

LESSON PLAN

Placing the Blame

Watch videos by Simple History explaining the signing of the Treaty of Versailles and the reparations on Germany that followed.

 30-60 min  Grades 5-8

DOMAIN	SUBJECT	TOPIC
Nazi Germany	Precursors	Treaty of Versailles

Enduring Understanding

The admittance of the "War Guilt Clause" forced Germany to accept complete responsibility for initiating World War I, meaning they would be liable for all material damages.

Essential Questions

1. What is a fair punishment for waging war?

Readiness

 5 min

Explain to students that they are going to be watching a video that will help explain the Treaty of Versailles, which brought an end to World War I and set the terms for the interwar period. Since Germany started WWI, do they suppose the Treaty was kind to them or unkind?

Input

 15 min

Watch YouTube videos, [The Treaty of Versailles, What Did the Big Three Want? 1/2](#) and [The Treaty of Versailles, Terms of the Treaty 2/2](#) from Simple History.

While the students are watching, have them take note of some things that stood out to them. Were they aware that Germany did not have a seat at the negotiation table?

Output

 25 min

Divide the class into groups of four. Have them discuss their first reactions to the contents of the video amongst themselves. Give 5 minutes for them to address their first impressions and questions that they have about the video. Ask them thereafter to share these thoughts with the large group and ask their questions to make sure everyone is on the same page.

Then review the discussion questions as a class.

1. Did you think the reparations decided in the Treaty of Versailles were fair?
2. What are the consequences of imposing such harsh punishments on Germany?
3. Would it have been more constructive to focus on how to settle international disputes during this conference?
4. What do you think the long-term consequences and challenges ahead for Germany might be?

Ask each group to return to discussion and address these questions. Give 10 minutes for discussion and then ask each group to respond to one question in an effort to kick off broader conversations about each.

Teacher Tip:

Prior to this lesson students should have a general knowledge and understanding of World War I. If not, please go back and look at one of the lessons on World War I that could help prepare students for this lesson.