

# World war ii dbq

[Countries](#), [United States](#)



The United States had entered World War I against many wishes of the American public, which made the ratification for the peace agreement an even more difficult task. Woodrow Wilson justified American involvement by claiming that an Ally victory would ensure a new world order. The war would be used as an instrument to "make the world safe for democracy". However, many Americans, government officials, and even the Allies did not agree with the progressive ideals that would be enforced to attain the peace that Wilson had desired and promised. This was made evident when Wilson's negotiations for the peace treaty were criticized and rejected by the leaders of the other Allied nations and isolationists. Even when Wilson acknowledged objections against his proposals, he refused to accept any compromises or different versions of the treaty. Therefore, both the inflexibility of Wilson and strength of the opposition forces led to the defeat of the Treaty of Versailles. Woodrow Wilson's battle for ratification with the Senate proved to be difficult and time consuming. From the beginning, Wilson had already angered and frustrated the Republicans, when he advocated Democratic votes for the midterm elections of 1918. However, in that election, Republicans had won a majority in the House of Representatives and in the Senate. Because of this event, instead of getting the votes he needed for ratification, he had to face the Republicans' unwavering hostility, especially from Senator Henry Cabot Lodge. Even the liberals who were receptive to Wilson's war aims were disappointed at the peace treaty that was to be ratified. They believed that the treaty did not solve any crises, but rather deepened the existing disagreement (Doc B). The proposal that caused the most controversy was Wilson's League of Nation. It was to be a permanent international

organization that would administer world affairs and prevent against future world conflicts. The League was the epitome of Wilson's idealistic values, it would be the main approach to attain the peace between neighboring nations that he guaranteed. However, Republican Senators, some known as irreconcilables, and some fervent isolationists, objected because they believed that American membership would interfere with not only US sovereignty, but also defy constitutional laws, like the Monroe Doctrine. The Monroe Doctrine allowed the United States to oppose European intervention in the Western Hemisphere. By passing the League of Nations, it would violate that right because the United States would unify itself with other world powers, which would entangle Americans in foreign conflicts (Doc E). The League of Nations would also welcome foreign nations to administer control and power over the United States. America's democratic system would be influenced by the values of other forms of government. In a speech by Willian Borah to Congress, he said, " Will anyone advocate... a tribunal created other than by our own people and give it to an international army subject to its direction and control to enforce its decree?" Borah was right. A majority of Americans would not consent to other nations' rule, when many died to gain and protect their freedom and liberty. Borah believed that despite its purpose, this committee, like the war, would only further trap America into unwanted and unnecessary international dilemmas (Doc A). However, according to Article X of the charter for the League, all member nations were to be ready to protect the independence and territorial integrity of other nations. If Wilson allowed the League of Nations to violate the freedom of nations, then the war that was fought would have been pointless

(Doc C). The Allies objected to the proposed treaty for different reasons from the Senate. Great Britain and France believed that it did not compensate for their incalculable losses during the war. The Allies wanted to ensure that Germany would not have the ability to become powerful enough to threaten European peace again. At first, Wilson opposed reimbursement from the Central Powers, but when the Allies denied approving the treaty, he set a specific sum for Germany to pay. However, by making Germany inferior would go against American's policy of spreading our superior civilization (Doc F). After much opposition to the peace treaty, Wilson returned to Europe to make modifications to satisfy his critics, except for the irreconcilables—those Republican Senators who would not accept it, despite any change. These new changes would reduce U. S commitment to the League of Nations in a way that would not challenge the Monroe Doctrine. Even these changes did not appease his challengers. Instead of accepting the new conditions that Senators proposed, he chose to fight for the treaty as it was. Finally, the time came for the Treaty of Versailles to be sent to the full Senate for ratification. Wilson was given a final chance to accept the fifty amendments and provisions to ensure ratification, however, he strongly disregarded all. He believed in the Puritan idea that America was to be considered a "city upon a hill", the nation that was to be a model for peace and to lead the world towards that peace. Any changes to the League would weaken that idea (Doc G). Even when the Senate voted for fourteen of those amendments, Wilson claimed that it would be no changes or no treaty at all. On November 19, 1919, the Senate officially rejected both the amended and original treaty. Though it was formally rejected, Wilson believed he could still gain support in

the 1920 election (Doc G). However, other problems that were arising in the post-war society quickly overshadowed the public sentiment for the ratification of the treaty. It was clear that much of the public was in favor of the treaty. Even the war peace movement led by The Woman's Peace Party realized such need for an international organization, like the League of Nations (Doc I). In the end the views of isolationists, which overpowered Wilson's persuasive tactics, ultimately led to the demise of the Treaty of Versailles. Not to mention the intense quarrels between the Senate and the tenacious president also contributed to the failure of Wilson's proposed peace treaty. By rejecting it, the Senate had ultimately destroyed Wilson's dream of peace and also illustrated how the future society would be turning away from his democratic ideals.