

SSUSH15 – Analyze the origins and impact of U.S. involvement in World War I.

c. Explain Wilson’s Fourteen Points and the debate over U.S. entry into the League of Nations.
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In January 1918, President Wilson spoke to Congress about the war aims of the nation. His plan ultimately became known as the **Fourteen Points** and was designed to create a lasting peace in the world. Once negotiations for the Treaty of Versailles were completed in June 1919, the United States was divided over whether to join the League of Nations - a vital component of the Treaty.

Wilson’s Fourteen Points became a guide for the negotiations at Versailles to secure peace after World War I. Some of Wilson's suggestions were accepted, some modified, and some rejected by the countries represented at the peace conference. The Points included the following:

1. Open diplomacy (no more secret treaties)
 2. Freedom of the seas
 3. End international trade barriers
 4. Reduce armaments
 5. Impartial dealings with colonies and their natives
- 6-13. Group of points dealing with the right of self-determination for the people of eastern and central Europe
14. Create an international organization, the League of Nations, to help keep the peace.

During the postwar treaty negotiations, Wilson worked hard to get as many of his Fourteen Points as possible included in the treaty. The Fourteenth Point, which proposed a **League of Nations**, was one that President Wilson was particularly committed to securing for world peace. After much negotiation, the League of Nations was included in the final provisions of the Treaty of Versailles. The treaty drafted at Versailles had to be ratified by the United States Senate as the final step for implementation in the United States.

Although Wilson believed strongly in the League of Nations, there was significant opposition to the concept among many Americans. Public opposition to the League of Nations ultimately led the Senate to vote against ratification of the treaty. Isolationists in the Senate believed that by joining the League of Nations, the United States would be obligated to get involved in future European conflicts.

One of the most vocal critics of the League was Senator Henry Cabot Lodge. Lodge was a Republican and Wilson was a Democrat. They held different ideas about the role the United States should take in world affairs. Lodge was a powerful and respected Senator who served as his party’s majority leader and was on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Lodge, and others from his party, believed that he should have been involved in the treaty’s negotiations. Although Wilson traveled across the United States to try and gain public support for the treaty’s ratification, it was eventually rejected in the Senate. The League of Nations was created and made up of primarily European nations, but the United States never joined.



THE GAP IN THE BRIDGE.

Punch Magazine of London
(December 1919)

Define

Wilson's Fourteen Points

1. What treaty ended WWI? & When?
2. How come the US did not ratify (approve) the treaty?
3. What was the debate over the U.S. joining the League of Nations?
4. According to the political Cartoon, why is the U.S. the gap in the bridge?