

# World War I Projects



# Lesson 1 - Activity 1 — “Causes of WWI” Map

## Part 1: Label the Powers

Locate and label the following countries on your map in black ink:

**Germany** (The large empire in Central Europe)

**Austria-Hungary** (The massive empire directly south of Germany)

**Serbia** (The small Balkan nation directly south of Austria-Hungary, near the Adriatic Sea)

**Russia** (The vast empire dominating the entire eastern portion of the map)

**France** (West of Germany)

**England / Great Britain** (The island nation across the English Channel)

## Part 2: Color the Alliances

Create a map key (legend) in the corner of your page and shade the nations according to their diplomatic alignments in 1914:

- **The Triple Alliance (Central Powers):** Color **Germany** and **Austria-Hungary** yellow. *(Note for students: Italy was technically part of this alliance in name but remained neutral when the war started before switching sides).*
- **The Triple Entente (Allied Powers):** Color **France**, **Russia**, and **England** green.
- **Neutral Nations:** Leave nations like **Spain**, **Switzerland**, **The Netherlands**, and the **Scandinavian countries** uncolored or shade them light gray.

## Part 3: Mark the Hot Spots of Tension

- **The Balkan "Powder Keg":** Draw a bright red star or circle around **Sarajevo** (located within the southern Austro-Hungarian border, right next to Serbia). Label it: *Assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand.*
- 🔥 **The Alsace-Lorraine Border:** Draw a red zigzag line right along the border between **France** and **Germany** to represent the long-standing territorial friction between them.

# Causes of WWI Map







Which alliance had more land? \_\_\_\_\_

Which region was the "powder keg"? \_\_\_\_\_

Why might alliances pull more countries into war? \_\_\_\_\_

## Lesson 1 - Match the Cause

Print and cut apart the cards. Have students match each major cause of WWI (M-A-I-N) with definitions and explanations. These are in order and may be used as an answer key.

 Militarism	building up strong armies, weapons, and navies to prepare for war	Countries competed to build the biggest armies and strongest navies.	Germany and England raced to build more battleships.
 Alliances	agreements between countries to help and protect one another	Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy promised to defend each other.	France, England, and Russia agreed to support one another.
 Imperialism	when a powerful nation takes control of weaker lands or colonies	European nations took colonies in Africa and Asia to gain power.	Countries argued over land and resources far from Europe.
 Nationalism	strong pride in one's country or ethnic group	People believed their nation was the best and wanted to prove it.	Groups like the Serbs wanted independence from larger empires.

## **Lesson 2 - Assassination Timeline**

Cut the strips apart and place them in the correct sequence to show timeline showing the key events that led from the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand to the start of World War I..

**Gavrilo Princip assassinates the Archduke.**

**Germany supports Austria-Hungary.**

**Archduke Franz Ferdinand visits Sarajevo**

**England enters the war.**

**Austria-Hungary blames Serbia.**

**Germany invades Belgium.**

## Lesson 2 - Allies and Central Powers

Sort the countries into "Allies" and "Central Powers." [Two Sets Included]

<b>Austria-Hungary</b>	<b>England</b>	<b>Russia</b>	<b>Serbia</b>
<b>Belgium</b>	<b>Turkey (Ottoman Empire)</b>	<b>France</b>	<b>Germany</b>

<b>Austria-Hungary</b>	<b>England</b>	<b>Russia</b>	<b>Serbia</b>
<b>Belgium</b>	<b>Turkey (Ottoman Empire)</b>	<b>France</b>	<b>Germany</b>

## Lesson 3 – Periscope View

Students imagine they are looking through the periscope of a German U-boat in 1917. This activity helps them understand why submarine warfare was so dangerous and why it pushed the United States toward war.

**How to Do It:** On the handout, include a simple circle outline labeled “Periscope View.” Students draw what a U-boat captain might see, such as:

- a cargo ship or passenger liner
- rough waves or fog
- a distant coastline
- a convoy of ships

Under the drawing space, include 2–3 reflection questions, such as:

Why did Germany use U-boats instead of surface ships?

How might civilians feel knowing submarines were nearby?

**Materials:** handout, pencil, colored pencils (optional)

**Optional Extension:** Students label their sketch with terms like “unrestricted submarine warfare,” “convoy,” or “neutral ship.”

# Periscope View



## Reflections:

Why did Germany use U-boats instead of surface ships?

- Harder to detect

How might civilians feel knowing submarines were nearby?

- Scared & worried

Why was this so dangerous during the war?

- Ships could be sunk suddenly

# INTERCEPTED TELEGRAM

## WORLD WAR I: SECRET CODE ACTIVITY

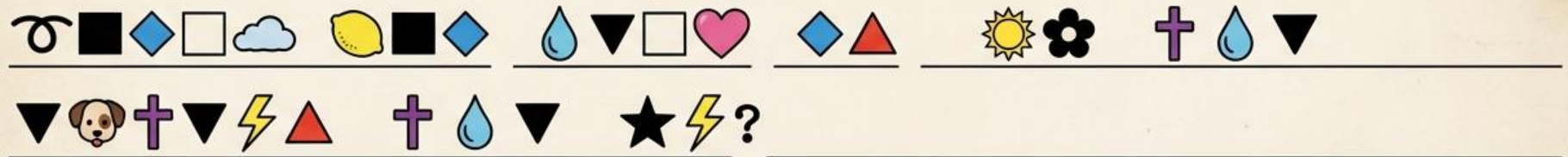
ZIMMERMANN TELEGRAM: CAN YOU DECODE THE MESSAGE?



### STEP 1: CODEBREAKER'S KEY (Substitution Cipher)

A=	B=	C=	D=	E=	F=	G=	H=	I=	J=	L=	M=
★	→	●	☁	▼	⚘	💧	☀	☾	✕	□	🐱
N=	O=	P=	Q=	R=	S=	U=	V=	W=	X=	Y=	Z=
🐶	■	♥	❄	▲	✚	◆	🐦	∞	🍏	🍋	🌀

### STEP 2: THE INTERCEPTED MESSAGE



After decoding the message, answer the questions below:

What did Germany want Mexico to do if the United States entered the war? \_\_\_\_\_

The actual telegram promised Mexico that if they helped Germany, they could win back land they lost to the U.S. (like Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona). Why would this promise shock and anger Americans living in 1917? \_\_\_\_\_

Imagine you are President Woodrow Wilson in 1917. How does reading an intercepted message like this change your plans to keep America neutral (out of the war)? \_\_\_\_\_

### Assassination Timeline Answer Key

- 1) Archduke Franz Ferdinand visits Sarajevo.
- 2) Gavrilo Princip assassinates the Archduke.
- 3) Austria-Hungary blames Serbia.
- 4) Russia supports Serbia.
- 5) Germany supports Austria-Hungary.
- 6) Germany invades Belgium.
- 7) England enters the war.

### Allies and Central Powers Answer Key

#### Central Powers (early war)

Germany  
Austria-Hungary  
Turkey (Ottoman Empire)

#### Allies (early war)

Russia  
France  
England  
Serbia  
Belgium

### Zimmerman Telegram Code Puzzle Answer Key

#### Decoded Message:

**"WHEN THE US ENTERS THE WAR, WILL MEXICO HELP AGAINST ENEMIES?"**

#### Question Rubric & Core Concepts:

#### What did Germany want Mexico to do?

*Target Answer:* Germany wanted Mexico to become allies with them and fight against the United States if the U.S. joined the war.

#### Why would the promise of land anger Americans?

*Target Answer:* It meant the war was no longer just a distant conflict in Europe; it was now a direct threat to American soil and safety. The idea of losing states like Texas or Arizona made the danger feel very close to home.

#### How would this change President Wilson's plans?

*Target Answer:* It would make it almost impossible to stay neutral. He would realize that Germany was actively plotting against the U.S., forcing him to protect the country by preparing for war.

## Lesson 4 - Draft Registration Card

Students learn how the United States built a larger army by completing a simple, kid-friendly version of a World War I draft registration card. This helps them understand how ordinary Americans were called into service.

**How to Do It:** On the handout, include a simplified registration card with fields such as:

- Name
- Age
- Town / State
- Occupation
- Reason you think the U.S. needs soldiers

Students fill out the card as if they were living in 1917. They may add a small sketch of themselves or a patriotic symbol in the corner.

Student Draft Project - Grade 5

### WORLD WAR I DRAFT REGISTRATION CARD (1917-1918)




Name: Arthur James Reed Age: 24 years old  
(born Nov 8, 1893)

Address: 42 Oak Street, Blowing Rock, NC

Occupation: Farmer / Carpenter

Reason US Needs Soldiers: "To fight for freedom and  
protect our country. We must stop the war and  
and make the world safe!"

Other information: Single, Caucasian,  
5'9", Brown hair,  
Blue eyes



Sept. 12, 1917

ARTHUR J. REED

## Lesson 4 - Home-Front Rationing Mini Poster

Students create a small poster encouraging Americans to conserve food during World War I. This reinforces Herbert Hoover's message and the idea that everyone contributed to the war effort.

**How to Do It:** On the handout, provide a blank mini-poster box with a title line. Students design a simple conservation message such as:

"Save Wheat for the Soldiers!"

"Wheatless Wednesdays Help Win the War!"

"Eat Less Sugar — Send More to the Troops!"

Students add a small drawing (bread loaf, wheat stalk, dinner plate, etc.) and color it lightly.



## Lesson 5 - Hero Badge

Students design a simple “hero badge” to honor Sergeant Alvin C. York. This activity helps students summarize York’s bravery in a visual, kid-friendly way.

**How to Do It:** On the handout, include a blank circle labeled “Hero Badge.” Students add:

- York’s name
- a symbol of bravery (star, shield, eagle, etc.)
- a short phrase such as “Courage Under Fire” or “132 Prisoners Captured”

Students lightly color the badge and may add a ribbon or border.

**Materials:** handout, pencil, colored pencils

**Optional Extension:** Students write one sentence explaining why York is remembered as an American hero.

# Sergeant York: Hero Badge



## Lesson 5 - Pershing's Leadership Chart

Students create a small three-box chart highlighting General John J. Pershing's leadership qualities. This reinforces why Pershing was chosen to command the American Expeditionary Forces.

**How to Do It:** On the handout, include a simple chart with three labeled boxes:

**Training:** What Pershing required before soldiers entered battle

**Strategy:** How he organized American forces

**Impact:** How his leadership helped win the war

Students fill in each box with a short phrase or drawing.

**Materials:** handout, pencil

**Optional Extension:** Students add a small sketch of Pershing or a symbol such as a helmet or flag.

# Pershing's Leadership Chart

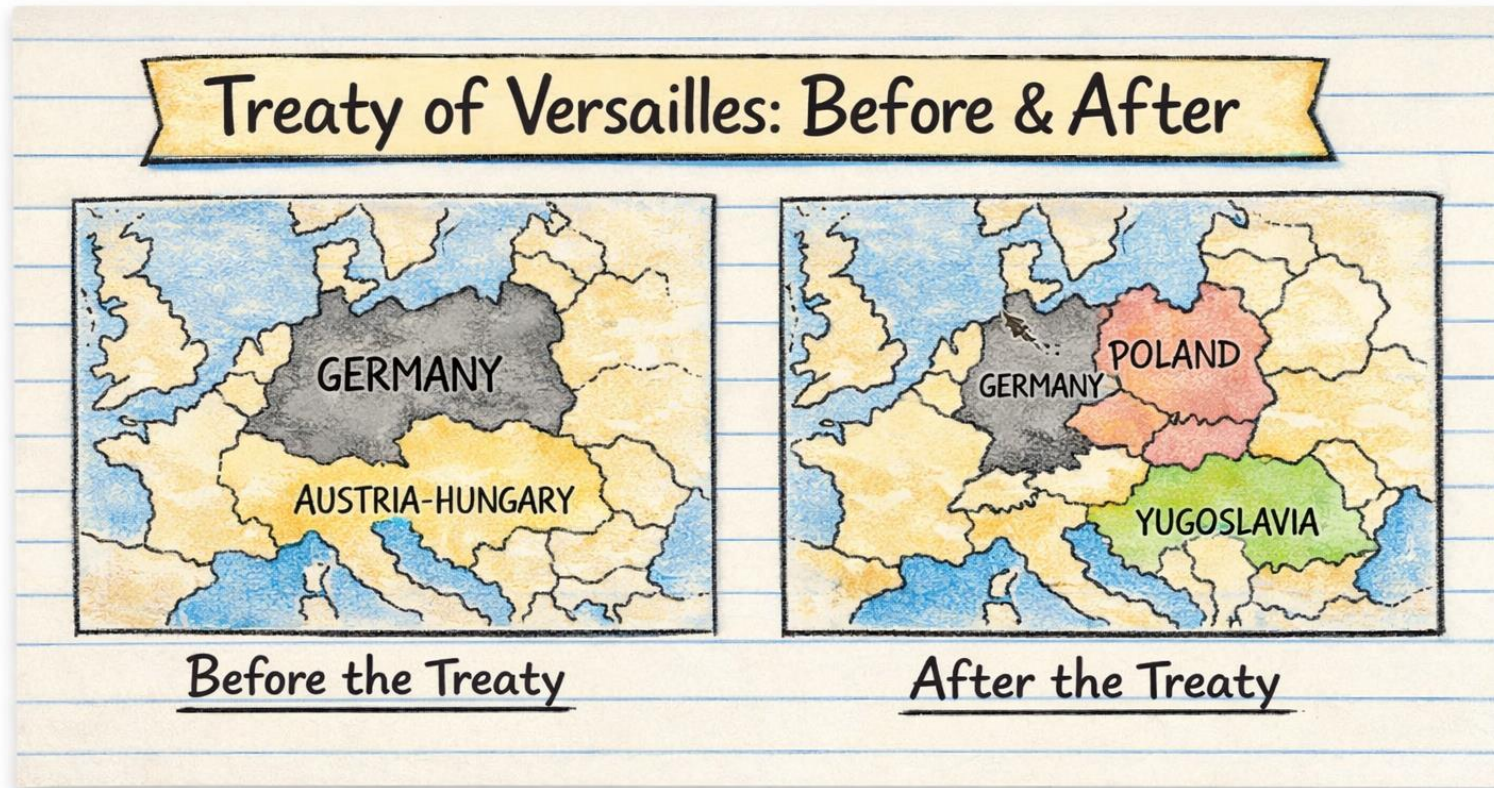
**General John J. Pershing**

<p><b>Brave</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fought in Combat</li><li>• Determined to Win</li></ul>	<p><b>Smart Planner</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Organized the AEF</li><li>• Tactical Strategy</li></ul>
<p><b>Strict</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demanded Discipline</li><li>• High Standards</li></ul>	<p><b>Inspiring</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Motivated the Troops</li><li>• Lead by Example</li></ul>

### Leadership Qualities:

- Courage
- Organization
- Respect

## Lesson 6 - Treaty of Versailles: Before & After Map



Students compare a simple “before and after” map of Europe to see how the Treaty of Versailles changed national borders and created new countries. This helps students visualize the impact of the treaty on Europe.

**How to Do It:** On the handout, include two small map outlines:

**Map 1:** Europe before the Treaty of Versailles

**Map 2:** Europe after the Treaty of Versailles

Students lightly color or label new nations such as Poland and Yugoslavia, and shade areas taken away from Germany.

**Materials:** handout, colored pencils, pencil

**Optional Extension:** Students write one sentence explaining why Germany was unhappy with the treaty.

**Lesson 6 - Treaty of Versailles: Before & After Map**



## Lesson 6 – League of Nations Symbol

Students design a simple symbol or logo that represents the goals of the League of Nations. This helps them understand the League's purpose and why some Americans opposed joining it.

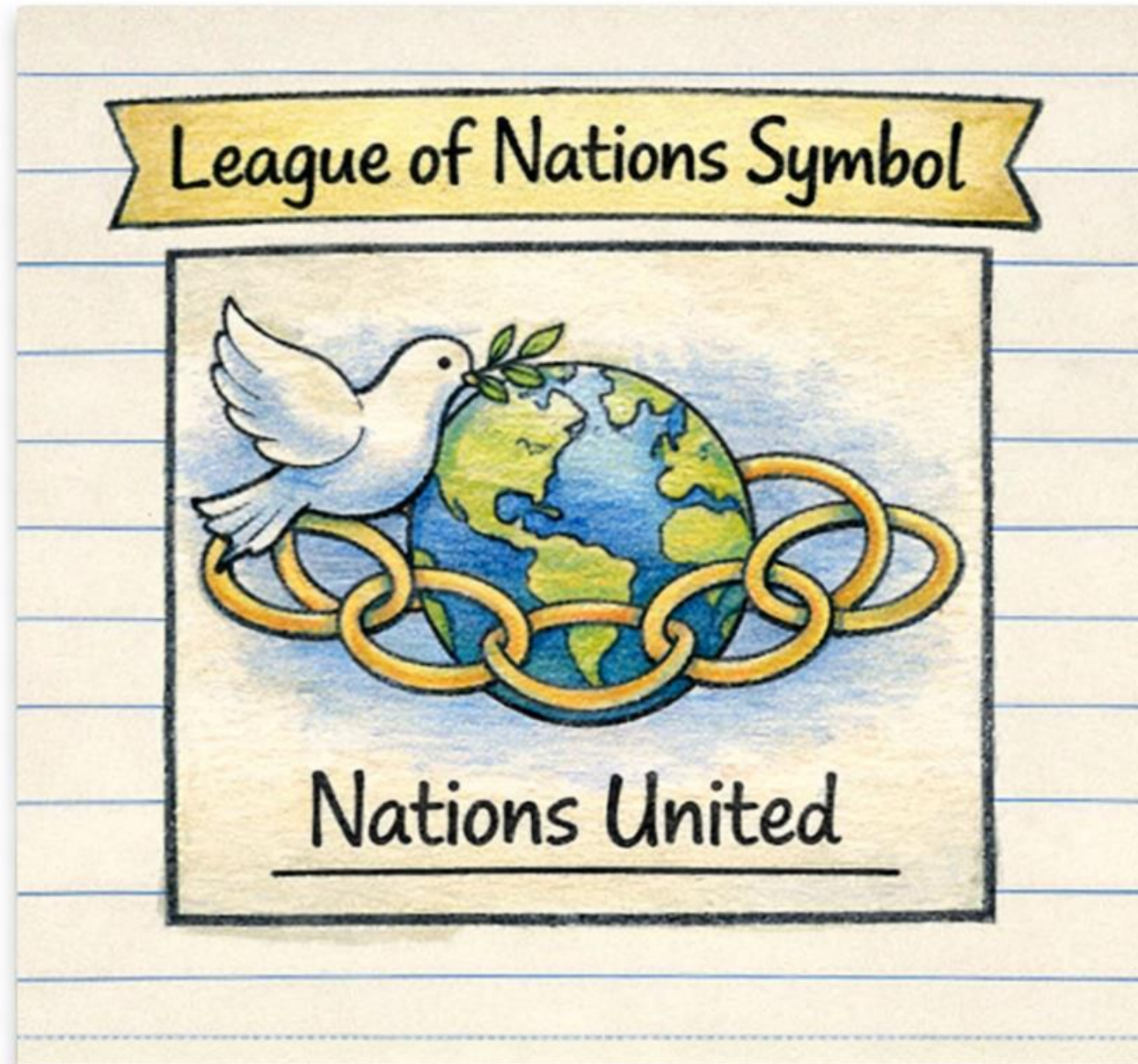
**How to Do It:** On the handout, include a blank square labeled "League of Nations Symbol." Students design a simple image such as:

- a globe
- a handshake
- a dove or olive branch
- linked circles representing cooperation

Students add a short motto such as "Working for Peace" or "Nations United."

**Materials:** handout, pencil, colored pencils or markers

**Optional Extension:** Students write one sentence explaining why the U.S. Senate refused to join the League of Nations.



## Lesson 6 – League of Nations Political Cartoon



The political cartoon *The Gap in the Bridge* shows a large stone bridge with a missing keystone in the center. The keystone is labeled "USA," and without it, the bridge cannot hold together. The sides of the bridge are labeled with countries like Belgium, France, England, and Italy. The cartoonist is showing that the League of Nations was weak because the United States refused to join. Just like a bridge needs its keystone to stay strong, the League needed the United States to help keep peace after World War I.

THE GAP IN THE BRIDGE.

- What problem do you see in the bridge in this cartoon?
- Which countries are shown on each side of the bridge?
- What piece is missing from the bridge, and what is it labeled?
- Why do you think the cartoonist drew the United States as the missing keystone?
- What message do you think the cartoonist is trying to send about the League of Nations?
- Do you agree or disagree with the cartoonist's message? Explain your thinking.

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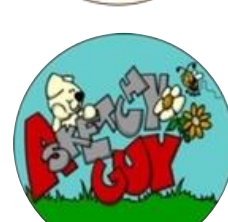
Write

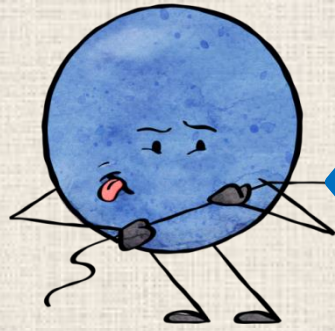
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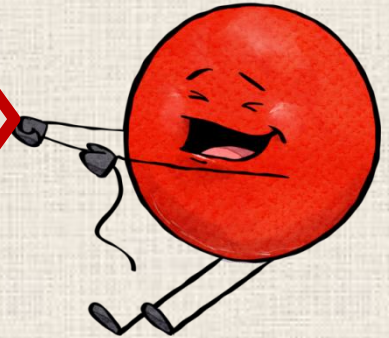




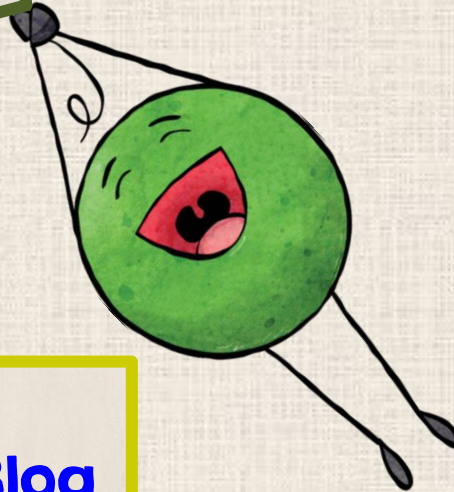
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