The Peace Settlement and Germany

Britain, France and the USA did not agree about what should be included in the peace treaty with Germany. Each country had suffered in different ways during the war.

France had suffered the most because much of Northern France had been a battlefield. She had lost almost 1,250,000 men and had been invaded by Germany for the second time since 1870. Ninety percent of the French coal and iron industries had been seized by the Germans at the beginning of the war. Many of these mines had been deliberately flooded by the retreating German Army at the end of the war. Over 48, 000 km of French roads and 23,000 factories had been destroyed during the fighting. In total, an area the size of Wales was completely devastated.

Britain had lost 750, 000 men and spent nearly £8 Billion on the war. Britain also had to borrow 1 Billion pounds from the USA. Many of its citizens blamed Germany for starting the war and now wanted revenge. Her Prime Minister, Lloyd George realised however that if Germany was treated too harshly, she would be bitter and might one day try to start another war.

The USA had joined the war in April 1917 and had lost 113,000 men in the fighting. No battles had been fought on her soil. Her businessmen had lent vast sums to countries like Britain to help them pay for the cost of the war. She had also captured many foreign markets which countries like Britain could no longer supply. Many Americans felt they had come to the rescue of Britain and France, and beyond that, had had no reason to become involved in the war. Now they wanted to turn their backs on Europe and to start collecting the money they had lent Britain and France.

Source A:
A member of the British public, 1918.

'The German nation should be destroyed. It is the only way to ensure that such a war never happens again.'

Source B:
A member of the British public, 1918.

'If we weaken and punish Germany too much, it will only anger her. That way, we'll make a war more likely , not less.

Reparation = to pay for the damage.

Source C:
Clemenceau, French President, 1918.

'Germany must be brought to book; We demand reparation and revenge'

By Mr Huggins
www.SchoolHistory.co.uk

QUESTIONS:

1. Which country had enemy armies fighting on their soil?
2. Which country suffered damage to farmland, factories and communications?
3. In your opinion which country suffered the most in World War One? Why?
4. In your opinion which country suffered the least in World War One? Why?
5. Read Source C. Why did the French want 'reparation and revenge'?

Source D: British Poster, 1919.

6. Read Sources A and D. Why did so many people in Britain hate the Germans in 1918?
7. Read Source B. Why did some people in Britain think punishing Germany too much was a bad idea?

The Treaty of Versailles

June 1919

Task: In groups of 4, each person is to represent a particular viewpoint of one of the countries involved (Great Britain, France, Italy, USA). **Write a 300 word position paper!**

YOU ARE TO GOING TO IMPROVISE A CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE FOUR LEADERS WHILE TRYING TO DECIDE THE TERMS OF THE PEACE AT VERSAILLES.

Using your reference card, you need to try to get the best agreement possible concerning the following issues:

- Should Germany be made guilty for starting the war? If so, why?
- What should be done with the Kaiser (currently in exile in Holland)?
- Should Germany's armed forces be limited? If so, how? (think of men and equipment)
- Should Germany be forced to pay reparations (payments for the cost of war)
  [Britain put in a demand for $120 billion, France think Germany should pay $200 billion]
- Austria is now a small country with German speaking people. They may wish to join Germany – can you stop this from happening?

THESE ARE THE SAME DIFFICULTIES & PROBLEMS FACED BY THE FOUR INDIVIDUALS AT THE PEACE CONFERENCE REMEMBER AGREEMENT IS NEEDED, SO WHILE PUSHING YOUR DEMANDS, YOU MAY HAVE TO COMPROMISE!

Great research sites: *www.historylearningsite.co.uk/**treaty_of_versailles**.htm* *and* **http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/versailles.htm**

Use with Versailles Roleplay Debate Simulation

Name: Georges Clemenceau
Position: Prime Minister of France
Details: He was nicknamed "The Tiger". He wanted to make Germany pay for all of the damage that France had suffered during the four years of fighting. He also wanted to make sure that a war like this would never happen again. He had three main demands:

- Germany must return Alsace-Lorraine to France; this had been taken by Germany in 1871.
- Germany must pay Reparations to France to cover the cost of rebuilding the parts of France that had been destroyed during the war (750,000 houses and 23,000 factories had been destroyed).
- France should be allowed to take possession of the Rhineland (the area near the River Rhine); this was to stop Germany attacking France in the future.

Name: Vittorio Orlando
Position: Prime Minister of Italy
Details: Italy had declared war on Germany in 1915 after the Secret Treaty of London. In the treaty France and Britain had agreed that Italy would be given the Adriatic coast at the end of the war.

- When Orlando arrived at Versailles he expected France and Britain to keep their promise.
- Orlando wanted his fair share of the spoils of war for changing sides during the war.

Name: Woodrow Wilson
Position: President of the USA
Details: The USA had only declared war on Germany in April 1917 and it had suffered no damage whatsoever. Wilson arrived in Europe with the "Fourteen Points", which he hoped would help prevent wars in the future.

The most important of these were:

- The peoples of Europe should be allowed to decide their own future; he called this "Self-determination" and he wanted an end to the empires which European countries had built up. He was not prepared to allow Italy to take the Adriatic coast.
- A League of Nations should be set up to settle disputes between countries in the future.

Name: David Lloyd George
Position: Prime Minister of Great Britain
Details: In Britain most people wanted Germany to be punished: "Make Germany Pay" and "Squeeze them until the pips squeak" were popular slogans, but Lloyd George believed that:

- Germany should not be treated too harshly; it would only lead to more trouble in the future.
- Germany should be allowed to recover.
- France should not be allowed to take the Rhineland. Lloyd George was only prepared to make the Rhineland "demilitarised".

Found at www.SchoolHistory.co.uk

Fishbowl Debate: The Versailles Treaty

Did you and your group complete your 300-word position paper?

- **Warm Up:** Prepare a colorful placard for your country to use in the fishbowl. Also, meet with your group to work out questions and responses to be used during the debate. **8 Minutes.**
- **Further Instructions:** How does a fishbowl debate work?
  - It's like tag team wrestling! Representatives of each group sit inside the inner oval, or "Fishbowl." Only they are allowed to speak.
  - If a teammate sitting outside the fishbowl wishes to speak, they must silently tag their teammate, replacing them in the fishbowl.
  - No name calling is allowed. Only intelligent questions and arguments, using the evidence you have gathered, will be accepted!
  - The debate ends when a logical conclusion has been reached. Or, if the class loses its focus and begins to act silly, I will end the debate and give you another assignment to do.

Debate Starter: Which options should be chosen for the Treaty?

	A	B	C
Reparations	Make Germany agree to pay whatever we eventually decide on	Make Germany pay for every penny of the damage she has caused	Keep reparations to a minimum to stop Germany being resentful in the future
Armaments	Planes: 0 Warships: 0 Soldiers: 0 Conscription banned. *Everyone else to disarm afterwards.*	Planes: 0 Warships: 6 Soldiers: 100,000 Conscription banned.	Planes: 10 Warships: 7 Soldiers: 50,000 Conscription banned.
War Guilt	Germany to accept total blame	Germany to accept main blame	Germany not to be blamed as this will only build up resentment
League of Nations	*Function*: International Parliament to promote world co-operation *Membership*: As many countries as possible	*Function*: To enforce the peace treaties at first, then work towards a grander objective *Membership*: Any country which proves itself to be peace-loving	*Function*: To enforce the peace treaties and to keep Germany under control *Membership*: Don't allow the USSR or Germany to join