

Teaching American History Grant: Learning Experience (2008-2009)  
(Stephanie McCaffrey, Wappingers CSD)

**Topic Title:** Causes of United States Entry into WWI

**Grade Level:** 11 (Self-Contained, Special Education Regents Level)

**Overview of the Learning Experience:**

- Introduction United States involvement in WWI
- Students will be able to develop and defend hypothesis of U.S. entry in WWI based on Primary sources.

**New York State Learning Standards:**

**Standard 1:** History of the United States and New York

Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in the history of the United States and New York.

**Standard 2:** World History

Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives.

**Essential Question:**

- What circumstances caused the United States to enter into World War I?

**Time Allotment (classroom time):**

- 40-minute class period is required for this lesson.

**Vocabulary (Key Terms):**

- neutrality
- democracy
- commerce
- vindication
- alliance
- embark

**Materials/Resources:**

- Computer with Internet access
- Hyperlinked Scaffolding worksheet
- Teacher Answer Key

**Procedures:**

- Download hyperlinked worksheet for student access through website.
  - Students can access each primary source via hyperlinks embedded in the worksheet.

- Students are to answer the eight questions on a separate sheet of paper.
  - Students will analyze and evaluate the content of the primary sources related to U.S. entry to WWI using the computer and hyperlinked worksheet.
- Review each question / answer
- Initiate class-wide discussion highlighting each of the studied causes for U.S. entry into WWI
  - Wrap up activity will be a class discussion; students will develop a hypothesis for U.S. entry into WWI based on prior knowledge and worksheet completion. Students with similar views will be encouraged by the teacher to collaborate in the defense of their theories.

**Assessment:**

- Completed Scaffolding questions
- Pass/ Fail participation grade for class discussion

**Reasons for  
United States Involvement in  
World War I**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:**

Open each link then answer the questions that follow.

**STATION 1: GERMAN SUBMARINE WARFARE**

<http://home.earthlink.net/~gfeldmeth/chart.ww1.html>

1. What were the Arabic Pledge and the Sussex Pledge?

<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/wilsonwarmessage.htm>

2. President Wilson stated in his speech on April 2, 1917 that the use of unrestricted submarine warfare was unacceptable and a cause for United States involvement in the European war. What reasons did Wilson give for his change of mind?

<http://www.firstworldwar.com/features/lusitania.htm>

3. American public opinion was extremely critical of Germany and its use of U-Boats. How were travelers, including those of the ill-fated *Lusitania*, warned by Germany to stay out of the war zone?

**Answer the following Regents Question:**

4. During his reelection campaign in 1916, President Woodrow Wilson used the slogan; "He kept us out of war." In April of 1917, Wilson asked Congress to declare war on Germany. What helped bring about this change?

- A. Bolshevik forces increased their strength in Germany and Italy.
- B. Britain was invaded by nations of the Central Powers.
- C. Russia signed a treaty of alliance with the Central Powers.
- D. Germany resumed unrestricted submarine warfare.

**STATION 2: ECONOMIC TIES**

[http://www.regentsprep.org/Regents/ushisgov/graphics/5a\\_1.gif](http://www.regentsprep.org/Regents/ushisgov/graphics/5a_1.gif)

5. Data from this graph support the conclusion that World War I

- A. caused the United States trade deficit to increase
- B. cost the United States many billions of dollars
- C. was a significant benefit to the American economy
- D. created an unfavorable balance of trade

America had **STRONG ECONOMIC** ties to BRITAIN and FRANCE (Allies) - trade with GERMANY was less than HALF than that of the Allied Powers.

**STATION 3: ZIMMERMAN NOTE**

<http://library.thinkquest.org/28005/flushed/timemachine/courseofhistory/zimmerman.shtml>

The American government kept the nation out of the European war for over two years. By 1917, President Wilson was able to maintain American neutrality. The discovery of the **Zimmerman Note** was one of the events that changed the mind of the President and the American citizens.

- 6. What was Germany's first plan concerning the United States?
- 7. If that plan failed, what did Germany propose to do in alliance with Mexico?
- 8. What reaction would this note have in the United States?

## Reasons for United States Involvement in World War I

Name Answer Key

### Directions:

Open each link then answer the questions that follow.

### STATION 1: GERMAN SUBMARINE WARFARE

<http://home.earthlink.net/~gfeldmeth/chart.ww1.html>

1. What were the Arabic Pledge and the Sussex Pledge?

*Arabic Pledge:* Germany Promises not to sink unarmed liners following sinking of British liner Arabic

*Sussex Pledge:* Following sinking of French steamer Sussex, Germany again agrees to "visit and search" rules, but insists that Great Britain should also agree to obey international laws regarding freedom of the seas

<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/wilsonwarmessage.htm>

2. President Wilson stated in his speech on April 2, 1917 that the use of unrestricted submarine warfare was unacceptable and a cause for United States involvement in the European war. What reasons did Wilson give for his change of mind?

*"The present German submarine warfare against commerce is a warfare against mankind"*

<http://www.firstworldwar.com/features/lusitania.htm>

3. American public opinion was extremely critical of Germany and its use of U-Boats. How were travelers, including those of the ill-fated *Lusitania*, warned by Germany to stay out of the war zone?

*Germany posted a notice from the Imperial German Embassy Washington, D.C., April 22, 1915 with the ad for the Cunard ship the Lusitania warning that war does exist between Germany and the allies.*

### Answer the following Regents Question:

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- D. **Germany resumed unrestricted submarine warfare.**

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6. What was Germany's first plan concerning the United States?

*To keep the United States neutral*

7. If that plan failed, what did Germany propose to do in alliance with Mexico?

*Mexico could regain the land they had lost in Texas, New Mexico and Arizona with an alliance with Germany lending support.*

8. What reaction would this note have in the United States?

*Answers will vary - should include that when the message was made public, Americans reacted angrily.*