Why World War, and Did Peace Fix It?

Teacher		**Class**	Year 9
Subject	History	**Topic**	The First World War
Date		**Room**	
Lesson length	60 minutes	**Country**	United States

Students learn how alliances turned the 1914 crisis into world war and what the 1919 settlement changed. They debate the peace and write a verdict on whether it would last.

Curriculum links

- Students analyse the causes of the First World War and its consequences [1]
- Challenges for Britain, Europe and the wider world 1901 to the present day, including the First World War and the Peace Settlement [2]

Learning objectives

- Students will explain how alliances turned the 1914 crisis into world war.
- Students will describe the global scale of the war and its human cost.
- Students will weigh views on whether the 1919 settlement would keep peace.

Success criteria

- I can explain how one shooting led to declarations of war in 1914.
- I can describe where the war was fought and what changed after it.
- I can give a verdict on the peace with reasons from both sides.

What students already know

Show Slide 2 poppy image. Ask: Why do people wear this red flower in November? Take 3 quick answers to check recall of remembrance and 1914–1918.

Key words

alliance	a promise between countries to help defend each other if attacked [8]
mobilisation	getting armies ready and moving for fighting [7]
empire	many lands ruled by one powerful country [3]
reparations	money a defeated country is made to pay to cover war costs [16]
consequence	something that happens later because of an earlier event [1]

Materials

- Slides 1–4, 7, 10–12
- Video clip 1 Causes of the First World War (0:00–4:40) on Slide 6
- Consequence cards for Was the Peace Fair?
- Opinion line labels from Strongly agree to Strongly disagree
- For, Against and Unsure cards

Before the lesson

- Load Slides 1–4, 6–7, 10–12 and test Video clip 1 (0:00–4:40) with sound.
- Print consequence cards, one set per table, and For, Against, Unsure cards.
- Put opinion line labels across the room from Strongly agree to Strongly disagree with a clear walkway.

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- Worksheet Task D Thinking hats: Judge the peace settlement fairly from three angles copies
- Print Worksheet Task D Thinking hats: Judge the peace settlement fairly from three angles page 4, one per student, and spare copies.

Lesson outline

0–8 min **Starter** 8 min · Whole class

Hook interest with the fairness question and recall remembrance and dates.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 1 The First World War and the Peace Settlement and read the question Why did a world war start, and did peace fix it?
2. Show Slide 2 and say the hook: If you win after losing millions of people, what do you ask for? Stand where you stand.
3. Ask pairs to answer why people wear the red flower in November, then confirm it is a poppy for remembrance of the First World War and Armistice Day, 11 November [7].
4. Preview the verdict vote on Slide 11 and point to the opinion line.

STUDENTS DO

1. Look at Slides 1–2 and discuss with a partner why the poppy is worn.
2. Share one idea and listen to where the opinion line is.

Say: Today we answer two big questions: why did a shooting lead to a world war, and did the peace deal fix it? If you win after losing millions of people, what do you ask for? Stand where you stand. By the end you will stand on that line and defend your verdict.

Ask: Why do people wear a red flower in November? (As a poppy for remembrance of the First World War and Armistice Day, 11 November.) · What will you decide by the end of the lesson? (Whether the 1919 settlement would keep peace, yes or no with reasons.)

Check understanding: Hands up for poppy link to First World War and 11 November. If unsure, repeat Slide 2 caption together.

Support: Show the poppy image and the words remembrance and 11 November on the board to point to.
Stretch: Ask what one hard choice winners face: punish, forgive or protect against revenge?

Use: Slides 1–2

8–20 min **Road to war** 12 min · Whole class

Explain how alliances linked the July–August 1914 declarations of war.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 3 From shooting to world war in 5 weeks and talk through the chain in date order.
2. Explain that countries agreed to protect each other and would defend them if one was attacked [8].
3. Play Video clip 1 (0:00–4:40) on Slide 6. Ask students to listen for how alliances linked countries and for Britain's reason to join.
4. Use Slide 5 Think, pair, share to check why the shooting of one man led to world war.

STUDENTS DO

1. Follow the dates on Slide 3 and note each link.
2. Watch the clip and note Britain's reason, then pair-share why one shooting spread so fast.

Say: One killing did not cause a world war on its own. Alliances joined countries together, so each declaration pulled in the next. Watch how the links work and listen carefully for why Britain said it had to join.

Worked example: 28 June: the heir to Austria-Hungary was shot and killed on 28 June 1914 by a Serbian man who thought Serbia should control Bosnia instead of Austria [8]. Step 2: Austria-Hungary, with German encouragement, declared war on Serbia on 28 July [7]. Step 3: because Russia had an alliance with Serbia, Russia mobilised, then Germany declared war on Russia on 1 August and on France on 3 August [7][8]. Step 4: after Germany violated Belgian neutrality, Britain and its empire entered the war on 4 August [7].

Ask: What turned the assassination into a wider war? (Alliances that promised defence, so Russia backed Serbia, Germany backed Austria-Hungary, and Britain backed Belgium and France.) · Why did Britain enter on 4 August? (After Germany violated Belgian neutrality, and Britain had agreements to protect Belgium and France.)

Check understanding: Mini-whiteboards: write the order 28 June, 28 July, 1-3 August, 4 August with one country per date. Reteach any mixed link with Slide 3.

Support: Give a pre-ordered timeline with dates to match to country cards. **Stretch:** Ask which alliance link was most decisive and why in one sentence.

Use: Slides 3, 5–6; Video clip 1 (0:00–4:40)

20–32 min **Global war to peace deal** 12 min · Whole class

Teach the scale of war and the key changes decided in 1919.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 4 A truly global war and confirm fighting was from 1914 to 1918 across Europe, Africa, Asia, the Pacific and the Middle East [4].
2. Teach Slide 7 words alliance, mobilisation and empire, and explain battles often lasted months instead of days [3] and fighting took place for the first time in the air as well as on land and at sea [3].
3. Show Slide 10 Europe before and after and explain the conflict caused the disintegration of four empires – the Austro-Hungarian, German, Ottoman and Russian [3].
4. Introduce the Allied delegates at the Versailles peace conference in 1919 [3] and that the victorious Allies looked to defeated Germany in 1919 to pay reparations [16].

STUDENTS DO

1. Copy the three key words and add one example for each.
2. Pair-talk: which changed more, the map with empires gone or daily life with loss on this scale?

Say: This was not only mud in France. Empires pulled soldiers from around the world, war was fought on land, at sea and in the air, and it cost the lives of over nine million soldiers worldwide. In 1919 the winners met at Versailles to redraw the map, end empires and make Germany pay.

Worked example: Model verdict starter: The settlement will not last because making Germany pay reparations may cause revenge, even though ending four empires removed old rivalries. That uses the words reparations, empires and consequence in one sentence.

Ask: How global was the war? (Fought 1914 to 1918 across Europe, Africa, Asia, Pacific and Middle East, on land, at sea and in the air.) · What did the 1919 settlement change? (Redrew borders and punished Germany at Versailles and made Germany pay reparations.)

Check understanding: Thumbs up if you can name the four empires that ended. If not, chant them from Slide 10 together.

Support: Provide pre-cut labels for Versailles 1919, reparations and the four empire names to sort. **Stretch:** Ask why empire and supply links connected distant theatres and made peace harder.

Use: Slides 4, 7, 10

32–52 min **Was the Peace Fair?** 20 min · Groups

Weigh different views on the consequences and judge if peace would last.

YOU DO

1. Set out consequence cards and the opinion line from Strongly agree to Strongly disagree for the vote Will the 1919 settlement keep peace in Europe?
2. Read three statements: it is fair because empires are gone so safer; it is too harsh and will cause revenge; it is too weak and will not stop dictators.
3. Run the line debate: students stand, one from each part gives a reason in ten seconds, others may move one step after hearing the other side.
4. Hand out Worksheet Task D and ask students to Judge the peace settlement fairly from three angles and use Slide 9 to write one verdict sentence using reparations, empires and consequence.

STUDENTS DO

1. In groups sort consequence cards, then stand on the opinion line and justify one For, Against or Unsure choice to stay or move.
2. Complete Worksheet Task D to Judge the peace settlement fairly from three angles and use Slide 9 to write a final verdict sentence to share in 60 seconds.

Say: You are the delegates now. Read your consequence card, decide where you stand, and give your reason clearly. Listen to the other side. If an argument is strong, move one step and be ready to say what moved you.

Worked example: Card: Over nine million soldiers died [3] plus empires ended. Fair view: ending empires makes war less likely. Unfair view: forcing reparations on Germany in 1919 punishes ordinary people and was a key factor in the outbreak of the Second World War from 1939 to 1945 [3]. Verdict: I vote No, too harsh, because revenge is more likely when costs fall on the defeated.

Ask: What is a strong reason the peace was fair? (Four empires disintegrated so old imperial power was broken and borders could be redrawn.) · What is a strong reason it would fail? (Reparations burden on Germany could cause anger and revenge and later war.)

Check understanding: Each group presents in 60 seconds using reparations, empires and consequence. If reasons are one-sided, prompt the missing view.

Support: Allow students to hold a For, Against or Unsure card and pass to speak, rather than speaking unprompted. **Stretch:** Ask them to connect one consequence back to one long-term cause of tension before 1914.

Use: Slide 9; Slide 11; Worksheet Task D Thinking hats: Judge the peace settlement fairly from three angles

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52–60 min **Plenary** 8 min · Whole class

Return to objectives and check verdicts on causes and peace.

YOU DO

1. Revisit Slide 1 question and ask two students from different parts of the line to restate their verdict.
2. Show Slide 12 Exit ticket and ask students to write one thing learnt about causes or peace and one question still held.
3. Connect back to Year 9 focus on analysing causes and consequences of modern conflicts like the First World War [1].
4. Collect Worksheet Task D Thinking hats: Judge the peace settlement fairly from three angles and Slide 9 verdicts and preview next lesson on inter-war years.

STUDENTS DO

1. Write exit ticket lines and place or read them in silence.
2. Self-tick success: can I explain the 1914 chain and judge the peace?

Say: We started with how alliances spread war in five weeks and ended with whether peace in 1919 fixed it. Write your exit clearly so I can see your verdict and what still puzzles you about 1914 to 1919.

Ask: Why did one shooting lead to world war? (Alliance promises and mobilisation plans turned Serbia-Austria-Hungary crisis into war involving Russia, Germany, France and Britain.) · Did the settlement fix it? (Debated: ended empires but reparations and redrawing risked revenge and future war.)

Check understanding: Read three exit tickets aloud. If verdicts lack reasons, model adding because with reparations or empires.

Support: Provide sentence frames: I learnt... My question is... **Stretch:** Invite a question a historian would ask about memory and significance.

Use: Slides 1, 12

Common mistakes

Mistake	How to spot it	How to fix it
Thinking the assassination alone caused the war	Says 28 June shooting equals world war with no links	Rebuild chain: alliances promised defence [8], so 28 July, 1-3 August and 4 August declarations followed [7].
Thinking the war was only fought in France	Map or answer names only the Western Front	Recall war 1914 to 1918 across Europe, Africa, Asia, Pacific and Middle East [4] and at sea and in the air [3].
Thinking Versailles ended all danger of war	Says peace must last because fighting stopped	Weigh reparations burden in 1919 [16] and break-up of four empires [3] which was a key factor in later war [3].

Support

- Hold For, Against or Unsure cards and pass to speak, rather than speaking unprompted.
- Use pre-ordered timelines, word banks and sentence frames for verdict writing.

Stretch

- Connect one consequence back to one long-term cause of tension before 1914 and explain the link.
- Draft two fairer alternatives delegates could have chosen and note one risk of each.

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For the LSE or teaching assistant

Stay with the opinion line group: help place students on the line, prompt For/Against/Unsure cards, scribe verdict sentence using reparations, empires and consequence.

Safety

- Model respectful language for mass loss; allow a written exit note instead of public speaking.
- Keep opinion-line walkway clear, walk not run, bags under desks to avoid trips.

Check for understanding

Question	Answer
Name the 1914 chain in order from assassination to Britain entering.	28 June assassination, 28 July Austria-Hungary v Serbia, 1-3 August Germany v Russia and France, 4 August Britain and empire enter.
Name two changes made by the 1919 settlement.	Germany made to pay reparations and give up land decided at Versailles.
Was the peace fair and will it last? Give one reason.	Accept Yes with empires gone so safer, or No with too harsh causing revenge or too weak to stop dictators.

Homework

Ask at home what remembrance means and write two lines linking it to what you learnt about 1914–1919.

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