

WORLD WAR I PEACE TALKS

Purpose

Understanding the human and material costs of total war reveals how different wartime experiences shape postwar peace, and how peace treaties—intended to foster prosperity—can sometimes create new tensions.

Process

Part 1: Reviewing the costs of war

Review [the Costs of War Data Chart](#) and respond to the following questions:

1. What countries included in the table were members of the Central powers?

2. What countries included in the table were members of the Allied powers?

3. What country spent the most money on the war?

4. What country had the largest number of casualties?

5. What country had the highest percentage of casualties?

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6. What country had the largest number of colonial troops participating in the war?

7. Overall, which country fared worst and why?

8. Overall, which country fared best and why?

Part 2: What does your country want?

Your teacher will divide your class into “country” groupings. Circle the country you are assigned.

Belgium

France

Germany

Great Britain

Japan

South Africa

United States

Austria-Hungary

1. Review [the Costs of War Data Chart](#) again, now looking specifically at the information for your country.
2. What were the social, political, and economic impacts on your country? (You may need to use your course resources to complete this.)

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Social impacts	Political impacts	Economic impacts

3. How critical is it that your country seek reparations? Why?

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4. How critical is it to your country that you prevent another war in Europe? Why?

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Part 3: Paris Peace Conference

1. Conference Time! You will examine five different issues and the possible terms to be imposed in the forthcoming treaty. You can review [the Terms for Peace](#) here, or your teacher may hand out cards with all the terms on them. Analyze each issue based on the impact to your country and the implications for your allies. If you're working in groups, take your group's choice card to the Conference leader for possible inclusion in the final treaty. Record your terms choice and reasoning on the chart. To ensure that your reasoning is well-founded, use the data from the Costs of War Data Chart.

Issues	Terms: A, B, or C?	Your country's reasoning
War guilt <i>Which country or countries should be blamed for causing World War I?</i>		
Reparations <i>Which country or countries should pay for the damages of war? How much?</i>		
Military power <i>Should all countries be permitted to keep a powerful military in peacetime?</i>		

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Colonial possessions <i>Should countries be permitted to keep their colonial possessions in the wake of World War I?</i>		
League of Nations <i>Should countries join an international peacekeeping and decision-making organization?</i>		

- If you're working in groups and taking part in the Paris Peace Conference led by your teacher, make sure you also complete one [Paris Peace Conference: Reflections](#) worksheet for your group.