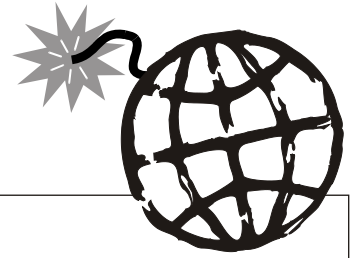


World War I

Section 19.1

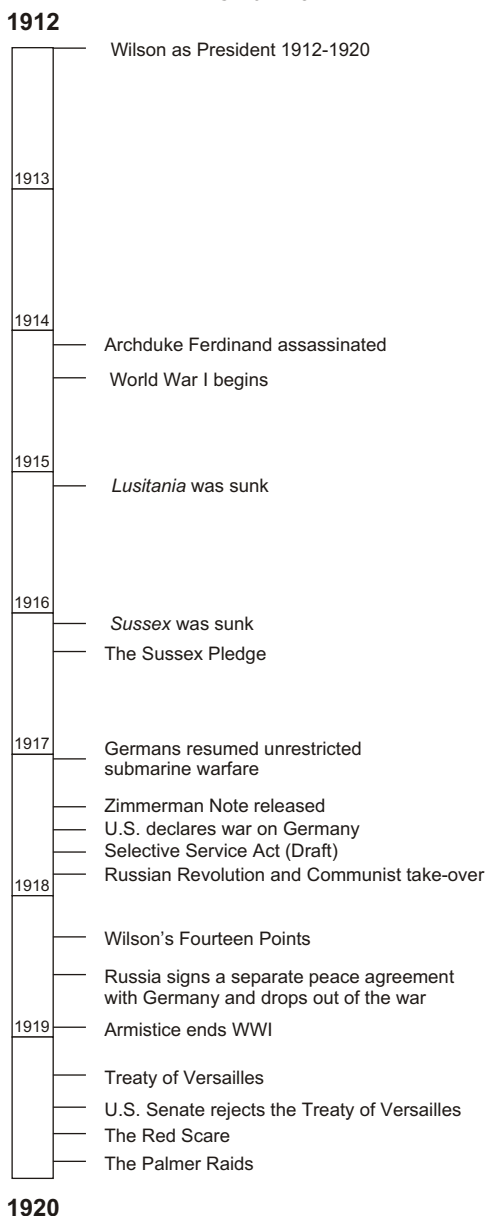
Introduction



Pre-View 19.1

- **The Great War (or World War I)** – war fought from 1914 to 1919; involved most of the world and the United States; renamed World War I following World War II
- **Isolationism** – a foreign policy of not promising to help other countries if they go to war
- **Neutral** – a country who doesn't take either side in a war

World War I



By the turn of the century, the nations of Europe were competing with each other for colonies around the world and eyeing the territory of their weaker neighbors.

The “isms” that resulted in World War I were imperialism, militarism, and nationalism. These things started the war in Europe called the **Great War, or World War I** as it was later known. Another “ism” kept the Americans out of the war for three years. It was called **isolationism**, a policy of not making alliances with other countries.

The United States tried to remain **neutral**, meaning that they would not take either side in the war. Unfortunately, that idea didn't last. Before it was over, most of the world, including the United States, were at war with one other.

So how did it get so bad? Here's a brief summary.

- A new wave of nationalism swept through Europe and led to each country putting its wants and needs ahead of the rest of the world.
- Factories were turning out huge stockpiles of weapons and ammunition.
- Great armies were assembled in case they were needed to protect national pride and territorial boundaries.
- Alliances among countries were being formed to protect each other from attack.
- Technology was creating new, more powerful war machines that would threaten the balance of power among nations.

The military build-up along with national pride and the desire for new territory (even if it had to be taken by force) set the stage for the greatest war the world had ever seen. All it needed was a spark to light the fuse.

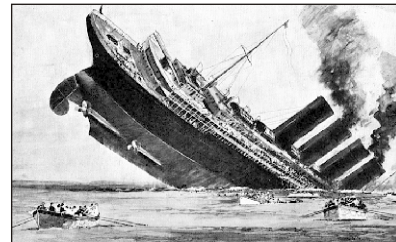
The tiny country of Serbia is blamed with striking the match that set the world on fire. Let's take a look at how it all happened.

Section 19.4, continued

America Enters the War

Submarine Warfare

By 1915, the Germans were already feeling the “pinch” of a British blockade. Germany was finding it hard to buy and transport enough food. Germany decided to step up the U-boat attacks in order to do the same to Britain. The Germans began to practice **unrestricted submarine warfare**. That means U-boats would sink any ship in the war zone around Great Britain without warning!



Sinking the *Lusitania*

That same year, a German U-boat sank the British passenger ship *Lusitania* off the coast of Ireland. Twelve hundred passengers died, including 128 Americans. Many in the United States thought the sinking should be enough to declare war, but others thought the American passengers should have known the risk. Germany had been running newspaper ads in the United States warning Americans not to travel on Allied ships.

The Sussex Pledge

In 1916, another U-boat sank the French passenger ship *Sussex*. Americans were injured but not killed. President Wilson issued a strong protest to the Germans. He insisted that the German government stop submarine warfare or risk war with the United States. The German response was called the **Sussex Pledge**. In it, the Germans promised to change their submarine warfare policy.

The Sussex Pledge

- Germany would not sink non-military ships.
- Merchant ships would be searched and sunk only if they were transporting military supplies.
- Merchant ships with military supplies would only be sunk after the crew was safely removed.

The Sussex Pledge gave both sides what they wanted. Americans wanted to stay out of the war, and stopping the unrestricted submarine warfare helped Americans do just that. Germany wanted a little more time before the United States entered the war, and their pledge was the only way to get that time.

In January 1917, Germany decided to take a risk by resuming unrestricted submarine warfare. The Germans knew that America would probably declare war, but they hoped to “starve” the Allies into ending the war before Americans could mobilize (get ready for the war).

Question 2: How did the Germans hope to “starve” the Allies into ending the war?

If the Germans could use their U-boats to sink enough ships, the Allies would run out of food and war materials. The Central Powers would win.

The Zimmerman Note

As if the resuming of unrestricted submarine warfare wasn’t enough, Americans were further provoked by an intercepted German message to Mexico. In March 1917, the German Ambassador Zimmerman sent a coded telegram to Mexico. In this **Zimmerman Note**, Germany asked Mexico to join the Central Powers if the United States entered the war. In return, the Germans promised to restore the Southwestern United States and Texas to Mexico when America was defeated. The note was published in the newspaper, and Americans were outraged at what Germany was suggesting. Now it was time for war!