

The Paris Peace Conference

In 1919, delegates from countries that fought in WWI gathered in Paris to negotiate peace. The United States, led by President Woodrow Wilson, hoped this would be a start for nations to determine their own futures. The conference led to the creation of the League of Nations to peacefully manage world conflicts. But the United States did not join the League, greatly weakening it.

The Treaty of Versailles ended the war between Germany and the Allies. Its harsh treatment of Germany reflected the wishes of Great Britain and France, who believed Germany to be the principal aggressor of WWI. The treaty was met with feelings of

bitterness and humiliation by Germans, creating an unstable environment that contributed to the outbreak of another horrific conflict 20 years later.

The partitioning of the Ottoman Empire into British and French mandates ignited opposition among Turkish nationalists, who established the independent nation of Turkey. The decision also led people in the region to view the West with suspicion, as it went against British promises of an independent Arab state. The consequences of this arbitrary settlement of the Middle East are still being felt today.



The American Sentinel, Archangel, Russia, 1919, announcing the peace talks coming to Paris.

DIRECTIONS Conduct additional research to answer the questions below on a separate sheet of paper.

- ▶ What were Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points?
- ▶ What was the purpose of the League of Nations, and why did the United States reject it?
- ▶ How was the map of Europe and the Middle East changed by the peace conference?
- ▶ How is the impact of the Paris Peace Conference still felt today?



The "Big Four" leaders in Paris (left to right): Prime Ministers Lloyd George (Great Britain), Orlando (Italy), and Clemenceau (France), and President Wilson (U.S.).