
How and why did the ‘Big Three’ want to punish Germany?
“Through the doors at the end...come four officers of France, Great Britain, America and Italy. And then, isolated and pitiable, come the two Germans, Dr. Muller and Dr. Bell. The silence is terrifying...They keep their eyes fixed away from those two thousand staring eyes, fixed on the ceiling. They are deathly pale...There is general tension. They sign. There is general relaxation...We kept our seats while the Germans were conducted like prisoners from the dock.”

(Harold Nicolson, Peacemaking, 1919.)
Aims of the Lesson

To find out:

• What members of the public in allied countries thought of the Germans in 1918

• The terms of the Treaty of Versailles

• What the German people thought of the Treaty of Versailles
Great Britain, America and France were the three most powerful Allies and they wanted to exert their influence upon the Treaty of Versailles.

Yet they wanted different things.

Click on the individuals to find out what each wanted from the peace treaty.
Lloyd George (UK)

• Germany to be justly punished, but not too harshly
  • Germany to lose its navy and colonies as these were a threat to Britain's own navy and empire
  • Germany and Britain to become trading partners

BUT Overall, Lloyd George did not want to punish Germany too harshly as he did not want Germany seeking revenge in the future
Lloyd George (UK)

There was pressure at home to make Germany pay - if he had been too soft he would have been voted out as PM. Lloyd George hated the Treaty. However "Hang the Kaiser" and "Make Germany Pay" were two very common calls in the era immediately after the end of the war and Lloyd George, looking for public support, echoed these views.

He liked the fact that Britain got German colonies, and the small German navy helped British sea-power. But, although many British people wanted to ‘make Germany pay’, Lloyd George thought that the Treaty was too harsh, and that it would start another war in 25 years time.

What did Lloyd George like and dislike about the Treaty?
Clemenceau (France)

- to cripple Germany so it couldn't attack France again.

- Wanted Germany broken down into smaller states (weakened).

France had suffered the most during the war so Clemenceau was under great pressure from the French people to make Germany pay.
Clemenceau (France)

Clemenceau liked the harsh things that were in the Treaty, especially reparations, because they would weaken Germany while helping France to recover. He had one very simple belief - Germany should be brought to its knees so that she could never start a war again (France had been invaded by Germany before in 1871).

He liked the idea of a small German army, and the demilitarised zone in the Rhineland, because he thought that this would protect France from attack in the future. Also, he was pleased that France received Alsace-Lorraine as this had been taken off France by Germany in 1871. In truth though, he wanted the Treaty to be harsher.
Wilson (USA)

- a better and more peaceful world
- a League of Nations that would help and support each other and help to promote world peace
- the right to self-determination. The right to decide which country you wish to be governed by

The U.S.A. had joined war late (1917) and hadn't suffered as much as the other Allies in terms of human and material costs.
Wilson (USA)

Wilson got self-determination for the peoples of Eastern Europe, and a League of Nations, but he was disappointed with the Treaty because few of his 'Fourteen Points' were acted upon.

Worst of all, when Wilson went back to America, the Senate refused to join the League of Nations, and refused to sign the Treaty of Versailles! In America, there was a growing desire for the government to adopt a policy of isolation and leave Europe to its own devices.

Wilson believed that Germany should be punished, but in a way that would lead to European reconciliation (peace) as opposed to revenge (war).

What did Wilson like and dislike about the treaty?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leaders</th>
<th>Wanted</th>
<th>Did not want</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>David Lloyd</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodrow Wilson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Clemenceau</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What would members of the public in Allied countries think of the Germans in 1918?
What does this source tell you about the British public’s feelings towards Germany in 1918?

“The Germans, if this government is elected, are going to pay every penny; they are going to be squeezed, as a lemon is squeezed, until the pips squeak.”

(Sir Eric Geddes, December 1918)

Sir Eric Geddes was Minister of Munitions in Britain, Controller of the Navy and First Lord of the Admiralty at different points during The First World War.
Does this information help you to understand why so many people wanted revenge after the war?

Around 8 million people had been killed

The cost of the war was roughly nine thousand million pounds

The destruction of land, homes, farms and factories was huge

Millions more people died after the war due to famine and disease

“In France and Belgium, where most of the war was fought, 300,000 houses, 6,000 factories, 1,000 miles of railway, 2,000 breweries and 112 coal mines were destroyed…In some ways, mankind has never recovered from the horrors of the First World War.”

John D. Clare, First World War (1994)
Does this information help you to understand why so many people wanted revenge after the war?

Around 8 million people had been killed
The cost of the war was roughly nine thousand million pounds
The destruction of land, homes, farms and factories was huge
Millions more people died after the war due to famine and disease

“In France and Belgium, where most of the war was fought, 300,000 houses, 6,000 factories, 1,000 miles of railway, 2,000 breweries and 112 coal mines were destroyed...In some ways, mankind has never recovered from the horrors of the First World War.”

John D. Clare, First World War (1994)

Does this information help you to understand why so many people wanted Peace after the war?
“The British General Election in December 1918 was punctuated by bellowings that the Kaiser should be hanged, that Germany should pay up....Few realised the harmful effects of uniformed and aggressive public opinion which had been aroused by years of war propaganda, and whipped up by the popular press...”

How would the German people have felt about the terms of the Treaty?
Germany had to accept total responsibility for starting the First World War. This was called the War Guilt Clause or Article 231.
Germany had to pay £6,600 million in reparations to cover war damages and other Allied losses.

These were called reparations.
Germany had to hand over some 70,000 square kilometres of land. This accounted for about 13% of all of her land and six million of her people who lived there.
Germany was to have her colonies taken away from her. These colonies were to become mandates run by the Allies on behalf of the League of Nations.
The German army was to have no more than 100,000 men and the navy was limited to 15,000 sailors.

There was to be no airforce and no submarines.
The German navy was only allowed six battleships and Germany was forbidden to buy any more weapons and other war material.
An Allied Army was to occupy the Rhineland for a period of fifteen years. No German troops were to be allowed into the occupation zone.

You now need to complete the card sorting activity on the terms of the Treaty of Versailles.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Terms of the treaty</th>
<th>Damage Germany economically</th>
<th>Damage Germany militarily</th>
<th>Damage Germany’s pride</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms of the treaty</td>
<td>Damage Germany economically</td>
<td>Damage Germany militarily</td>
<td>Damage Germany’s pride</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70,000 sq km of land was taken away from Germany</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No overseas colonies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany’s army was reduced to 100,000 men</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She was not allowed an air force</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She was allowed only 6 battleships and no submarines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allied troops to occupy the Rhineland at all times</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany had to accept full responsibility for starting the war.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany had to pay £6,600 million in reparations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Treaty seemed to satisfy the "Big Three" overall.

- It made sure that Germany was too weak to start another European War, yet strong enough to help stop the spread of Communism.

- It kept the French border with Germany safe from future German attacks.

- It created the League of Nations. This would help promote peace and trade throughout the world.
Germans hated the treaty, especially Article 231 which blamed them for starting the war.

Many Germans also thought the financial penalties that the treaty imposed upon their country and her people to be immoral and unjust.

The German Government that had agreed to the treaty became known as the "November Criminals".

Many German citizens felt that they were now being punished for the mistakes of the Kaiser and German government of August 1914 who had started the war as well as the government of 1919 that had signed the treaty that brought peace.
Quick Test

1. In which year was the Treaty of Versailles signed?

2. How many soldiers were the German army allowed to retain under the treaty?

3. How much land was taken off Germany within Europe?

4. What phrase did the Germans use when referring to the treaty and treaty negotiations?

5. How much were the Germans supposed to pay the Allies in reparations?
1. In which year was the Treaty of Versailles signed?  
1919

2. How many soldiers were the German army allowed to retain under the treaty?

3. How much land was taken off Germany within Europe?

4. What phrase did the Germans use when referring to the treaty and treaty negotiations?

5. How much were the Germans supposed to pay the Allies in reparations?
1. In which year was the Treaty of Versailles signed?
   **1919**

2. How many soldiers were the German army allowed to retain under the treaty?
   **100,000**

3. How much land was taken off Germany within Europe?

4. What phrase did the Germans use when referring to the treaty and treaty negotiations?

5. How much were the Germans supposed to pay the Allies in reparations?
Quick Test

1. In which year was the Treaty of Versailles signed?
   1919

2. How many soldiers were the German army allowed to retain under the treaty?
   100,000

3. How much land was taken off Germany within Europe?
   70,000 sq km

4. What phrase did the Germans use when referring to the treaty and treaty negotiations?

5. How much were the Germans supposed to pay the Allies in reparations?
Quick Test

1. In which year was the Treaty of Versailles signed?
   1919

2. How many soldiers were the German army allowed to retain under the treaty?
   100,000

3. How much land was taken off Germany within Europe?
   70,000 sq km

4. What phrase did the Germans use when referring to the treaty and treaty negotiations?
   Diktat

5. How much were the Germans supposed to pay the Allies in reparations?
1. In which year was the Treaty of Versailles signed?
   1919

2. How many soldiers were the German army allowed to retain under the treaty?
   100,000

3. How much land was taken off Germany within Europe?
   70,000 sq km

4. What phrase did the Germans use when referring to the treaty and treaty negotiations?
   Diktat

5. How much were the Germans supposed to pay the Allies in reparations?
   £6,600 million
Describe the reaction of the German people to the Treaty of Versailles?

(2 marks)
Useful websites

www.johndclare.net/peace_treaties1.htm
This part of John D. Clare’s website looks at The Conference, Aims, Terms, German Reactions and Verdicts. There are also revision sheets, tests and a booklet that you can download.

www.johndclare.net/ToV5_cloze.htm
This takes you directly to an interactive test on John D. Clare’s website where pupils can check their answers and print out a revision sheet.

www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/FWWversailles.htm
This page from Spartacus looks at some of the clauses within the Treaty and provides written comments and observations from 1919 (sources).