

4. WORLD WAR I— ON THE HOME FRONT

OVERVIEW OF THE VIDEO

The second in the two-volume World War I study from the *America in the 20th Century* series, “World War I—On the Home Front,” examines the domestic issues facing the United States during its involvement in The Great War. Included are discussions of the changing industrial workforce; the growth of the women’s suffrage movement; African-American migration to the North and subsequent racial tensions; erosion of American civil liberties during the war; Wilson’s Fourteen Points; and the Treaty of Versailles.



NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR HISTORY

(From The National Center for History in the Schools, Basic Edition, 1996. Found at: <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/nchs/standards/>)

U.S. History—Era 7—Standard 2:

The changing role of the United States in world affairs through World War I

2B—The student understands the causes of World War I and why the United States intervened.

2C—The student understands the impact at home and abroad of the United States’ involvement in World War I.

VOCABULARY

Big Four	espionage	League of Nations	sedition
Bolshevik	Fourteen Points	migration	Socialism
demilitarization	immigrant	munitions	tariff
entrepreneur	Imperialism	reparation	Treaty of Versailles

BEFORE THE VIDEO

Review the civil liberties Americans enjoyed or sought prior to World War I before beginning the video. Emphasize:

- ★ The women's suffrage movement and the strides that were made before the war.
- ★ The American racial climate and the civil liberties given to and denied African Americans up to that time.
- ★ The First Amendment to the Constitution and what led the founding fathers to provide for freedom of speech.

DURING THE VIDEO

There are natural PAUSE POINTS within this episode that separate the content into sections. Pause the video at these times for class discussion, using the following questions as springboards.

1. TIME CODE 09:52—What was the cause of the so-called “great migration,” in which more than half a million African Americans moved from the South to the large cities of the North?

ANSWER: With so many men leaving to fight in the war, and so many immigrants returning to their homelands, northern manufacturing companies began recruiting women and southern African Americans to fill in the workforce and produce wartime goods. Because these companies paid much better than southern companies, thousands of African Americans left their homes in the south and migrated to large cities like Chicago, Philadelphia, and New York.

2. TIME CODE 15:02—How did the Supreme Court use interpretation of the Constitution to uphold the Sedition and Espionage Acts?

ANSWER: Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., proposed a type of “test” to determine if an act warranted suspending the right of free speech. He stated that when the exercise of free speech constituted a “clear and present danger that will bring about substantive evils Congress has a right to prevent,” then the government could suspend the right of free speech. Since this “test” looked only for a “tendency” to bring harm, many were harassed and arrested purely on suspicion.

3. TIME CODE 21:53—How did the Treaty of Versailles differ from President Wilson's Fourteen Points?

ANSWER: The Treaty wasn't as harsh as the other members of the Big Four wanted it to be, but it also wasn't as compassionate as Wilson had hoped. German colonies were parceled out among the victors, instead of encouraging the Imperialist country to allow self-government. Germany also lost land in the secret treaties that Wilson deplored, and nine new nations were created. The League of

“Let us, while this crisis lasts, forget our special grievances and close our ranks shoulder-to-shoulder with our own white fellow citizens and the allied nations that are fighting for democracy.”

—W.E.B. Du Bois,
Founder, N.A.A.C.P.,
1917

Nations of Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points did make it into the Treaty, in a reduced form.

AFTER THE VIDEO

The episode ends with an on-screen Video Quiz, a series of True/False questions (see page 24). This quiz may be copied for classroom use.

Video Quiz Answer Key

1. *F* 2. *F* 3. *F* 4. *T* 5. *T* 6. *T* 7. *T* 8. *T* 9. *F* 10. *F*

For in-depth discussion:

1. What American freedoms were reduced or terminated during the Great War? Which would have caused the most hardship to the average American? Which civil liberties would not be curtailed in the same way today?
2. What were the differing points of view about women's role in the workforce both during and after World War I? What about today?
3. Why do you think so many African Americans agreed with W.E.B. Du Bois instead of the other African-American leaders about fighting in the war?

EXTENDING THE LESSON

Research topics for group or individual study.

1. **Time, Continuity, and Change.** How do the conflicts of World War I compare to the current situation in the Middle East? Which can be traced directly to decisions made during the peace conferences? How would the events of the 20th century have changed if the other countries of the Big Four had accepted Wilson's Fourteen Points rather than pushing through the sanctions of the Treaty of Versailles?
2. **Viewpoints.** Over a time span of 600 years, from about 1300 to World War I, the Ottoman Empire expanded into the largest political entity in Europe and western Asia. What were the arguments that preceded its alliance with the Central Powers rather than the Allied Powers during the war? What became of the Ottoman Empire under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles?
3. **Political Perspectives.** How did big business gain from the United States' entry into the war? How did pressure from Wall Street influence the events of this period?
4. **Presidential Focus.** List and discuss the amendments to the U.S. Constitution that were passed during Woodrow Wilson's presidency. Was he in favor of or against them? What does each of these amendments say about the personality of this president?

“On both sides of ‘no-man’s-land,’ the trenches erupted. Brown-uniformed men poured out of the American trenches, gray-green uniforms out of the German. I watched them throw their helmets in the air, discard their guns I could see them hugging each other.”

—Captain Eddie Rickenbacker, American ace fighter pilot, 1918

“I can predict with absolute certainty that within another generation there will be another world war, if the nations of the world do not concert the method by which to prevent it.”

—President Woodrow Wilson, 1919

5. **History and Technology.** Investigate and describe industrial research from this time period. Other than aviation and munitions, what innovations had their roots in the time of the Great War?
6. **Signs of the Times.** How did propaganda efforts to build support for the war affect how the American public viewed all things German, including German Americans, the entertainment industry, and school curricula?
7. **Curriculum Connections (Geography).** How did the maps of Europe and Asia change after the Treaty of Versailles went into effect? What countries, borders, and allegiances have changed in the years since then? Draw maps illustrating this region before World War I, immediately after the war, and in the present.
8. **Your Region in History.** Are there any World War I memorials in your community? What do they commemorate? How many community members served in the war effort?
9. **Career Exploration (Health Care).** The International Committee of the Red Cross won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1917 for its efforts during World War I. Research the history of this organization and describe the education, training, duties, and career opportunities available to people interested in the field of health care. What services do they perform, both locally and abroad?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Barbeau, Arthur E., and Florette Henri. *The Unknown Soldiers: African-American Troops in World War I*. Cambridge, MA: DaCapo Press, 1996.

This competently written and carefully researched study provides the first full-scale scholarly treatment of black soldiers during World War I.

Ebbert, Jean, and Marie-Beth Hall. *The First, the Few, the Forgotten: Navy and Marine Corps Women in World War I*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2002.

Original in its focus, this groundbreaking book tells the story of the women who served in the military during World War I.

Kennedy, David M. *Over Here: The First World War and American Society*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

As the first full-scale exploration of the impact of World War I on American society, Kennedy's book uses the record of America's experience in the Great War as a prism through which to view early 20th-century American society.

Knock, Thomas J. *To End All Wars: Woodrow Wilson and the Quest for a New World Order*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995.

In this book, the author provides an intriguing narrative of Woodrow Wilson's epic quest for a new world order. The account follows Wilson's thought and diplomacy from his policy toward revolutionary Mexico, through his dramatic call for "Peace without Victory" in World War I, to the Senate's rejection of the League of Nations.

Remarque, Erich Maria. *The Road Back*. New York: Fawcett Books, 2001.

In this novel of post-war Germany, the author of *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1929) follows a German soldier as he makes his way home following Germany's defeat. *The Road Back* was first published in 1931.

WEB RESOURCES

Note: Teachers should preview all sites to ensure they are age-appropriate for their students. At the time of publication, all URLs were valid.

The Library of Congress exhibit on the American Memory has recordings of famous Americans speaking about World War I and the election of 1920:

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/nfhtml/>

The University of Kansas provides images of World War I medals, maps, and photographs:

http://raven.cc.ukans.edu/~kansite/ww_one/imagarch.html

“My Mother’s War: Mementos of World War I”—The Great War, from a mother’s point of view:

<http://www.murphsplace.com/mother/main.html>

For help in research reports, this British Web site contains articles on many topics relating to the Great War:

<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/WW.htm>

VIDEO QUIZ: WORLD WAR I—ON THE HOME FRONT

Name _____

Date _____

Read each of the following statements and circle T if it is true, or F if it is false.

- T F 1. When the United States joined the war, it had surprisingly little impact on the home front.
- T F 2. Employers paid females the same wages they paid males to do the jobs.
- T F 3. Ratification of the 19th Amendment was due, in large part, to women's participation in the war-era workforce.
- T F 4. African Americans from the South headed for cities like Chicago, New York, and Philadelphia.
- T F 5. After some difficulties with jobs in the North, many African Americans became entrepreneurs.
- T F 6. Competition between white and black workers in the North led to race riots.
- T F 7. A person could be fined \$10,000 for participating in anti-war activities.
- T F 8. President Wilson advocated the principle of self-determination for establishing national boundaries to help achieve peace.
- T F 9. The League of Nations laid the groundwork for World War II with the many demands made of Germany.
- T F 10. The Treaty of Versailles reunited nine nations.