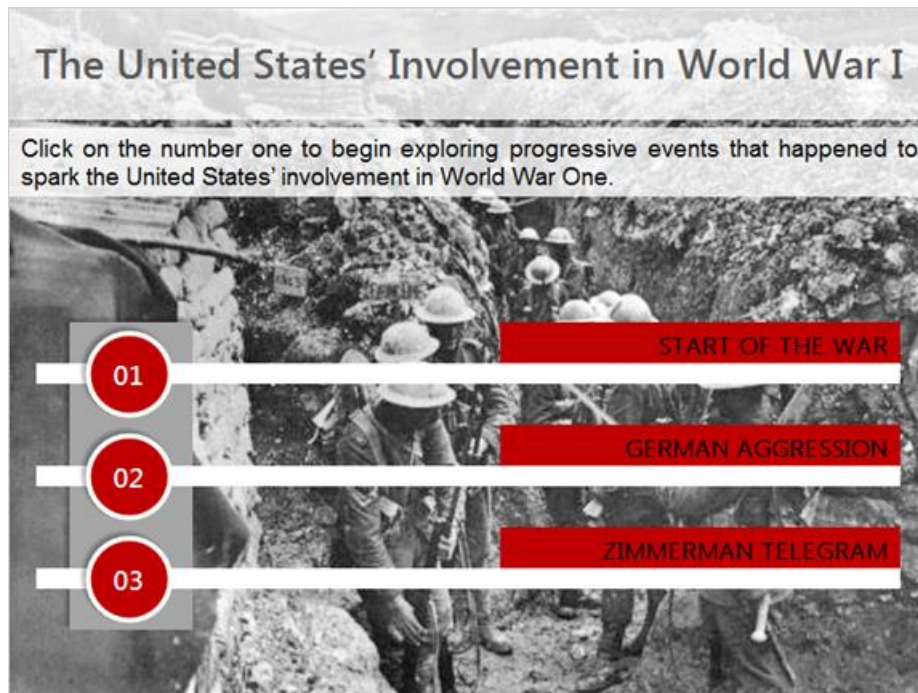


Module 7: America at the Turn of the Century – 1900 to the 1930s

Topic 2 Content: The United States' Involvement in World War I

Introduction



The United States' Involvement in World War I

Click on the number one to begin exploring progressive events that happened to spark the United States' involvement in World War One.

01 START OF THE WAR

02 GERMAN AGGRESSION

03 ZIMMERMAN TELEGRAM

The slide features a background image of World War I soldiers in a trench. On the left, there are three red circular buttons labeled '01', '02', and '03'. To the right of each button is a red rectangular box containing the corresponding event name: 'START OF THE WAR', 'GERMAN AGGRESSION', and 'ZIMMERMAN TELEGRAM'. The text at the top of the slide reads 'The United States' Involvement in World War I' and 'Click on the number one to begin exploring progressive events that happened to spark the United States' involvement in World War One.'

Click on the number one to begin exploring progressive events that happened to spark the United States' involvement in World War One.

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Start of the War

START OF THE WAR

01

Central Powers
Monarchs listed from left to right: Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany; Kaiser and King Franz Joseph of Austria-Hungary; Sultan Mehmed V of Ottoman Empire; Tsar Ferdinand of Bulgaria

NEUTRAL UNITED STATES

Allies/Triple Entente
Russian poster from 1914 that depicts the female personifications of France, Russia, and Britain.

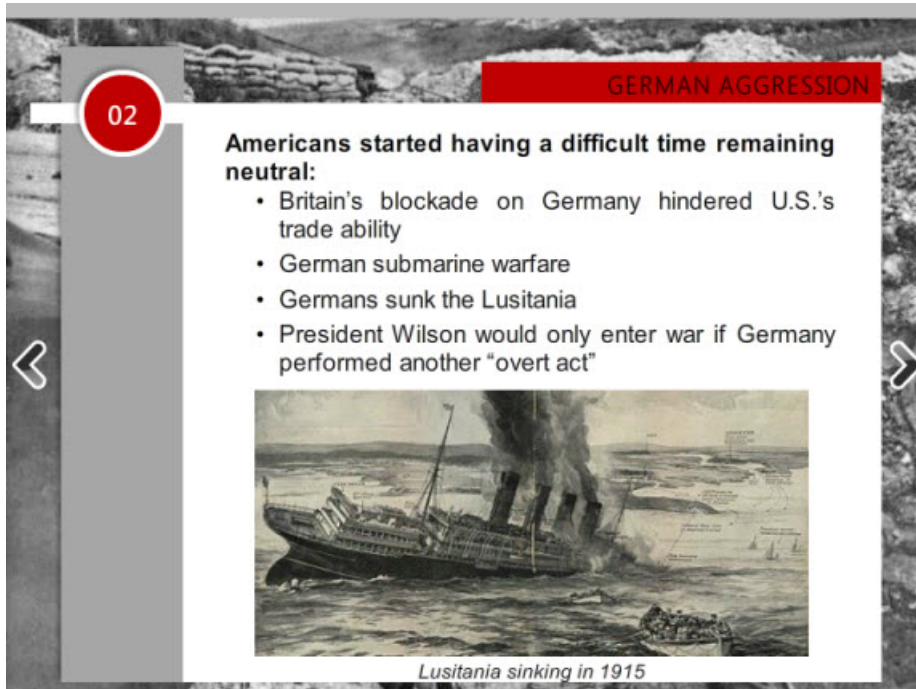
Americans were very strategic about how often they became involved with foreign affairs in the early 1900's. Therefore, when the Great War began in 1914, Americans did not join the war effort right away. The war started in Europe when Germany and Austria-Hungary formed the Central Powers, and began fighting Britain, Russia and France, known as the Allies or Triple Entente. The war carried on for three years with no involvement from the United States. In fact, since the United States was a nation of immigrants who had ties to both Britain and Germany, Americans prided themselves on remaining neutral. Also, the United States felt that it would cripple the economy to cut trading ties with any of the nations involved in the Great War.

Click the right arrow to continue.

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German Aggression




02

GERMAN AGGRESSION

Americans started having a difficult time remaining neutral:

- Britain's blockade on Germany hindered U.S.'s trade ability
- German submarine warfare
- Germans sunk the Lusitania
- President Wilson would only enter war if Germany performed another "overt act"



Lusitania sinking in 1915

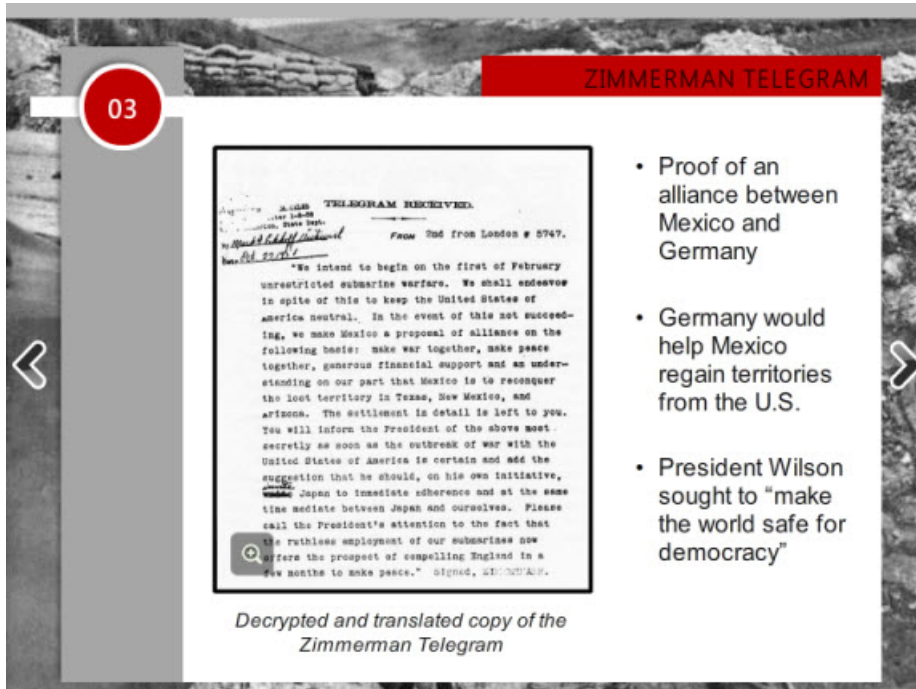
As the Great War progressed, it became impossible for the United States to remain neutral. The British implemented a blockade on trade with Germany, which also cut off America's ability to trade with Germany. In response, Germans started engaging in submarine warfare with the intent of sinking any Allied ship found in waters surrounding Britain. This action was a violation of the freedom of the seas. On May 7, 1915, the Germans sank the British ship, the Lusitania, killing one thousand one hundred ninety-eight people, one hundred twenty-eight of whom were Americans. After this event, American sentiment turned against Germany and the Central Powers. Even though Americans began protesting against the Germans, President Woodrow Wilson maintained his desire for peace. On January 31, 1917, Germany announced it would sink all hostile and neutral ships in British waters. At this time, the President claimed the United States would enter war if an "overt act" occurred.

Click the right arrow to continue.

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Zimmerman Telegram



03

ZIMMERMAN TELEGRAM

TELEGRAM RECEIVED.

From 206 from London # 5747.

"We intend to begin on the first of February unrestricted submarine warfare. We shall endeavor in spite of this to keep the United States of America neutral. In the event of this not succeeding, we make Mexico a proposal of alliance on the following basis: make war together, make peace together, generous financial support and an understanding on our part that Mexico is to reconquer the lost territory in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. The settlement in detail is left to you. You will inform the President of the above most secretly as soon as the outbreak of war with the United States of America is certain and add the suggestion that he should, on his own initiative, ~~make~~ Japan to immediate adherence and at the same time mediate between Japan and ourselves. Please call the President's attention to the fact that the ruthless employment of our submarines now offers the prospect of compelling England in a few months to make peace." Signed, A. ZIMMERMAN.

- Proof of an alliance between Mexico and Germany
- Germany would help Mexico regain territories from the U.S.
- President Wilson sought to "make the world safe for democracy"

Decrypted and translated copy of the Zimmerman Telegram

The first overt act came in the form of the Zimmerman Telegram. This note between the German foreign minister and the German ambassador in Mexico detailed an alliance between Mexico and Germany that affirmed Germany would back Mexico if war began with the United States. Specifically, Germany would help Mexico regain the territories of Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas that Mexico had lost to America in 1848.

Unrestricted submarine warfare and relationship the United States had with Britain ultimately led to the end of America's neutrality. President Woodrow Wilson and the nation sought to "make the world safe for democracy."

Click the right arrow to exit the course.