

The Paris Peace Conference: the aims of the participants

This chapter investigates conditions in Europe when the Paris Peace Conference meetings were held in 1919 and the aims of the participating governments.

Throughout the chapter you need to consider the following questions:

- ★ What contemporary events affected the Paris Peace Conference discussions?
- ★ What were the main aims of the US government for the Paris Peace Conference?
- ★ To what extent had Britain achieved its war aims by December 1918?
- ★ Were French aims directed at making France more secure or more about punishing Germany for the First World War?
- ★ To what extent did Italy's goals differ from those of other Allied Powers?
- ★ How far was the new German government willing to co-operate with the victorious Allied Powers at the Paris Peace Conference and how successful was its strategy?

1 Conditions in Europe in 1919

▶ **Key question:** *What contemporary events affected the Paris Peace Conference discussions?*

In January 1919, leaders and diplomats of the 29 countries which had emerged victorious from the First World War began a year-long series of meetings to establish world order and peace.

Each victorious nation had particular goals and concerns, although these were sometimes shared between several of them. What was clear was the need for urgent action as there were many problems throughout Europe as a result of the First World War.

Hardship in Europe

The statesmen of the victorious Allied Powers were confronted by Europe in turmoil. Soldiers were returning to towns, farms and villages which had been destroyed in battles across much of eastern Europe, France, Belgium and northern Italy. With the disintegration of the Austrian, Turkish and Russian empires there was no stable government anywhere east of the Rhine. As new nations formed, such as Poland, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, people were no longer living in countries they had fought for.

← **What problems faced Europeans in early 1919?**

KEY TERM

Central Powers The wartime alliance of Germany, Austria, Turkey and Bulgaria.

The peoples of Germany, Austria-Hungary and other parts of Europe were starving. The British naval blockade of Germany during the war had meant imported food, on which Germany relied, could not get through. This blockade continued until June 1919, meaning that Germans continued to starve in the early months of the Paris Peace Conference, a situation exacerbated by the fact that there were fewer farmers to grow food as they had been conscripted into the army. Chemicals that would normally have been used to make fertilizers and even manure from animals that would help the soil replenish nutrients were used instead by the warring states to make explosives and other war goods. The soil simply grew less food and there were fewer people farming.

The problems facing the statesmen in Paris were thus not only the negotiation of peace and the drawing up of new frontiers, but also the pressing need to avert economic chaos and famine.

What conditions in Europe at the end of the First World War created revolutions?

→ Revolution

The sudden and complete defeat of the **Central Powers** had made Europe vulnerable to the spread of **communism** from Russia.

The Russian Revolution

In October 1917 a radical political group, the **Bolsheviks**, overthrew the Russian government and began a violent take-over of the entire nation. The Bolsheviks ended Russia's war with Germany and fighting broke out between the Bolsheviks and many other groups for control of the country. This civil war, which lasted for more than three years, was still taking place

KEY TERM

Communism A political and economic system in which all private ownership of property is abolished along with all economic and social class divisions, countries and governments; the only class that would exist in a communist system would be the former working class.

Bolshevik A group that followed the teachings of Karl Marx. It preached the violent overthrow of the existing social order and capitalism in order to establish the working class as the only social and economic class.

SOURCE A

'Bolshevik atrocities', Latvia, 1919.



What information is contained in Source A (both the photo and caption) that is important for historians?

during the Paris Peace Conference. During the civil war, many national groups fought for independence from Russia with varying degrees of success and with much bloodshed. Some of these states were Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Georgia and Armenia. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were successful, while Georgia and Armenia were not.

Revolution in Germany

SOURCE B

German Chancellor Friedrich Ebert's announcement of 10 November 1918. *New York Times*, 11 November 1918, vol. LXVIII, no. 22,206. The *New York Times* had been published since 1851 in New York, USA and has had one of the largest circulations of any newspaper in the world for over 100 years.

Citizens:

The ex-Chancellor, Prince Max of Baden, in agreement with all the Secretaries of State, has handed over to me the task of liquidating his affairs as Chancellor.

I am on the point of forming a new Government in accord with the various parties, and will keep public opinion freely informed of the course of events.

The new Government will be a Government of the people. It must make every effort to secure in the quickest possible time peace for the German people and consolidate the liberty which they have won.

The new Government has taken charge of the administration, to preserve the German people from civil war and famine and to accomplish their legitimate claim to autonomy. The Government can solve this problem only if all the officials in town and country will help.

I know it will be difficult for some to work with the new men who have taken charge of the empire, but I appeal to their love of the people. Lack of organization would in this heavy time mean anarchy in Germany and the surrender of the country to tremendous misery. Therefore, help your native country with fearless, indefatigable work for the future, everyone at his post.

I demand every one's support in the hard task awaiting us. You know how seriously the war has menaced the provisioning [supplying food] of the people, which is the first condition of the people's existence.

The political transformation should not trouble the people. The food supply is the first duty of all, whether in town or country, and they should not embarrass, but rather aid, the production of food supplies and their transport to the towns.

Food shortage signifies pillage and robbery, with great misery. The poorest will suffer the most, and the industrial worker will be affected hardest. All who illicitly lay hands on food supplies or other supplies of prime necessity or the means of transport necessary for their distribution will be guilty in the highest degree toward the community.

I ask you immediately to leave the streets and remain orderly and calm.

What is the importance of Source B in understanding the conditions in Germany in November 1918?



KEY TERM

Kaiser Emperor of Germany. Wilhelm II, 1888–1918, was the last German Emperor.

Parliamentary government A government responsible to and elected by parliament.

Armistice Agreement to stop fighting.

Fourteen Points A list of points drawn up by Woodrow Wilson on which the peace settlement at the end of the First World War was based.

Socialist One who believes that a society should be as equitable as possible with few, if any, differences between society members in terms of economic or social standing.

Republic A form of government in which representatives are elected by a population to rule, usually in a parliamentary method of government.

Chancellor Head of the German parliament and equivalent to prime minister.

Pariah state A nation with no friendly relations with other states.

On 28 September 1918, the German Generals Ludendorff and Hindenburg conceded defeat in the First World War and advised the **Kaiser** to form a new **parliamentary government**. This was intended to impress US President Wilson with its democratic credentials and receive more lenient treatment at the war's end.

On 4 October the new German government asked Wilson for an **armistice** on the basis of the **Fourteen Points** (see page 15). Wilson, however, asked France and Britain to draft the details of the armistice agreements. They produced tough terms that were not wholly consistent with the Fourteen Points, but which anticipated their key aims at the coming peace conference. The terms were too harsh for the German government to accept.

Once news of the armistice negotiations became public, the demand for peace by the German people, after the years of deprivation caused by the Allied blockade and false hopes of victory, became unstoppable.

Rashly, on 28 October, the German Admiralty ordered the fleet out on a suicide mission against the British. In protest, the sailors at the Wilhelmshaven base mutinied. When the ringleaders were arrested, their colleagues organized mass protest meetings and formed councils, as **socialist** revolutionaries had done in Russia in 1917. By early November, sailors took control of all naval facilities and ports and were soon joined by socialist political parties which were in the majority in the German parliament, the *Reichstag*. Socialist revolutionaries soon controlled most German cities.

On 9 November the Kaiser was forced to abdicate and Germany became a **republic**. The German government had little option but to accept the armistice on 11 November. The new German **chancellor**, Friedrich Ebert, worked with great urgency to prevent the revolution from becoming violent and overthrowing the social and economic order of Germany as had happened in Russia with the Bolsheviks. By forming a republic, it was hoped Germany would be treated more leniently because the Allied Powers were also republics. For the army, it had the benefit of creating a new government which could sign any surrender documents rather than the army having to do so; this would preserve the army's honour.

SOURCE C

General Erich Ludendorff, General of the Infantry of the German Empire, quoted in *My War Memories 1914–1918*, first published in 1919. Currently published by Naval & Military Press, UK, 2005. Ludendorff was overall commander of German military forces in the final years of the First World War.

By the Revolution the Germans have made themselves pariahs among the nations, incapable of winning Allies, helots [slaves] in the service of foreigners and foreign capital, and deprived of all self-respect. In twenty years' time, the German people will curse the parties who now boast of having made the Revolution.



According to Source C, what will happen to Germans as a result of the 1918 revolution?

The Spartacist uprising

In January 1919, just as the delegates were arriving in Paris, a group of German communists, called the Spartacists, attempted to overthrow the newly created German republic. The Spartacists were aggressively suppressed, partly because the world had witnessed the violence of the Bolsheviks in Russia. In May 1919, the German government was also able to crush the short-lived Bavarian Soviet Republic, another Marxist-inspired rebellion against Germany and the old political and social order (see page 71).

Fear of communist revolution

In March 1919, much of Hungary, a state forming out of the old **Austro-Hungarian Empire**, became the Hungarian Soviet Republic when communists seized power. It survived until August, when defeated by anti-communist Romanian and Hungarian troops, but at the time it seemed to the Allied leaders that the door to central Europe was now open to communism.

In 1918 and early 1919, there were workers' strikes in France, Britain, Italy and other countries, all demanding better wages and working conditions. The fear of communist revolution was felt throughout much of Europe, including among the victorious Allies. This fear of revolution was intensified by the **Spanish influenza pandemic** which, by the spring of 1919, had caused the deaths of millions of people, and by the near famine conditions in central and eastern Europe.

So, the context in which the Paris Peace Conference met was one of political turmoil in a Europe which was starving and where millions were infected with influenza. As one Allied official observed, 'There was a veritable race between peace and anarchy.'

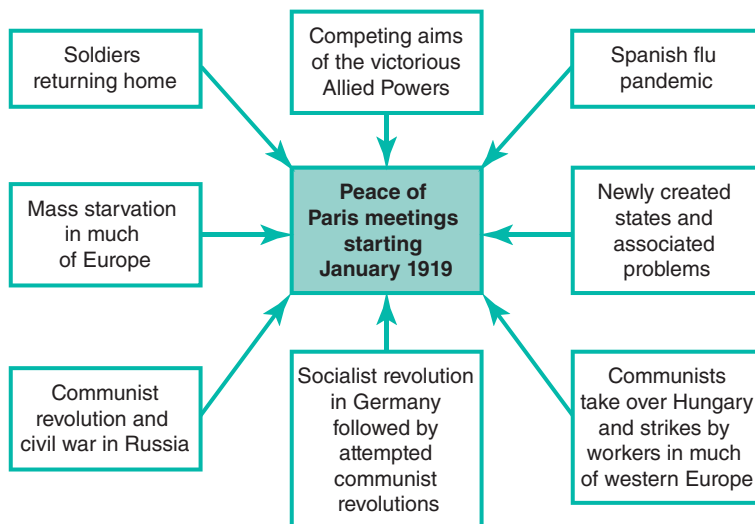
KEY TERM

Austro-Hungarian Empire

A multinational empire which was administrated in two separate parts: Austria and the Kingdom of Hungary, with the Habsburg Emperor of Austria also being the King of Hungary. Its territory comprised all of modern-day Austria, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and parts of Poland, Romania, Italy, Serbia, Montenegro and Ukraine. It was formed in 1867 from the Austrian Empire and lasted until 1918.

Spanish influenza pandemic

This disease killed between 50 million and 100 million people worldwide from 1918 to 1920.



SUMMARY DIAGRAM

Conditions in Europe in 1919

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Aims of the USA in Paris 1919

▶ **Key question:** What were the main aims of the US government for the Paris Peace Conference?



What is the importance of Source D in understanding the aims of the USA in the Paris meetings of 1919?

SOURCE D

Excerpt from a speech about the Fourteen Points given on 8 January 1918 by Woodrow Wilson, President of the USA.

What we demand in this war, therefore, is nothing peculiar to ourselves. It is that the world be made fit and safe to live in; and particularly that it be made safe for every peace-loving nation which, like our own, wishes to live its own life, determine its own institutions, be assured of justice and fair dealing by the other peoples of the world as against force and selfish aggression. All the peoples of the world are in effect partners in this interest, and for our own part we see very clearly that unless justice be done to others it will not be done to us.

How did the USA's experience of war influence its aims for peace?

→ The USA in the First World War

The USA officially entered the war in 1917 but was unable to participate in the fighting in a significant way until 1918. The USA had to build ships, an army and war equipment, while also supplying Britain, France and Italy with food and munitions. The USA did not suffer the great loss of life and property of the other **Allied Powers** because of their late entry into the conflict. They lost only about 117,000 soldiers, according to the US Department of Justice, with 43,000 of these from the Spanish influenza. Russia and France had over a million deaths of soldiers each, while the British Empire had just over 900,000 war-dead.

Many in the USA believed that no country should benefit from such a tremendous catastrophe as the First World War and were suspicious of their Allies, believing, correctly, that they hoped to reward themselves with land and financial compensation. Many Americans believed that taking colonies and provinces from defeated powers would simply lead to future conflicts.

KEY TERM

Allied Powers Britain, France, the USA, Italy and other countries which fought against Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire.

Which US aims were meant to create lasting conditions for world peace?

→ General aims

US President Wilson issued his Fourteen Points in a speech in January 1918. According to Wilson, these points were not only to be the basis of a German surrender, but also for creating a lasting world peace. Throughout 1918, the USA worked successfully to get other Allied Powers to agree to the points as a basis for post-war peace treaties. Italy, France and Britain all eventually agreed, but with significant reservations.

A summary of the Fourteen Points

- 1 Secret treaties between nations will end.
- 2 All ships of all countries have the right to use the sea at all times.
- 3 All nations must accept free trade.
- 4 All nations must work towards **disarmament**.
- 5 Colonial issues must be resolved, but in co-operation with the people living in the colonies.
- 6 Foreign troops must leave Russia and the new government there must be welcomed by other nations.
- 7 All foreign troops must leave Belgium and its independence restored.
- 8 German troops must leave all French territory and Alsace-Lorraine, part of Germany since 1871, must return to France.
- 9 Italy should be expanded to include areas where Italian-language speakers live.
- 10 The various groups living within the Austro-Hungarian Empire should be allowed to form **nation states**.
- 11 Foreign troops should leave the Balkan peninsula and all states there should be restored; Serbia should have access to the sea.
- 12 Turks in the **Ottoman Empire** should continue to rule themselves, but other nationalities in the Empire should be free to form their own states; the **Dardanelles** should be a free international waterway.
- 13 An independent Poland should be created and also have access to the sea.
- 14 An international body of states [League of Nations] should be formed to work towards resolving conflicts.

KEY TERM

Disarmament Limiting weapons and militaries in order to reduce the possibility of war.

Nation state A state consisting of a culturally united population.

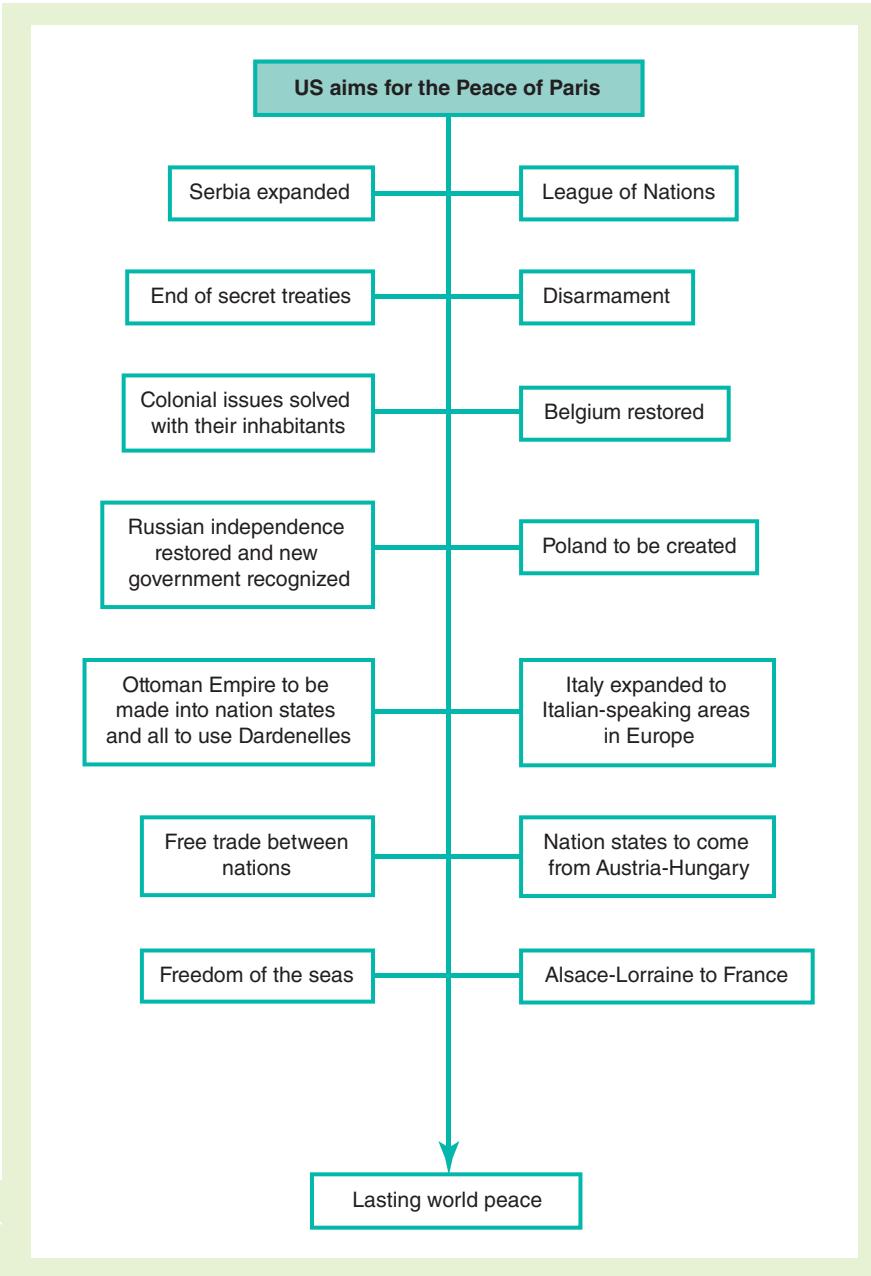
Ottoman Empire Large, nationally and religiously diverse empire ruled by Turks that included most of the Middle East and a small part of Europe, including the Dardanelles and Bosphorus straits that linked the Aegean and Mediterranean Seas with the Black Sea.

Dardanelles Strait connecting the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas with the Black Sea, separating Europe from Asia Minor.

Covenant Rules and constitution of the League of Nations.

Although Wilson believed that Germany should be punished and, according to historian Margaret MacMillan, treated like a convict for starting the First World War, he was determined to ensure that the Fourteen Points served as a basis for the peace negotiations and to anchor the **Covenant** of the League of Nations in the text of the peace treaties. He was convinced that this was the key to creating a just and lasting peace.

The Fourteen Points very obviously demonstrate Wilson's belief that free trade, self-rule for the various nationalities of Europe and the Middle East, and disarmament would lead to world peace. Like many others at the time, Wilson also believed that military alliances with secret clauses and the lack of an international body to discuss problems also produced war.



SUMMARY DIAGRAM

Aims of the USA in Paris 1919

3 British aims for the Paris Peace Conference 1919

▶ **Key question:** To what extent had Britain achieved its war aims by December 1918?

SOURCE E

Statement by David Lloyd George, British Prime Minister, 5 January 1918, regarding British war aims. From *Encyclopedia of International Affairs*, edited by J.C. Johari, Ammol Publications Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, India, 1997. Johari has published numerous books on politics.

... The first requirement ... [is the] independence of Belgium, and such reparation as can be made for the devastation of its towns and provinces. This is no demand for war indemnity, such as that imposed on France by Germany in 1871. It is not an attempt to shift the cost of warlike operations from one belligerent [warring nation] to another, which may or may not be defensible. It is no more and no less than an insistence that, before there can be any hope for a stable peace, this great breach of the public law of Europe must be repudiated [rejected] and, so far as possible, repaired.

... We believe, however, that an independent Poland comprising all those genuinely Polish elements who desire to form part of it, is an urgent necessity for the stability of Western Europe ...

... Finally, there must be reparation for injuries done in violation of international law. The Peace Conference must not forget our seamen and the services they have rendered to, and the outrages they have suffered for the common cause of freedom.

What reasons does Lloyd George give in Source E for the specific aims of independence of Belgium, the independence of Poland and reparations?



Britain in the First World War

Britain declared war on Germany in 1914 when the German army crossed into neutral Belgium. The neutrality of Belgium was guaranteed by the Convention of 1839 which prohibited any alliances for Belgium and its invasion by any country. This treaty had been signed by Britain and France, among others, and the British government believed it had a legal and moral obligation to fulfil its pledge to defend Belgium in case of attack by another country.

There was also fear of the powerful German navy. If Belgium and France fell, the German navy and its submarines, U-boats, would be within very easy striking distance of Britain. Britain imported the vast majority of its food and much of its raw materials for industry, so security of the sea was vital for its independence. Many in the British government also felt obligated to assist France, which Germany had declared war on, due to several military

Why did Britain join the First World War and what was the impact of its participation?

arrangements between them, although there was no formal alliance such as the one France had with Russia.

The British Empire lost over 900,000 soldiers fighting primarily against Germany and the Ottoman Empire in the First World War. There were also over two million wounded. Many ships had been sunk, complete with valuable cargoes, and Britain ended the war with tremendous debt, owed mostly to the USA.

By the end of the war, the British Empire was in possession of most German colonies and huge areas of the Ottoman Empire. Most German merchant ships had been either seized or destroyed and with the November 1918 armistice, the entire German navy was turned over to Britain. By the end of the First World War, many British aims had been achieved.

How were most British demands for naval superiority already accomplished before the Paris Peace Conference?

→ Naval supremacy

As an island and a world-spanning empire, Britain was most concerned with maintaining a navy superior to all others. As such, one of the main aims of the British government was the elimination of the German naval threat that had existed before and during the First World War.

This aim was largely achieved by the time the Allied Powers met in Paris as the German fleet had surrendered in order to secure the armistice in November 1918.

Britain did, however, reject Wilson's second point of the Fourteen Points which stated that all nations should have free use of the seas during peace and war. Wilson had to drop the issue during the subsequent negotiations.

To what extent did Britain intend to reward itself for victory in the First World War?

→ Colonial and territorial considerations

The British wished to divest Germany of its colonies. This had already been accomplished during the war, when Britain and its **Dominions**, as well as Japan, took over these territories. Part of this concern over colonies was driven by British desire to take over some of Germany's trade, but there were also security concerns. By depriving Germany of colonies, Britain could guarantee that no bases or ports for a future German navy would exist. Colonies were seen as a form of reward for Britain and the Dominions.

Britain's territorial ambitions lay primarily in the Middle East, due to its oil. It wanted colonial expansion there at the expense of the Ottoman Empire and, in 1916, it had made an agreement with France to divide Ottoman territory between them at the war's conclusion in the Sykes–Picot Agreement (see page 157). The British wanted to confirm this agreement in the discussions in Paris and thereby expand their control over a potentially mineral-rich area.

KEY TERM

Dominions Self-ruling parts of the British Empire such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Newfoundland and South Africa.

Preservation of Germany

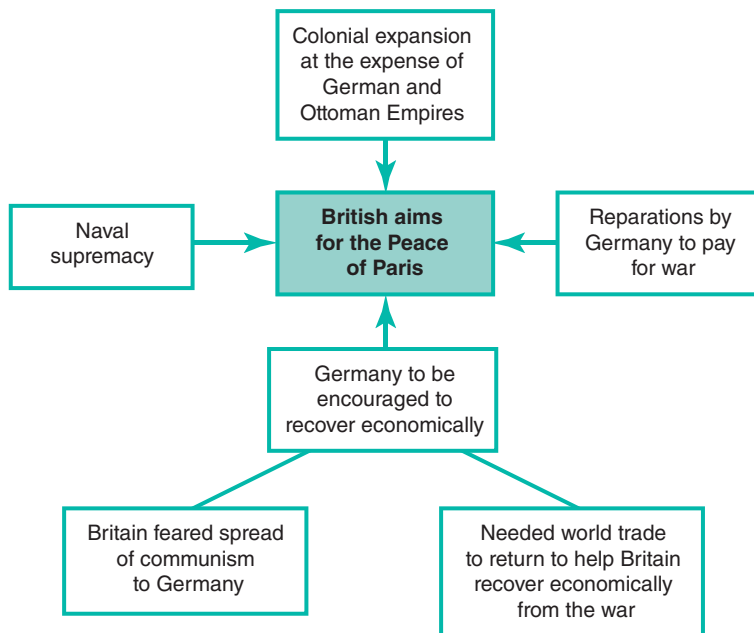
Britain believed that Germany should be made to pay for the war through **reparations**. At the same time, they believed that Germany should be rehabilitated as soon as possible to stabilize international trade. Germany was one of the most industrialized nations in the world and, as such, was not only an exporter, but a great importer of British materials and goods. Britain needed German trade for both economic and political reasons. Many of its overseas markets were lost to the USA during the war years. In addition, many colonies and dominions became more economically independent when British industries switched to military from consumer production. Moreover, an economically revitalized Germany would be better able to make reparations to the Allied Powers.

Britain was also concerned with the emerging Soviet Union. Britain, like most industrialized countries, not only wanted to prevent the Bolsheviks from being successful in Russia but also from spreading their philosophy to other nations. Bringing a peaceful Germany back into the world system of international trade would prevent revolution from spreading and serve as a barrier against the emerging Soviet Union.

← Why did Britain want the German economy to recover as soon as possible?

KEY TERM

Reparations Payments made by a defeated country to the victor in order to pay for the victor's war expenses, damages, and as a penalty for losing.



SUMMARY DIAGRAM

British aims for the Paris Peace Conference 1919

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French aims for the Paris Peace Conference 1919

Key question: Were French aims directed at making France more secure or more about punishing Germany for the First World War?



According to Source F, what was one French goal for the end of the First World War?

SOURCE F

Excerpt from a letter from Aristide Briand to Jules Cambon dated 12 January 1917, published in *The Foreign Policy of France from 1914 to 1945* by Jacques Néré, Routledge Publishers, 2002, p. 267. Briand was Prime Minister of France eleven times and often Foreign Minister at the same time. Cambon was French Ambassador to Germany at the outbreak of the First World War, subsequently serving as head of the Political Section of the French Foreign Ministry. Néré is a French historian who has published numerous books on the modern history of France.

In our eyes, Germany must no longer have a foot beyond the Rhine; the organisation of these territories, their neutrality and their temporary occupation must be considered in exchanges of opinion between the Allies. It is, however, important that France, being the most directly concerned with the territorial status of this region, should have the casting vote in examining the solution of this serious question.

How was France affected by the German invasion?



France in the First World War

On 28 July 1914 the Russian government ordered **mobilization** of its forces in reaction to Austria-Hungary's declaration of war on Serbia. Germany believed that war between Russia and its ally Austria-Hungary was possible. This led to Germany putting the **Schlieffen Plan** into action (see Source G) and duly declaring war on France. The plan depended on defeating the French, an ally of Russia, before the Russian army was fully prepared for war. This unprovoked attack led to the death of over 1.3 million French soldiers and the wounding of millions more. It also meant the destruction of most of northern France and massive war debt. Losses and damage were tremendous and as a result France wanted to guarantee that Germany could never attack again.

KEY TERM

Mobilization Preparing armed forces for war.

Schlieffen Plan German plan for war against France and Russia. The plan was to defeat France within weeks, moving through Belgium and Luxembourg, avoiding the fortified border between France and Germany. After the defeat of France, the mass of the German army would move quickly east by rail to invade Russia.

SOURCE G

Map of the Schlieffen Plan with movements of troops and anticipated conquests in terms of weeks.



What is the importance of Source G in understanding French desire for security against Germany after the First World War?

Territorial and colonial considerations

France first and foremost demanded the return of the provinces Alsace and Lorraine. These had been annexed by the newly formed German state in 1871. They had the added benefit of coal and iron mines, as well as steel factories. In November 1918, just days after the armistice with Germany, French troops occupied the two provinces, ending a week-old Republic of Alsace-Lorraine. Wilson's Fourteen Points called for the return of Alsace and Lorraine to France and this was very agreeable to the French.

France desired the creation of the state of Poland, as well as other states in central Europe, such as Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, to balance German power. If Poland could be created with German territory, then the French government would be even more satisfied. France also wanted to create an independent Rhineland state which would weaken Germany economically; major resources and industry were located there. This would also create a **buffer state** between Germany and Belgium and Germany and France in case of future conflicts.

← What territorial adjustments did France desire in Europe?

KEY TERM

Buffer state A country separating two other nations who are enemies.

The Saar was one of the most industrialized and coal-rich areas of Germany and bordered France. France wanted the Saar as compensation for the war.

France believed that Germany should not be allowed to retain any of its overseas territories for reasons similar to those of Britain. France desired parts of the defeated Ottoman Empire, specifically access to the Mosul oil fields, and already had a long-term relationship with the territory known as Lebanon during the Ottoman era.

Why did France expect Germany to pay for the entire war?

Reparations

SOURCE H

Georges Clemenceau's opening address as conference president, 18 January 1919 from *Source Records of the Great War, vol. VII*, edited by Charles F. Horne, published by National Alumni, USA, 1923. Clemenceau was Prime Minister of France twice, most critically from 1917 to 1920. Horne wrote over 100 books, mostly on history, and was a professor of English at City College of New York, USA.

The greater the sanguinary [bloody] catastrophe which devastated and ruined one of the richest regions of France, the more ample and more splendid should be the reparation – not merely the reparation for material acts, the ordinary reparation, if I may venture to say so, which is due to us – but the nobler and loftier reparation – we are going to try to secure, so that the people may at last escape from this fatal embrace, which, heaping up ruins and sorrows, terrorizes the populations and prevents them from devoting themselves freely to their work for fear of the enemies who may spring up at any moment.



According to Source H, what was the purpose of German reparations?

KEY TERM

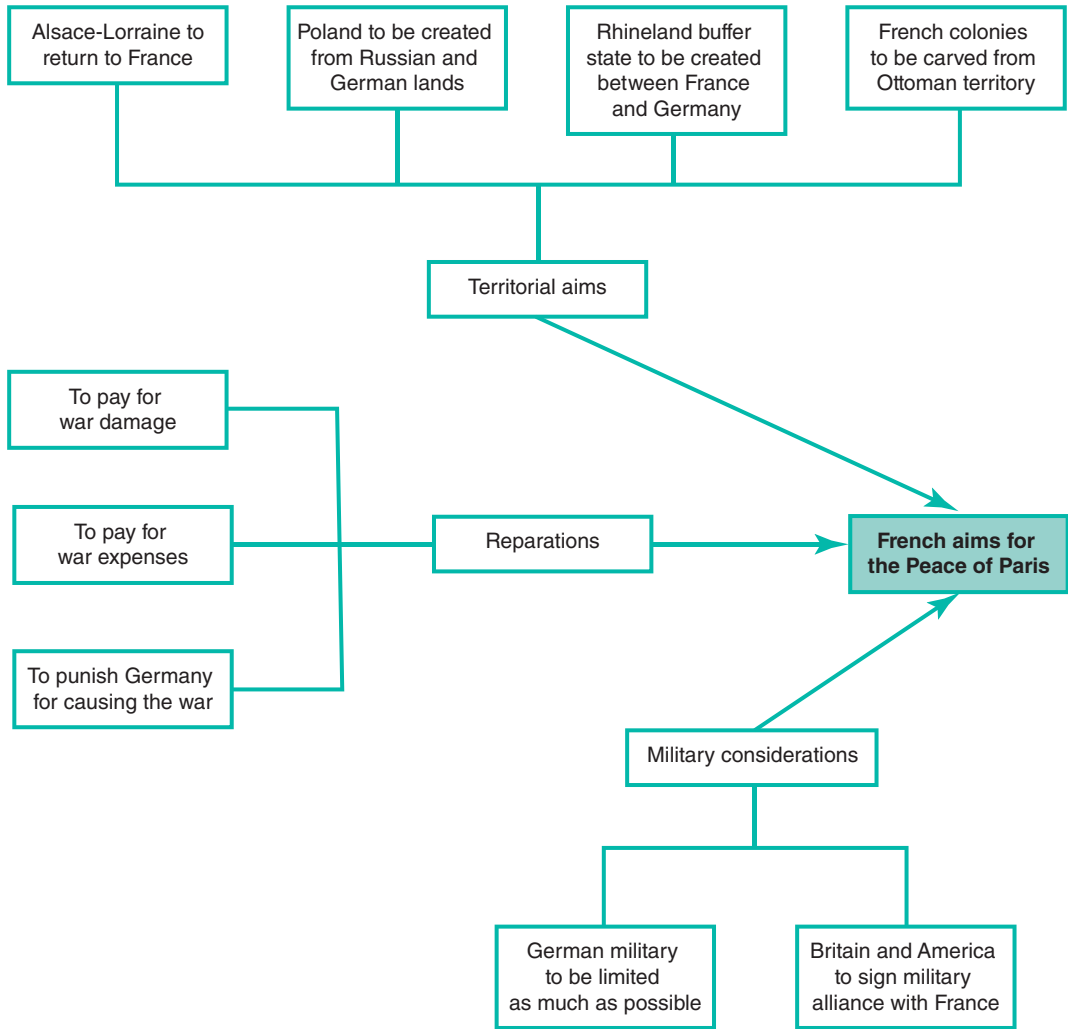
Indemnity A financial penalty where one country owes another.

France owed approximately \$3.5 billion to Britain and the USA as a result of the First World War. In addition, France had lent 12 billion francs to Russia, but this was repudiated by the Bolshevik government and these funds would never be repaid. During the war, thousands of businesses, factories, mines and homes had been destroyed in northern France. The severely damaged economy and massive debt meant that France would have difficulty recovering economically. France believed that Germany should receive a massive **indemnity** to pay for the war and also serve as a punishment. It is important to remember that in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1 France was defeated, the German states formed the German Empire, and France was given a massive war indemnity to pay for the war and to punish it for starting the conflict.

What was the main motive for the French to desire a much smaller German military?

Military considerations

France naturally wished to limit the Germany military as much as possible so that future attacks would be essentially impossible. Germany had threatened France several times since 1871, including during the Moroccan and Agadir Crises of 1905 and 1911, respectively, to achieve concessions from France. France had every reason to limit the Germany military because of the sheer number of dead and wounded from the First World War. France also desired a military alliance with Britain and the USA against any future German aggression.



SUMMARY DIAGRAM

French aims for the Paris Peace Conference 1919

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Italian aims for the Paris Peace Conference 1919

▶ **Key question:** To what extent did Italy's goals differ from those of other Allied Powers?



According to Source I, what are the incentives for Italy to join the First World War?

SOURCE I

Excerpt from the Treaty of London, 26 April 1915. This document was signed by the foreign ministers of Britain, France, Italy and Russia.

ARTICLE 4 By the future treaty of peace, Italy is to receive the district of Trentino; the entire Southern Tyrol up to its natural geographical frontier, which is the Brenner Pass; the city and district of Trieste; the County of Gorizia and Gradisca; the entire Istria [Istrian peninsula] ...

ARTICLE 9 France, Great Britain and Russia admit in principle the fact of Italy's interest in the maintenance of the political balance of power in the Mediterranean, and her rights, in case of a partition of Turkey, to a share, equal to theirs, in the basin of the Mediterranean ...

ARTICLE 11 Italy is to get a share in the war indemnity corresponding to the magnitude of her sacrifices and efforts.

Why did Italy join the First World War and with what success by 1918?

Italy in the First World War

Italy had been part of the **Triple Alliance** with Austria-Hungary and Germany before the First World War. Italy left the alliance at the start of the war, pointing out that the alliance was meant to have been defensive in nature, not offensive. The possibility of joining the war was extremely unpopular in Italy, a country with few resources and little unity. There was some desire, however, by **Italian nationalists** to have the Italian-language territories in Austria-Hungary join the rest of Italy, regardless of what the residents of those areas wanted. The idea of an Italian Empire appealed to some. Italy did join the war in May 1915, but only after being promised significant territories in a secret treaty, the Treaty of London.

Italy struggled during the First World War. After initial small successes against Austria-Hungary, at the cost of tens of thousands of men, there was little military progress. Austria-Hungary and Germany launched a massive counter-attack in 1917 that almost took Italy out of the war. In 1918, French and British troops reinforced the Italian army and only at the end of 1918 was there any major success on the battle field, as Austria-Hungary began to collapse militarily and politically. Over 600,000 Italians were killed with few territorial gains to show for it.

KEY TERM

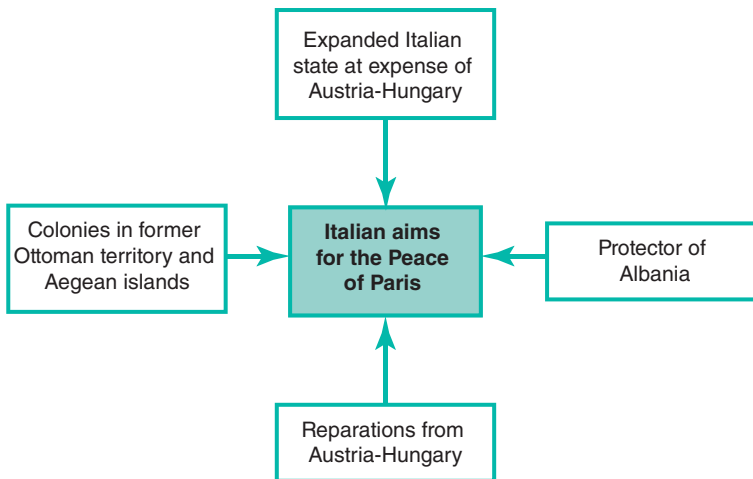
Triple Alliance Military alliance established in 1881 between Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy.

Italian nationalists In this period, people who wanted to expand the nation state of Italy to include all Italian-language speakers.

Territorial claims

Italy's main concerns for the Paris Peace Conference were territorial in nature, perhaps because Italy specifically entered the war to gain territory, not because it was attacked by another nation. The Treaty of London promised Italy large sections of Austro-Hungarian land, mostly where there were at least some Italian-speaking people living. The territories promised were the province of Tyrol up to the Brenner Pass, the port of Trieste and the Istrian peninsula, plus most of the Dalmatian coast. Italy would also receive the Dodecanese islands in the Aegean Sea, part of German colonies in Asia and Africa, and the Albanian port of Vlorë. Italy was to be the protector of Albania, thereby giving it control over much of its foreign policy and resources. Italy expected to be granted parts of the Ottoman Empire and the deep-water port of Fiume, today's Rijeka, adjoining the Istrian peninsula, although this was not stated in the Treaty of London. These promises were made without any provision to determine the wishes of the inhabitants of the regions concerned. Italy's involvement in the war was very unpopular and there was much pressure on the government to demonstrate that the sacrifices made in the war were rewarded. Naturally, Italy expected reparations for war damage, as did all the Allied Powers.

← **What was the importance of the Treaty of London of 1915?**



SUMMARY DIAGRAM

Italian aims for the Paris Peace Conference 1919

6

German hopes for the Paris Peace Conference 1919

▶ **Key question:** How far was the new German government willing to co-operate with the victorious Allied Powers at the Paris Peace Conference and how successful was its strategy?

SOURCE J

Excerpt from 'Germany Before the Peace Conference by Count von Brockdorff-Rantzau' in *The Living Age*, vol. 301, published by The Living Age Company, Boston, USA, 1919, pp. 68–9. Brockdorff-Rantzau was Foreign Minister of Germany during the Paris Peace Conference meetings. *The Living Age* was an American weekly news magazine.

We decline our enemies as judges because of their prejudice. We can inwardly submit not to the claims of the conqueror but only to the judgment of the unbiased. Therefore, I will not allow myself to be driven away from the points of the Wilson peace program as recognized by both sides ... We are prepared for both limitations of our sovereignty, if our previous enemies and our future neighbors submit to the same limitation.

... Therefore, we hold fast to the Wilson principles that no costs are to be paid to the conqueror and no territory is to be ceded by the vanquished.

We are bound and prepared to make good the damage which has resulted from our attack to the civil population in the territories occupied by us, but if we again build up what has been destroyed in those territories, we wish to do that by our own free work.

... Our enemies have to thank for their victory to an overwhelming extent not the military but the economic conduct of the war. From this it follows that the peace must be not merely a political, but also essentially an economic peace. President Wilson rightly described the principle of economic freedom and equality as the main condition of a just and permanent peace.

... Germany can no more enter the League of Nations without colonies than she can without a merchant fleet. According to Wilson's programme there should be a free, generous, and absolutely equitable settlement of colonial questions ...

... it would be unjust to dispose of [the people of Alsace-Lorraine] without their consent, without even respecting the language frontiers.



What, according to Source J, was the basis of German arguments against the aims of some of the Allied Powers, France in particular?

What actions did Germany take to reduce potential punishment at the hands of the victorious Allied Powers?

→ Self-preservation

Germany realized that victory on the Western Front against France, Britain and the USA was not possible by late September 1918. The army informed the German Emperor who then allowed the formation of a parliamentary

government. This meant that the German government was now under the control of the *Reichstag*, the German parliament. It was hoped that Allied governments would grant better armistice and peace terms as a result of this democratic change.

The army and emperor also believed that in some way the new government could be blamed for Germany's surrender. In a little over a month, the emperor was removed from office and sent into exile. Germany had become a republic under the leadership of Frederick Ebert.

The new republic agreed to a harsh armistice on 11 November 1918. This was done for several reasons. First, the new government faced many internal threats from both Bolshevik-inspired socialists and those who supported the old former government. There was mass starvation in the cities and the Spanish influenza pandemic affected millions. The economy had essentially collapsed and millions of soldiers and sailors were no longer willing to fight in a lost cause.

By agreeing to an armistice, however harsh, Germany also hoped to demonstrate its willingness to co-operate with the Allies. It was hoped that this would translate into fair treatment at the Paris Peace Conference. The armistice included the surrender of the entire German fleet, including U-boats, to Britain and the removal of all German troops from occupied lands and from the western bank of the Rhine River which would then be occupied by Allied armies. Germany had to repudiate the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (see below), which had been signed earlier in the year with Russia. Germany was not invited to Paris in January 1919 and would simply have to wait for the decision of the victorious Allied Powers to be announced.

War guilt and reparations

Germany was aware of French and British demands that Germany and its ally Austria-Hungary be blamed for the war. If Germany could be forced to accept guilt for causing the war, then it would be easier to punish Germany in a legal way. Germany was anxious to avoid a declaration of war guilt. Germany was also aware of British and French demands for reparations and expected to be forced to make a substantial payment to at least those two countries. In order to mitigate an expected harsh indemnity, Germany offered to rebuild much of northern France and Belgium with its own workers and materials.

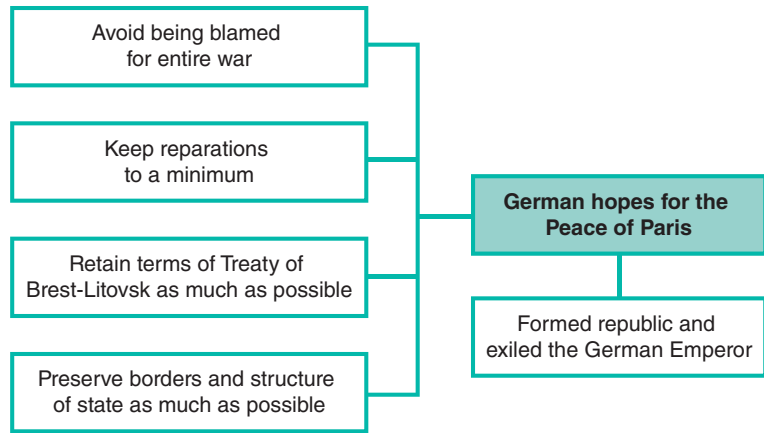
Treaty of Brest-Litovsk

Many hundreds of thousands of German soldiers were killed or wounded fighting Russia between 1914 and early 1918. Russia was slowly defeated with great sacrifice and the fight against Russia drained German manpower and resources needed to fight France and Britain on the Western Front. In early 1918, Russia left the war by signing the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. The treaty gave Germany control of Poland, the Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia,

← Why did Germany hope to avoid being blamed for the First World War?

← What was the importance of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk for the German government?

Estonia and Finland. This territory contained one-third of the population and farmland of Russia and over half its industry. Most Germans believed that their great sacrifice in defeating Russia should mean that the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk either remain intact or as intact as possible in the coming Paris Peace Conference although the armistice required Germany repudiate that agreement.



SUMMARY DIAGRAM

German hopes for the Paris Peace Conference 1919

Chapter summary

The Paris Peace Conference: the aims of the participants

Many nations gathered in January 1919 in Paris to settle the First World War. Each of the major participating powers, including the USA, Britain, France and Italy had different agendas. These varied partly as a result of their different experiences with Germany over the decades since its creation, but also their experiences in the war.

- The USA suffered fewer losses, but was owed billions of dollars from the others and hoped to achieve world peace forever.
- Britain had already achieved many of its major objectives during the war and through the armistice of November 1918, yet needed money to pay its war debts to the USA.

- France had more dead and wounded than the other Allied Powers in Paris and had much of its northern areas destroyed. It also owed more than the others and was set on eliminating any future threat from Germany.

- Italy had joined the war specifically to gain territory which was promised in a secret treaty.

Germany was not invited to the conference, nor were the Austro-Hungarian or Ottoman Empires. However, Germany was different from its former Central Power allies in that it was one of the most industrialized nations in the world and was a nation-state of Germans. Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire contained multiple nationalities and had underdeveloped economies. This meant that Germany could not be easily destroyed like Austria-Hungary or the Ottoman Empire. It also meant that it would be a challenge to limit Germany in such a way as to prevent it from rebuilding its military and economy in a short period of time.

Examination advice

Paper 1 question 1: how to answer direct questions

Question 1 on the IB History Diploma examination is in two parts. Each part involves reading comprehension and simply asks you to tell the examiner what the sources say. Each of the questions will ask only about one source. You will often see questions that ask you to convey the message or meaning of a source. This is asking you to explain what the source is saying.

Question 1 requires no prior knowledge, just the ability to read and understand sources. When you start your examination, you will receive five minutes of 'reading time' when you cannot actually touch your pen and start writing. Use the time wisely and read question 1a to see which source it is asking about. Once you understand which source the question is about, read the source and then think of your response. When the five minutes are up, you may begin writing and you should be ready to answer the question immediately.

Question 1 is worth 5 marks out of the total of 25 for all Paper 1. This means it is worth about twenty per cent of the overall mark. Answering questions 1a and 1b should take five minutes or less of the actual examination time.

How to answer

In order to best answer the question, you first have to determine what the question is asking you about the source and what type of source it is. The vast majority of sources are fragments of speeches, quotes from various historians or historical figures, or any other type of written source. There are, however, visual sources that can be asked about as well, such as photographs, charts, maps, cartoons and diagrams.

When you start your answer it is good practice to use the wording in the question to help you focus your answer. For example:

Question	Begin your answer with ...
According to Source X, what is the significance of The Treaty of London?	The significance of the Treaty of London, according to Source X is ...
What was the importance of the Treaty of London according to Source X?	The importance of the Treaty of London according to Source X was ...
What was Clemenceau's view on war reparations according to Source X?	According to Source X, Clemenceau's view on war reparations was ...

After starting your answer, understand that you should paraphrase what the original source stated. This means you should explain what the source says, but in your own words. Sometimes this is impossible because the words used in the source may be so specific that there is no other way to say them.

If this occurs, make sure you put quotation marks around the phrases which you are copying from the source.

The total number of marks available for question 1 is 5. One part is worth 3 marks and the other 2 and this will be clearly indicated on the examination. If a question is worth 2 marks, try to have at least two specific points to your answer. If a question is worth 3 marks, have at least three points.

Example

This question uses Sources C and D found in this chapter on pages 12 and 14.

- a) According to Source C, what will be the outcome of the German revolution of 1918? (3 marks)
- b) What is the message conveyed in Source D? (2 marks)

It has just been announced that your reading time has begun on the IB History Paper 1 examination. Find the Paper 1 questions at the back of the examination booklet and read question 1a. It asks you to explain what Source C says will be the result of the German revolution of 1918. You cannot touch your pen for several minutes, so go to Source C in the booklet and read it. Once you are allowed to pick up your pen and start writing, do so. Below is a good sample answer to the question:

Each answer repeats part of the question, using phrases such as 'According to Source C' and 'The message conveyed in Source D is.' This helps the answer focus on the question.

Both sources are paraphrased in the answers.

Both 1a and 1b are answered in paragraph form and not bullet points.

Each answer states the origin of the source. While this is not required, it helps you build a better paragraph and may help you later when you are asked to discuss the origins of two of the sources.

1a) According to Source C the outcome of the German revolution of 1918 will be a negative one. Source C is a quote from German General Ludendorff. He believes that the Germans will become economic slaves to other nations and depend financially on others. He also believes Germany will have neither Allies nor self-respect. He states that Germans will regret the revolution in time.

1b) The message conveyed in Source D is that US President Wilson believes that all people in all nations should live in a world where they do not fear violence. Nations should have the right to be free to develop as they wish and should deal with each other justly and in fairness. The source also states that these desires are shared by all the people in the world and they are to be partners in working towards these goals.

Questions 1a and 1b are worth a combined 5 marks. Both answers indicate that the student read and understood what each source stated. Question 1a is worth 3 marks. The answer for 1a contains at least three different points to address the question. Question 1b is worth 2 marks. The answer has more than two points to answer the question. Mark: 5/5.



Examination practice

The following are exam-style questions for you to practise, using sources from the chapter. Sources can be found on the following pages:

- Source B: page 11
 - Source C: page 12
 - Source D: page 14
 - Source E: page 17
 - Source H: page 22
 - Source I: page 24
- 1 What, according to Source B, is the purpose of the new German republican government?
 - 2 What, according to Source B, is the most important issue facing the new German government in November 1918?
 - 3 What is the message of Source B?
 - 4 What message is conveyed by Source C?
 - 5 What, according to Source D, are the aims of the United States for the Paris Peace Conference?
 - 6 What, according to Source E, is the purpose of German reparation payments?
 - 7 What, according to Source E, are three desires for the British in a future peace treaty with Germany?
 - 8 Why, according to Source H, will France seek war reparations?
 - 9 What is the message conveyed by Source H?
 - 10 What, according to Source I, will Italy receive as a result of the Treaty of London signed in 1915?



Activities

- 1 In groups, using paragraphs of this chapter as sources, create Paper 1-type questions assigning them either 2 or 3 marks. Use the paragraphs that focus on individual war aims of each of the countries discussed. Vary your questions such as in the examples above. Try to create at least two different questions per paragraph. Exchange your questions with other groups, being sure to indicate the location of the paragraphs in the chapter, and give yourselves approximately five minutes to answer the two questions. Once questions have been answered, review the answers and assign marks. Be sure to indicate what was successful and appropriate and what could have been improved.
- 2 As homework, create Paper 1-type questions using sources from Chapters 3 and 4. Once you have created your questions and assigned a mark value of 2 or 3, depending on the source, answer your own questions. Have your questions marked by classmates. They should give you a mark per question and comment on your answers' strengths and weaknesses. This activity can be extended to include other chapters or only speeches, only quotes from historians, and so forth.