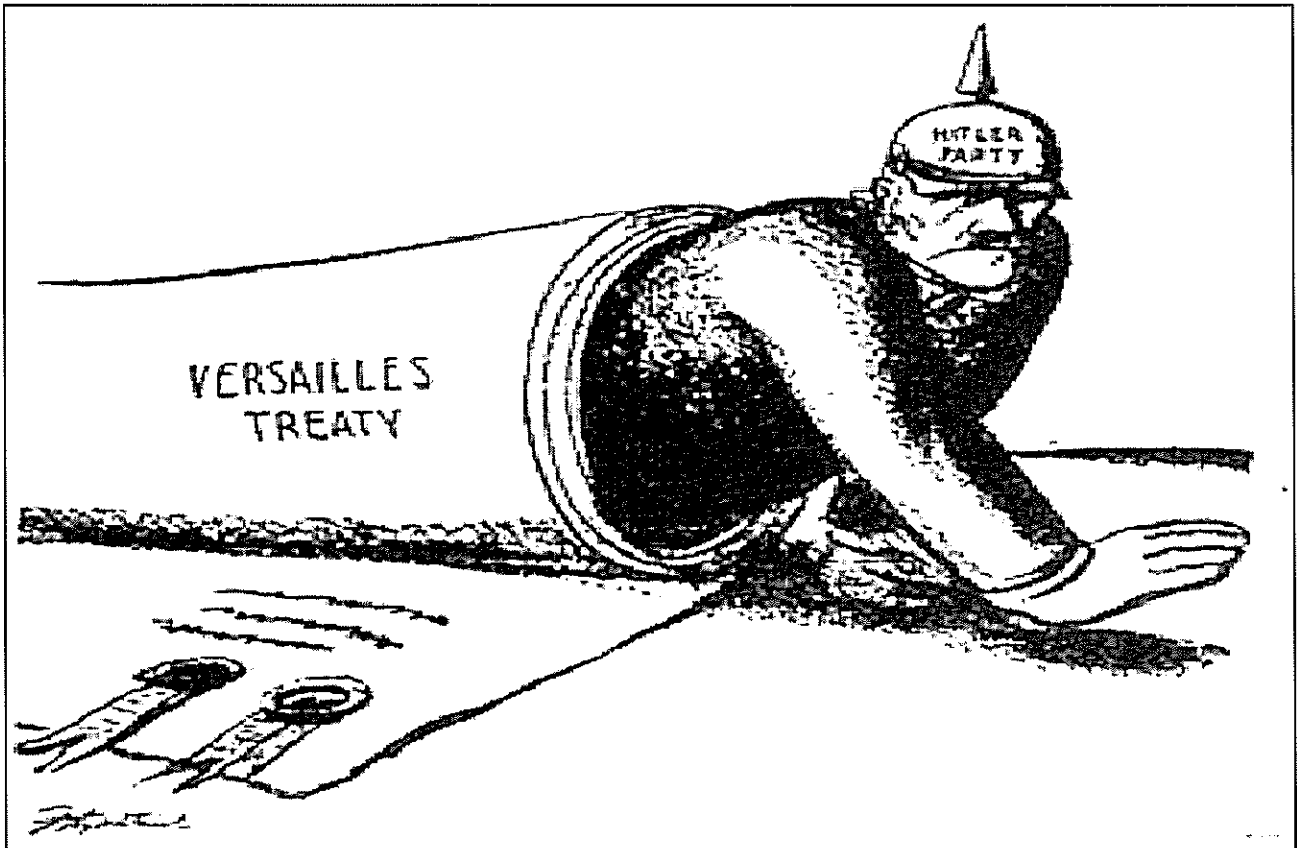


How Did the Versailles Treaty Help Cause World War II?



Daniel Fitzpatrick, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, October 19, 1930.

Overview: On June 28, 1919 – seven and a half months after the horrific fighting of World War I ended in November 1918 – the Versailles Treaty was signed by the victorious Allied nations of Great Britain, France, and the United States and by a defeated Germany. The framers of the treaty hoped that it would stabilize Europe and ensure that another catastrophic war would never happen again. But just over two decades later, the flames of war consumed Europe. This Mini-Q examines the ways in which the treaty contributed to the Second World War.

The Documents:

- Document A: German Territorial Losses; *Mein Kampf* (map and text)
- Document B: Treaty of Versailles, Article 160; Troop Levels, 1920 (cartoon)
- Document C: Treaty of Versailles, Articles 232 and 233; Reparations (chart)
- Document D: Treaty of Versailles, Article 231; War Guilt Clause

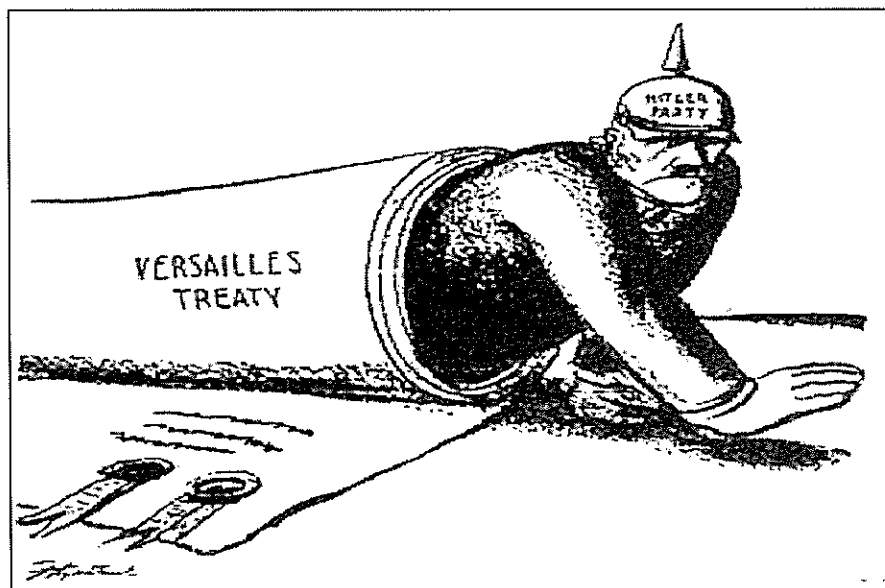
A Mini Document Based Question (Mini-Q)

Hook Exercise: Analyzing a Political Cartoon

Directions: From August 1914 to November 1918 the major powers of Europe were at war. The war pitted Germany and Austria-Hungary against France, England, Russia, and, eventually, the United States. Known then as the Great War, and known today as World War I, this terrible conflict left an estimated 17 million soldiers and civilians dead. It finally ended with a German defeat. After the war a conference was held at the Versailles Palace just outside of Paris. The purpose was to write a treaty that would set the terms of the peace. The treaty was finally signed on June 28, 1919.

Below is a famous political cartoon. With a partner, examine the cartoon and answer the questions that follow.

Source: Daniel Fitzpatrick, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, October 19, 1930.



Hook Exercise Questions:

1. During what years was World War I fought? When was the Versailles Treaty signed?
2. When and in what American newspaper did the cartoon appear?
3. How many years after the signing of the Versailles Treaty was this cartoon published? How many years before the outbreak of WWII?
4. Based on what he is wearing on his head, who does the person in the cartoon represent?
5. What is the person crawling out of?
6. What is the main idea of the cartoon?
7. What information would you like to have to decide if the main idea of the cartoon is correct?

How Did the Versailles Treaty Help Cause World War II?

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It is hard to say anything good about World War I. Fought mainly in western and eastern Europe, it was a war that took the lives of over 10 million soldiers and seven million civilians, and wounded 10 million more. It was a war where men charged one another, again and again, through a storm of machine gun fire and **mustard gas** only to find themselves, months later, lying in the same God-forsaken trenches they had dug one year before.

The main **combatants** in this war included the major nations of Europe – Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey on the one side – France, England, Russia, and Italy on the other. The reason for the war was, at bottom, a struggle for economic and political power. It grew out of the scramble for overseas colonies, ethnic and national pride, and a tangle of alliances that said “I’ll help you if you help me.” It was a war coaxed into being by a huge military build-up. England was determined not be outdone by anyone else’s navy; Germany was determined not to be outgunned by anybody else’s army. By 1914 a tense Europe bristled with weapons.

An assassination in the Balkans triggered the actual fighting and the devastation followed. In 1917, after three years of indecision, the United States entered on the side of England and France and it was enough to tip the balance. By the summer of 1918 Germany was ready to give up. Ironically, little if any of the war had been fought on German soil. Most of the **carnage** had occurred on the **Western Front** in France and Belgium and on the **Eastern Front** near and in Russia. The result was that many of the German people, due to the government’s control of the press, had not known they were losing. Thinking that the war was no worse than a draw, they would not be prepared for a harsh peace.

The war ended on November 11, 1918. It was only a few months before leaders from around the world would meet at Versailles in France to hammer out a treaty. The major players were Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau of France, Prime Minister David Lloyd George of England, and Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States. Germany was given no voice. Russia, who had pulled out of the war in 1917, was not represented.

Woodrow Wilson wanted the treaty to guarantee independence for many of the national groups in Eastern Europe. He also wanted to create a **League of Nations** to settle future disputes and avoid war. But neither of these ideas was primary to Georges Clemenceau. France had suffered terribly in the war. Clemenceau wanted Germany to pay – in gold, in land, in resources, and in reduced military strength. His goal was that Germany should never rise again to threaten France or the rest of Europe. David Lloyd George agreed with Clemenceau. However, one of the English representatives, John Maynard Keynes, argued that the terms imposed on Germany were impossible for her to meet, and would lead to bitterness and future conflict. Wilson shared this thinking. In the end, Clemenceau and Lloyd George won out.

Keynes and Wilson were right about a future conflict. World War II, even more deadly than World War I, would arrive less than 20 years later. Modern historians have argued long and hard over the degree to which the Versailles Treaty sowed the seeds of World War II. In a Mini-Q it is not possible to explore the fullness of this argument. However, it is possible to look at several of the terms of the Treaty and consider how they might have been factors in the war to come. Examine the four documents that follow and answer the question, *How did the Versailles Treaty help cause World War II?*



Background Essay Questions

1. What were the years of World War I?
2. What were the military and civilian death totals in World War I?
3. What were the four main causes of World War I?
4. Why were the German people not prepared to accept the harsh peace terms of the Versailles Treaty?
5. Who were the three government leaders that shaped the Versailles Treaty and what country did each represent?
6. What was Germany's role at the Versailles conference?
7. How did the goals of Georges Clemenceau and Woodrow Wilson differ?
8. What was the concern of English treaty representative George Maynard Keynes?
9. Define these terms:
 - mustard gas
 - combatants
 - carnage
 - Western Front
 - Eastern Front
 - League of Nations

Timeline

- 1914** – July 28: Austro-Hungarian emperor Franz Joseph declares war on Serbia.
- 1916** – Battle of Verdun. German and French armies suffer one million casualties.
- 1917** – April: United States declares war on Germany.
- 1917** – October–November: Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. Communist rule soon begins.
- 1919** – June 28: Treaty of Versailles is signed by delegates of Germany and Allied Powers. WWI is over.
- 1932** – Unemployment rate in Germany reaches 30%.
- 1933** – January 30: Adolf Hitler is named Chancellor of Germany.
- 1939** – September 1: Germany invades Poland, marking the beginning of WWII.

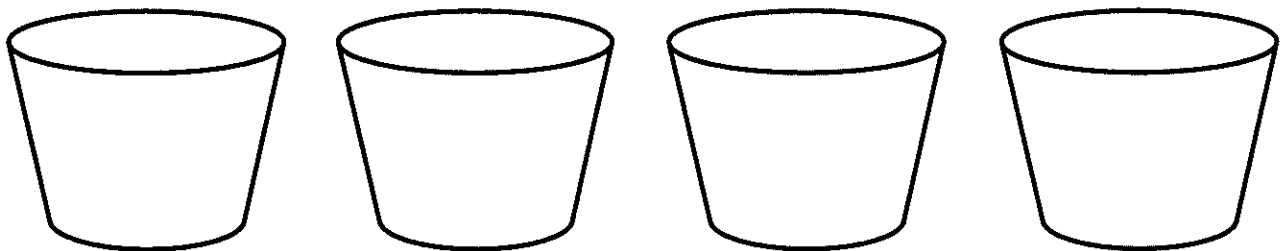
Understanding the Question and Pre-Bucketing

Understanding the Question

1. What is the analytical question asked by this Mini-Q?
2. What terms in the question need to be defined?
3. Rewrite the question in your own words.

Pre-Bucketing

Directions: Using clues from the Mini-Q question, think of possible analytical categories and label the buckets.



Document A

Source: Map created from various sources.

German Territorial Losses, Versailles Treaty, 1919.



Note: The Treaty took Alsace and Lorraine away from Germany, reducing German coal production by 40%.

Source: Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 1924.

It should scarcely seem questionable to anyone that ... the restoration of the frontiers of 1914 could be achieved only by blood. Only childish and naive minds can lull themselves in the idea that they can bring about a correction of Versailles by wheedling and begging.... No nation can remove this hand from its throat except by the sword.

Note: Adolf Hitler published *Mein Kampf* ("My Struggle") in 1924, well before he came to power but when he was beginning to make his mark as a German political figure.

Document Analysis

1. What territories did Germany lose due to the Versailles Treaty?
2. East Prussia remained a part of Germany. Why might the loss of the Polish Corridor and Danzig have been especially difficult for Germans?
3. In losing territory, what critical resource did Germany give up?
4. How does Hitler suggest Germans should respond to the Versailles Treaty?
5. How can you use this document to explain how the Versailles Treaty helped cause World War II?

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Document B

Source: Treaty of Versailles, 1919.

Article 160: By a date which must not be later than March 31, 1920, the German Army must not comprise more than seven divisions of infantry and three divisions of cavalry.... After that date the total number of [military troops]...in...Germany must not exceed one hundred thousand men, including officers.... The Army shall be devoted exclusively to the maintenance of order within the territory and to the control of the frontiers.... The total effective strength of officers, including the personnel of staffs, whatever their composition, must not exceed four thousand.

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Source: German political cartoon, 1920s.

Troop Levels, 1920

Translations:

Frankreich (France)

Belgien (Belgium)

Deutsches Reich (Germany)

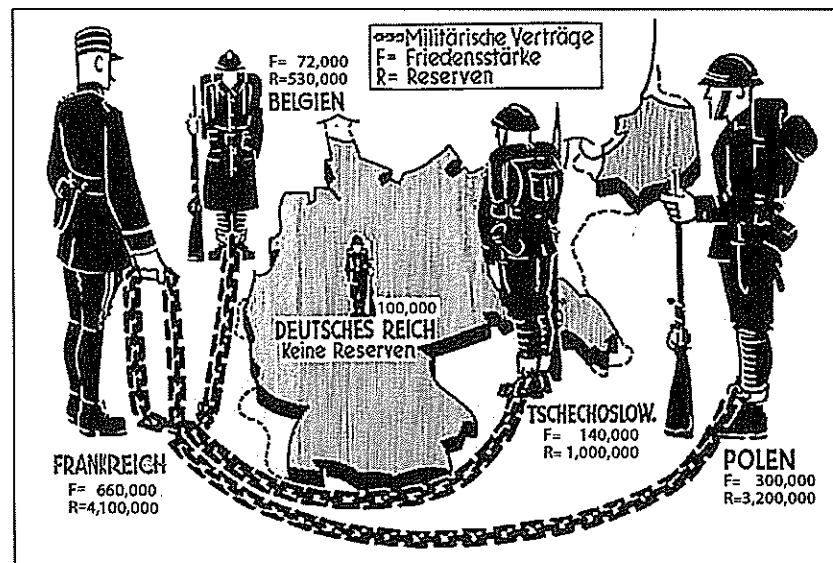
Tschechoslow (Czechoslovakia)

Polen (Poland)

Friedensstärke (peacekeepers;
full-time military troops)

Reserven (military reserves
available when required)

Militärische Verträge (military
alliances)



Document Analysis

1. What is the total number of German military troops allowed by Article 160 of the Versailles Treaty?
2. How does Article 160 define the role of the army?
3. Which of the countries in the cartoon image has the largest combined army of reservists and peacekeepers?
4. What is implied by the imagery showing the chain held by the large figure representing France? How does this image suggest German politicians and citizens might have felt about their military security compared to that of their neighbors?
5. How can you use this document to explain how the Versailles Treaty helped cause World War II?

Document C

Source: Treaty of Versailles, 1919.

Article 232: The [Allies] ... require, and Germany undertakes, that she will make compensation for all damage done to the civilian population of the Allied and Associated Powers and to their property during the period of the belligerency....

Article 233: The amount of ... [reparations or payments] to be made by Germany shall be determined by an Inter-Allied Commission, ...[which will] consider the claims and give to [Germany] a just opportunity to be heard.... The Commission shall ... draw up a schedule of payments prescribing the time and manner for securing and discharging the entire obligations within a period of thirty years from May 1, 1921.

EV

Source: Chart compiled from varied sources including John Maynard Keynes, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, 1920, and Charles Mee, *The End of Order: Versailles, 1919*.

Reparations Established by Versailles Treaty with Later Revisions

Date	Amount of Reparations	Value in 2010 US Dollars	German Response and Payment
1921	132 billion gold marks	\$367 billion to be paid over 30 years	Anger/humiliation. Paid little in 1920s.
1929	112 billion gold marks (reduced from 1921)	\$341 billion	Not counting American loans, Germans pay only 2 billion marks over next three years.
1933			Hitler comes to power. Stops all reparations payments

Document Analysis

1. What are reparations?
2. Why was Germany required to pay reparations for World War I?
3. When were the reparation payments set to begin and what was the date by which they were required to be fulfilled?
4. In 1929, what was the reduced amount of reparations Germany was required to pay?
In German gold marks? In 2010 US dollars?
5. How does this document help explain how the Treaty of Versailles contributed to World War II?

Document D

Source: Treaty of Versailles, 1919.

Note: This Article of the Versailles Treaty is often referred to as the War Guilt Clause.

Article 231: The Allied and Associated Governments affirm and Germany accepts the responsibility of Germany and her allies for causing all the loss and damage to which the Allied and Associated Governments and their nationals have been subjected as a consequence of the war imposed upon them by the aggression of Germany and her allies.

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Source: Laurence V. Moyer, *Victory Must Be Ours: Germany in the Great War 1914–1918*, 1995.

The Allies continued in the years after 1919 to regard the [Versailles] Treaty as an international contract...but most Germans saw it as an atrocious injustice, an evil thing which must be destroyed. This feeling persisted long after most of the provisions had been carried out, long after many Germans could even name its provisions. What they knew of the treaty was etched indelibly in their minds and could be abbreviated in [a] single word: humiliation. Nations, as with individuals, do not like to be made to feel disgraced and cast off.... It undermines... a sense of worth, their value of themselves.... Much of the exaltation [enthusiasm] within Germany arising from the Nazi regime arose [from] the way in which Hitler restored a sense of pride, reawakened a sense of self-respect, forcing the world to look at Germany anew.

Document Analysis

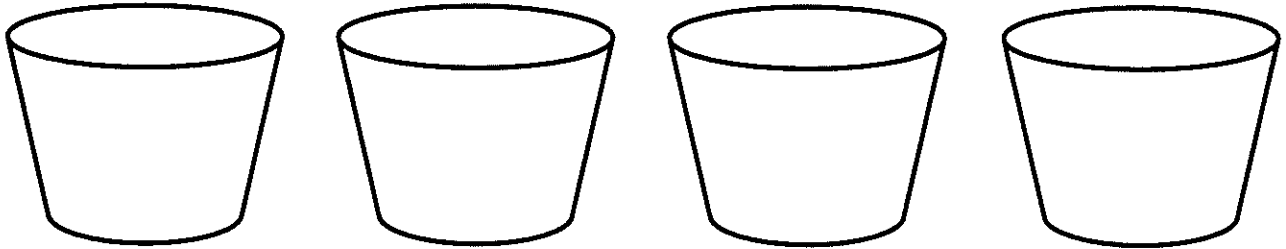
1. What is the main idea of Article 231 of the Treaty of Versailles?
2. According to historian Laurence Moyer, how did Germans feel about the Treaty of Versailles?
3. According to Moyer, why did many Germans admire Adolf Hitler?
4. How can you use this document to explain how the Treaty of Versailles helped cause World War II?

Bucketing – Getting Ready to Write

Bucketing

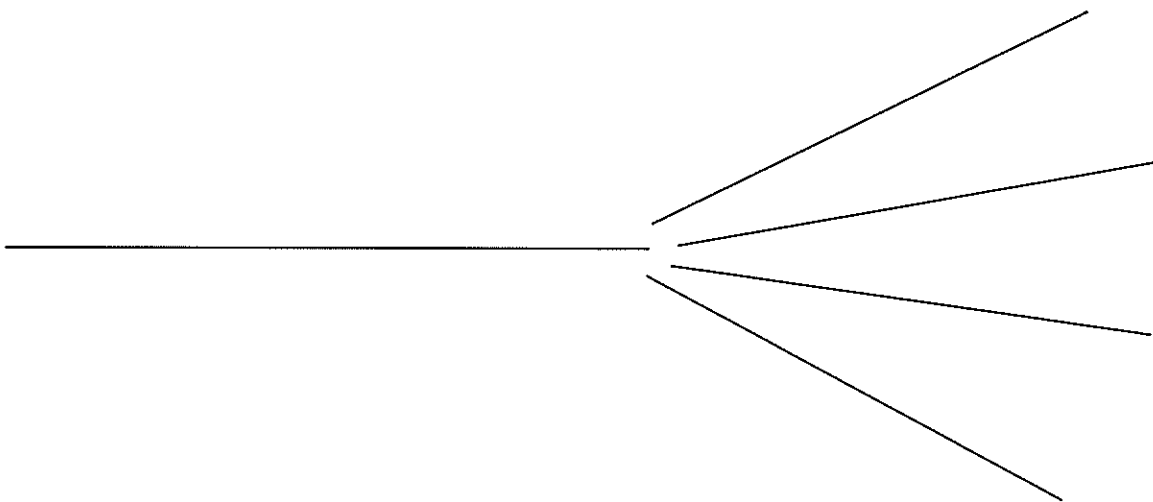
Look over all the documents and organize them into your final buckets. Write bucket labels under each bucket and place the letters of the documents in the buckets where they belong. You can put a document into more than one bucket (multi-bucketing), but you need a good reason for doing so. Remember, your buckets are going to become your body paragraphs.

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Thesis Development and Road Map

On the chickenfoot below, write your thesis and your road map. Your thesis is always an opinion that answers the Mini-Q question. The road map is created from your bucket labels and lists the topic areas you will examine in order to prove your thesis.



From Thesis to Essay Writing

Mini-Q Essay Outline Guide

Working Title

Paragraph #1

Grabber

Background

Stating the question with key terms defined

Thesis and road map

Paragraph #2

Baby Thesis for bucket one

Evidence: Supporting detail from documents with document citation

Argument: Connecting evidence to the thesis

Paragraph #3

Baby Thesis

Evidence

Argument

Paragraph #4

Baby Thesis

Evidence

Argument

Paragraph #5

Baby Thesis

Evidence

Argument

Paragraph #6

Conclusion: "Although" statement followed by convincing restatement of the thesis.

Student Mini-Q Lined Paper

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