

USA 1890–1945

The USA 1890–c1920

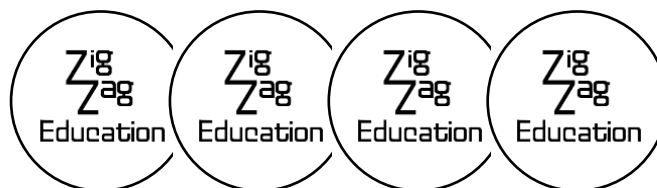
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Teacher's Introduction

This resource has been produced with the new AS Level modules in mind. It specifically matches the specifications for the AQA Examination Unit HIS1M: The USA 1890–1945. However, it also has relevance for any specification covering this period of American history.

The resource is aimed at GCE AS Level students, and includes a number of tasks to reinforce learning or to challenge student perceptions. It can be used as a classroom resource, a basis for teacher-led lessons or as an independent learning tool for students to use at home or in free periods.

How to use each Chapter

Each chapter of this resource can be used together as a complete course or discreetly as a stand-alone episode dealing with certain key issues and questions about the USA 1890–c1920.

There are several ways the tasks can be approached:

- Work through each section of the chapter, completing each task in turn
- Introduce each chapter by means of digital presentation, film or other method before handing out the chapter to the students and using the tasks as given
- Using the tasks as a basis for discussion and debate
- Using the tasks as reinforcement or support activities

All tasks are related to the information that directly precedes them; however, some will benefit from additional research or referral to other sections of the resource.

The tasks can be ignored in favour of other teacher-guided activities, and the resource used for background information, additional reading or revision.

Finally the resource and its tasks can be used for homework and/or research, and can also be used to set work for those times when a teacher is absent.

Chapter One: Domestic Policy

What was the political system of the United States?

The United States of America effectively began its time as a sovereign nation when it declared its independence from Britain in 1776. However, the next seven years were spent forcing the British to recognise the reality, and it took a further four years before the Americans came up with a constitution for governing their new state.

The US Constitution of 1787 is still in force today. It cannot be altered unless enough Congressmen agree to add an Amendment to the Constitution. Interestingly, an Amendment cannot be deleted from the Constitution any more than the Constitution itself can be changed. The only way to repeal an Amendment is to add a subsequent Amendment. Hence the 18th Amendment was repealed by the 21st Amendment.

The first ten Amendments to the US Constitution were the Bill of Rights. These were added in order to guarantee various freedoms, such as freedom of speech, freedom of association and freedom to petition the government. They also allowed citizens of the USA the right to carry weapons and the right of a fair trial if accused of a crime.

The USA is a Federal Republic. Unlike a more centralised country like Britain, a federal system means that there is a central or federal government for the whole country, but each individual state also has its own government. The Federal Government of the USA is based in Washington DC and is mainly responsible for foreign policy, defence, trade, currency and the postal service. The remaining areas of policy are mostly in the domain of the individual states, which can (and do) have different laws from each other (e.g. they have different policies on the issue of capital punishment).

The head of state and of the Federal Government is the President of the USA. He is elected directly by the people of the USA every four years, and once elected he assumes the position of Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. Unlike the British Prime Minister, the American President has a free choice of the advisers he wants to serve as heads of government departments. He does not have to choose advisers from the same political party as himself.

Before Franklin Roosevelt (1833–1945) American Presidents had never served more than two terms in office. In 1951, concerned by the increase in the power of the President under Franklin Roosevelt, Congress passed the twenty-second Amendment to the Constitution, which formally limits a President to two terms of office and no more.

In the USA the supreme law-making body is the United States Congress, which can initiate legislation as well as approving or rejecting presidential policies. Congress has two houses, both of which are elected. The 'lower' house or House of Representatives comprises Congressmen who are elected every two years. Each Representative acts for approximately the same number of voters – therefore states with the most people have the most Representatives in Congress.



Franklin Delano Roosevelt
(1833–1945)

The 'upper' house of the US Congress is the Senate, which by the end of the twentieth century comprised one hundred Senators. In 1890 there were fewer Senators because there were fewer states. Both Wyoming and Idaho were admitted to the Union in July 1890; it would take several more years before Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Alaska and Hawaii were admitted. Each state sends two Senators to the Senate regardless of its size, and each Senator is elected for a term of six years. Every two years one-third of the Senate has to be re-elected.



The final branch of the US Government is the Supreme Court, which has nine judges. The judges are not elected but chosen by the President with the agreement of the Senate. Supreme Court judges cannot thereafter be removed unless they resign, die in office or are impeached. So far there have been no impeachments of Supreme Court judges in US history. The purpose of the

Supreme Court is to make sure that the President and the Congress obey the laws of the US Constitution. Judges in the Supreme Court therefore have the power to declare new laws unconstitutional.

The American system of government was designed so that the three branches of government – President, Congress and Supreme Court – worked together in a set of '*checks and balances*'. This was to make sure that no one branch of government could become too powerful. For instance, Congress is able to deny a President funding if it disapproves of a presidential policy, whilst a President can veto laws passed by Congress. If this happens, Congress needs a two-thirds majority to overturn the presidential veto. Finally, the Supreme Court can overrule both President and Congress if it finds a law to be unconstitutional.

A similar system exists in each individual state as well, with three branches of government. In this case the three branches are the Governor, the state legislature and the state courts. State laws only apply to the state where the laws were passed, whereas federal laws apply to all states.

The United States is a democracy, which means that American citizens vote for the President, for Congressmen, for Senators, for State Governors and for state legislatures. In some states people even vote for public officials, like judges. There are two main political parties in the USA – the Republicans and the Democrats. In the first part of the twentieth century the Democrats were seen as being more progressive or left-wing than the Republicans.

In 1870 the 15th Amendment to the Constitution gave the voting rights to all male citizens regardless of race, colour or religion. However, many states found ways to frustrate this – such as requiring proof that the voter could read. So-called '*Grandfather*' clauses were put into place. These limited the number of African-Americans who could vote because a citizen had to prove that his grandfather had voted before he was allowed to register. African-Americans were excluded because their grandfathers would have been slaves at the time and therefore unable to vote.

American women were not allowed to vote until 1920.

Task

1. When did the United States become an independent country?
2. What is the only way in which the US Constitution can be changed?
3. How does a federal country like the USA differ from a more centralised state like Britain?
4. How many terms can be served by an American President according to the 22nd Amendment?
5. What is the difference between the House of Representatives and the Senate?
6. How is a Supreme Court judge appointed?
7. What power does the Supreme Court enjoy?
8. Explain the system of '*checks and balances*'.
9. What is the difference between a state law and a federal law?
10. Name the main political parties in the United States.

Why was the USA so successful economically after 1865?

The USA possessed huge natural resources, such as coal, oil, timber and cotton. It was virtually self-sufficient in all commodities. This meant it did not have to import these resources from abroad, and was therefore not reliant on foreign powers for essential commodities.

The development of the railways in the nineteenth century opened up these natural resources, especially in the American West, and capital (money), especially from Britain, helped the USA develop its economy.



Meanwhile the mass immigration into the USA in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries provided a large and a cheap source of labour. It also led to a growing home market, and growing demand for goods. American workers were paid well by European standards; therefore employers were encouraged to make goods more productively than their competitors in order to compete in the world market. Thus the Americans began mass producing goods where they could maximise profits.

Before 1900 US Government policy was one of laissez-faire. Politicians did not believe it was their job to interfere in economic matters, so American businesses were allowed to grow free from government controls. However, government policy did not always stay out of economic affairs and did sometimes encourage business, for instance by imposing high tariffs to discourage Americans from buying foreign goods.

Task

Explain how the following led to economic success for the USA:

- The possession of huge natural resources
- The development of the railways
- Foreign capital
- Mass immigration
- Mass production
- The laissez-faire policies of American governments
- High tariffs

What were the main features of the American economy in the late nineteenth century?

In 1876 the USA celebrated a hundred years as an independent state. However, it was far from a unified country. The American Civil War had ended a mere 11 years earlier, and the Reconstruction in the southern states following the war had failed to achieve equality for African-Americans. By 1890, despite the abolition of slavery in the USA, white Americans were firmly in control in the South. Most African-Americans were denied their civil rights and were in effect second class citizens. The effective segregation of American society by race was supported by the US Supreme Court, which ruled that black Americans were in fact '*separate but equal*'.

In Practice, however, they were just separate.

By 1890 the Indian tribes of the Great Plains had been defeated and the American Frontier was ended. However, vast swathes of the American West remained under-populated. To assist in the realisation of settlement on the Plains people were encouraged to come to the USA from abroad. Between 1840 and 1920 some 34 million people arrived seeking a better life free from poverty or persecution or both. Many enjoyed a new sense of freedom, though many others were treated merely as a source of cheap labour.



Painting of a US cavalry attack on an Indian Camp

Immigrants came from several countries. Upon arrival they settled and created a number of diverse communities, and they were particularly important in increasing the population in previously under-developed areas, such as California.

American industry also expanded rapidly, but the expansion in both industry and population came at a price. The reservations for Native American Indians were continually reduced so that Indian lands could be allocated to white American ranchers and homesteaders. Industrial practices were so unregulated that they were often abusive of industrial workers. This caused the formation of a labour movement within the USA, designed to protect the interests of the working classes. However, clashes occurred as the authorities tended to support the big business owners against workers.

For all the issues that came from the worsening industrial relations within the USA, American industry continued to grow and by the late nineteenth century the United States had become a leading industrial power. Farming was big business, especially on the newly settled Great Plains, whilst the USA had a plentiful supply of raw materials and was able to build on new technologies.

American foreign policy assisted in this development. The Americans tended to keep out of the conflicts that often embroiled the European powers, which meant that the USA was spared the crippling costs of maintaining powerful armed forces. The money saved could then be used to invest in industrial expansion.

Task

Match the sentences below

1. *American industry expanded rapidly*

2. *The American Civil War led to the Emancipation of American slaves*

3. *Mass Immigration was encouraged to fill the American West*

4. *The Labour movement grew in order to protect the interests of the workers*

5. *The USA kept out of international affairs and conflicts*

6. *By the late nineteenth century the USA had become a leading industrial power*

7. *The American West had been settled*

A. *But it remained badly under-populated*

B. *But clashes occurred with labour unions as the authorities tended to support big business*

C. *But industrial relations were among the worst in the world*

D. *But saved money because there was no need to spend it on large armed forces*

E. *But most African-Americans remained impoverished regardless*

F. *But many of them were treated merely as a source of cheap labour*

G. *But industrial practices were so unregulated that they were often abusive of the workers*

How and why did problems develop with the growing industrialisation of the USA?

By 1913 the United States was the world's leading industrial nation. The Americans had been able to capitalise on the plentiful supply of land and raw materials as well as the availability of a large workforce. Advances in communications technology, such as the telegraph, allowed US businesses to expand their operations, whilst the railways that had been built in the nineteenth century had opened up the American West, creating new markets in areas that had previously been deserted.

Meanwhile new technology had been used to boost industrial production, most notably in the iron and steel industry. At the same time new working practices, such as the assembly line, allowed for increased output.

Finding the money for these huge industries encouraged larger and larger units, called corporations. These expanded by combining into trusts and ultimately into monopolies and they also enjoyed protection from foreign competition as a result of a high tariff policy. This taxation on foreign goods made them more expensive than their US equivalent.

The process that led towards monopoly was encouraged by the laissez-faire attitude of American governments, which took the view that government did not have the right to interfere in the lives of individual people or businesses. However, in this the government was hypocritical – though it did nothing to regulate business in any way, it was quite prepared to intervene in order to prevent workers organising themselves into trade unions.



American business was dominated by a handful of extremely powerful industrialists, such as Andrew Carnegie (*left*) and John D. Rockefeller (*right*). Men like these amassed massive personal fortunes and possessed immense power and influence; collectively they became known as the 'robber barons'. These 'robber barons' dominated a mainly white Anglo-Saxon and Protestant world in which they could benefit from the steady stream of immigrants to the USA who were prepared to work for low wages. The 'barons' also found immigrants useful at times of strike action because they could be brought in as replacements for striking workers, who could then be sacked.



The life of an American industrial worker at the turn of the century was hard. Even at the best of times wages were kept as low as possible; working hours were long and working conditions were dangerous. This situation was considerably worse for female or child workers, who made up a significant number of the American workforce but who received much smaller wages than men.

All workers suffered from the periodic economic downturns. During these times wages were cut and jobs were lost. However, the development of the monopoly made matters worse because monopolies removed economic competition. This meant that workers were often forced into specific companies that demanded long hours of work, low pay and no benefits. Apart from leaving the monopoly industry altogether there was little that the worker could do to find better conditions elsewhere within the industry.

In the 1890s a new threat had emerged to the American worker. New technological improvements had contributed to increased productivity, but the greater usage of machines meant that there was less call for human workers. At the same time the flood of immigrants continued, bringing more and more people into the USA, all of whom would look for work in an economy where there was already a labour surplus.

Workers in the USA had little in the way of protection. The Federal Government refused to become involved in legislation for worker protection, insisting that the whole question was a matter for the individual states. Few of these gave any consideration to the needs of the workers.

By contrast the American system was working in favour of the '*robber barons*'. The Judiciary tended to rule against anyone who dared challenge the established way of doing business, often because the judges accepted the Darwinian concept of the '*survival of the fittest*', which encouraged only the best to rise to the top. In order for this to happen they did not need any sort of government interference that might skew the outcome. Many Americans agreed with this idea. They accepted that success came from individual efforts, and any attempt by the government to regulate business practices only had the effect of impeding the '*natural evolution*' of American companies and individuals.

This Social Darwinian attitude may have encouraged the growth of American businesses and the success of some individuals who ended up living the American Dream. However, the indifference implied in the concept of '*survival of the fittest*' meant that millions of people were left to suffer, enduring appalling living and working conditions. Their chances of escaping their poverty and living the American Dream were slim, no matter how hard they chose to work.

In the 1890s therefore the USA was a land of sharp contrasts, with millionaire business leaders and an impoverished working class. Most industrial workers in the 1890s were still expected to work for ten hours a day; however, many of them earned up to 40% less than the amount deemed necessary for a reasonable life. It was a situation that would appeal to more radical elements and those influenced by Socialist, Communist and other left-wing ideas, whose thoughts moved towards organising labour in order to improve conditions for working people.

The first attempt to organise American workers was the Noble Order of the Knights of Labour, formed in 1869 as a secret society for textile workers in Philadelphia. This was replaced in the 1870s by the American Federation of Labour (AFL), which sought to increase wages and reduce working hours.

Although there was no link in the minds of AFL leaders with socialist principles, the reluctance of business owners to make any concessions to the workers ultimately led to violent conflict. The first of these was the Great Railroad Strike of 1877, when railway workers across the USA went on strike after their employers cut their wages by 10%. Efforts to crush the strike led to several bloody conflicts in several cities, including New York and San Francisco.

Violence became a hallmark of American strike action. During a strike in Chicago in 1886 two workers were shot dead by police. Later a rally was called to protest about these deaths. Police arrived to disperse the demonstrators, and at some point someone threw a bomb at the police. A riot broke out in the course of which eleven people were killed and several dozen more injured.

In 1892 riots broke out at Carnegie's steel plant in Homestead, Pennsylvania. The company hired the Pinkerton Detective Agency to break the strike, but the strikers fired upon the agents and killed ten of them. The National Guard was brought in to subdue the workers, whilst the company hired non-union workers to break the strike. Once defeated, unions were not allowed back in the plant until 1937.

The most socialist of American working class organisations was the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW, also known as the '*Wobblies*'). The IWW openly called for class war, and used revolutionary rhetoric in its speeches. It gained many supporters after its successful textile strike in Lawrence, Massachusetts in 1912.

Task

Answer the following questions:

1. Why had the USA become the world's leading industrial nation by 1913?
2. What was a corporation and why were corporations able to do so well in the USA?
3. What was the traditional attitude of US governments towards regulation of the US economy?
4. Why might this traditional attitude be considered hypocritical by some?
5. Who were the '*robber barons*' and why were they called this?
6. What problems faced American workers, especially female and child workers?
7. Why did the existence of the monopolies make things harder for American workers?
8. Why did technological innovation threaten American workers?
9. Why were many American workers opposed to immigration?
10. What were the advantages and disadvantages of the concept of survival of the fittest when applied to American business?
11. Why did socialist and communist ideas spread during this period?
12. What was the main purpose of the American Federation of Labour?
13. Why did so many American strikes turn violent?

What problems were associated with mass immigration to the United States?

Although the immigrants to the USA came from a variety of countries, the largest numbers came from Britain, Ireland, Germany, Italy and Austria-Hungary. The vast majority arrived at the port of New York City, but most of these soon passed through to different parts of the USA. Once they had been processed, ethnic groups then tended to congregate in different parts of the USA. New York and other large cities were the preferred destination for the Irish, the Italians and the Jews, whilst the Germans and Austro-Hungarians tended to head towards the Midwestern areas.

There were a number of reasons why people wanted to come to the United States. Many were seeking a better life, hoping for stable employment in industry or possibly as one of the growing number of homesteaders settling on the Great Plains. In the case of the Irish many had fled their homeland in an effort to escape the potato famine of the 1840s.



Immigrants arrive in America seeking a better life

Other people were fleeing religious or political persecution. Prominent among these were the conservative Lutherans from Saxony and the Jews from Russia and Austria-Hungary. Finally there were those who came to escape the constant warfare in parts of nineteenth century Europe or to avoid the regular bouts of disease epidemics that hit their homelands.

Whatever the reason for the arrival of each immigrant, many of them faced prejudice and discrimination, and all of them had to deal with the exploitative working conditions in the USA. Some people were excluded from entry to the USA, notably the Chinese and the Japanese, which led to feelings in the Far East that there was a racist element to US immigration policy.

Task

1. From which European countries did most immigrants come?
2. Why did so many people choose to leave Europe for the United States?
3. What problems were faced by immigrants?
4. Why did the Japanese and Chinese consider US immigration policy to be racist?

What was populism and how successful was it as a movement?

During the nineteenth century huge advances were made in farming in the United States and more and more land was brought into cultivation. However, many farmers faced periods of hardship, caused by several factors, including soil exhaustion, natural disaster and a lack of government assistance.

By the end of the nineteenth century the most serious problem was over-production, largely as a result of the developments in the Great Plains. New technology and mechanisation had permitted the cultivation of more land and also the output from each plot of land. Similar developments were also taking place in other countries, such as Canada, Australia and Argentina, resulting in a glut of agricultural produce on the world market. In turn this caused prices to fall as producers sought to sell their produce at any price they could get to whoever might wish to buy it.

At the same time as farmers were receiving lower prices for their produce, the price of manufactured goods was rising. Farmers therefore found their costs rising whilst their income fell. Many farmers lurched into difficulties and attempted to solve their financial problems by borrowing money.

Borrowed money does have to be repaid and with interest. Many farmers, faced with the need to pay off their debts, chose to increase the output from their farms hoping to earn more from the sales. In the event this merely added to the surplus of agricultural produce on the world market, which in turn reduced the prices further, made life even harder for the farmers and led to even greater borrowing. It was a vicious circle and few knew how to break free from it.

During the 1880s the so-called Farmers' Alliance began to organise American farmers. By 1890 it had a membership of some one and a half million members across the USA. At the same time African-American farmers joined the Coloured Farmers' National Alliance, which gained more than a million members. Both organisations were political and both had programmes for economic reform, which included demands for lower interest rates on loans and lower tariffs.

However, the McKinley Tariff of 1890 was one of the highest ever introduced into the United States, which caused greater distress among the farming communities of the USA. The Farmers' Alliance drew the conclusion that it could do little without political influence in Congress, so it teamed up with other small parties and sympathetic Democrats to create the Populist Party.

The new party enjoyed some success in 1890, entering into coalition governments in several southern and western states and sending Populists to both Houses of Congress. Many of the Populists wanted to change the American political system, which they considered to have become hopelessly corrupted by business and commercial interests. In the 1892 presidential election the Populists put forward their own candidate, who gained more than a million votes.

Populists tended to think that the problems facing their supporters in the countryside had come about because of a shortage of money in the economy. They argued for an unlimited silver coinage, which they maintained would increase the volume of available money and ultimately would increase the price of farm produce. A silver coinage would also lead to inflation, which would make it simpler for those in debt to repay their loans.

This brought the Populists into conflict with more traditional economists and conservative elements within the USA, who countered that once inflation had started it could not be stopped easily. They pointed out that railway bonds – the most important financial instrument of the time – were payable in gold. If their values were reset in half-price silver dollars then the railways would go bankrupt within weeks leading to massive unemployment and the ruination of the American economy.

Perhaps more significantly the American political system worked against smaller parties, and the Populists soon came to the conclusion that they would need to form an alliance with one of the two main political parties. At the time this choice was easy because it was the Democrats who were more sympathetic to the idea of using silver. Therefore, by the 1896 presidential election the Populists had been absorbed into the Democratic Party.

The 1896 election was won by the Republican William McKinley. The next year the American economy began an upward turn, and the nation's attention was pulled away from economic matters in 1898 because of the Spanish-American War. Populism seemed to have died away. But the ideas of Populism lived on within the Democratic Party and several of their ideas for reform were eventually introduced into the USA during the twentieth century.

Task

How successful was the Populist movement?

In answering this question you might like to mention the following:

- The problems facing American farmers by the end of the nineteenth century
- The Farmers' Alliance and the formation of the Populist Party
- The electoral performance of the Populists between 1890 and 1892
- The attempt to change the US currency to one based on silver
- The way in which the American political system operated
- The later policies of the Democratic Party

Remember that when faced with such a question you will need to consider the ways in which the movement may not have succeeded, as well as the ways in which it may have been successful, before coming to a reasoned conclusion.

What were the main features of the Harrison presidency?

The sitting President of the USA in 1890 was Benjamin Harrison (*right*), who had defeated the Democratic candidate in 1888, Grover Cleveland, even though Cleveland had won 100,000 more votes than Harrison. The vagaries of the US electoral system, however, allowed Harrison to carry the Electoral College by 233 to 168, and thus he became President.



The most significant aspect of the Harrison presidency was perhaps the Sherman Anti-Trust Act, because this was the first time the Federal Government had tried to regulate an aspect of American business practice. In fact, despite its name, the act was not aimed specifically at Trusts. Instead it was pointed at anything that would *'restrain trade'* and it spoke of prohibiting *'combinations'* that could interfere with trade. This meant it could easily be used – and was used – as a piece of anti-trade union legislation.

The intention of the act was to prevent businesses cooperating to increase the price of goods to the consumer. This was not the same thing as preventing the dominance of one company over a particular industry. In fact, according to Senator George Hoar, any company that *'got the whole business because nobody could do it as well as he could'*, was considered not to have violated the act.

Perhaps the biggest issue of the Harrison administration was that of the McKinley Tariff, which had set the average tariff rate for imports at 48.4%. This acted to increase prices of many goods in the USA, which led to demands for wage increases to keep pace with prices. This then tended to put up production costs in the USA – costs which were passed on to the consumers in the form of yet higher prices.

The tariff was especially harsh on farmers because it pushed up the price of farm equipment but failed to prevent the collapse in the price for farm produce. This was because American agricultural produce was already cheaper than foreign imports, so the upward trend in prices seen as a result of the tariff in most areas of the economy did not apply to farming.

To what extent the tariff was responsible is uncertain, but it certainly did not help the economic situation in the USA and long before the end of the Harrison administration prosperity had disappeared. Voters realised that the economy was in trouble and blamed Harrison for the problems. The 1892 election was therefore won by the Democrat, Grover Cleveland.

What were the main features of the Cleveland presidency?



The re-election of Grover Cleveland (*left*) in 1892 meant that he became the only US President to be elected for a second term of office that did not run successively to the first. However, his second presidency soon faced serious economic problems as a full-scale panic hit the American stock market in 1893.

Cleveland was aware that the tariff was the cause of the cycle of ever-increasing prices and he tried twice (in 1893 and 1894) to lower the tariff rate. In this effort he was frustrated by the Senate, which pushed through the Wilson-Gorman Tariff Act to replace the McKinley Tariff. Cleveland considered this new tariff to have changed little, though he did concede that it was better than the McKinley Tariff.

The most serious incident of the Cleveland administration was the Pullman Strike, which illustrated the problems in American industrial relations and the methods used to break strikes. The Pullman Palace Car Company specialised in the production of railway carriages. In the 1893 economic crisis the demand for new railway carriages collapsed and the company's income fell. The company decided to make up the shortfall by cutting the wages of the workers.

A workers' delegation sought to complain about this decision, but the company refused to discuss the issue. Many of the workers had joined the American Railway Union (ARU), so when a strike was called, the ARU immediately supported the Pullman workers by starting a boycott of all Pullman carriages.

Faced with the prospect of no work, the Pullman works was shut down and a lockout began. In retaliation railway workers across the USA refused to switch Pullman carriages onto trains and the ARU stated that if any switchman was disciplined for this refusal, then the ARU would order a national strike of all railwaymen.

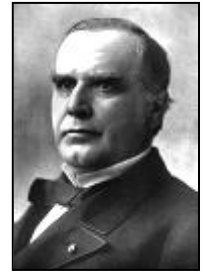
By the end of June 1894 some 125,000 railway workers had stopped work rather than handle Pullman carriages. In response the affected railway companies hired replacement workers to break the strike, which immediately increased tensions. The companies also appealed to the law, using the Sherman Anti-Trust Act, obtaining an injunction to ban union leaders from supporting the Pullman strike.

The leaders of the ARU chose to ignore the injunction, at which point Cleveland, determined that the railway lines would remain operative, sent in some 2,000 federal troops, who were used to break the strike. Cleveland justified his decision by claiming that the strike interfered with the delivery of the mail, which was a federal responsibility. He also argued that the unions had ignored a federal injunction and that the strike represented a threat to public safety.

The presence of soldiers did nothing to reduce tensions and violence continued, in the course of which strikers were killed and wounded. The strike was broken, and the ARU was also broken, its leader sentenced to jail in 1895 for contempt of court. Finally, by using the law against the trade union, the right to strike in the USA had been questioned. Industrial relations in the United States continued to be strained.

What were the main features of the McKinley presidency?

The 1896 presidential election was won by the Republican William McKinley (*right*). He had claimed to be the '*advance agent of prosperity*' – a claim that seemed justified in 1897 as the US economy revived, partly because of renewed confidence in the business sector as a result of the Republican victory.



McKinley had been responsible for the 1890 tariff, and he was again concerned about tariffs during his presidency. The US Treasury was in deficit when McKinley was in office and, in order to redress the balance, McKinley decided there was a need for a new tariff. The result of this was the Dingley Act, which increased the average tariff rate from 40% to 50%. This was a much heavier tariff than its predecessors, and it soon had the same effect as McKinley's 1890 tariff. Prices in the USA began to rise.



McKinley was, however, re-elected as President in 1900. He served little of it. In September 1901 he went with his wife to the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York. On the second day he was greeting the American people at the Temple of Music. One of these people was Leon Frank Czolgosz (*left*), the son of a Polish immigrant who had been influenced by anarchist propaganda. When the President moved to greet him, shot him twice. The first bullet merely grazed the President's shoulder, but the second lodged in his back-muscles after having passed through his stomach, colon and kidney.

The doctors treating his wounds were convinced that McKinley would live, but they were unable to find the bullet. Gangrene set in and eventually the President died. Ironically there was one of the new X-Ray machines on display at the Exposition, but the doctors were unwilling to use the new technology because they were unsure about the side effects.

Czolgosz was tried and found guilty of murder. He was executed by electric chair on 29th October 1901.

Task

What was the significance of the following during the presidencies of Harrison, Cleveland and McKinley?

- The Sherman Anti-Trust Act
- The McKinley Tariff
- Farm costs and prices
- The Wilson-Gorman Tariff
- The Pullman Strike
- The actions of the American Railway Union (ARU)
- The use of federal troops in industrial disputes
- The Dingley Act
- Leon Frank Czolgosz

What was progressivism?

There is no clear definition for progressivism. Some have argued that it was primarily about the regulation of big business. Others maintain it was an attempt at political and social reform. It was certainly not specific to any one political party. Both Theodore Roosevelt (Republican) and Woodrow Wilson (Democrat) are seen as progressives.

At the same time, not all social and political reforms were introduced by progressives, and progressive reforms were often introduced at state rather than federal level. This has led some to argue that progressivism is more accurately defined as '*interventionism*'. By this they mean a process by which direct efforts could manipulate social improvements. However, in the USA, progressives were not socialists. All progressives supported capitalism, and all believed in representative democracy and moderate reform by persuasion.

Progressives tended to support one or more reformist ideas. Many progressives believed that trusts and monopolies had become a threat to the interests of the American people because they could fix prices. This needed to be changed because it was contrary to the principles of free enterprise.

Many also believed that over the years the political machinery of the USA had become dominated by big business and was therefore corrupt. Progressives wanted government to become more accountable to the people, which was the principle of democracy, rather than to big businesses. However, progressives did not always agree on the objectives – for example, not all progressive opinion favoured the concept of female suffrage.

Progressives were aware that many Americans lived in terrible poverty, and they wanted to improve their living conditions. They argued for an end to child labour and they wanted the introduction of old age pensions and education reform. Many believed this could be done by changing the system of taxation so that incomes were redistributed – however, others were against this because it would contradict the principle of individual reward for individual effort.

Many of the progressives tended to be middle class professionals, such as lawyers and doctors. As such they were not revolutionary and favoured moderate reform in order to make society more stable and efficient. They also knew how to make use of the media. At the same time one magazine believed it had hit a winning formula – it noticed that circulation increased when it exposed political or business corruption. Such reports tended to '*push*' public opinion towards progressive reform.

Finally, progressives tended to believe that their programme of moderate reform was essential. The growing violence that accompanied strike action in the USA convinced progressives that, unless reform was introduced to improve the lot of the working classes, then socialism would spread and the United States could end up facing class struggle and revolution.

Task

Define precisely what is meant by progressivism.

Make sure you include information on the following:

- Trusts and Monopolies
- Big Business and Democracy
- Social and Economic Improvement
- The attitude towards extremist and socialist ideas

How progressive was Theodore Roosevelt?



In accordance with American political practice, Vice President Theodore Roosevelt (*left*) assumed the presidency on the death of McKinley. Roosevelt became President at the start of the progressive movement and thus he faced the demands for social and political reform that came from the progressives.

By the early twentieth century more than half of the states had established a maximum 8-hour day. Many had also passed laws to improve both working and living conditions, and laws had also been passed making employers legally responsible for injuries that took place at the workplace.

President Roosevelt was not immune from the progressive spirit. At least, he was politically astute enough to realise that taking a progressive stance would win him support among the voters. In his State of the Union address in 1901 he called for promotion within the civil service based on merit, the conservation of natural resources and greater controls on business and interstate transport.

To bring some sort of coherent programme to his presidency, Roosevelt spoke of a '*square deal*' that would help all Americans. He was also prepared to intervene in issues in order to put forward a progressive platform. He became actively involved in an industrial dispute between miners and coalmine owners in Pennsylvania when he sought to get both sides to agree to arbitration. The talks broke down after the mine owners refused to accept the President's proposal for independent arbitration to settle the dispute. Roosevelt then threatened to use federal troops to run the mines and he began to put pressure on individual owners to submit to his proposal.

Eventually the mine owners gave in and the arbitration decision was for miners to be given a 10% wage increase and a nine-hour day. However there was to be no union recognition in the mines.

Roosevelt was not opposed to big business, but he was eager to ensure fair competition and business practices that were fair to consumers. As a result he supported the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906, which banned the false-labelling and adulteration of food and drugs. He also supported the Meat Inspection Act of 1908 and he was stricter in his treatment of American Trusts, establishing the Bureau of Corporations in 1903, which had the power to investigate any allegation made against a Trust.

Roosevelt chose not to stand for re-election in 1908, though there was no constitutional reason to prevent him. Instead he threw his support behind William Taft, who won the election and became the 27th President of the USA. Taft remained true to the progressive programme begun by Roosevelt. During his presidency an eight-hour day was introduced for everyone on government contracts, the Sixteenth Amendment was also introduced, allowing for the imposition of a graduated income tax, and government departments were created to help workers secure decent working conditions.

Taft was also willing to pursue big business practices when he thought it appropriate. In 1911 the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey was dissolved for holding an illegal monopoly in oil refining; in the same year the American Tobacco Company was forced to reorganise after it was declared an illegal combination.

However, Taft was to lose progressive supporters because of his support for a new tariff and seemingly supporting private ownership over conservationism. Progressives had hoped for a massive cut in the tariff, and the failure to gain this led many to question Taft's commitment to the progressive cause. Taft also found himself supporting conservatives in Congress, which made it appear that he had lost his progressive attitude. Many began to feel he was no longer committed to their progressive cause.

Why did William Taft lose the 1912 election?

Growing opposition to Taft (*right*) within his own party caused Theodore Roosevelt to reconsider his position. Roosevelt had come to the conclusion that Taft had not sustained a sufficiently progressive approach during his presidency, thus Roosevelt put himself forward as a presidential candidate for the Republicans.



This did not meet with the approval of the Republican leadership, and Taft emerged as the Republican candidate as a result of the support of his party leaders. Taft promised far greater progressive reform should he reform, but this did not convince Roosevelt, who became the presidential candidate for the newly formed Progressive Party.

In the event Roosevelt pushed Taft into third place in the election, but the Republican vote had been divided between Taft and Roosevelt. The winner was therefore the Democratic candidate, Woodrow Wilson, who became the only Democratic President between the years 1899 and 1933.

Task

1. Why did Theodore Roosevelt take a progressive position during his presidency?
2. Why did he get involved in the Pennsylvania mining dispute?
3. Why did he support various pieces of progressive legislation, such as the Pure Food and Drug Act?
4. Why did William Taft become President in 1909?
5. Why did Taft lose the support of the progressives?
6. Why did Taft lose the 1912 presidential election?
7. How progressive were Presidents Roosevelt and Taft? Use the information above and explain your answer.

How progressive was Woodrow Wilson?



Wilson (*left*) believed passionately in justice and brought his liberal ideas to his policies. In domestic affairs he was far from a new direction in American politics, concluding many of the policies initially introduced by Roosevelt and Taft.

First the Wilson administration supported new pieces of legislation designed to support American workers and farmers, such as the Smith-Lever Act (1914), which helped farmers learn new agricultural techniques by means of home instruction, and the Adamson Act (1916), which established an eight-hour day and overtime pay for railway workers involved in interstate business.

The Clayton Anti-Trust Act was introduced in 1914, and made it clear that strikes and boycotts were not unlawful under federal law, despite the decisions made in some courts that such action was in '*restraint of trade*'. It also limited the use of injunctions to prevent strike action, and stressed that trade unions were not to be considered as trusts.

In the same year the Federal Trade Commission was set up with the power to oversee any business engaged in interstate trade. Wilson had also been keen to establish a better banking and credit system within the USA. The 1913 Federal Reserve Act created a nationwide system of credit under an independent Federal Reserve Board. This brought the currency under central control, and also permitted the Board to operate tight monetary controls in different parts of the country.

Finally the Democrats passed the Underwood Tariff of 1913. This reduced the tariff rate on nearly a thousand different items and abolished the tariff on other items, such as iron and wood.

Wilson's first presidency, therefore, saw greater regulation of business, a more flexible currency and greater protection of workers, at least as far as was possible within the limited constitutional power of the federal government. His reforms were popular and thus he won the 1916 election for a second term of progressive domestic reform. However, by then domestic issues were being overshadowed by foreign affairs.

Task

Place the following acts passed during the Wilson administration in an order of importance from the point of view of a progressive:

- The Smith-Lever Act
- The Adamson Act
- The Clayton Anti-Trust Act
- The Federal Reserve Act
- The Underwood Tariff

Why have you chosen this particular order?

How did the First World War affect progressivism?

Some have seen the First World War as the high point of American progressivism. They argue that Wilson's principles of self-determination and making the world '*safe for democracy*' to be an attempt to apply progressivism to foreign policy.

The government certainly became more involved in social and economic concerns, regulating many industries in order to maximise the war effort. For instance, the government took control of the railways and of the telephone lines.

However, others have argued that the First World War represents the death throes of progressivism, and that a new era was introduced for the 1920s as a result of the war that was less regulatory and distinctly not progressive.

Was progressivism progressive?

Several left-wing commentators, notably Communists, have put forward the viewpoint that progressivism was little more than a small piece of legislation introduced only to keep the working masses happy and to prevent genuine radical reform. They point to the lack of any social reorganisation – big businesses and trusts survived the progressive era, as did political corruption.

Right-wing opinion argues that the main benefits of the progressive period – pensions, profit-sharing schemes, wage rises, etc. – was more a result of voluntary action undertaken by individual businesses rather than government intervention. This is used to underplay the progressive legislation of the period and to stress the need for government to keep out of business matters.

Finally there was a distinctly darker side to progressivism because many southern progressives were racist in their attitudes, including Woodrow Wilson himself. The period actually saw greater segregation of African-Americans in the southern states rather than greater freedoms for them.

However, for all the limitations, it had become harder for American corporations to act against the public interest and progressivism had blunted the harsher aspects of American industrialisation. It had also more firmly established the principle that government was responsible to the people. Progressive Presidents also paved the way for more actively reformist twentieth century Presidents, such as Franklin Roosevelt and Lyndon Johnson.

This was for the future. In 1924 a new Progressive Party put forward Robert La Follette as their presidential candidate. He stood on a progressive platform that condemned monopolies, called for tariff reform and railway nationalisation, and proposed aid for farmers. In the 1920s this programme was considered dangerously radical by both Republican and Democratic voters. Progressivism was no longer a force in American politics.

Task

Read the following opinions about progressivism, and then match the comment with the person below

A. *I like what progressivism has achieved. And it has been done in true American tradition, with no extremist influence. It is much harder for big business to act against the interests of the majority of Americans now.*

B. *There was absolutely no need for government intervention in order to advance so-called progressive legislation. More was achieved by the voluntary actions of individual businesses than was ever done by government. The role of government is to keep out of economics.*

C. *The best part of progressivism is the keeping of the races separate. We don't want control passing out of white hands.*

D. *Progressivism is a con – it has done little more than provide a few sops to the workers to keep them happy. It has certainly made no real change to American society.*

1. The Communist

2. The Businessman

3. The Racist

4. The Progressive

Chapter Two: Foreign Policy

What was traditional US foreign policy?

George Washington and the Founding Fathers



The United States was born after a successful war against their British colonial masters from 1775 to 1781. The commander-in-chief of American forces was George Washington (*left*), who later became the first President of the United States. When he retired after two terms in office, he warned the Americans against becoming entangled in foreign alliances.

Washington believed the USA had little to gain from becoming tied to any other country, and advised future American leaders to keep out of any European disputes. It was advice that his immediate successors were happy to follow. Many of these had also lived through the revolt against Britain and had helped Washington to establish the American Republic. Collectively these men became known as the Founding Fathers.

The Monroe Doctrine, 1823

The desire of the Founding Fathers to remain aloof from European affairs did not, however, guarantee that European countries would leave the United States alone. At the start of the nineteenth century much of the American continent was occupied by European colonial powers.

The initial conquerors of the American continent had been the Spanish and Portuguese, but the strength of both these powers was fading by the nineteenth century. This encouraged many of their possessions in South and Central America to rebel against their masters and establish a number of independent republics.

Such acts were supported in Washington, but the Americans were also wary that these new republics might prove unstable and unable to withstand pressure from stronger European powers, in particular the British and, to a lesser extent, the French. Thus, in 1823, the US President, James Monroe (*right*), issued his famous doctrine.



This called for European powers to stay out of the Western Hemisphere – in other words no new European colonies or dominions should be established anywhere on the American continent. Any European power ignoring the doctrine would be considered hostile by the United States. In return the Americans promised to stay neutral in European affairs and stated that the USA had no intention of establishing its own colonies in the Western Hemisphere, or anywhere else. It was a doctrine that was to last until the twentieth century.

Task

What was the influence of the Founding Fathers and President Monroe on American Foreign Policy?

Why did some Americans want a new Manifest Destiny?

Until the defeat of the Plains Indians in 1890, the expansion of white Americans into the Great Plains had allowed for continued growth and development. But the massacre of the Indians at Wounded Knee had effectively ended the '*Frontier*', and thus there was no further scope for expansion within North America. Manifest Destiny – the belief by white Americans that they would come to control North America – had been achieved. Many now began to look for a new version of Manifest Destiny.

In the early 1890s, President Harrison conducted a foreign policy that culminated in the first Pan-American Congress. This met in Washington and it represented the first attempts to engender co-operation between all nations on the American continents.

At the same time Harrison tried to put forward a treaty that would see the American annexation of Hawaii. However, nothing had come of this by the time Harrison's presidency ended, and President Cleveland withdrew the treaty once he took over in the White House.

In 1893 the USA suffered a stock market collapse and economic crisis that led to massive unemployment, which in turn led to social protest and violent industrial disputes. Some Americans came to the conclusion that the US market had reached a point when companies were producing more goods than customers had the money or desire to buy.

They argued therefore that new markets were needed for American goods. A new Manifest Destiny would bring new areas of the world under white American control, providing not only new markets but also new employment opportunities for the unemployed in the USA.

However, the Americans realised that they were unlikely to bring new areas of the world under the influence of the USA without some competition from European powers seeking exactly the same thing for exactly the same reason. There could therefore be clashes in various parts of the world, especially in the Pacific and South America where American interests often clashed with those of Britain.

Task

1. What was the original Manifest Destiny?
2. Why did some Americans consider that a new Manifest Destiny was needed?
3. What was the danger inherent in any new Manifest Destiny?

What were the arguments for and against an American Empire?

The Case for Empire

Once Manifest Destiny had been fulfilled and the American Frontier closed, some Americans felt the need to continue to expand into other areas of the American continent. The British had made it perfectly clear that they had no intention of abandoning Canada, and there was no enthusiasm in the USA for confrontation with Britain in any case, so the obvious direction for any future form of Manifest Destiny was Latin America.

The Americans were to claim that expansion into Latin America was their duty – the United States should expand its civilising influence and the benefits of democracy to other states considered less fortunate than itself. Yet the justification was tinted with tones of racial superiority. Many Americans argued that American democracy and capitalism were clearly better systems than the outdated concepts that existed in so many other countries. Therefore the Americans would intervene in those countries and impose American ideals on them for their own good. These countries would then *'benefit'* from American values.

No better example can be seen of the paternalistic, not to say racist, attitudes of the time than President McKinley's referral to the Filipinos as *'little brown brothers'*. He also spoke of the desirability that the United States should *'uplift, civilise and Christianise'* the Philippine Islands. Such a comment merely served to highlight the ignorance of the President – the Filipinos had been Roman Catholic Christians for centuries as a result of Spanish colonisation.

For some Americans the economic arguments were paramount. The US economy was certainly in depression by the mid-1890s and there was a belief in some quarters that the Americans needed new overseas markets in which to grow further. Many Americans found the potentially massive Chinese market to be hugely tempting.

Finally there was the argument that the possession of an empire was essential if the USA were not to be considered as a *'second-rate'* power when compared to the European powers. By the mid-1890s most of the world had been claimed as a colony for one or other of the European empires, and a failure of the USA to join the *'imperial club'* would mean that the balance of world power would be tilted against the United States.

The Case against Empire

Most Europeans were very much in favour of the concept of Empire. In the United States there was some support for the concept – but there was also much opposition. There were voices in the USA that were quick to point out that, far from exporting the benefits of democracy to foreigners, the record of white Americans within the USA itself left much to be desired. African-Americans had been kept as slaves and were now segregated and discriminated against, whilst the Native Indian tribes had essentially been systematically slaughtered.

Opponents of Empire argued that there were no huge foreign markets for American goods, and the search for these elusive markets would only bring the USA into conflict with a European rival. They pointed out that the USA, unlike countries like Britain, had no experience of empire and therefore lacked the manpower and expertise to run an empire successfully.

Their main argument was however one of morality. Dressing up imperialism as *'Manifest Destiny'* would not do and would fool nobody. The arguments offered for Empire were no better than those put

forward by Europeans – and those arguments were outdated. Far from enabling greater civilisation and democracy to take place, American Imperialism would merely harm the reputation and image of the Americans.

By acting like the European Great Powers, the Americans would also surrender their unique role as a strong and democratic state that respected the freedom of other peoples. Opponents of Empire were savage in their attacks on the Imperialists, and demanded to know how the Imperialists could have forgotten the very origins of the United States. The USA had fought the British for freedom from the British Empire. How could a state that had fought for its own freedom now seek to deny it to others?

Yet as the 1890s progressed, it became clear that the anti-Imperialists were in a minority. It seemed that the Americans were on course for Empire.

Task

Which of the following statements are arguments against Empire and which are arguments for Empire? Which is the more convincing argument – the case for Empire or the case against? Why?

- A. Once Manifest Destiny had been fulfilled some Americans felt the need to continue to expand into other areas of the American continent. The psychology of the Americans had become used to growth, and the Americans would feel constrained if they were not permitted to expand elsewhere.
- B. The USA, unlike Britain for example, simply lacked the manpower and expertise to develop an Empire. The Americans needed to concentrate on developing the under-populated American West.
- C. It was the duty of the USA to expand its civilising influence and the benefits of democracy to other states less fortunate than itself. American democracy and capitalism were clearly better systems than the outdated concepts that existed in so many countries.
- D. The development of Empire was essential if the USA were not to be left behind as European Empires continued to grow. Without Empire the world balance of power would work against the USA.
- E. American Imperialism would merely harm the reputation and image of the Americans. By acting like the European Great Powers, the Americans would surrender their unique role as a strong and democratic state that respected the freedom of other peoples.
- F. Far from exporting the benefits of American values to other people, the history of white American action on home soil showed that US society left much to be desired. Black African-Americans had been kept as slaves and were now discriminated against, whilst Native American Indians had been more or less systematically slaughtered.
- G. There were no huge markets abroad for American goods. The only significant possibility in the search for new markets was China – which might bring about a clash with a European rival.
- H. The domestic economy had reached its maximum capability and thus the USA needed overseas markets in order to grow further. To do this the Americans would also need bases in order to protect communications and supply routes.
- I. American businesses would gain access to cheap raw materials from these possessions and the poor of the USA would have the opportunity to seek a new life abroad.
- J. The USA had fought the British for freedom from the British Empire. How could a state that had fought for its own freedom now seek to deny it to others?

How and why did the Americans begin an Empire?

The Americans had long taken an interest in trading with the Chinese and these trading interests were key factors in US foreign policy in the Far East. The Americans were convinced that there was a large market in China that would help the American economy out of depression and bring about economic growth.

However, the route to China was long. Ships using the trading routes would need several stopping stations at various Pacific islands for refuelling and supply purposes. Once the Americans had gained access to these bases, it then became vital that no other power muscled in to seize control of the relevant island – and the most certain way to achieve this was to take control of the islands themselves.

Of course, the European powers had come to the same conclusion, which could easily lead to confrontation. One such threat had already arisen over the Samoan Islands, where the British and the Germans were also seeking control. In this case, however, conflict was avoided when both European powers agreed with the Americans to joint control of the islands.

From the American perspective the most significant of the Pacific islands was Hawaii, and in 1887 the USA had gained exclusive rights to the deep-water port of Pearl Harbour. In return for this right the Americans permitted the Hawaiians to export sugar to the USA free from tariff duties. However, in 1890, the Americans ended this privilege, which caused strong anti-American feelings in Hawaii.

This caused American settlers to fear that their position in Hawaii was under threat. Thus, in 1893, the settlers joined with US Marines to overthrow the queen and establish a much more pro-American government. This new government then requested permission to join the United States. This got nowhere at the time because President Cleveland turned down the request. Cleveland was not convinced that the majority of Hawaiians wanted to join the USA.



US Marines in Honolulu at the time of the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy, January 1893.

By 1898 Cleveland had been replaced by McKinley, who was much more favourably inclined towards the idea of allowing Hawaii to join the USA. Formal annexation of Hawaii therefore took place in 1898. Hawaii was by no means the only island to fall to US control – others included Johnston Island, Palmyra Island and Guam (1898) and Wake Island (1899).

Meanwhile the European powers were steadily increasing their control over China. The Americans were anxious not to be excluded from the Chinese market, but also did not wish to come into conflict with Europeans over China. They put forward the concept of the '*Open Door*', which stated that Chinese ports should be open to merchants from all nations, not just those from the country that controlled the particular port.

US Secretary of State John Hay was aware that the United States could not challenge the European powers, so he sent a note to each of them asking for their agreement to the Open Door Policy. The Europeans ignored this note, but Hay announced regardless that it had been accepted.

Hay was aware that there was likely to be little in the way of European opposition to the policy – there were too many rivalries between the various European states for any of them to be unduly worried about the United States. However, Hay did underestimate the reaction in Japan. The Japanese simply considered the American presence in China to be yet another white power seeking to exploit the Chinese for its own ends. The decision of the USA to become involved in China therefore marks the beginning of the deep suspicions between Japan and the USA that ultimately led to the events at Pearl Harbour in 1941.

Task

Explain the importance of the following in the development of the American Empire:

- The Chinese market
- The need for ships to have places to refuel
- The Samoan Islands
- Hawaii and Pearl Harbour
- American island annexations in 1898 and 1899
- The Open Door Policy

What were the causes of the Spanish-American War?

By the 1890s the United States was mainly concerned about the ambitions of the British and the Germans; however, the oldest European presence in the Americas had been Spanish. Christopher Columbus had discovered the American continent in 1492 in the name of the Spanish monarchy, and much of America had been claimed by Spain.

By 1895 most Spanish colonies had been lost, but Spain still had a few, one of which was Cuba. The Cubans had tried to oust the Spanish, but had so far failed. In 1895 they tried again. The Spanish responded by sending in troops to assist the local garrison in putting down the revolt.

Unfortunately for the Spanish the rebels used guerrilla tactics, denying the superior Spanish regulars the chance to bring them to decisive battle. After two years the rebellion had not been put down, and the Cubans had declared their independence.

In the USA there was sympathy for the efforts of the Cubans to overthrow Spanish rule. However the official position was to keep out of the rebellion. This became difficult. Two New York newspapers were locked in a circulation war, and they now used the Cuban revolt to gain readers by printing ever more sensational stories.

It was a process that became known as '*Yellow Journalism*'. Stories were all strongly anti-Spanish, and many of them were clearly untrue. Yet their circulations rose and their readers were appalled. The Americans began to turn strongly against Spain. The reality was that both sides were guilty of atrocities during the revolt, but the American people were given heavily-biased accounts that caused outrage against the brutal Spanish. Yet even this wave of feeling among the people was unlikely to convince the US Government to intervene in Cuba.



The wreckage of the USS *Maine* in Havana Harbour, 1898

Then, in February 1898, the American warship USS *Maine* exploded in Havana, Cuba's chief city. The ship was lost and 266 US sailors died. The first investigation into the incident blamed mines laid by the Spanish. A second one blamed sparks igniting the ammunition hold. Whatever the cause, the American newspapers had already made up their mind: Spain was blamed for the loss of life and revenge was called for.

McKinley was extremely anxious to avoid war with Spain. He hoped to achieve a negotiated settlement, but the Spanish didn't want peace talks. The Spanish had not yet been defeated and they thought negotiations would lead to them having to make concessions they did not need to make.

Unfortunately for Spain a letter from the Spanish ambassador to his government fell into the hands of the Cuban rebels. This letter was highly critical of President McKinley, and caused deep embarrassment in Madrid. American public opinion was once more inflamed. McKinley now felt he had no choice. Reluctant to go to war, he was nevertheless aware of American public opinion. So too was Congress, some of which faced mid-term elections in 1898. There was little to debate in reality and the decision for war against Spain was embraced by Congress and President.

There remained one issue. Those Congressmen who opposed the idea of Empire were anxious that the revolt in Cuba did not become an excuse for the USA to take Cuba as a colony in place of Spain. As a result the Teller Amendment was passed. This stated that the "*people of the island of Cuba are, and of right ought to be, free and independent*", and the USA rejected any intention of exercising "*sovereignty, jurisdiction or control*" over Cuba.

The Amendment was a defeat for the Imperialists. Cuba controlled the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean, and would make a useful base for trade with South America as well as a vital strategic base once the Panama Canal was built. Some had even argued that Manifest Destiny included Cuba, because it was only 200 kilometres from the coast of Florida, and thus should form part of the USA.

Task

Which of the following reasons for the American decision to declare war on Spain do you find most convincing and why?

Explain carefully how each reason contributed to the declaration of war before coming to your conclusion.

- American revulsion at Spanish brutality in Cuba
- The role of the Yellow Press
- The explosion of the USS *Maine*
- The captured letter written by the Spanish Ambassador
- Public opinion and the mid-term elections

How did the Americans win the Spanish-American War?

The debate in Congress about war with Spain ended when McKinley was granted approval to send troops to Cuba to throw out the Spanish. However, the first American attack occurred many miles away in the Philippines, which had long been a Spanish colony. The American navy attacked a Spanish fleet, sank ten Spanish warships and took control of the chief city, Manila.

In Cuba the Americans blockaded Spanish warships in Santiago Bay. When the Spanish tried to run the blockade, they were virtually annihilated. On land some 17,000 American troops landed in June 1898, and Santiago fell to the Americans in July. Faced now with military defeat the Spanish agreed to an armistice. It had been a short and successful war and US Secretary of State, Hay, spoke of a '*splendid little war*'.



US troops storm earthworks near Santiago, June 1898

The reality was different. When the Americans declared war they had been totally unprepared for war. The US Army numbered a mere 28,000 men and relied on local rather than federal organisation for supplies and equipment, which were often woefully inadequate. The Americans were also medically unprepared for the diseases that could strike in Cuba – although they lost less than 400 men in combat, some 5,000 men were lost to the effects of disease.

However, the American decision for war took the Spanish by surprise, and Spanish forces on Cuba also suffered from poor logistics. In their case the supply lines across the Atlantic from Spain were much longer than those for the USA, and the tactics employed by Spanish commanders were at best weak. Thus, for all the American bravado, the reality was that the victory owed much more to Spanish failings than to American success.

Task

Outline the argument for saying:

- why the Americans can be considered to have won the Spanish-American War
- why the Spanish lost that war.

What were the consequences of the US victory over Spain?

Cuba

Hostilities against Spain were ended by the Treaty of Paris in 1898, which granted to the Americans the possession of the Philippines, Guam and Puerto Rico. Cuba was recognised as an independent country, although American forces would stay in Cuba for another four years and an American governor was appointed on the grounds that Cuba needed help to develop a constitution and a stable society. It was argued that American experience in achieving independence would be of great value.

In theory Cuban independence was guaranteed, but the Platt Amendment of 1901 betrays the reality. This Amendment replaced the Teller Amendment and gave the USA the right to intervene in Cuba to maintain its stability and independence. It stated that the Cubans could not make treaties that would threaten their independence and, in effect, meant that the Americans would decide what did and did not constitute a threat to Cuban 'independence'.

In 1902 American troops were withdrawn from Cuba, with the exception of a base at Guantanamo Bay, which was granted to the Americans in the Cuban constitution. A Cuban government was set up by Cubans and run by Cubans, though the economy of Cuba was dominated by Americans. However, the Americans had argued that they had fought for Cuban independence. In theory at least, this had been achieved.

The Philippines

The first military action of the Spanish-American War took place against the Spanish in the Philippines. The rapid American victory brought the Philippines under US control, and the Treaty of Paris awarded the Philippines as a '*prize*' for the American success in the '*splendid little war*'.

This all mattered little to the Filipinos, who saw little difference in the new masters. Some Filipinos hoped that the Americans would announce Filipino independence once the Spanish had been removed. This was not to be – the Americans decided that the Philippines were to be a stopping place on the trade routes to the Far East, and thus brought the islands under US rule.

The Filipino reaction was speedy. They had begun a rebellion to achieve their freedom from Spanish rule, and they saw no reason to cease their rebellious activities. The Americans soon found that they faced an armed uprising against their rule.

In the subsequent war between the US military and the Filipino guerrillas more than 4,000 American soldiers died. This was more than eight times the death rate for the campaign in Cuba. Filipino deaths, including civilian casualties, were far higher. Many civilian deaths were the direct result of American forays into the countryside, where they adopted scorched earth tactics. Whole villages were destroyed, whilst civilians were murdered or tortured or forced to move into so-called protection areas. In fact, the war in the Philippines closely resembled the later war in Vietnam, with similar problems for the Americans.

Many Americans were actually opposed to the seizure of the Philippines. They were quick to point out the irony of the USA having gone to war to assist the Cuban rebels gain their independence and then suppressing the Filipino rebels, who wanted exactly the same thing.

Opposition to the annexation of the Philippines eventually led to the abandonment of plans for a permanent naval base on the islands. More significantly however was the reaction in the USA. Many felt the cost of the war in the Philippines to have been too high, especially the cost in terms of lives. If this was to be the price of empire, then many Americans considered it to be too high.

The Growth of the US Navy

In 1890 a book called *The Influence of Sea Power* was published. Its author, Alfred Thayer Mahan, argued that the most powerful nations in history had always been sea powers. Citing Britain as his chief example, he argued that the USA needed to become a major naval power, especially as it had coastlines on both the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans.

Mahan went on to argue that naval powers needed to have overseas colonies so that they could act as supply bases for their navy. He maintained that a canal needed to be built through the narrow isthmus of Central America so that American shipping could be more easily transferred from the Atlantic to the Pacific and vice versa. This led to the initial thinking about the Panama Canal, and Mahan then stressed the need for the Caribbean to be under American influence so that any such Canal could be protected.



The US Atlantic Fleet, 1907

Supporters of an American Empire seized upon this book, and the US governments of the decade accepted its main tenet – the need for a strong American navy. The events of the Spanish-American War seemed to bear this out – the actions of the navy was crucial in the victories over Spain both in the Philippines and in Cuba.

By 1900 the United States had the third largest navy in the world (after Britain and Germany). Although the Americans still held close to the ideas of the Founding Fathers and remained determined to keep aloof from foreign entanglements, the growth of the US Navy clearly indicated that the USA saw itself as a world power.

Task

What were the consequences of the American victory in the Spanish-American War for:

- a. Cuba
 - b. the Philippines
 - c. the US Navy?
- *For Cuba you should consider the terms of the Treaty of Paris, the Platt Amendment and the decision with regard to Guantanamo.*
 - *For the Philippines you should think about the terms of the Treaty of Paris, the rebellion of the Filipinos and the American reaction to that rebellion.*
 - *For the US Navy you should take into account the argument put forward by Mahan, the decision to construct the Panama Canal and the lessons from the American conflict with Spain.*

How Imperialist was the United States?

By the beginning of the twentieth century the United States began to experience a clash between two of its guiding principles. On the one hand the Americans were convinced that it was their Manifest Destiny to spread the benefits of American democracy and civilisation to the rest of the world. On the other hand was the American democratic belief that people should only be ruled if they consented to their rule. The victory over Spain in 1898 had left the United States in possession of the Philippines, Puerto Rico and Guam. The Americans now had to decide what to do with these possessions.

The biggest issue was that of the Philippines. The Americans had promised independence to the Cubans once the Spanish had been defeated, but no such promise had been made to the Philippines. The issue soon became one over whether the USA should allow the Filipinos to choose their own destiny, or whether the Americans should impose a destiny upon them. The issue was not a simple one, and the US Senate revealed the divisions within the USA when 29 Senators supported phased independence for the Philippines, 29 voted against any such commitment and the remaining 32 Senators simply abstained.

This tied vote meant the casting vote of the Vice-President had to be used, and he came down in favour of America's Manifest Destiny. The decision brought the USA into the world of empire. Americans were to exert their power over people markedly different to them in terms of race, culture and language.

However, the acquisition of the Philippines did not see a major effort by the United States to grab a large American Empire. The only later additions to the so-called American Empire were the Panama Canal Zone in 1903 and the Virgin Islands in 1917. By contrast, Puerto Ricans, acquired as spoils as a result of the Spanish-American War, were granted US citizenship in 1917. The Americans also resisted any temptation that they may have had to renege on their promise to Cuba and annex the island.

Therefore the American '*Empire*' was small, especially when compared to the European empires. For instance the British Empire saw 35 million Britons in control of some 322 million people, and even the 5 million Dutch ruled over 34 million people in South East Asia.

The small size of the American '*Empire*' was not because the Americans lacked the power to expand. The US Navy was strong enough to push its power into the Pacific and attempts to take more land at the expense of Mexico or from British Canada were unlikely to have met much in the way of resistance. Yet the Americans did not use their power to enhance their '*empire*'.

Some have maintained that the main reason for this decision was economic. Although it has been argued, especially by later Communist states, that capitalist nations were bound to become imperialists in order to achieve new markets for their goods, the fact was that few American businessmen were desperate for empire, preferring to invest their money in the development of the American West and in other areas.

Neither was there a compelling trade argument for empire. The Americans exported very little to the undeveloped areas of the world, and the majority of US trade was with Britain. By contrast, trade with the Philippines accounted for a mere 0.55% of US exports in 1897.

In the case of Hawaii the main argument for US control was strategic rather than economic. As Japan became more and more powerful in the Pacific region many Americans came to see Hawaii as a key element in the defence of the American West Coast. It was this that led to the initial deal that Hawaii would not grant territorial possession to any power other than the USA. In return the Americans permitted Hawaiian sugar onto the American market free from import duties.

In 1887 strategic control over Hawaii seemed to have been secured when the USA secured the exclusive use of Pearl Harbour as a naval base. However, when Queen Liliuokalani acceded to the Hawaiian throne in 1893 she proposed a constitution that would have strengthened her powers considerably. Several of the American settlers on the islands feared that this would weaken their own position in Hawaii. Some of them combined with American Marines and overthrew the queen, declaring that Hawaii was henceforth an American Protectorate.

Many felt that this would be followed by full annexation of Hawaii. However, sitting President Grover Cleveland had no time for the concept of empire and he sent a commissioner to the islands in order to ascertain whether the people of Hawaii wished to become part of the United States. It was discovered that a vast majority of the native islanders were against annexation. Cleveland would then have returned the rule of the islands to the queen – but he faced some difficulty with this proposal because the queen had promised to behead those Americans who had overthrown her. This attitude turned American public opinion against her, and thus Hawaii was left to simmer for a while in a period of uncertainty.

The uncertainty ended when McKinley became President, because he immediately signed an annexation treaty. However this only got as far as the Senate, where the Democrats acted to block ratification of the treaty. It is likely that opposition to the annexation of Hawaii would have continued but for the outbreak of the Spanish-American War. This conflict brought into sharp relief the need for naval bases, and Hawaii had one of the best natural harbours in the Pacific. Pearl Harbour was simply too valuable to be lost, and so it was decided that Hawaii would have to be annexed by the USA after all.

It was the decision to go to war with Spain over Cuba that was the trigger for the brief American flirtation with empire. When war began in 1898 there was a significant group of Americans committed to the expansion of American power. This included Secretary of State John Hay and future President Theodore Roosevelt, though they did tend to think of themselves more as *'expansionists'* rather than as *'imperialists'*. The group also included Social Darwinists, who believed that American domination would represent the survival of the fittest in terms of international relations, and Christian missionaries who argued that it was the duty of the USA to pass on 'the word of God' to the *'pagans'* of the world.

This group proved to be hugely influential when the fate of the Philippines was considered. Words like *'destiny'*, *'mission'* and *'civilisation'* were heard so that the *'poor'* Filipinos could *'benefit'* from the *'benevolent control'* of the United States.

And yet even at this point there was little in the way of unanimity on the question of the Philippines. Opponents of empire argued that the annexation of foreign countries would ultimately lead to the ruin of the USA as surely as it had destroyed the power of Spain. They maintained that an annexation of the Philippines was not only contrary to the American beliefs in democracy and freedom but also would prove to be hugely expensive.

The problem for those arguing against annexation was their belief that the Filipinos were in no position to govern themselves, which meant that there was little support for the concept of Filipino independence. Given that the anti-annexationists lacked a credible alternative policy played into the hands of those arguing for American control of the islands. After all, they reasoned, if the Filipinos needed a period of time in order to learn how to govern themselves, then which state would be better able to tutor them than the USA?

Finally the Americans were concerned that if they did not take possession of the Philippines, then some other country would lay claim. The USA was particularly concerned at German behaviour – especially after the Germans had sailed battleships into Manila Bay while American warships were at anchor. In

the end British advice was heeded. The British urged annexation on the Americans, concerned that if the USA did not take the Philippines under its protective umbrella, then the imperial powers of Europe would end up squabbling and fighting over them.

Many Filipinos resisted American annexation, which led to conflict – a conflict in which more than 4,000 Americans died and an estimate of close on a quarter of a million Filipinos. The massive casualty list encouraged the anti-imperialists, who now pointed to the human cost of annexation. They were also right about the economics – the Americans spent far more in the Philippines than they ever got out of the country. The counter argument that the Filipinos benefited far more from American '*occupation*' than they ever had under Spanish rule seemed tame by comparison.

The debacle in the Philippines soon quelled any American enthusiasm for empire, which was now considered to be more trouble than it was worth. The principle of self-determination was quickly re-established in the minds of most Americans – a principle that was to endure despite the temptations that followed victory in two world wars. Therefore the conclusion must be that, save for the few years at the turn of the century as a result of the euphoria following the victory over Spain and the confusion about what to do with the Philippines, the Americans were not convinced imperialists – at least not in the traditional European manner.

Task

1. What was the dilemma faced by the Americans when thinking about their democratic beliefs?
2. Why was the decision taken by the American Vice-President so significant for the USA?
3. List the imperial acquisitions of the USA following the annexation of the Philippines.
4. Why was there such limited expansion of the American Empire after 1898?
5. Why was Hawaii considered to be so important?
6. Why did President Cleveland refuse to annex the Hawaiian Islands?
7. Why did the Spanish-American War change the fate of Hawaii?
8. What role was played by:
 - a. The Germans
 - b. The British in the American decision to annex the Philippines?
9. Why can it be argued that the Americans were not convinced imperialists?

Why were American forces sent to China in 1900?

By the turn of the century a new organisation had arisen in China, known as the Fists of Righteous Harmony. Western powers, including the USA, referred to them as the 'Boxers', because the members practised martial arts. Their cause was to expel all foreigners from Chinese soil, and they believed that a magical power would protect them from foreign bullets.

In early 1900 thousands of Boxers roamed the Chinese countryside, attacking Christian missionaries, often killing them and any Chinese who had converted to Christianity. Then they moved on to the cities, attracting more and more followers as they went.

The foreign missions in Peking put pressure on the Empress to do something about the Boxers. The Empress replied that they should not be alarmed because her troops would soon crush the '*rebellion*', but as the Boxers entered the city, nothing happened.

Foreign diplomats and their staff lived in an area just outside the Forbidden City, and they rapidly joined together to erect makeshift defences as the Boxers advanced towards them. In the event rifle fire from foreign sailors caused the Boxers to withdraw from an attack.

This was not to be the end. The Boxers returned and surrounded the foreign enclave in Peking. For almost two months the foreign delegates held out against the fierce attacks and bombardments. By then they had lost 76 defenders and their supplies of food, ammunition and medicine were almost used up. Fortunately for the foreigners a relief column arrived before they finally ran out.

Foreign governments were at first unaware of the situation, but the absence of any communication soon drew their attention to China. They quickly agreed to act together and put an international force into China to rescue their diplomats. This force included some 2,500 Americans. The international force dealt with the Boxers relatively easily and soon took control of Peking. As a result an expanded Open Door policy was introduced for China. It would now apply to the whole of China, not just the European spheres of influence. It was a result with which the Americans could be well pleased.



US Troops during the Boxer Rebellion

Task

How might a member of the US Government justify an American presence in China in response to criticisms from traditionalists that such a decision contradicted the advice of the Founding Fathers?

Why did the British withdraw from the Western Hemisphere?

In 1890 the Americans were particularly concerned about the intentions of two European powers – the Germans and the British. At the time the most significant European power on the American continent was Britain. The British were in possession of Canada as well as several of the Caribbean islands, and they had strong trading links with South American countries.

In 1895 a serious dispute arose between the British and the Venezuelans over the borders of British Guiana. The Americans feared that Britain would use this dispute as an excuse to take control of a part of Venezuela, so they intervened in the quarrel. Some Americans, including future President Theodore Roosevelt, were more than willing to go to war with the British if Britain did not agree with American wishes with regard to Venezuela. However, the British were not interested in any conflict with the USA, so they agreed to negotiate and the dispute ended peacefully.

The reality was that Britain was keenly aware of its diplomatic isolation in Europe. The European powers had divided into two armed camps, with the French and Russians on one hand and the Germans, Austro-Hungarians and Italians on the other. Britain was aware that it could fall foul of either camp, perhaps even both. Therefore the British were aware that they could not afford conflict in the Western Hemisphere, so London told Washington that Britain had no plans or desires to challenge American power or superiority in that region.

In fact the British went so far as to withdraw their fleet from the American continent and settled all outstanding issues of dispute with the USA. In effect the British had withdrawn from the American continent, and this simplified matters for the USA. London simply did not want any further complications from a dispute with the Americans. It was the first sign that the USA would benefit from the growing disputes of the Europeans. It was also the first tentative move in the direction of Anglo-American cooperation.

Task

1. Why were the British considered a major rival by the USA?
2. Why did the British decide to withdraw from the Western Hemisphere?
3. What were the consequences of the British withdrawal for the USA?

What was the foreign policy of Theodore Roosevelt?

In 1900 Vice President Theodore Roosevelt wrote that he had always been fond of an African proverb – ‘*Speak softly and carry a big stick*’. A year later, President McKinley was assassinated. Under the terms of the US Constitution, should the President die in office, the Vice-President would assume the mantle of high office; in September 1901 this was Theodore ‘*Teddy*’ Roosevelt.



Political cartoon of Roosevelt and his “big stick” policy

Roosevelt was very aware of the potential power of the United States – and of the difference between this potential and the reality of American power. He was convinced that the USA would not be able to continue its traditional foreign policy of maintaining aloofness from foreign affairs because the United States was too big to be ignored and would thus be forced to engage in a more interventionist manner in world affairs.

His first principle was to ensure that the United States was strong enough to defend its own vital national interests. He much preferred to ‘*speak softly*’ (i.e. use diplomacy) in these cases, but if necessary he was prepared to use the ‘*big stick*’ (i.e. force). For example, during a 1903 dispute with Britain about the precise border between Canada and Alaska, Roosevelt agreed to a diplomatic arbitration of the border. However, he made sure the British were aware that if the arbitration decision did not go the American way, then he would send in troops. He got his way.

However, Roosevelt also wanted to use American influence to preserve the peace. During his term of office he witnessed the British joining with France and Russia, thus polarising Europe even more into two armed camps. He believed that the USA held the balance of power, and this would allow the Americans to encourage the rival nations of Europe to discuss their differences and come to peaceful conclusions in their disputes. Roosevelt was convinced that world peace was vital to the interests of the USA, and thus he believed he should work to preserve that peace.

Roosevelt had already accepted the arguments of Mahan about the need for an enlarged US Navy. He oversaw the addition of ten new battleships and four armoured cruisers to the US fleet during his presidency. It was a useful ‘*big stick*’ and he continued to be prepared to use it. In 1902 the German Emperor proved reluctant to accept arbitration over Venezuela, Roosevelt quietly reminded the German ambassador that the entire US fleet just happened to be in the Caribbean at the time – and if the Germans did not voluntarily remove their naval force from the area, then Admiral Dewey would be ordered to encourage them.

However, Roosevelt was aware of the limits of American power, especially with regard to the power of the American army. It was because of this that he preferred to use diplomacy, using the influence of the United States to uphold world peace. He accepted that formal treaties between countries could solve international disputes – however, he was not willing to see any clause in such treaties that might restrict American freedom of action. In his reluctance to commit the USA by treaty he was as traditional as past Presidents, and in total harmony with his people.

Instead of formal alliance, Roosevelt believed in the concept of the balance of power. This concept meant peace could be maintained provided the Great Powers of the world (including the USA) were effectively kept in balance and that no one Great Power or group of Great Powers became significantly more powerful than the others. World peace was held secure by this balance of power.

In this he was in close agreement with Britain. Not generally pro-British, and certainly highly critical of some aspects of British foreign policy, Roosevelt nevertheless came to believe that war between the United States and Britain was completely impossible. In a statement that precluded the later Anglo-American '*special relationship*', he said that British "*interest and ours will run on parallel lines in the future*". He was not proved wrong.

Roosevelt also showed that in matters of foreign affairs the President could take a major hand. During his presidency he had two Secretaries of State (Hay and Root), but the President himself determined foreign policy. He preferred to work with his own personal foreign contacts in Washington, or to deal directly with European foreign ministers or heads of state. Annoying as this was to the State Department, which was basically ignored, Roosevelt was convinced that his decisions were the correct and moral choices, and that he was the only man capable of directing US foreign policy effectively.

Task

Create a character analysis of Theodore Roosevelt

You should include reference to the following:

- His attitude towards traditional American foreign policy and his reasoning for this
- His statement to '*speak softly and carry a big stick*'
- The concept of the balance of power
- His attitude towards:
 - a. Peacemaking
 - b. The navy
 - c. Formal treaties and alliances
 - d. The British
 - e. His Secretaries of State

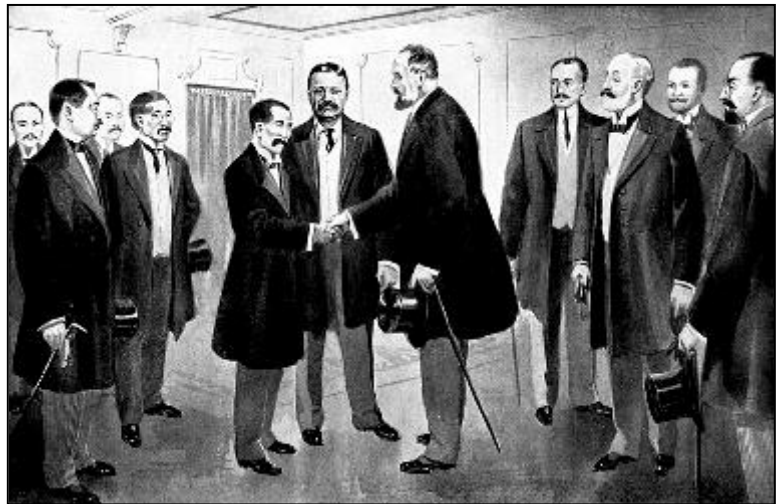
What was Roosevelt's foreign policy in Asia and the Pacific?

In Asian affairs Roosevelt very much supported the Open Door Policy for China. He also thought that the territorial integrity of China needed to be maintained – China should not be divided up between the European powers and/or Japan.

However, Roosevelt had no wish to enter into conflict with other states. Ultimately there was no vital American security issue at stake in China, so the US President sought diplomatic agreements with various states to protect the American position. He was aware that, even if the Americans did have the desire to enter into war, the USA did not have the power to project armed force in the Far Eastern region.

In 1904 tensions in the Pacific heightened when war broke out between Japan and Russia. By inclination Roosevelt tended towards support of the Japanese, as he believed Russian aims and policies were significant threats to world peace. However, the stunning result of the conflict was to change his mind. The Japanese surprised the world by crushing the Russian Navy and achieving victory after victory on land. In Washington the fear was soon expressed that the Japanese might capitalise on their success and seek to expand their influence into East Asia and Siberia.

Roosevelt decided that he should intervene at this point in order to broker a peace agreement. He wanted to make sure the Japanese were constrained in East Asia, and that the Russian presence in the region was not ended. This was perfectly consistent with his balance of power concept. In East Asia the idea was that the Russians and the Japanese would balance each other out whilst each kept a check on the actions of the other. This would also maintain a China free from the over-powerful influence of either, and furthermore would protect American interests in China. In 1905 Roosevelt convinced both parties to negotiate under his mediation. The result was the Treaty of Portsmouth, 1905, which gained a Nobel Peace Prize for Roosevelt in 1906. It was perhaps his greatest diplomatic triumph.



Drawing of Roosevelt mediating between Russian and Japanese Delegates as they negotiate the Treaty of Portsmouth in 1905

Roosevelt was aware of Japanese aspirations towards China, and he was also aware that too strong an opposition from the USA could lead to hostility. The key issues for the USA were the defence of the Philippines and, preferably, a continuation of the Open Door Policy with regard to China. With this in mind he was prepared to acknowledge the special interest of Japan in China and he accepted the Japanese annexation of Korea. However, the outcome of the Treaty of Portsmouth meant that Russian power in the region had not been totally destroyed and thus the Russians could still act as a counterweight to Japanese ambitions in China.

This diplomatic triumph reveals much about Theodore Roosevelt. Although he was a staunch supporter of the Open Door, he was only prepared to defend the policy diplomatically. He knew the USA was simply not powerful enough to stand up to a determined rival in the Far East, and what he could not gain through diplomatic means would therefore have to be surrendered. In the Far East he would walk softly, but the big stick would not be applied.

The big stick in the Pacific was the US Navy, which could be used to show American power if necessary. However, the idea was not to have to use the stick. Following the Treaty of Portsmouth, relations between the Americans and the Japanese began to deteriorate. The issue was that of Japanese immigration to the USA because the Japanese government felt embittered by what it termed unacceptable racial restrictions in California. Japan protested formally about this to the United States.

Roosevelt was anxious to mollify the Japanese (though not by altering the immigration policy for Japanese people) and undertook a number of conciliatory actions as a result. Yet the issue was to prove thorny. A crisis again arose in 1907, and this time the President sent an American naval fleet on a visit to the eastern coast of Asia. Roosevelt wanted to impress upon the Japanese the great strength of the US Fleet. In the event the Japanese did not see the gesture as a provocation or a threat. Instead the Japanese Emperor invited the US Fleet to visit the Japanese port of Yokohama. The Americans accepted the invitation and were given a very warm reception by the Japanese people there.

In 1908 the Root-Takahira Agreement saw the Americans recognise the existing status quo in the Far East and Pacific. Every issue of contention between the Americans and the Japanese seemed to disappear as a result – at least for the time being. However, the power of the Japanese in the Pacific was on the increase and the Japanese need for new markets for its manufactured goods was pushing Tokyo into a more expansionist phase. At the same time the USA was also looking for new markets abroad, and it too was pushing into the Pacific. The basis for the attack on Pearl Harbour was slowly being established.

Task

Explain the following in the context of US foreign policy in Asia:

- The Open Door Policy
- The Russo-Japanese War
- The Treaty of Portsmouth
- Japanese immigration to the United States
- The Root-Takahira Agreement

What was Roosevelt's foreign policy with regard to Europe?

If peace in Asia was desirable to Roosevelt, it was essential in Europe. The President was deeply troubled by what seemed to be a dynamic German Empire challenging the traditional strong European powers of France and Britain. He saw this rivalry as a clear threat to world peace, and he came to the conclusion that the USA would have to intervene in European affairs if this was what was needed to keep the peace.

In 1906 a dispute arose between France and Germany over Morocco. It was eventually agreed that the issues raised would be discussed at an international conference at Algeciras in Morocco. Roosevelt decided to send American delegates along to this conference on the basis that the Americans had financial and business interests in Morocco.

The Germans were very strongly in favour of the American presence at the conference and Roosevelt enjoyed an excellent relationship with the German Kaiser. However, any hopes the Germans may have had of American support were soon to be dashed. The cartoon on the right portrays this disagreement of 'kindred spirits'. Roosevelt was very aware and very wary of German diplomacy at this time. He officially instructed his delegate to observe strict neutrality except in any issues where American interests might be affected. However, in private the delegate was told to do all he could to keep the peace and – according to Coate, former US Ambassador to Britain – if necessary to stand with the French and the British. In the event the Americans at Algeciras provided considerable influence in helping to resolve all the issues peacefully.



Because of the American presence in Morocco, Roosevelt used the official US signature on the General Act of Algeciras. This led to a storm of protest back in the USA and revealed the weakness of the US President in his attempts to develop a more active foreign policy. Roosevelt was attacked for having gone further than any other previous President in signing an official document with foreign powers.

In fact the General Act committed the United States to absolutely nothing, but this did not stop the criticisms that Roosevelt *“had exceeded his powers”* and had ignored *“the warnings of Washington and Jefferson against foreign commitments”*.

The Senate did – eventually – approve the decision of the President, but attached a reservation. This stated that their acceptance of the General Act did not depart from traditional US policy *“which forbids participation by the United States in the settlement of political questions which are entirely European in their scope”*. This appears to have calmed down many Americans, though, of course, the conference at Algeciras did indeed end with a *“settlement of a political question which was entirely European in its scope”*.

Nevertheless the incident served to show that, although Roosevelt was more willing to involve the USA in world affairs, the American people had yet to grasp the implications of his policy and of their own global position.

Task

What were the consequences of the General Act of Algeciras for:

- France and Britain
- Germany
- US commitments abroad
- The future foreign policy of Theodore Roosevelt?

How and why was the Panama Canal built?

By the turn of the century the US Government was convinced of the need to build a canal across Panama to connect the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. This would allow speedier transport links between the West and East coasts of the United States, would permit faster redeployment of warships between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, and would allow for better trade routes between the East Coast of the USA and China.

In 1903 the USA negotiated a treaty with Colombia, which at that time controlled the province of Panama. By the terms of this treaty, Colombia agreed to cede the territory along the Panama Canal Zone to the Americans. However, once the negotiations ended the Colombians appeared to do their very best to obstruct the Americans and go back on the deal.



To Roosevelt the Panama Canal was crucial to American defence. It was a project funded by Americans and Americans should therefore enjoy the right to defend it. If the Colombians would not play by the terms of the treaty they had agreed to, then the USA would have to find other means to safeguard their vital interests in Panama. Roosevelt thus secretly encouraged a revolt of the Panamanians against Colombia. Once this occurred, the United States immediately recognised Panama as an independent state, and then agreed to a new treaty with the new Panamanian Government. This gave the Americans the territory along the Canal that the Colombians had originally agreed to. Roosevelt claimed that he had acted in accordance with the highest standards of governmental ethics. Few outside the USA agreed.

Task

Why was the US Government convinced of the need to build a canal across Panama?

Did Roosevelt behave ethically?

You may want to consider the following points:

- American strategic considerations
- The behaviour of the Colombians
- The funding of the Panama Canal
- The secret encouragement of the Panamanian Revolt
- The possible feelings of the Panamanian rebels

Why did Roosevelt introduce the Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine?

In common with many other American Presidents, Roosevelt was far more prepared to intervene in Latin American affairs than he was in other parts of the world. He believed that American predominance in the Western Hemisphere was not optional but a vital issue for US security and that if the Americans were not predominant in the region, then a European power – probably Germany or Britain – would try to increase their influence over Latin America. This could well be against the interests of the United States.

The USA was particularly concerned that some Latin American countries had borrowed significant amounts of money from European countries, but they were not always willing or able to pay it back. The fear was that a European power might use a default in debt repayment to interfere in Latin America. This seemed to be the case in 1902 when the Germans put pressure on Venezuela to keep obligations to Germany that were being ‘overlooked’.

Roosevelt was very anxious that the Germans had no excuse to gain a presence in Latin America, so he persuaded both countries to go to arbitration. The Germans and Venezuelans were able to come to an agreement as a result, but in 1904 the Dominican Republic defaulted on its debt repayments. The Americans were convinced that sooner or later continued debt defaulting would lead to European involvement, so the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine was announced in 1904.

The Corollary altered the original wording of the Doctrine, which had been introduced to warn off the Europeans from intervention in the Americas. Roosevelt was careful to state that the USA had no designs on any of its neighbouring countries. However, he warned all the Latin American states of the need to pay off their debts. If they did not do so, then the United States, under the principle of the Monroe Doctrine, might be forced to “*the exercise of an international police force*”. In other words the United States might now choose to intervene themselves in Latin American states before any other power did.

This was not long in coming. An agreement was made with the Dominican Republic whereby the Americans took control of the Republic’s finances and allocated enough of its revenues to make sure that foreign debt obligations were met. In effect Roosevelt had created an American Protectorate over the Dominican Republic.

The USA had no problem with the idea of Protectorates. As well as the Dominican Republic, Cuba fell into the category. The treaty signed in 1898 after the Spanish-American War included the Platt Amendment, which stated that the Americans would intervene in Cuba if the Cubans could not maintain a stable government. Before too long a number of other Protectorates were set up under the Corollary.

The Corollary was in effect a new use of American power in order to prevent foreign intervention in the region that the USA considered vital to its own security. Decisive action in Latin America in order to prevent any foreign intervention has remained a cornerstone of US foreign policy ever since the days of Theodore Roosevelt.

The Americans were very fearful that a European power could exploit instability or incompetence in Latin America. In 1915 the USA decided to occupy Haiti because the USA was concerned about a possible German invasion. This was designed to put a stop to any German intervention in Haiti. However, as far as the Haitians were concerned, they were now a conquered land. American military forces remained in Haiti until 1934.

Task

1. What was the Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine and how did it differ from the original Doctrine?
2. Why did Theodore Roosevelt think it necessary to introduce the Corollary?
3. Where and why was the Corollary applied in Latin America?

How successful was the foreign policy of Theodore Roosevelt?

There can be no doubt that in his foreign policy Theodore Roosevelt's presidency marks a significant shift away from nineteenth century American foreign policy. Beforehand the idea that the USA would involve itself in world affairs at all was unheard of – probably never seriously considered. Roosevelt by contrast sought to bring US foreign policy into the twentieth century by engaging in international dialogue and undertaking foreign policy initiatives.

Generally he displayed a great degree of foresight into the future of the USA. In 1908 he said: "Here in the United States what is most lacking to us is to understand that we have interests in the whole world. I wish that all Americans would realise that American politics is world politics; that we are and shall be involved in all great questions."

Critics of Roosevelt argue that his foreign policy was both aggressive and belligerent, citing his statements and actions before his presidency, the use of the *'big stick'* to threaten force against both Britain and Germany and the Panamanian incident. This view is harsh. Overall he reacted in a sound manner to the international problems of the day and he generally acted in accordance with his principles that the preservation of world peace was vital.



A political cartoon of Roosevelt's "Big-Stick" Policy

Roosevelt was convinced that the United States had to end its isolationist approach and accept a major role in international affairs. He was, however, a realist and he realised both the realities of the world situation in the 1900s as well as the limitations to the power of the United States. He did what was possible at the time. By the time his administration was over he had extended American power in Latin America by means of the Corollary and the construction of the Panama Canal and he had signalled to the rest of the world the growing power of the USA through both diplomatic mediation and engagement, such as the Treaty of Portsmouth, and also the growth of the US Navy. He was prepared to threaten the use of force when he deemed this necessary, but he kept the USA out of conflict and was certainly successful in terms of increasing the role and influence of the USA in world affairs.

However, he did not manage to convince his people that his foreign policy was the correct one for the USA, as witnessed by the reaction to the American signature of the General Act of Algeciras. By the time his term of office ended in 1909 it was still clear that Americans were not ready to assume any sort of global role. They remembered still the admonitions of the Founding Fathers and were content in their isolation.

Roosevelt was very aware of the reluctance of his people to engage in world affairs. He was also aware of the limitations of American power. He did what he could within these limitations and did it very successfully, but until the American people were convinced of the need of a more active foreign policy, there were always going to be restrictions on the actions of the President.

Task

Key Issues To Consider:

- Roosevelt's awareness of the weakness of the American armed forces
- Roosevelt's belief that the territorial integrity of China needed to be maintained
- The Treaty of Portsmouth 1905
- Roosevelt's attempt to limit Japanese expansion
- The Root-Takahira Agreement of 1908
- The General Act of Algeciras in 1906
- Congressional Reaction to the General Act of Algeciras
- The use of the Corollary of the Monroe Doctrine in Latin America
- The construction of the Panama Canal
- The conclusion of the Venezuelan issue in 1902
- The agreement with the Dominican Republic
- American participation in international dialogue
- The support of the American people for a more engaged foreign policy

When you look at each of the above statements, consider whether they could be considered a success or a failure for Roosevelt (it is possible though not likely that some may be considered both). Don't forget to consider why they might be a success or failure.

What do the events in Mexico reveal about US foreign policy under Woodrow Wilson?

Woodrow Wilson (*right*) was the only Democrat President between the years 1897 and 1933. When he took office it was thought that he may take US foreign policy in a completely new direction because he spoke strongly against American interference in any foreign countries, including Latin America. Some even believed that he would reverse Roosevelt's Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine.



This never happened, and Wilson was as prepared as any other US President to intervene in Latin American affairs, as witnessed by his decision to send the Marines into Haiti in 1915. He also increased the role of the USA in the Dominican Republic. However, it was the events in Mexico that were most revealing about Wilson's attitude in foreign policy.

Just before the inauguration of Woodrow Wilson as US President in 1913 the Mexican government was overthrown and the Mexican President murdered. Mexican President Madero had come from a rich family, but he had wanted to improve life for the thousands of poor peasants in Mexico. At the time there were about 15 million Mexicans, but the wealth of the country was owned by a mere 150,000 of them, along with foreigners – mostly Americans or Europeans.

These foreigners paid little in the way of taxes – and Madero had targeted them as a means of introducing reform to his country. By contrast the US Ambassador considered himself to be the protector of foreigners in Mexico and he wanted a return to the days when Mexico was run by its President for the benefit of the few – which included the foreigners.



The ambassador's chosen man was General Huerta (*left*). Madero had appointed him as commanding officer in the suppression of coup d'état in Mexico City – but Huerta secretly went over to the rebels, and then arranged for Madero to be seized. At this point the American Ambassador introduced Huerta to assembled foreign diplomats at the US Embassy. The ambassador toasted and embraced the new leader of Mexico – to the horror of many Mexicans.

Madero's wife rushed a desperate appeal to President Taft to do something to save her husband. Taft did nothing. Meanwhile Huerta had acted – he sanctioned the murder of Madero on the basis that he was "*shot whilst trying to escape*". Such events did not deter the majority of European governments from diplomatically recognising the new regime in Mexico. The new American President – Wilson – was expected to do likewise – it was traditional American practice to recognise all governments in power.

Wilson refused. He did not use the excuse of the growing disorder in Mexico after several Madero supporters and Huerta opponents acted to overthrow the newly-installed Mexican government. Instead the American President refused to recognise the Huerta "*government of butchers*" on the basis that it did not have the "*consent of the governed*".

Wilson tried to persuade Huerta to hold an election so that he could justify his rule in Mexico. However, fighters under the leadership of Madero supporter Carranza defeated Huerta's army in Northern Mexico. Huerta panicked, surrounded the Chamber of Deputies and imprisoned the deputies, fearful that they would support a change of government.

Only then did elections go ahead – unsurprisingly a pro-Huerta Chamber was elected and Huerta was appointed as emergency President. This did not please Wilson one iota, who now decided to become involved in the murky politics of Mexico. Rejecting the advice of American businesses that he should accept the situation in Mexico for the sake of good order, Wilson decided to support Carranza by providing him with armaments.

At the same time American sailors in Tampico, Mexico, were arrested by Huerta's troops on 9th April 1914. The Mexican government troops were expecting an attack by Carranza's troops, and had arrested the Americans by mistake. Once the mistake was realised the Americans were released with profuse apologies. This was not enough for the American Navy squadron commander, who insisted that the Mexicans raise the American flag on the shore and give a 21-gun salute to the Americans. Huerta replied that he would only comply if the Americans matched each gun shot fired by the Mexicans.

It was a silly argument – which Wilson used as a pretext to ask Congress to sanction American armed intervention in Mexico. The President of the USA was eager to remove Huerta but, in the political process of gaining Congressional approval, he was tempted to misrepresent to Congress the treatment of American citizens in Mexico. In point of fact the Mexicans treated Americans in their country with the utmost respect and courtesy.

On 21st April Wilson was told that a German steamer would land in Mexico the following day laden with ammunition for the Huerta government. Wilson immediately sent out an order to the US Navy to seize the port of Veracruz to prevent the Germans from making land. This action did not quite progress as Wilson would have wanted. He had hoped that the Mexicans in Veracruz would welcome the Americans as their liberators from the '*brutal*' Huerta regime. In the event the Mexicans chose to see the Americans as invaders and they defended their country. For once even the troops of Carranza and Huerta had found something they could both fight against side by side.

Abroad the American action was not seen as one inspired by the ideal of overthrowing an unrepresentative regime. Instead the world viewed events as an example of Yankee Imperialism. In South America several riots broke out against the USA and Wilson was mocked as a hypocrite.

In June 1914 the Americans agreed to accept whatever provisional government might emerge from the conflict in Mexico. In the event Huerta decided to cut his losses and left the country, allowing Carranza to enter Mexico City in triumph in August 1914.

If Wilson hoped for some sort of gratitude from Carranza he was to be disappointed – Carranza merely resented American interference in Mexican affairs. In any case the political turmoil in Mexico was far from over – and Wilson had yet to surrender his wish to guide the Mexicans towards a constitutional system of government.

Carranza had not been the only rebel who had worked for the ousting of Huerta. In the northwest of Mexico, Pancho Villa (*right*) had gathered together a group of rebels. Villa had been portrayed in the American press as a kind of Mexican Robin Hood and he was certainly a new type of rebel leader – he was the first Mexican to abandon the usual custom of taking women and children on military campaigns, and he tended to make use of cavalry, arranging swift and unexpected raids into enemy territory.

Villa was not pleased by the success of Carranza – and immediately decided to continue his campaign for power, only this time against Carranza. Wilson was convinced that Villa would win this new round of civil war in Mexico and secretly encouraged him in his efforts.



Wilson was wrong. Villa was defeated in the big civil war battles, causing Wilson to change direction and give effective recognition to Carranza's new government. Villa was not impressed by this and, on 10th January 1916, Villa stopped a train at Santa Ysabel and murdered 17 Americans on board. On 9th March 1916, Villa crossed into New Mexico and attacked the American town of Columbus, killing a further 19 Americans before he was driven off.

Villa's actions can be understood. Villa felt betrayed by Wilson, especially when he found out that he had lost one battle against Carranza's forces only because Wilson had granted Carranza permission to enter US territory. It seems that Villa sought to provoke the Americans into a declaration of war with Mexico so that he could exploit the ensuing confusion. Wilson was not drawn into this. Instead he sent General Pershing into Mexico in pursuit of Villa.

The interventions of the Americans in Mexico soured relations between the two countries for some years, but ultimately Wilson was in favour of the revolution in Mexico. Whatever faults Carranza may have had, he was certainly more likely to work for the benefit of his people than Huerta had been. Despite American business protests, Wilson fully recognised the Mexican government and the Mexican constitution that granted mineral and oil rights to the Mexican state. In the final analysis, Wilson's behaviour in Mexico shows that he might not have used the correct methods, but his principles were sound and ultimately followed.

Ultimately the incident in Mexico revealed that not only was Wilson prepared to commit US forces in Latin America in line with the provisions of the Roosevelt Corollary, he was also prepared to make a stance on principles that he believed in. The use of American forces to protect American interests in places like Haiti and Mexico was approved of by many Americans. To them this was certainly not some American form of colonialism or an American attempt to dominate other countries. The rest of the world was not so sure...

Task

What do the events in Mexico tell us about Woodrow Wilson and his foreign policy? Which of the following statements do you consider to be justified? Explain your opinions.

- Wilson believed that the USA had no business interfering in Latin American affairs
- Wilson believed that foreign governments were only legitimate if they governed with the consent of the people
- Wilson took a highly moral stance to the events in Mexico
- Wilson enjoyed the support of the US Congress
- Wilson's decisions were popular in Mexico and abroad
- Wilson caused the death of several American citizens by an inconsistent policy towards Mexico
- Wilson acted solely with the intention of bringing constitutional government to Mexico
- Wilson was not afraid to exercise the power of the United States

Why did the USA enter the First World War?

When war broke out in Europe in 1914 American President Woodrow Wilson stressed the determination of the USA to remain true to the ideas of the Founding Fathers and to stay out of European affairs. The USA therefore remained neutral in accord with the traditional American reaction to European power politics. To many Americans the war was a dispute between the Europeans and was of little concern to the USA.

But the policy of neutrality proved to be more difficult than the Americans expected. Both sides in the First World War were quick to recognise the value of American support and American public opinion, and it was not long before the USA became a target for European propagandists.

Wilson and the US Congress were aware of the issues – and the problems. Most Americans, if they thought about the war at all, tended towards sympathy for the British and the French. However the situation in the USA was complicated by the estimated 8 million people that were of German origin, not to mention the Austrian and Hungarian immigrants.

These ethnic groups tended to support the Central Powers, as did the Irish-Americans. This latter group was not especially pro-German, but they were anti-British. Therefore, whichever side an American government might favour was sure to upset the immigrants from the other, possibly even leading to civil war. It was yet another argument in favour of American neutrality.

Maintaining friendly relations with the warring nations was difficult. As usual the British set up a naval blockade of Germany upon the declaration of war. This was to stop shipping from entering enemy harbours in order to prevent the enemy from being able to supply his armies and feed his people. This British tactic irritated the Americans because it denied American shipping the freedom of the seas. Complaints were sent to London – and ignored by the British. As a result American trade with Germany and Austria-Hungary was severely curtailed.

In 1916 a group of Irish nationalists tried to oust the British from Ireland in the abortive Easter Rising in Dublin. Though the British response to the Rising soon quashed the rebellion, the manner in which the British dealt with the captured rebels appalled many Americans. Neither were the Americans much impressed when London black-listed more than 400 American and Latin-American companies, which the British declared were acting in the interests of the Germans.

However, for all the problems in Anglo-American relations, the difficulties facing the USA when dealing with the Germans were more severe. The USA had long feared German imperial ambitions in the Caribbean for some years, whereas the British had already agreed to withdraw from the Western Hemisphere.

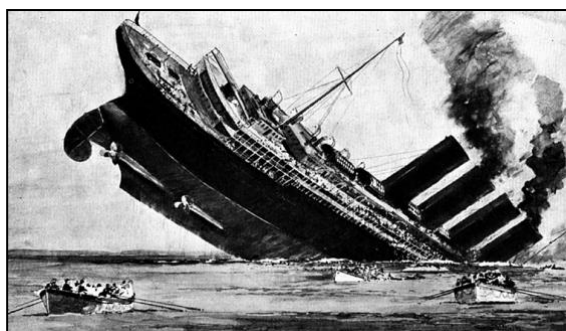
Many Americans, whilst critical of aspects of British and French democracy, felt considerable distaste for the absolutist and militaristic German system of government. The German decision to invade tiny Belgium merely confirmed the impression of a bullying nation-state using its military power to achieve its ends, and the refusal of the Germans to allow the dispute between Serbia and Austria-Hungary – the trigger for the war – to go to international arbitration convinced several Americans of the warlike nature of Imperial Germany.

British propaganda did its best to emphasise the brutal, militaristic nature of the Germans. Several Americans were convinced by British stories of German soldiers raping Belgian nuns or bayoneting Belgian babies; once the Americans found out that the Germans had been the first to use poison gas on the battlefield they were convinced of the negative image of Germans as portrayed by the British.

However, the biggest problem facing the Germans in their relations with the USA was the question of naval strategy. The initial German plan to end the war quickly had failed and the war had settled down to one of attrition on the Western Front with neither side able to achieve a decisive advantage.

The German High Command therefore came up with a new strategy. They thought that if Germany used enough submarines, they could sink the merchant ships bringing food to Britain and thus starve the British out of the war. As a result the Germans declared a war zone around the British Isles and warned neutral shipping to stay away in order to avoid 'accidents'.

The strategy was a new way to wage modern war – and one that did not meet with American approval. President Wilson despatched a strongly-worded note to Berlin stressing that the United States would hold Germany responsible for any damage caused to an American ship by a German submarine.



Sketch of the Lusitania sinking after being torpedoed by a German submarine, May 1915

In May 1915 a German submarine sank the British passenger liner 'Lusitania', killing 1,200 people, including 128 American citizens. At this stage the Americans remained content to stay out of the war but Wilson insisted that the Germans *"take immediate steps to prevent the recurrence of anything so obviously subversive to the principles of warfare"* and informed Berlin that further such 'incidents' would be seen as *"deliberately unfriendly"*. However there is no evidence to suggest that Wilson intended to break off diplomatic relations with Germany.

Wilson did threaten to cut off diplomatic contact after a German submarine sank a British Channel steamer with considerable loss of life. The tactic worked because in 1915 the Germans could see no advantage in offending the United States, so they responded by suspending submarine operations.

The German decision marks a diplomatic victory for the Americans, but Wilson realised that tensions between the USA and Germany could well develop once more and he began the 'preparedness' campaign. This was designed to prepare the people of the USA for the possibility of a war that could not be avoided. As a result the US Army was increased to 220,000 men in June 1916, and new warships were commissioned.

Wilson was anxious to emphasise that the USA was not moving away from its neutrality. However, this was not accepted by all his opponents. As former Secretary of State William Bryan said: *"The nation does not need burglars' tools unless it intends to make burglary its business"*.

Although American neutrality was maintained throughout 1916 there was a definite shift of American public opinion towards the British and French. The British in particular were beginning to gain through links of language, culture, tradition and law, and the British ambassador in the USA proved very able at resolving any differences or misunderstandings between the two Anglo-Saxon nations.

For all this the Americans at the end of 1916 believed they could maintain their neutrality and keep out of European affairs.

They were wrong.



Political cartoon of Woodrow Wilson, 1916

By the winter of 1916 the British Blockade was beginning to have a serious effect on the Germans. The German High Command was aware that it had to respond to this threat, and again considered the option of unrestricted submarine warfare in order to knock Britain out of the war.

The Germans did not take this decision lightly – they were keenly aware that unrestricted submarine warfare could lead to an American reaction. However, the Germans felt, based on traditional US foreign policy, that there was a good chance that the United States would stay neutral regardless. They also believed that, even if the Americans entered the war, the British would be beaten before the USA could have any effect on the conflict.

The German announcement that they would resume unrestricted submarine warfare in 1917 led to an immediate break in diplomatic relations with the USA. However there was little chance in January 1917 that the US Congress would sanction a presidential declaration of war even if Wilson had been willing to make one.

However, in February 1917 British naval intelligence intercepted a message from German Foreign Secretary Zimmermann to the German minister in Mexico. The message was essentially an offer to the Mexicans for a restoration of land lost to the USA in the 1840s in return for a Mexican declaration of war on the United States. The British were not slow in letting the Americans know the contents of the message, which the Americans considered not just a hostile act against the USA but a violation of the Monroe Doctrine.

The next month a revolution occurred in Russia. The absolutist Tsar of Russia was overthrown and a provisional government established, which promised to bring democratic reform to the Russians. This allowed the Americans to see the war in ideological terms – the ‘good-guy’ side of democracy versus the ‘bad-guy’ militarists.

But the main concern for the Americans was the mounting number of Americans who lost their lives at sea as a result of German submarine attacks. By the end of March 1917 American opinion was so inflamed that Wilson decided it was time to put an end to the attacks. In April 1917 he asked Congress for a declaration of war against Germany. The House of Representatives agreed by 373 votes to 50 votes and the Senate by 82 to 6 votes.

Therefore, with a ringing pronouncement that the United States was going to “*make the world safe for democracy*”, the USA declared war on Germany on 6th April 1917.



President Wilson announces the break in official relations with Germany to congress, 3 Feb 1917

Task

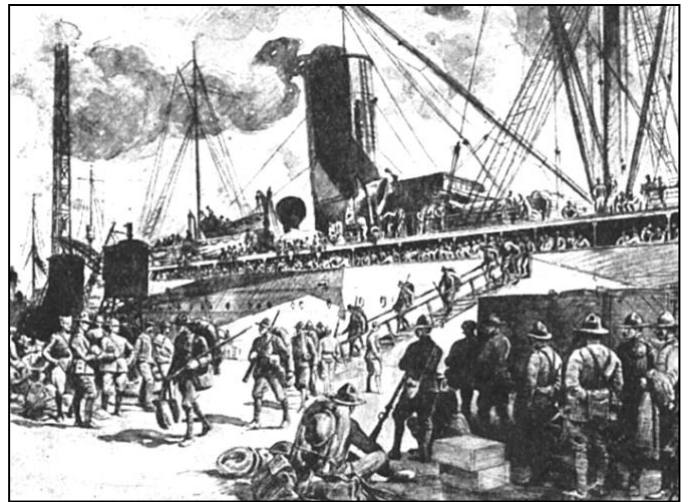
Consider the reasons given below for the American declaration of war:

- a. Because of allied propaganda against the Germans
 - b. Because the Americans needed to defend the democratic nations of France and Britain from the militarism of the Germans
 - c. Because of the linguistic, cultural and historic links with the British
 - d. Because the Americans wanted to protect trading links with the British and French, which were worth 150% more than trading links with Germany
 - e. Because of the sinking of the Lusitania
 - f. Because the Germans announced unrestricted submarine warfare
 - g. Because of the Zimmermann Telegram
1. **Decide whether any of these reasons should be rejected, and for what reasons.**
 2. **Create a poster or information leaflet for distribution to Americans explaining why it was necessary for the USA to declare war on Germany.**

How important was the American contribution in the First World War?

The first American troops arrived in France in June 1917, bringing hope to the allied cause. There were good reasons for British and French hopes. In the fighting of 1916 both countries had suffered dreadful loss of life and had acquired little in the way of territorial gains. German forces still occupied large sections of Belgium and Northern France and the deadlock of trench warfare continued.

The British had also become concerned by the German campaign of unrestricted submarine warfare, by which the Germans hoped to starve Britain into capitulation before any American intervention could be decisive. In 1917 it became clear to the British that German submarines were sinking an increasing amount of supplies vital to Britain, and the commander of the British fleet seemed to have no answer to the threat.



Sketch of American troops landing in France, 1917

The Russian Revolution had caused further anxiety. Although the Russians had not been particularly effective during the war, Russia had been an ally of the British and French and their mere existence had drawn German troops away from the Western Front. The revolution that took place in March 1917 ended any effective Russian participation in the First World War, and the Germans would therefore be able to redeploy their forces from Eastern Europe to face the British and French.

Finally, in April 1917, the French had launched a military offensive that had turned into yet another bloodbath with thousands of French casualties. The French High Command had promised so much from this offensive that its failure led to a collapse in the morale of the French Army. Several units mutinied and / or deserted their posts and at some points a concerted German offensive may well have found no resistance whatsoever. Fortunately for the French, the Germans were unaware of the situation and order was restored.

Considering these Anglo-French concerns it is no wonder that both Britain and France greeted the arrival of the Americans with unrestrained enthusiasm. The USA was, even in 1917, the richest country in the world, had huge industrial capacity and large reserves of manpower. The potential for the Americans to make good the loss of Russia was immense.

However, in the spring of 1917 American involvement in the war was potential rather than actual. The Germans may well not be able to outfight the USA in the long term, but for the moment the German economy and armed forces were geared up for war, whilst the Americans were a long way from being ready to make a major contribution in Europe. Much would depend on how quickly the United States could turn its potential power into actual battlefield strength.

Many have argued – especially American historians – that the entry of the USA into the First World War was strategically decisive and that the Germans would have won if the United States had not entered the war. This assessment is probably accurate, but for reasons other than American battlefield actions.

The first problem facing the Americans was that of recruitment and deployment. The image of American troops being rushed to France to rescue the Allied cause in the manner of the US cavalry rescuing white homesteaders from hostile native Indians is one suitable only for the storytellers. In reality the USA could not make a quick and decisive entry into the war.

The first American troops to arrive in Europe were poorly equipped because the priority was to bring the soldiers over. This was not of great significance to the British and French, however. The advantage to Britain and France of the US entry was twofold. In the first place the USA would provide financial loans to their allies, so that they could continue their war effort, and in the second place the long-term military potential of the USA meant a large supply of reserve manpower. This was important to the British and French because both countries had lost so many of their own young men.

The Germans also realised this, but they looked to win the war in 1917 before the American manpower potential could be made reality. They also hoped to sink significant numbers of American troop ships sending men to Europe. However, in both these aims the Germans were unsuccessful.

The number of American troops in Europe grew slowly. This was explained by the fact that the US Army in peacetime was very small – even smaller than the British Army had been in 1914. However, in that year the British had been expecting a European war, whilst the Americans had not expected to become involved in the war at all. It would therefore take time to build up the American Army, to bring the recruits together and to train them. The logistical routes to France had also to be worked out in order to keep American forces in France in supply.

Once in France the Americans then insisted on independence of action rather than merging with French and British units to form joint units. The American commander – General Pershing – was prepared to wait in order to achieve this.

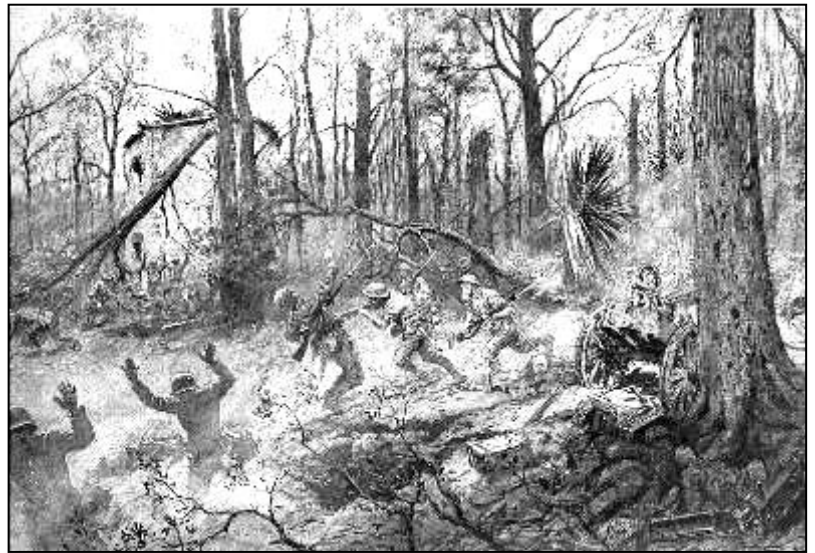


General Pershing inspecting French positions at the frontline near Chemin, 1917

British and French commanders were dismayed by this. They realised that their own forces were not at full strength and that there were few reinforcements to be found in their respective homelands. Both had hoped that American forces would fill the gaps, and both tried to pressurise the Americans into this role. Pershing was having none of it. Thus, by the start of 1918, the slow build-up and independent role of the US Army meant that, when the Germans launched their offensive in 1918, there was only one American division in the line facing the enemy.

However, there were encouraging signs in 1918 for the allies. The development of the convoy system meant that the British could afford greater naval protection to their merchant shipping and the German submarine campaign had clearly failed to achieve its objective of knocking Britain out of the war.

The Germans were aware that over time an increasing number of Americans would be sent to the front line. This would eventually lead to the Allies achieving numerical superiority, thus the Germans concluded that they had to attack in the spring of 1918 in an effort to win the war before the American presence became decisive. They launched an offensive in March 1918, breaking through French lines, moving on Paris and threatening to drive the British back to the Channel. Few Americans were engaged in the desperate fighting, which eventually petered out as the Germans outstripped their ability to keep their army in supply.



US Marines in the Battle of Belleau Wood during the German Spring Offensive, 1918

The German successes did have an effect on the Americans. Pershing gave up on his insistence on independence, offering his forces to the French to be used as they thought fit. This was not what Pershing considered to be ideal, but he had come to realise that if he did not help the British and French there may no longer be a front for an independent American army to defend.

The German offensive also caused a greater sense of urgency in the Americans. More and more troops were sent to France and with greater speed. It was an escalation that spelled the end of German resistance. French and American forces launched a counter-offensive in July 1918, which was the first time in the war that American forces had made a significant contribution.

The war was over for Germany. The German government was aware that there was no chance of reinforcement for their front line whilst the French and British could look forward to considerable reinforcement from the USA. For Germany there was nothing to look forward to but the growing starvation of their people after years of the British Blockade.

In August 1918 the British, supported by the Americans, launched an offensive on the Somme. By this time there were some one and a half million Americans in France, and that number could only increase. However, even at this stage of the war, it was still the potential might of the USA in the longer term that concerned the Germans rather than the actual numbers deployed on the Western Front in 1918. The American contribution to the final victory was brave and heroic, but ultimately the main fighting against the Germans in the latter months of the First World War was undertaken by tired but resolute British units. Therefore, although the American role in the First World War was decisive, it was so in terms of its financial power, which enabled its allies to borrow money from the USA, and in terms of its military potential in the longer term.

More significant however were the strategic consequences of the First World War. Germany had proved to be a match for the combined might of both the British and the French Empires. Although Britain was still a power to be reckoned with, it seemed that if a resurgent Germany was to be resisted, a new power in the world would be needed to replace, or at least to support, the British. For the first time the winds of power seemed to blow, if only as a gentle breeze, from across the Atlantic Ocean.

Task

1. Why had the Germans begun a campaign of unrestricted submarine warfare even though they knew that such a campaign was likely to bring the USA into the war against them?
2. Give at least three reasons that might explain why the British and French were so enthusiastic about the arrival of American forces in France.
3. Why were the Americans unable to make a quick and decisive military contribution to the Allied war effort?
4. Why did the arrival of the Americans initially make life even more difficult for the British?
5. What had been the main way in which the Americans supported both the French and the British both before and during the First World War?
6. Why was American manpower likely to make a significant difference in the long run?
7. Why were the Americans slower than the British in deploying troops in France?
8. Why did Pershing's decision to keep American forces separate from the French and British slow down the military contribution of the Americans in the First World War even more?
9. Why did the Germans launch the Ludendorff Offensive in March 1918?
10. How effective was American armed support for the British and French in defending the Allied positions from the Ludendorff Offensive?
11. Why did the Ludendorff Offensive persuade Pershing that he was wrong to hold out for an independent American army?
12. Why was there no further hope for the Germans following the failure of the Ludendorff Offensive?
13. How effective were the Americans in the final offensive against the Germans, compared to French and British forces?
14. What conclusion can be drawn about the American contribution to the Allied victory in the First World War?
15. Why did the '*winds of power*' now seem to blow across the Atlantic Ocean rather than across the English Channel?

What was the American contribution to the peace settlement of 1919–1920?

In 1918 an exhausted Germany approached the Americans seeking terms for a ceasefire in the fighting of the First World War. The Germans hoped that the USA would be more lenient than the British or the French because the Americans had not been fighting for so long, had not fought on their own territory and had not taken so many losses.

In response President Woodrow Wilson proposed a '*Peace without Victory*', by which he intended to create a peace settlement that would be fair to all parties. He therefore put forward his Fourteen Points as a basis of a peace settlement. They were as follows:

1. Open covenants of peace, with no secret agreements
2. Absolute freedom upon the seas... in peace and war alike
3. The removal, as far as possible, of economic barriers
4. National armaments be reduced to the lowest point needed for defence
5. An adjustment of all colonial claims
6. The evacuation of all Russian territory and a settlement of all questions affecting Russia
7. Belgium to be evacuated and restored
8. All French territory to be evacuated and Alsace-Lorraine to be returned to France
9. A readjustment of the frontiers of Italy on the basis of national self-determination
10. The peoples of Austria-Hungary to be given independence
11. Romania, Serbia and Montenegro to be evacuated; Serbia to be given access to the sea
12. Autonomous rule for the peoples of the Ottoman Empire (Turkey)
13. An independent Polish state to be established with access to the sea
14. A League of Nations to be formed for the purposes of securing the political independence and territorial independence of great and small states alike

Many of these points reflected the beliefs of the Americans in general and Wilson in particular. Wilson believed that the USA could have an influence for good in the world, spreading American ideas of liberal democracy and capitalism.

Some of the Fourteen Points reflect the experience of the United States during the First World War. For example, the point about the freedom of the seas (2) reflects Wilson's belief that Americans should be able to travel the oceans freely without having to worry about hostile submarine attacks.

However, many of the Fourteen Points reflect the time spent by the American President analysing the causes of the war. Wilson had come to the conclusion that future peace could be guaranteed if the causes of the First World War were identified and then dealt with. For instance, he was convinced that the secret treaties signed between the various powers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had divided Europe into two mutually suspicious camps. Hence, the first Point about open covenants, so that suspicions could be reduced and addressed.

He was also convinced that nationalism had been one of the major causes of the war, and he therefore put forward the concept of self-determination, which would allow people the right to decide their own future and type of government. Such a policy would address problems seen before the war – such as Serbian nationalism – by allowing the Serbs to reject Austrian rule and establish their own nation.

However, some of the Points failed to take into account the practicalities of international diplomacy. For instance, establishing a Polish state was consistent with self-determination, but Poland would be severely weakened unless it had access to the sea. Yet Poland could only be given access to the sea if territory was taken from Germany and many Germans were placed under Polish rule. Such a decision could easily store up trouble for the future.

In the event the peace treaties, such as the Treaty of Versailles, were much harsher on the Germans and their allies than Wilson had intended. However, the President was not unduly bothered. He believed that his new concept – the League of Nations – would be able to deal with any issues as they arose. He also considered that the League would be able to make any changes to the treaties at a later date if there were any injustices.

For that reason Wilson was prepared to make concessions to his European allies, who were generally less amicably disposed towards Germany than the USA. In return he insisted that the League of Nations was incorporated into all the peace treaties so that changes to the treaties could be made if necessary. It was a decision that ultimately rebounded against him, but it was also the way in which the Americans influenced the peace settlement most of all. It just remained to be seen whether the League of Nations could live up to Woodrow Wilson's hopes.

Task

1. Match the Fourteen Points with the three aims of Woodrow Wilson

The Fourteen Points

1. Open diplomatic covenants openly agreed
2. Freedom of the seas
3. Free Trade
4. Disarmament
5. Impartial adjustments of all colonial claims
6. Evacuation of Russia by the Germans
7. Evacuation and restoration of Belgium
8. Return of Alsace-Lorraine to France
9. The re-adjustment of Italian frontiers based on nationality
10. Self-determination for the peoples of Austria-Hungary
11. Evacuation and restoration of Romania, Serbia and Montenegro
12. Self-determination for the peoples of the Turkish Empire
13. Establishment of an independent Poland with access to the sea
14. Establishment of a League of Nations

The Principles Outlined by Woodrow Wilson

- a. **Peace without Victory:** The concept that the peace settlement should not penalise the losers too much lest they suffer from feelings of revenge and seek a new war to redress the outcome.
- b. **Self-Determination:** The concept that people of a similar nationality, language and culture should have the right to live together and to decide their own future free from foreign rule.
- c. **The Elimination of War:** Wilson wanted to end war as a means of international relations.

The League of Nations

This was to be an association of self-governing nations built into each of the peace treaties with the defeated powers. The defeated powers were Germany, Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey.

The aim of the League of Nations was to promote international cooperation and to achieve international peace and security. The idea was that member states would discuss their disputes through the League rather than resorting to war. Member states would also protect each other in the event of an attack. This concept was known as collective security, and was meant to deter any aggressor state from attacking because it would then have to face the combined power of the League.

Task

Why was the creation of the League of Nations so important to the USA?

Why was the Treaty of Versailles harsher than the Fourteen Points?

When Wilson arrived in Paris for the peace talks the people of France greeted him as a saviour. The US President spoke of “*making the world safe for democracy*”, of “*self-determination*” and “*peace without victory*”. For people that had been told that the war was the “*war to end all wars*”, the President’s words were popular.

Yet his words took no account of the other strong feelings in France and Britain. The French had lost nearly one and a half million men and much of Northern France had been destroyed in the fighting. The British had lost some 900,000 men and were bankrupt. Both wanted to make Germany pay, especially the French, who – having been attacked twice in living memory – wanted to make sure that Germany would never be strong enough to attack France a third time.

Wilson soon discovered that the Europeans were determined to have their revenge, to see their territorial ambitions met and to receive reparations for damage inflicted on them during the war. Nothing could be further removed from his concept of peace without victory.

Arguments over territory soon began. Some were easy enough to solve, such as the return of Alsace-Lorraine to France, but others caused real difficulties. A refusal to grant the inflated territorial demands of the Italians ultimately led to the withdrawal of Italy from the peace talks. Wilson soon realised that to accomplish anything he would have to make compromises.

Mistakes were certainly made, and compromises that went fundamentally against Wilson’s beliefs. He was convinced that imposing reparations on the Germans was a mistake, believing that it would cause resentment in Germany and sow the seeds for future conflict. However, the French and the Belgians insisted on reparations in order to rebuild their war-torn countries.

Wilson was forced to concede the point. Yet if he had not insisted on his allies paying off their war debts to the USA, they might have been more willing to abandon the issue of reparations. In the event Germany was forced to agree to some \$33 billion in reparations, part of which the European allies then had to use to repay the Americans. If Wilson believed he could achieve his wishes without a financial settlement of some sort, he was surely deluding himself.

Wilson comforted himself with his concept of the League of Nations. He wanted an international organisation so that countries could discuss problems and disputes without resorting to war. If war did break out, Wilson’s vision was that all the members of the League would then join together against any aggressive state. This would prevent states from making war because they would know that they would face a combined group of nations if they did. This concept became known as Collective Security.

To Wilson the concept was so important that he insisted on writing it into all the treaties rather than making a separate agreement. The other powers eventually agreed, after having wrung concessions from the Americans, and the treaty was eventually signed. But Wilson had stored up problems for himself when he came to secure the agreement of Congress to his plans.

Task

In this task you are to play the role of the American President. You have been given some proposals from the French (and British). What is your attitude towards these proposals?

1. That the French gain possession of the Saarland and its rich coal-mining areas, even though the area is ethnically German
2. That the western side of the Rhineland be demilitarised, preferably under French control. The Rhineland is ethnically German, but the idea is to weaken the Germans
3. That the request from the Austrians to use self-determination and join with Germany should be refused lest it make the German state too strong
4. That the ethnically German area of the Sudetenland should be given to the new state of Czechoslovakia in order to improve the defences of the new state
5. That the access to the sea for Poland should be carved out of territory that once belonged to Germany
6. That Germany should surrender the port of Danzig to international control so that the Poles could use the port equally
7. That Germany should accept guilt for starting the war, and accept that all the damage caused by the war should be paid for by the Germans
8. That the German army should be limited to a mere 100,000 men
9. That the Germans should not be allowed to possess any tanks, submarines or warplanes
10. That the Americans should cancel all money owed to them by Britain and France

Task

The British and the French seem to be determined to introduce their proposals. Think about the concept of the League of Nations and decide how that association may allow you to agree to all the French and British demands without feeling you have had to surrender your principles.

Why did the US Congress reject the peace settlement?

In November 1918 (before the Paris peace talks had begun) the mid-term elections to the US Congress were held. Wilson chose to make the peace conference a party political issue in the hope that the electorate would return large Democrat majorities in both the House and Senate. The plan did not work, and the Republicans gained control of both. Wilson was to make this awkward situation worse by making no attempt to gain Republican support for his foreign policy plans.

The Republican majority leader in the Senate – Henry Cabot Lodge – was soon to decide that he did not like the plans for the League of Nations. He believed it was contrary to traditional American foreign policy because it might engage the USA in foreign entanglements as a consequence of collective security.

Wilson knew he was in for a fight. He had already been advised to compromise in order to have the settlement accepted by Congress. However, Wilson did not appear to be in any mood for compromise. In a speech to the Senate on 10th July 1919 he argued for an unqualified acceptance of the peace treaties. Wilson believed his personal powers of persuasion would win the day – he was wrong.

At first there was good reason for optimism. Very few Senators wanted to reject the treaties altogether. However, Wilson's insistence that the Senate approve the entire treaty with no reservations caused much Republican opposition. Wilson needed the Treaty to be passed in the Senate by a two-thirds majority. Henry Cabot Lodge was determined that this would not happen unless the Treaty was amended.

The main worry of Lodge and his supporters was that the Covenant of the League of Nations seemed to commit the USA to an international role. They wanted clear limits and definitions on what the USA was supposed (or not supposed) to do under the terms of the peace settlement. Various reservations were put forward, especially relating to Article 10 of the League of Nations. These reservations would effectively have given the Americans a 'get-out' clause if they were unhappy about any League action or decision.

Lodge proposed that majority approval in Congress would be needed before Americans could be committed to League action, especially if that action involved either economic sanctions or military action. Wilson stood firm – he wanted the entire peace settlement to be passed without any reservations. The stage was set for a political battle.

The Senators led by Lodge were not against the settlement as such, but they were looking for certain changes and guarantees before they would vote to ratify it. However, Lodge himself was a strong critic of Wilson's foreign policy, claiming it was both ignorant and feeble and he also disliked Wilson personally, believing that Wilson lacked principle.

Lodge believed the USA should only engage in foreign affairs if such affairs affected American interests. He maintained that American supremacy in the Western Hemisphere was essential, and he opposed Article 10 of the League of Nations because it might drag the USA into a foreign adventure that did not involve American interests. He had little liking for the idea of the League of Nations. He was an American isolationist, who did believe there was a role for the United States in world affairs, but who did not agree with the idea of *"plunging the United States into every controversy and conflict on the face of the globe"*.

However, Lodge was not and never was totally against the peace treaties. Neither were his supporters. Thus many of the so-called opponents to the treaties could have been persuaded to ratify it – including the League – if provision were granted to allow the USA to retain its freedom of action. They wanted the USA to consider each incident that arose on a case-by-case basis rather than sign up to an unlimited commitment to collective security. Such a commitment by the USA might drag Americans into a war that was not of their own choosing, in a far away part of the world where there was no vital American interest.

To Wilson, peace would be maintained by the *implied* threat of force – no nation would be sufficiently foolish to challenge the *potential* combined force of League members. Lodge thought this to be far too vague, and was not willing to change his view when Wilson tried to claim that Article 10 was “*binding in conscience only, not in law*”.

However, Lodge *was* prepared to enter into compromise talks in January 1920, and was praised by the British Ambassador, who felt that the Lodge reservations represented the best way to make sure of American involvement in the League of Nations. But Wilson was not prepared to let go of his dream. He felt that the USA should either accept the peace settlement in its entirety, as he had negotiated it in Paris, or not accept it at all. He was not willing to compromise, and he rejected all political attempts at achieving compromise.

Many Democrats were increasingly alarmed at the stance of the President, but they also felt they had to support him. Wilson’s defence of the League was passionate, convincing and strong. He underlined the social and economic benefits of membership. He stressed the disarmament provisions and attempted to reduce the anxieties about Article 10, pointing out that Congress had the power to veto any US action anyway.

But Wilson refused to consider any change to the wording of Article 10. He saw Article 10 as vital to the League of Nations. He therefore rejected any compromise with Lodge, and thus forfeited the chance to ratify the Treaty.

In October 1919 Woodrow Wilson suffered a severe stroke. He was unable to work until the end of December, and then only for a few minutes. At the time the extent of his illness was kept secret, and under normal circumstances he should have resigned in favour of the Vice President. The illness begs the question: would Wilson have found a way to reconcile differences with Lodge if he had been fully fit? Given the uncompromising statements he made before his stroke, this is by no means certain.

Many of his closest supporters in January 1920 were concerned about the President’s health. He seemed to have lost touch with reality, rejected all talk of compromise and all advice from colleagues.

On nineteenth March 1920, the Treaty of Versailles was put forward for ratification by the Senate, together with the Lodge reservations. It failed to gain the necessary two-thirds majority by seven votes. The Americans had rejected the peace settlement.

Task

1. Read the information presented.
2. Look at the reasons below to explain why the USA rejected the Treaty of Versailles:
 - Wilson had ignored traditional US foreign policy
 - Henry Cabot Lodge’s actions ensured that the Treaty of Versailles would fail
 - The Treaty was bound to fail because it was a compromise with the British and French
 - Wilson could have got the Treaty passed if he had been more willing to compromise
 - Too many Americans were opposed to the Treaty and its obligations
3. Look at the statements, and decide if any of them can be rejected. Explain the reasons for your rejection.
4. Place the remaining statements into an order of importance. Explain how each of these statements might have contributed to the rejection of the Treaty.
5. Which do you consider the most important reason for the rejection of the Treaty? Explain your answer.

Was Wilson to blame for the American rejection of the peace settlement?

The end of the First World War saw the conclusion of more than four years of conflict. The awful destruction and death seen in that war caused people to think that the peace settlement should ensure there would never be another war. This sentiment was shared entirely by Woodrow Wilson.

However, Wilson's vision of a collective security based upon a League of Nations with full American participation was stillborn as a result of his failure to convince the Senate of its need. Perhaps this was unavoidable. Wilson foresaw a world of democracies working for peace by reducing armaments and resolving conflict by reasoned discussion. It was a noble vision, but one that was easy to attack for its idealism, as several of his opponents did. In the end the Senate rejected the vision as a fundamental alteration of American foreign policy. The American people – at least via their representatives in the Senate – were not yet ready for the world order envisioned by their President.

Yet in many ways the fight in the Senate missed the point. The League of Nations was a new concept, and one that would have to develop and grow. As such the detailed design of the League in 1919 and 1920 mattered little as experience would cause that detail to be altered. Thus it was at least feasible that the reservations put forward by Lodge would have made little difference to the Covenant of the League as it evolved over time. In this sense Wilson was at fault in not realising the essential nature of his own creation, and failing to compromise at a time when it was necessary in order for that evolution to take place.

But perhaps the South African general, Jan Smuts, has best summed up the main issue. He argued that the Americans wanted Wilson to fail; that the Americans wanted to evade the issues that would arise as a result of the treaty obligations. If Smuts was right, then there was little that Wilson could have done to avoid the ultimate fate of the peace settlement.

Task

The South African Premier Jan Smuts claimed that Wilson could have done little to preserve the peace treaties. To what extent do you agree?

Why did American forces intervene in the Russian Civil War?

The second Russian Revolution in November 1917 had brought to power a new government that based its ideology on the Communist writings of Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin. The Communist government made a separate peace with the Germans and looked to end all fighting in order to consolidate their hold on power.

In the event Russia was plunged into a vicious civil war, and several foreign powers intervened in the conflict. Britain and France both sent forces to Russia, partly to reclaim supplies they had previously sent to an ally who had now pulled out of the fight, but also because they both wanted to overthrow the new government. The Japanese also sent troops to Vladivostok, and the Americans sent 7,000 men to Siberia in March 1918. The Americans stayed there until 1920 and, apart from some minor skirmishing, did little and achieved nothing.



The Russians claimed that the American presence was part of an international attempt to crush Communism. Wilson was certainly no Communist and had no sympathy with Communism. However, it also appears that he had no great hatred for the new regime.

Some have argued that the American presence was in support of Britain and France. If so, then the American presence in Siberia was far away from the British and French deployments in Russia and it is difficult to see how much support could therefore have been offered.

The most likely reason is that the Americans were in Siberia in order to keep an eye on the Japanese. Wilson was concerned that, in the uncertainty of the civil war in Russia, the Japanese might try to enhance their territorial possessions in Siberia.

Whatever the reason, hundreds of Americans lost their lives or suffered injury for no apparently obvious cause, and the whole escapade planted a deep distrust of American motives in the minds of the Russians. It was an unfortunate legacy that was to last into the Cold War.

Task

Three reasons have been suggested to explain why Woodrow Wilson sent American troops to Russia in 1918. These are:

- *The American President wanted to support his British and French allies in Russia*
- *Wilson was concerned at Japanese intentions*
- *The Americans wanted to crush the Communist (Bolshevik) government*

1. Which of these three reasons do you find most convincing and why?
2. Some have suggested that the true origin of the Cold War began during the Wars of Intervention in Russia. What is the evidence for this?

How successful was Woodrow Wilson's foreign policy?

Judgement on Wilson rests in European histories on his role in the peace settlement at the end of the First World War, and then on his failure to deliver an American ratification of the treaties he had worked so hard on. Many Europeans have criticised the idealism that he brought to the treaty, and his failure to bring the USA into the League of Nations after he had insisted on the concept being written into each peace treaty. This failure weakened the League and thus contributed to its ultimate failure.

The point that the absence of the Americans from the League was a major blow cannot really be disputed. But the Americans cannot be blamed for the failure of the League, and there is no guarantee that the League would have been any more successful if the USA had been a member. After all, the presence of the USA in the United Nations since 1945 has not always led to UN successes.

Wilson may have been more idealistic than his European counterparts, and some of his original Fourteen Points may have stood little chance of success. Some of his ideas may even have been impractical. For instance, the idea of self-determination may have been morally correct. However it was always going to be difficult to persuade the British and French of the moral correctness of surrendering their Empires. In the event the Americans went along with the idea of granting League Mandates to Britain and France. In effect this allowed the British and French to expand their Empires, which was totally contrary to the idea of self-determination.



A Poster of the key events of Wilson's Administration

Much has been made of German resentment, or of the economic disaster that was bound to occur as a result of the peace settlement. This was not the main fault of the settlement. Instead the concept of self-determination itself was to be the biggest problem. Millions of Europeans had been freed from German, Austrian, Hungarian or Russian control, but had been placed in small, weak states that were unable to defend themselves.

More seriously these states were left with large minority races, who were themselves to clamour for self-determination in an echo of the words of Woodrow Wilson. In particular there were the Germans, left in Poland, Czechoslovakia and elsewhere. These provided a perfect excuse for a determined German nationalist to march to their 'rescue'.

Yet Wilson cannot take sole blame for the mistakes of the Treaty. The British and French also made mistakes, and given three such strong powers it was necessarily a Treaty of compromise, where the final result ultimately satisfied no one. Neither can Wilson take the blame for the events of the 1920s and 1930s that were to lead to the end of the Versailles settlement.

The peace settlement was probably the best that could have been achieved given the circumstances of the time. Wilson could not have been blamed for this. Yet ultimately Wilson did fail in his foreign policy. He failed because he was not willing to divorce his precious League of Nations from the various peace treaties. Neither was he prepared to see the treaties ratified at home without the League being accepted in its entirety. Perhaps he felt he had compromised enough already – but his failure to seek consensus ultimately took the United States away from world affairs. For a man that propounded the virtues of collective security, this must have been a bitter blow.

Task

Consider the following aspects of US foreign policy and decide whether the aspect represents a success or failure of the policy:

- The intervention of the USA in Mexico
- The failure of the USA to join the League of Nations
- The idealism of the President
- The impracticality of self-determination
- The granting of League of Nations Mandates to Britain and France
- The number of European states left with significant German minorities
- The impossibility of knowing what might happen next
- The role of the British and French
- Public opinion in the USA

Now make your reasoned judgement on whether the foreign policy of Wilson could be considered successful or not.

Timeline

Important Dates before 1890

Year	Domestic Policy	Foreign Policy
1776	Declaration of American Independence	
1823		Monroe Doctrine
1877	Great Railroad Strike	
1888	Election of Benjamin Harrison as President	

Timeline of American History 1890–c1920

Year	Domestic Policy	Foreign Policy
1890	McKinley Tariff	Mahan writes The Influence of Sea Power
1892	Election of Grover Cleveland as President; Riots at Carnegie's Homestead steel works	
1893	Stock Market Panic	
1894	Pullman Strike	
1896	Election of William McKinley as President	
1898		Spanish-American War; Annexation of Hawaii by the USA
1900		Boxer Rebellion in China
1901	Assassination of McKinley – Teddy Roosevelt becomes President	
1902		Withdrawal of American troops from Cuba
1903		Panama gains independence from Cuba
1904	Theodore Roosevelt elected as President	Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine
1908	William Taft elected as President	
1912	Textile Strike in Lawrence, Massachusetts; Woodrow Wilson elected as President	
1913	Federal Reserve Act	Rebellion in Mexico
1914		Start of First World War
1915		Occupation of Haiti
1916	Federal Workingman's Compensation Act; Adamson Act	
1917		American Declaration of War on Germany
	Selective Service Act introduced military conscription; War Industries Board set up to organise purchases for the armed forces; Food Administration set up; Creation of the Committee on Public Information; Espionage Act passed	US Declaration of War on Germany
1918	Sedition Act passed, banning criticism of the war effort	End of the First World War; Fourteen Points; American troops sent to Russia
1919	Prohibition introduced	Treaty of Versailles
1920	Warren Harding elected President; Volstead Act defined what was meant by intoxicating liquor; Palmer Raids; Clarke and Tyler recruited to the Ku Klux Klan	US rejection of the peace treaties; American troops withdrawn from Russia

USA 1890–c1920: Answers to tasks

The Political System of the United States

1. When did the United States become an independent country?
1776
2. What is the only way in which the US Constitution can be changed?
By making an Amendment.
3. How does a federal country like the USA differ from a more centralised state like Britain?
Each area has responsibility for its own affairs in a federal system rather than having all decision made by one centralised government.
4. How many terms can be served by an American President according to the 22nd Amendment?
Two
5. What is the difference between the House of Representatives and the Senate?
The House of Representatives is elected by the American people, while the Senate represents the states. The House of Representatives has more members from the more populous states, whereas the Senate has two members from each state regardless of the size of the state.
6. How is a Supreme Court judge appointed?
By the President with the agreement of the Senate.
7. What power does the Supreme Court enjoy?
It can declare laws made by the President and/or Congress to be unconstitutional.
8. Explain the system of 'checks and balances'.
This was set up to make sure that no one branch of government could become too powerful.
9. What is the difference between a state law and a federal law?
State laws only apply to the state where the laws were passed, whereas federal laws apply to all states.
10. Name the main political parties in the United States.
The Republicans and the Democrats.

The Economic Success of the USA

- **The possession of huge natural resources:** *This meant the USA did not have to import (and pay for) these resources and was not reliant on foreign powers.*
- **The development of the railways:** *This made it easy to transport natural resources to the factories, etc.*
- **Foreign capital:** *This gave the Americans the money needed to develop their economy.*
- **Mass Immigration:** *This provided a large and a cheap source of labour, a growing home market, and growing demand for goods.*
- **Mass Production:** *This allowed US businesses to maximise their profits.*
- **The laissez-faire policies of American governments:** *American businesses were allowed to grow free from government controls.*
- **High Tariffs:** *These discouraged Americans from buying (more expensive) foreign goods.*

The Main Features of the Nineteenth Century American Economy

1 – G; 2 – E; 3 – F; 4 – C; 5 – D; 6 – B; 7 – A

(There is an argument for other matches, e.g. 6 – C/4 – B. This is fine – the idea of the task is to encourage thinking and so long as the final matching can be explained, it should be accepted.)

Problems with Growing Industrialisation

1. Why had the USA become the world's leading industrial nation by 1913?
Plentiful land and raw materials, large workforce, advances in communications such as railways and telegraph, new technology.
2. What was a corporation and why were corporations able to do so well in the USA?
They were large industrial units that got ever bigger and became monopolies; they did well as a result of protection from foreign trade via US tariff policy.

3. What was the traditional attitude of US governments towards regulation of the US economy?
Laissez-faire, by which government did not interfere in business practice.
4. Why might this traditional attitude be considered hypocritical by some?
It did not apply to workers' unions – the government intervened to prevent labour organisation.
5. Who were the 'robber barons' and why were they called this?
They were powerful industrialists like Carnegie and Rockefeller; the name came about as a result of their habit of using immigrants as a source of cheap labour and as strike-breakers.
6. What problems faced American workers, especially female and child workers?
They were paid less money than men.
7. Why did the existence of the monopolies make things harder for American workers?
Monopolies removed competition, meaning that workers had to accept low wages or leave their jobs.
8. Why did technological innovation threaten American workers?
Machines could replace human workers.
9. Why were many American workers opposed to immigration?
They took jobs at low wages, keeping Americans out of work or forcing them to accept low wages.
10. What were the advantages and disadvantages of the concept of survival of the fittest when applied to American business?
*Advantage: Encouraged the growth of business and individual success;
Disadvantage: Millions had to accept poor working/living conditions and had no means of escaping their poverty.*
11. Why did socialist and communist ideas spread during this period?
These ideologies looked to improve conditions for workers.
12. What was the main purpose of the American Federation of Labour?
To increase wages and reduce working hours.
13. Why did so many American strikes turn violent?
The resistance of employers led to desperation among workers and clashes with the forces of law and order.

Problems of Mass Immigration

1. From which European countries did most immigrants come?
Britain, Ireland, Germany, Italy and Austria-Hungary.
2. Why did so many people choose to leave Europe for the United States?
Seeking a better life, stable employment, escaping starvation or religious/ political persecution, escaping warfare or disease.
3. What problems were faced by immigrants?
Prejudice, discrimination and exploitation.
4. Why did the Japanese and Chinese consider US immigration policy to be racist?
Because the policy excluded them from entry to the USA.

Populism

Indicative Information:

- **Successes:** *The formation of the group to represent rural interests; the creation of the political party and its initial electoral successes; the influence upon later Democratic Party policy.*
- **Failures:** *The attempt to change the economy to one based on gold; the failure to achieve a political breakthrough as a result of the electoral system; the need to merge idea with the Democratic Party.*

The Presidencies of Harrison, Cleveland and McKinley

- **The Sherman Anti-Trust Act:** *The first time the federal government tried to regulate an aspect of American business practice; not actually aimed specifically against trusts, and could be used against trade unions.*
- **The McKinley Tariff:** *The high tariff acted to push up prices (inflation).*
- **Farm costs and prices:** *Costs rose in line with other industries, but farm prices fell, threatening the livelihoods of many farmers.*
- **The Wilson-Gorman Tariff:** *The replacement for the McKinley Tariff, which slightly reduced the tariff in an effort to stop inflation.*

- **The Pullman Strike:** *An indication of the problems within American industrial relations, as well as how industrial disputes were dealt with.*
- **The actions of the American Railway Union (ARU):** *An immediate support for the Pullman workers was given by the decision to boycott Pullman cars.*
- **The use of federal troops in industrial disputes:** *Justified on the basis that the Pullman Strike represented a threat to public safety, this showed that governments were prepared to use troops to break strikes.*
- **The Dingley Act:** *This increased tariffs – and had the same effect on prices as the McKinley Tariff.*
- **Leon Frank Czolgosz:** *The man who shot President McKinley.*

Progressivism

- **Trusts and Monopolies:** *Many progressives believed that trusts and monopolies had become a threat to the interests of the American people because they could fix prices. This needed to be changed because it was contrary to the principles of free enterprise.*
- **Big Business and Democracy:** *Many also believed that over the years the political machinery of the USA had become dominated by big business and was therefore corrupt. Progressives wanted government to become more accountable to the people, which was the principle of democracy, rather than to big businesses.*
- **Social and Economic Improvement:** *They argued for an end to child labour and they wanted the introduction of old age pensions and education reform.*
- **The attitude towards extremist and socialist ideas:** *Progressives tended to believe that their programme of moderate reform was essential if the USA was to avoid socialism and class struggle.*

Theodore Roosevelt and Progressivism

1. Why did Theodore Roosevelt take a progressive position during his presidency?
He was influenced by the progressive spirit of his time – or by the need to encourage progressive voters to support him.
2. Why did he get involved in the Pennsylvania mining dispute?
He wanted to get both sides to agree to arbitration.
3. Why did he support various pieces of progressive legislation, such as the Pure Food and Drug Act?
He wished to end the false labelling of food products, as well as the adulteration of food and drugs.
4. Why did William Taft become President in 1909?
Roosevelt refused to stand for re-election, but did support Taft, transferring his support.
5. Why did Taft lose the support of the progressives?
Because of his support for a new tariff and seemingly for private ownership over conservationism.
6. Why did Taft lose the 1912 presidential election?
Growing opposition to Taft within the Republican Party; the division of Republican votes between Taft and Roosevelt.
7. How progressive were Presidents Roosevelt and Taft? Use the information above and explain all points made.

Indicative Content

- **Progressive:** *Roosevelt supported a civil service based on merit, the conservation of natural resources and greater controls on business and interstate travel; Roosevelt intervened in industrial disputes and also threatened to use troops against mine owners in Pennsylvania; Roosevelt supported fair competition and business practice; Taft introduced an 8 hour day for government contracts; Taft introduced a graduated income tax.*
- **Not Progressive:** *Roosevelt may have embraced progressivism for political reasons rather than from conviction; Taft supported the introduction of a new tariff; Taft supported private ownership over conservation and supported conservatives in Congress.*

Woodrow Wilson and Progressivism

(There are a number of alternatives here based upon the judgement of the student. The key is to consider the reasoning behind the choice and to award credit accordingly.)

Attitudes to Progressivism

1 – D 2 – B 3 – C 4 – A

Traditional US Foreign Policy

- **The Founding Fathers:** Discouraged American involvement in foreign affairs and from entanglement in foreign alliances.
- **President Monroe:** Discouraged European involvement/interference in the Western hemisphere; avoided American colonialism.

New Manifest Destiny

1. What was the original Manifest Destiny?
The belief by white Americans that they would come to control North America.
2. Why did some Americans consider that a new Manifest Destiny was needed?
A new Manifest Destiny would bring new areas of the world under white American control, providing not only new markets but also new employment opportunities for the unemployed in the USA.
3. What was the danger inherent in any new Manifest Destiny?
It could lead to clashes with European powers such as Britain or Germany.

The American Empire

- **Arguments for Empire:** A; C; D; H; I
- **Arguments against Empire:** B; E; F; G; J

(Assess the final judgement on the strength of the argument put forward by the student.)

The Start of the American Empire

- **The Chinese Market:** The USA wanted to develop its trading links with China.
- **The need for ships to have places to refuel:** Ships using the trading routes would need several stopping stations at various Pacific islands for refuelling and supply purposes. Once the Americans had gained access to these bases, it then became vital that no other power muscled in to seize control of the relevant island – and the most certain way to achieve this was to take control of the island themselves.
- **The Samoan Islands:** European powers agreed with the Americans to joint control of the islands.
- **Hawaii and Pearl Harbour:** The USA had gained exclusive rights to the deep-water port of Pearl Harbour and formal annexation of Hawaii therefore took place in 1898.
- **American island annexations in 1898 and 1899:** Hawaii was by no means the only island to fall to US control – others included Johnston Island, Palmyra Island and Guam (1898) and Wake Island (1899).
- **The Open Door Policy:** Chinese ports should be open to merchants from all nations, not just those from the country that controlled the particular port.

Spanish-American War (Causes)

Indicative Content

- **American revulsion at Spanish brutality in Cuba:** The Americans would have been appalled by the brutality of the Spanish response to the rebellion; also they would have reacted sympathetically to a people seeking to throw off their colonial masters, just as the Americans had thrown off the British.
- **The role of the Yellow Press:** The circulation war meant that the press exaggerated Spanish atrocities in order to achieve greater sales. They thus whipped up American public opinion against Spain.
- **The explosion of the USS Maine:** The Americans blamed the Spanish for this incident and wanted revenge.
- **The captured letter written by the Spanish Ambassador:** The criticism of the US President inflamed American public opinion.
- **Public opinion and the mid-term elections:** McKinley and Congress felt that they could not ignore public opinion and expect to win the elections. Therefore the pressure for a declaration of war was that much greater.

(Assess the final judgement about the most convincing reason for the declaration of war on the strength of the argument put forward by the student.)

The American Victory against Spain

Indicative Content

- a. **American Victory:** Ten Spanish warships sunk off the Philippines; capture of Manila; blockade of Santiago Bay; capture of Santiago Bay; US declaration of war surprised Spain.
- b. **Spanish Defeat:** US Army unprepared and woefully supplied; medical provision for US troops poor; long Spanish supply lines across the Atlantic; poor Spanish leadership and tactics.

(Assess the final judgement on the strength of the argument put forward by the student.)

Spanish-American War (Consequences)

Indicative Content

- c. **Cuba:** Recognition as an independent state, though Americans would 'help' on the Cuban road to independence; Platt Amendment gave the USA the right to intervene in Cuba to maintain its stability and independence; Guantanamo Bay was granted to the Americans.
- b. **Philippines:** Awarded to the USA; Filipino rebellion against the new 'masters' led to war with the USA that cost many lives and much money; reaction in the USA to this cost turned most Americans against the concept of Empire.
- c. **Navy:** Mahan's argument that naval powers were strongest seemed vindicated and provided an argument for Empire; the need for the Panama Canal seemed clear; the navy had been crucial in the victory over Spain, thus needed strengthening.

US Imperialism

1. What was the dilemma faced by the Americans when thinking about their democratic beliefs?
On the one hand the Americans were convinced that it was their manifest destiny to spread the benefits of American democracy and civilisation to the rest of the world. On the other hand was the American democratic belief that people should only be ruled if they consented to their rule.
2. Why was the decision taken by the American Vice-President so significant for the USA?
The decision to acquire the Philippines for the USA was taken on the casting vote of the Vice President.
3. List the imperial acquisitions of the USA following the annexation of the Philippines.
The Panama Canal Zone in 1903 and the Virgin Islands in 1917.
4. Why was there such limited expansion of the American Empire after 1898?
The Americans exported very little to the undeveloped areas of the world, and the majority of US trade was with Britain. By contrast, trade with the Philippines accounted for a mere 0.55% of US exports in 1897. Therefore there was no compelling case for Empire.
5. Why was Hawaii considered to be so important?
Strategic reasons – to counter Japanese expansion and to allow for the defence of the West Coast.
6. Why did President Cleveland refuse to annex the Hawaiian Islands?
He had no appetite for Empire and did not believe the Hawaiians had either.
7. Why did the Spanish-American War change the fate of Hawaii?
It highlighted the need for naval bases, of which Pearl Harbour was the most important.
8. What role was played by (a) the Germans and (b) the British in the American decision to annex the Philippines?
 - a. *The Germans seemed to threaten the Philippines and thus the USA needed to keep them out by annexing the islands.*
 - b. *The British urged the Americans to annex the islands to prevent European squabbling over them.*
9. Why can it be argued that the Americans were not convinced imperialists?
The debacle in the Philippines soon quelled any American enthusiasm for empire, which was now considered to be more trouble than it was worth. The principle of self-determination was quickly re-established in the minds of most Americans – a principle that was to endure despite the temptations that followed victory in two world wars.

The Boxer Rebellion in China

Indicative Content

Necessary to protect interests in China, especially the Open Door Policy; need to resist aggression; need to ensure that foreign states, e.g. Japan, did not gain advantage from the situation.

The British Withdrawal

1. Why were the British considered a major rival by the USA?
The British were in possession of Canada as well as several of the Caribbean islands, and they had strong trading links with South American countries.
2. Why did the British decide to withdraw from the Western Hemisphere?
British isolation in Europe meant that Britain could not afford to risk conflict in the Western Hemisphere.
3. What were the consequences of the British withdrawal for the USA?
It allowed regional supremacy to the USA and began the process of the 'special relationship' with Britain.

Theodore Roosevelt's foreign policy

Indicative Content

His attitude towards traditional American foreign policy and his reasoning for this: He was aware of the potential power of the United States – and of the difference between this potential and the reality of American power. He was convinced that the USA would not be able to continue its traditional foreign policy of maintaining aloofness from foreign affairs because the United States was too big to be ignored and would thus be forced to engage in a more interventionist manner in world affairs.

His statement to 'speak softly and carry a big stick': He preferred to use diplomacy and negotiation, only using force when all else failed, but making sure that the USA did have an option to use force.

The concept of the balance of power: He believed that the USA held the balance of power, and this would allow the Americans to encourage the rival nations of Europe to discuss their differences and come to peaceful conclusions to their disputes.

His attitude towards (a) peacemaking, (b) the navy, (c) formal treaties and alliances, (d) the British and (e) his Secretaries of State:

- a. **Peacemaking:** Roosevelt was convinced that world peace was vital to the interests of the USA, and thus he believed he should work to preserve that peace.
- b. **The Navy:** Roosevelt had already accepted the arguments of Mahan about the need for an enlarged US Navy.
- c. **Formal treaties and alliances:** He accepted that formal treaties between countries could solve international disputes – however, he was not willing to see any clause in such treaties that might restrict American freedom of action.
- d. **The British:** Not generally pro-British, and certainly highly critical of some aspects of British foreign policy, Roosevelt nevertheless came to believe that war between the United States and Britain was completely impossible.
- e. **His Secretaries of State:** He preferred to work with his own personal foreign contacts in Washington, or to deal directly with European foreign ministers or heads of state.

Roosevelt's Foreign Policy in Asia/the Pacific

- **The Open Door Policy:** In Asian affairs Roosevelt very much supported the Open Door Policy for China.
- **The Russo-Japanese War:** Initially the Americans favoured the Japanese, but the stunning success of the Japanese concerned the USA. In Washington the fear was soon expressed that the Japanese might capitalise on their success and seek to expand their influence into East Asia and Siberia.
- **The Treaty of Portsmouth:** The Americans were concerned to maintain a balance in Asia. The outcome of the Treaty of Portsmouth meant that Russian power in the region had not been totally destroyed and thus the Russians could still act as a counterweight to Japanese ambitions in China.
- **Japanese immigration to the United States:** The Japanese government felt embittered by what it termed unacceptable racial restrictions in California. Japan protested formally about this to the United States.
- **The Root-Takahira Agreement:** The Americans recognise the existing status quo in the Far East and Pacific. Every issue of contention between the Americans and the Japanese seemed to disappear.

Roosevelt's Foreign Policy in Europe

Indicative Content

- **France and Britain:** The Act meant that the two European democracies were favoured by the Americans over the Germans.
- **Germany:** Could not rely on American support despite an excellent relationship between the Kaiser and Teddy Roosevelt.

- **US Commitments Abroad:** No consequences – the Act committed the Americans to absolutely nothing
- **Roosevelt's future foreign policy:** Roosevelt would need to be careful with regard to any agreement he might make in the future.

The Panama Canal

- Why was the US Government convinced of the need to build a canal across Panama?
This would allow speedier transport links between the West and East coasts of the United States, would permit faster redeployment of warships between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, and would allow for better trade routes between the East Coast of the USA and China.
- Did Roosevelt behave ethically?
You may want to consider the following points:

Indicative Content

- **American strategic considerations:** It was considered appropriate at the time for the country that paid for an improvement to defend it regardless of whose territory the improvement had been made on.
- **The behaviour of the Colombians:** Roosevelt was entitled to feel aggrieved at the Colombian behaviour after they had come to an agreement with the USA.
- **The funding of the Panama Canal:** There was no reason why the USA should not choose to fund a development in another country.
- **The secret encouragement of the Panamanian Revolt:** This contradicts the accepted maxim that one country should not interfere in the internal affairs of another.
- **The possible feelings of the Panamanian rebels:** It was possible that the Panamanians appreciated their opportunity for self-determination.

The Roosevelt Corollary

1. What was the Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine and how did it differ from the original Doctrine?
It was introduced to warn off European states that might use a default in debt repayment as an excuse to interfere in Latin America. It differed from the original Doctrine because it made provision for American intervention in Latin America.
2. Why did Theodore Roosevelt think it necessary to introduce the Corollary?
He was concerned about German pressure on Venezuela to keep obligations (debt repayments) to Germany that were being 'overlooked'.
3. Where and why was the Corollary applied in Latin America?
*Dominican Republic – Debt Repayment.
Haiti – Concern over a possible German intervention.*

The Success of Roosevelt's Foreign Policy

Indicative Content

- **Roosevelt's awareness of the weakness of the American armed forces:** He was realistic enough to realise that the relative weakness of US armed force acted as a constraint on US foreign policy.
- **Roosevelt's belief that the territorial integrity of China needed to be maintained:** There was no diminution in Chinese territory during Roosevelt's presidency.
- **The Treaty of Portsmouth 1905:** Successfully brought to a conclusion the war between Russia and Japan without destroying the Russian presence.
- **Roosevelt's attempt to limit Japanese expansion:** Korea was lost to the Japanese, but there were no other instances of Japanese expansion.
- **The Root-Takahira Agreement of 1908:** Agreed to maintain the status quo in the Far East, though probably not in the long term.
- **The General Act of Algeciras in 1906:** Showed the weakness of Roosevelt's position – his people were anxious not to commit to any form of international agreement no matter how limited.
- **Congressional Reaction to the General Act of Algeciras:** Showed the continued abhorrence of Americans towards engagement in foreign affairs.

- **The use of the Corollary of the Monroe Doctrine in Latin America:** Roosevelt was willing to use this in order to prevent European intervention.
- **The construction of the Panama Canal:** Showed a determination – if not a morality – to achieve American strategic aims in the area.
- **The conclusion of the Venezuelan issue in 1902:** Was concluded peacefully and without recourse to war.
- **The agreement with the Dominican Republic:** Showed that the USA was prepared to take control of Latin America.
- **American participation in international dialogue:** Roosevelt had increased the voice of the USA in world affairs.
- **The support of the American people for a more engaged foreign policy:** The Americans remained reluctant to participate in a more engaged foreign policy.

Wilson and the American Intervention in Mexico

(Assess the final judgement on the strength of the argument put forward by the student)

It is impossible to assess how individual students will interpret the various statements, which should be used to formulate viewpoints.

The American declaration of war in 1917

All the statements made are reasons for the American declaration of war in 1917. The student's opinions as to which were the valid reasons will need to be explained on their poster, etc.

The American contribution to the First World War

1. Why had the Germans begun a campaign of unrestricted submarine warfare even though they knew that such a campaign was likely to bring the USA into the war against them?
The Germans hoped to starve Britain into capitulation before any American intervention could be decisive.
2. Give at least three reasons that might explain why the British and French were so enthusiastic about the arrival of American forces in France.
German submarines were sinking an increasing amount of supplies vital to Britain, and the commander of the British fleet seemed to have no answer to the threat; the revolution that took place in March 1917 ended any effective Russian participation in the First World War, and the Germans would therefore be able to redeploy their forces from Eastern Europe to face the British and French; the French High Command had promised so much from the 1917 offensive that its failure led to a collapse in the morale of the French Army. Several units mutinied and / or deserted their posts.
3. Why were the Americans unable to make a quick and decisive military contribution to the Allied war effort?
The Americans were a long way from being ready to make a major contribution in Europe. The first problem facing the Americans was that of recruitment and deployment. The number of American troops in Europe grew slowly. This was explained by the fact that the US Army in peacetime was very small – even smaller than the British Army had been in 1914. The logistical routes to France also had to be worked out in order to keep American forces in France in supply.
4. Why did the arrival of the Americans initially make life even more difficult for the British?
The first American troops to arrive in Europe were poorly equipped because the priority was to bring the soldiers over.
5. What had been the main way in which the Americans supported both the French and the British both before and during the First World War?
In the first place the USA would provide financial loans to their allies, so that they could continue their war effort, and in the second place the long-term military potential of the USA meant a large supply of reserve manpower.
6. Why was American manpower likely to make a significant difference in the long run?
The Germans were aware that over time an increasing number of Americans would be sent to the front line. This would eventually lead to the Allies achieving numerical superiority.
7. Why were the Americans slower than the British in deploying troops in France?
In 1914 the British had been expecting a European war, whilst the Americans had not expected to become involved in the war at all. It would therefore take time to build up the American Army, to bring the recruits together and to train them.
8. Why did Pershing's decision to keep American forces separate from the French and British slow down the military contribution of the Americans in the First World War even more?
The French and British realised that their own forces were not at full strength and that there were few reinforcements to be found in their respective homelands. The refusal of the Americans to accept joint command meant US troops could not be deployed in action until the Americans considered themselves to be ready.

9. Why did the Germans launch the Ludendorff Offensive in March 1918?
The Germans concluded that they had to attack in the spring of 1918 in an effort to win the war before the American presence became decisive.
10. How effective was American armed support for the British and French in defending the Allied positions from the Ludendorff Offensive?
Few Americans were engaged in the desperate fighting.
11. Why did the Ludendorff Offensive persuade Pershing that he was wrong to hold out for an independent American army?
He had come to realise that if he did not help the British and French there may no longer be a front for an independent American army to defend.
12. Why was there no further hope for the Germans following the failure of the Ludendorff Offensive?
The German government was aware that there was no chance of reinforcement for their front line whilst the French and British could look forward to considerable reinforcement from the USA.
13. How effective were the Americans in the final offensive against the Germans, compared to French and British forces?
The American contribution to the final victory was brave and heroic, but ultimately the main fighting against the Germans in the latter months of the First World War was undertaken by tired but resolute British units.
14. What conclusion can be drawn about the American contribution to the Allied victory in the First World War?
The American role in the First World War was decisive, but in terms of its financial power, which enabled its allies to borrow money from the USA and in terms of its military potential in the longer term.
15. Why did the 'winds of power' now seem to blow across the Atlantic Ocean rather than across the English Channel?
Germany had proved to be a match for the combined might of both the British and the French Empires. Although Britain was still a power to be reckoned with, it seemed that if a resurgent Germany was to be resisted, a new power in the world would be needed to replace, or at least to support, the British.

The Peace Settlement

- **Peace without Victory:** Points 1, 2, 3, 4
- **Self-Determination:** Points 5–13
- **The Elimination of War:** Point 14

President Wilson believed that his new concept – the League of Nations – would be able to deal with any issues as they arose. He also considered that the League would be able to make any changes to the treaties at a later date if there were any injustices. This meant the League was the most vital element of the peace settlement as far as the Americans were concerned.

The Treaty of Versailles

Indicative Content:

1. *The Americans would not likely wish to support the proposal for the Saarland because it contradicted the ideal of self-determination by placing Germans under French rule.*
2. *The Americans may support the idea of a demilitarised zone in accordance with their view on disarmament, but would be unlikely to support the concept of French governance over a clearly German area.*
3. *The Americans may well support the wish of Germans to join together under the principles of self-determination, but may also wish to support their allies in preventing an over – strong German state.*
4. *The Americans may accept the strategic arguments here even though the concept of self-determination is being overridden.*
5. *The Americans would clearly accept the need for Poland to have access to the sea (Point 13 of the Fourteen Points).*
6. *The Americans would agree to the concept of international control under the auspices of the League of Nations.*
7. *The Americans would probably support this in order to ensure that they received repayment on the loans given out to their allies.*
8. *The Americans would agree on the basis of their point on disarmament.*
9. *See 8 above.*
10. *Absolutely not – never, ever – would the Americans accept this.*

Ultimately Wilson could cede all the demands of the British and French (except the one about cancelling the war debts) because the League of Nations could make any necessary revisions to the treaty at a later date.

The US rejection of the peace treaties

The student opinions as to which were the valid reasons will need to be explained, as will their thoughts on the importance of the valid reasons.

Was Wilson to blame?

The South African Premier Jan Smuts claimed that Wilson could have done little to preserve the peace treaties. To what extent do you agree?

Indicative Content:

- **No**
Wilson could have made compromises to ensure the treaty passed through Congress and then seen how things developed. Thus it was at least feasible that the reservations put forward by Lodge would have made little difference to the Covenant of the League as it evolved over time. In this sense Wilson was at fault in not realising the essential nature of his own creation.
- **Yes**
Traditional American attitudes towards foreign affairs meant the Americans wanted to evade the issues that would arise as a result of the treaty obligations. They wanted Wilson to fail and thus Wilson could have done little to preserve his peace treaties.

The Russian Civil War

1. *All the statements made are reasons for the American intervention in Russia. The student opinion as to which was the most convincing reason will need to be explained.*
2. *The evidence that suggests the Cold War began in 1917 was the legacy of distrust of American motives in the minds of Russian leaders following the American intervention in the Russian civil war.*

Wilson's Foreign Policy

Indicative Content: *Comment may include the following:*

- **Successes:** *the support for democratic principles in Mexico, the moral and ethical stance of the president on matters such as self-determination, the establishment of the League of Nations as a world body, the fact that he did his best, especially given the position of the British and French.*
- **Failures:** *misunderstanding the nature of Mexican politics, the fact that self-determination could not be made to work and penalised the Germans, which also contradicted his principle of Peace without Victory, the failure of the USA to join the League, his failure to take the American people and Congress with him in his vision of foreign policy.*

The final verdict will be a matter for explained student judgement.