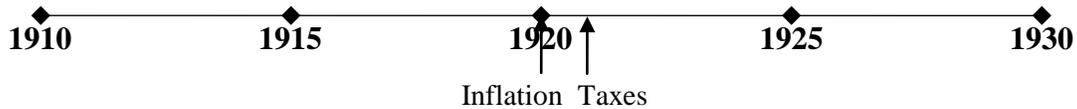
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## Vocabulary

- Inflation—Increase in prices
- Deficit—The government spends more money in a year than it takes in through taxes
- Interest rate—The amount (as a percentage) that banks charge for loaning money; also the amount paid to customers for keeping deposits at a bank
- GNP (gross national product)—The measure of all the goods and services in an economy in one year
- Depression—Sharp decline in the GNP accompanied by high unemployment
- Unemployment rate—The percentage of potential workers without jobs
- Income tax—Taxes paid based on one's income earned (subtracting expenses) in a given year
- Andrew Mellon—Secretary of the Treasury under the Republicans in the 1920s; called for tax cuts
- Recession—Decline in the economy; less severe than a depression
- Progressive tax—Requires the rich to pay a higher percentage of their income

# LESSON 7: ECONOMIC POLICIES IN THE 1920s

## Student Handout 1



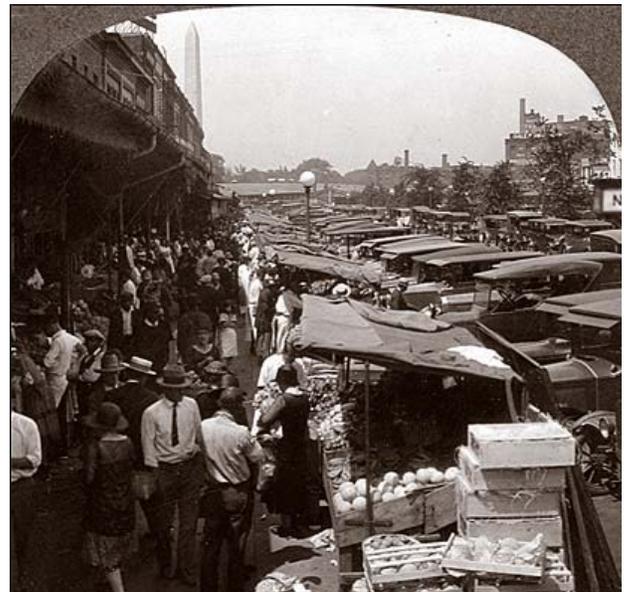
### PROBLEM 1—INFLATION IN 1920

You are the Secretary of the Treasury under Democrat Woodrow Wilson in 1920. The widespread shortages the United States experienced during World War I created great demand for goods and caused inflation. Americans are worried about the high cost of living, which in 1919 rose 77% above 1914 levels and in 1920 reached 104% of prewar levels. The people in this photograph are surely concerned about higher prices.

In addition, the government has been spending more money than it is taking in through taxes, creating huge budget deficits: \$9 billion in 1918, and \$13.4 billion in 1919.

As Secretary of the Treasury, you are in a position to influence U.S. economic policy. Which of the following will you do?

- A. Nothing. The market is the most efficient way to correct these economic problems.
- B. Increase interest rates to slow down or stop inflation. With higher interest rates, people will buy fewer products and businesses will borrow less to expand. Thus demand will go down, bringing prices down also.
- C. Raise taxes to pay off the deficits. Higher taxes will also slow down demand, which will slow inflation.
- D. Cut government spending on war-related goods, which will reduce the deficits and slow inflation. Shut down government agencies such as the War Production Board, the Food Administration, and the Railroad Administration.
- E. Create your own proposal



A street market in Washington DC

**PROBLEM 2—TAXES IN 1921**

You are Secretary of the Treasury under Republican Warren G. Harding in 1921. The government raised the income tax during World War I to where it stands now. The tax starts at 4% for households (married couples) with annual incomes exceeding \$2000. Above \$4000, the rate climbs to 8%. The top rate is 73% on incomes over \$1 million.

In reality, only 1 person in 500 pays any income tax, since most incomes are below \$2000. Of those who do pay tax, the top 2% pay 75% of the total. Meanwhile, the government debt has risen from \$1.2 billion in 1914 to \$24 billion in 1921 as a result of borrowing for the war. Interest on the debt is now larger than the entire budget of 1914.

As Secretary of the Treasury, what will you do about the income tax? Remember that people pay other taxes (such as property taxes) to their local governments.

- A. Cut the tax: if so, you will be cutting it for rich people, since they are the only ones who pay the income tax
- B. Keep the tax the same
- C. Raise the tax: if so, will you raise the tax on the rich, the middle class (those with annual incomes of \$800–\$3000), or the poor?

# LESSON 7: ECONOMIC POLICIES IN THE 1920s

## Student Handout 2

### OUTCOMES

#### PROBLEM 1—INFLATION IN 1920

Woodrow Wilson's administration chose a combination of B, C, and D: increasing interest rates, raising taxes, and cutting spending. The result was a depression in which industrial production dropped 35% and unemployment rose from 1.4% to 11.7% in 1921. There were 30,000 bankruptcies and 500,000 farm foreclosures. Prices, however, dropped by 50%; combined with an increase in demand, this brought about a quick recovery in 1922. The recovery lasted through the rest of the 1920s.

#### PROBLEM 2—TAXES IN 1921

Andrew Mellon, the Secretary of the Treasury under Republican Warren G. Harding, proposed cutting income taxes, and three cuts occurred during the 1920s. The main cut was in the surtax. The top rate was cut from 73% to 25%. Secretary Mellon stated, "The history of taxation shows that taxes which are inherently excessive are not paid. The high rates inevitably put pressure upon the taxpayer to withdraw his capital from productive business and invest it in tax-exempt securities or to find other lawful methods of avoiding the realization of taxable income." Mellon believed tax reductions would bring in higher revenues and stimulate economic growth. Meanwhile, personal exemptions were increased (so many more people paid no tax at all) and the lowest tax rate was cut from 4% to 0.5%.

Economic historians still dispute the effects of the tax cuts. Conservatives credit them with the economic prosperity of the 1920s. Liberals dispute this, saying that the cuts were ineffective or, in some cases, harmful. The following section divides the effects, first explaining why conservatives praise the cuts, then explaining why liberals do not. As you look at these effects, keep in mind that inflation did not increase between 1922 and 1930, so any increases in incomes were not a response to inflation. How many of these effects did you consider?

**A. Conservative view.** The tax cuts:

1. Created economic growth in the 1920s. Since people kept more of their money, they invested more, leading to economic growth. The economy, as measured by the GNP (Gross National Product), grew 4.7% per year from 1922 to 1929 (a growth rate of 3% is considered very good). The unemployment rate declined from 6.7% to 3.2% (4% is excellent).

2. Actually increased, rather than decreased, taxes paid to the government. Since the economy grew and people made more money, they paid more taxes, even with the lower rates. More people became rich: the number of people earning over \$100,000 per year almost quadrupled, the number earning between \$10,000 and \$100,000 increased 84%, and the number reporting income below \$10,000 dropped. As a result, rich people paid a significant portion of the taxes the government took in. Tax revenues increased from \$700 million in 1921 to \$1.1 billion in 1929, after the tax cuts.
3. May have contributed to inequality, since the tax cuts benefited the rich and allowed them to grow richer. But the conservative view states that in a capitalist society, people with ideas and skills should be rewarded. Their ideas and skills lead to greater economic growth, which benefits the country as a whole. The increased inequality claimed by the liberals was due to more people prospering, not poor people getting poorer. People in general were better off.

**B. Liberal view.** The tax cuts:

1. Might have contributed to economic growth, but most of the economic growth resulted from changes in technology and increases in productivity. The economy experienced a very sharp depression in 1921, so naturally the economy looked much better later, as it recovered from the depression. In fact, the country began to recover before some of the tax cuts were passed or went into effect. Also, the rate cuts for the lowest income groups might have been more important in bringing about economic growth than the rate cuts for the rich (it is impossible to tell for certain).
2. Didn't create the increased tax revenues as conservatives claim. The conservative view assumes that the tax cuts caused the economic growth, which created the increased revenues. Liberals don't accept that notion. If the tax cuts did not cause the economic growth, then they did not create the increased revenues that the growth generated. As evidence for the idea that other factors created the increased tax revenues, liberals point out that the greatest increase in revenues happened in 1927. Why then? Maybe it was due to tax cuts, but maybe it was something else.
3. Increased inequality. Rich people were now paying lower taxes, so their wealth increased tremendously, while the middle class and poor barely increased their standard of living during these boom years. Increased inequality, in turn, tended to undermine democracy, because those who increased their wealth also increased their political power, being able to hire lobbyists, make campaign contributions, etc.
4. Maintained the idea of progressive income taxes. While liberals dispute the effectiveness of the tax cuts, they do appreciate that the government did not eliminate the idea that the rich should pay more. The government did not, for example, switch to a national sales tax, under which poor people would pay a much higher percentage of their income than rich people.

# LESSON 8: THE ELECTION OF 1928

## Teacher Pages

### OVERVIEW

The 1928 presidential election is very helpful in understanding the social issues of the time. The two candidates had similar economic views, so Americans decided whom to vote for based on the candidates' personalities and stances on social issues. Students will be asked to consider these issues and decide which candidate to vote for.

### VOCABULARY

- Prohibition—A national ban on the sale and transportation of alcohol brought about by the 18th Amendment
- Wet—A person who opposes Prohibition, as opposed to a “dry”
- Collective bargaining—One person (or small group) negotiates on behalf of all the workers
- Tariff—A tax on imports

### DECISION-MAKING SKILLS EMPHASIZED

- Reflect on goals

# LESSON PLAN

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## **A. IN-DEPTH LESSON (30–40 minutes)**

### Procedure:

Give students the handout on the candidates and ask them to vote. After they have voted, tell them who the candidates were and that Herbert Hoover (Candidate B) won, as described on Handout 2. Ask students how they think Hoover will do as president based on this description. Was there anything in the description of Hoover that would help us understand how he would handle the coming Great Depression? (For example, he believed in government cooperation with business and in volunteerism.)

### Reflecting on Decision Making:

Ask students what they learned from this outcome. Then ask what decision-making skills were most important in deciding for whom to vote. Which letters of **P-A-G-E** applied especially to this problem? (See the “Decision-Making Analysis” section below for ideas.) You may want to ask students directly if they voted primarily on character, decision-making skills, or positions on important issues. 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 students what the election shows about America in 1928. Did the country’s prosperity cause voters to focus on social issues instead of economic policies? What personal characteristics appealed to Americans? Why did students vote differently, or the same as, the majority of voters?

### Connecting to Today:

What criteria should voters use when deciding which presidential candidate to vote for—character, skills, or positions on issues? What does the 1928 election show about how people choose candidates?

### Troubleshooting:

It’s helpful for some students to review trusts, regulation, woman’s suffrage, tariffs, income tax, and socialism.

## **B. QUICK MOTIVATOR (10 minutes)**

Have students decide on their candidate for homework. In class, ask them to vote on their candidates and predict the results. Then give them Handout 2 with the results. Keep the discussion short by focusing on whether students voted based on personal characteristics or on issues.

# TEACHER NOTES FOR EXPANDING DISCUSSION

(For outcomes for students, see Handout 2)

## What Actually Happened:

There is debate among historians about the extent to which Hoover believed in strict *laissez-faire*. Many cite his experiments with government/business cooperatives as evidence that he wanted a more active government role in business.

## **DECISION-MAKING ANALYSIS:**

### P = Problem

- Identify any underlying problem
- 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 = Goal

- \* - **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

- **Reflect on goals:** What are voters trying to achieve when they elect a candidate? Are they looking for someone with strong character, good decision-making skills, or the right positions on important issues? Many historians believe that while Hoover exhibited signs of strong character and had popular positions on social issues, he nevertheless did a poor job responding to the Great Depression. His changes weren't significant enough to deal with the massive economic disaster of the depression, according to these historians. Some historians disagree, preferring Hoover's limited response to the extensive government programs of the New Deal.

### Further Research

The platforms of the Republican and Democratic parties are provided at The American Presidency Project, available at: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/platforms.php>.

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## **LESSON 8: THE ELECTION OF 1928**

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### **Vocabulary**

- Prohibition—A national ban on the sale and transportation of alcohol brought about by the 18th Amendment
- Wet—A person who opposes Prohibition, as opposed to a “dry”
- Collective bargaining—One person (or small group) negotiates on behalf of all the workers
- Tariff—A tax on imports

# LESSON 8: THE ELECTION OF 1928

## Student Handout 1



You are an American citizen in 1928, and you are about to cast your vote in the presidential election. Choose the candidate you think will be best for the country.

### CANDIDATE A

#### Positions on Issues:

1. Business—Thinks the government should be pro-business, favoring business in its policies
2. Prohibition—Is personally against Prohibition and is well known as a “wet.” He pledges to enforce the law, but favors drinking in moderation over complete prohibition.
3. Farmers—Favors some government support for farmers
4. Tariffs—Advocates lower tariffs to reduce the cost of living of workers
5. Labor—Supports collective bargaining rights for workers (meaning that one person negotiates with the owner on behalf of all the workers)
6. Taxes—Wants a further reduction in taxes

#### Personal Characteristics:

He grew up in New York City and speaks with a very strong New York accent. Thanks to radio, listeners far beyond New “Yoik” (York) are able to hear his voice for the “foist” (first) time, as the governor speaks “poissonally” (personally) on such matters as “woik” (work) and “resoich” (research). As the governor of New York, he made government more efficient and more effective in meeting social needs. He strengthened laws governing child and women’s labor and workmen’s compensation. He supports and identifies with immigrants. Although he has worked for Tammany Hall (a Democratic organization widely known for its corruption), he is known as an honest politician.

His father died when he was 13. In order to support his family, he had to drop out of school and get a job at a fish market. He is married with five children and is a very devout Catholic.

## CANDIDATE B

### Positions on Issues:

1. Economy—Stresses the prosperity that the country has experienced since his party pushed tax cuts through in the 1920s. Campaign workers give out copper coins that say: “The [Candidate B] Lucky Piece—Good for Four Years of Prosperity.” A campaign slogan says, “Two chickens in every pot and a car in every garage.”
2. Prohibition—Supports it. His campaign calls it “a noble experiment.”
3. Business—Favors the pro-business approach that has brought so much prosperity to the U.S. in the 1920s
4. Farmers—Opposes government help to raise farm prices, instead favoring farmers’ cooperatives to raise prices
5. Tariffs—Favors a high tariff to protect American businesses and farmers
6. Taxes—Supports the low-tax policies of his party

### Personal Characteristics:

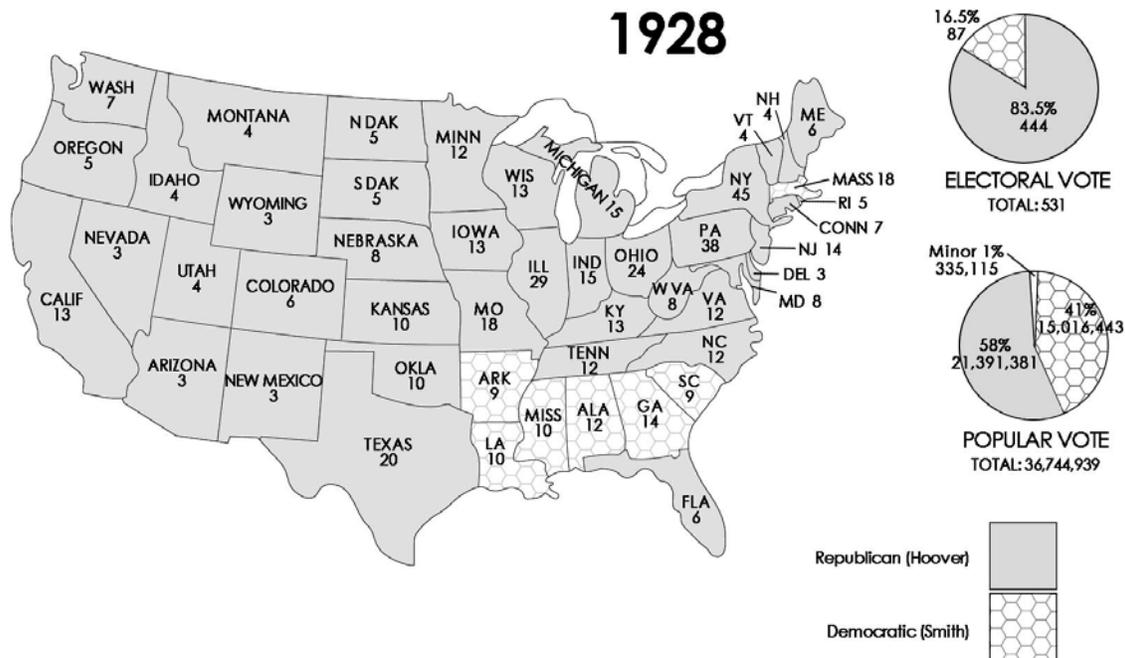
He grew up on a farm in Iowa. Both his parents died when he was young. He fondly recalls swimming and fishing at a nearby pond and refers to himself as “a boy from a country village, without inheritance or influential friends.” He grew up poor but became wealthy through hard work. He is a non-drinker and believes Prohibition should be enforced.

He is an engineer who achieved great success in business. During World War I he gave up his business and organized relief efforts to prevent starvation in Belgium through voluntary contributions. He became the head of the American Food Administration when the U.S. entered the war, and he organized food relief for millions of starving people in Central Europe after the war’s end. He became Secretary of Commerce in the 1920s, promoting close cooperation between government and business, and in 1927 he organized relief for a flood in Mississippi.

He is a strong Quaker (a Protestant sect that stresses personal faith) and is married with two sons.

# LESSON 8: THE ELECTION OF 1928

## Student Handout 2



Department of the Interior

### What Actually Happened:

Candidate B, the Republican Herbert Hoover, defeated Candidate A, the Democrat Al Smith, by 58% to 40% (444 electoral votes to 87) in the 1928 election. Some historians believe that Smith made a mistake by agreeing with Hoover on most economic issues, such as favoring business; the fact that the two supported similar economic policies made voters focus on religion, Prohibition, and personality. Smith was at a disadvantage in all three of those areas: He was the first Catholic to run for president in a predominantly Protestant country, and many voters were more comfortable with a Quaker like Hoover. Prohibition was a popular policy, and the fact that Smith was known as a “wet” did not work in his favor. Finally, even though both candidates overcame adversity to achieve great things, Smith’s urban upbringing and thick accent alienated many voters in a way that Hoover’s rural Iowa background did not. The Democrats may have made a mistake in nominating a Catholic, wet, urban candidate for president. But most historians agree that neither Smith nor any other Democrat could have beaten Hoover. Americans credited the Republicans with the economic prosperity of the 1920s, and that made Hoover, the Republican candidate, very tough to beat.