How Did the Versailles Treaty Help Cause World War II?

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 (map)
Document B: Treaty of Versailles, Article 160; Troop Levels, 1920 (cartoon)
Document C: Treaty of Versailles, Articles 232 and 233; Reparations
Document D: Treaty of Versailles, Article 231; War Guilt Clause

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Mini-Qs in World History
Volume 3, Unit 8

How Did the Versailles Treaty Help Cause World War II?

MINI-Q™ LESSON PLAN

DAY 1 – 45 minutes

Step One: Hook Refer to the Step One teacher notes in the Mini-Q. Read the directions aloud. The purpose is to get students engaged, talking, and wanting to do the Mini-Q.

Step Two: Background Essay Refer to the Step Two teacher notes in the Mini-Q. Students can write out answers to the BGE questions or the questions can simply be discussed.

Step Three: Understanding the Question and Pre-Bucketing The task of recognizing and defining key words in the question is a crucial habit of mind. The second task of pre-bucketing based on clues in the question and in document titles is a huge categorization skill.

Step Four: Document Analysis Do Document A with the whole class, modeling the kind of detail you expect in student answers to the Document Analysis questions. Homework: Analyze the remaining documents and answer the questions that follow.

DAY 2 – 45 minutes

Step Four (continued): Discussion of Documents
Option One: Working in pairs or threesomes, have students discuss the answers to the first set of Document Analysis questions they did for homework. Using a different-colored pen than they used for homework, they may add to their answers. After five minutes, open the discussion of that document to the full class. Then proceed to the next document and repeat.
Option Two: Proceed as above, but have a volunteer group lead each of the three or four different document discussions. Students at their desks may add to their notes, again in a different pen.

Step Five: Bucketing and Chicken Foot Have students complete the bucketing and chicken foot work page. This step will help students clarify their thesis and road map.

Step Six: From Thesis to Essay Writing For homework) Have students fill out the Outline Guide Sheet or write their multi-paragraph essay.

DAY 3 (Optional)

Step Six (continued): Conduct an in-class Writing Workshop.

MINI-Q™ LESSON PLAN: CLEAN VERSION OPTION

If students are ready, use the Clean Version of the Mini-Q, which requires them to handle more of the analysis on their own. Estimated time to complete is 1-2 class periods.
There are four documents in this Mini-Q. Students are provided with the same document list but it is not divided into analytical categories or buckets. Students may develop categories that are different from these.

**Territorial Losses**

Document A: German Territorial Losses (map)

**Military Restrictions**

Document B: Treaty of Versailles, Article 160; Troop Levels, 1920 (cartoon)

**Reparations**

Document C: Treaty of Versailles, Articles 232 and 233, Reparations

**War Guilt**

Document D: Treaty of Versailles, Article 231, War Guilt Clause
Step One: The Hook

Teacher Note: This Hook is meant to help students firmly grasp the main idea driving this Mini-Q – that there were terms in the Versailles Peace Treaty that may have contributed to a later and even bigger war. There seems to be no doubt in the cartoonist's mind. The National Socialist (Nazi) Party had nearly disappeared in the mid-1920s but had reasserted itself by 1930 as a force to be reckoned with. Hitler hated the Versailles Treaty. In 1930 he was three years away from legally taking over power in Germany. It is a bit chilling to think that in 1930 the cartoonist could not have known Hitler's future or anything about World War II.

If students understand the main idea of the cartoon they should realize the importance of knowing something about the Versailles Treaty. Allow a few minutes at the end of the exercise for a full-class discussion.

Answers to questions

1. During what years was World War I fought?
   1914 - 1918

2. When was the Versailles Treaty signed?
   June 28, 1919

3. When and in what newspaper did the cartoon appear?
   The cartoon appeared in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch on October 19, 1930.

4. Who is the figure crawling out of the treaty scroll? What is he wearing on his head?
   Adolf Hitler, or a person representing Hitler's political party. He's wearing a helmet.

5. What is the main idea of the cartoon?
   There is something about the terms of the Versailles Treaty that has caused an angry, warlike person like Hitler to get power and support in Germany.

6. What information would you like to have to decide if the main idea of the cartoon is correct?
   It would be important to know the specific terms of the treaty and how the German people and leaders felt about those terms.
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?

2. When was the Versailles Treaty signed?

3. When and in what newspaper did the cartoon appear?

4. Who is the figure crawling out of the treaty scroll? What is he wearing on his head?

5. What is the main idea of the cartoon?

6. What information would you like to have to decide if the main idea of the cartoon is correct?
Step Two: Establishing the Context

**General Instructions**
- Review the Timeline.
- Pre-teach the boldfaced vocabulary.
- Have students read, or read aloud, the Background Essay.
- Have students answer the Background Essay questions on the next page.

**Specific Considerations**
The main purpose of the Background Essay is to create a context for the Mini-Q exercise. Its job is to provide a sense of time, place, and story, and to introduce important vocabulary and concepts. Doing this well gives all students a more equal chance to succeed with the Mini-Q.

**Time:** Review the years of World War I (1914 – 1918), the signing of the Versailles Treaty (1919), and World War II (1939 – 1945). It was 14 short years between the signing of the treaty and the beginning of Hitler’s dictatorship in 1933.

**Place:** Review a map of Europe in 1914. Students should be able to locate England, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey. Note the location of the Western Front in northeast France and the Eastern Front in Eastern Europe. Have students also note the location of Versailles. Versailles, more accurately called the Palace of Versailles, was the home and center of government for the absolute French kings in the 17th and 18th centuries. The palace has 2,300 rooms. It is a big place.

**Story:** We suggest reading the Background Essay aloud. It is good for many students, even good readers, to hear the words as they see them. For many, it is important to hear the cadence of the language, to experience pauses and emphasis. Use the Background Essay questions to review the text.

**Vocabulary and Concepts:** You may want to pre-teach the six boldfaced terms in the essay. Our feeling about vocabulary is that some pre-teaching is good, but keep the word list short. When reading aloud, see how much students can get from context.
How Did the Versailles Treaty Help Cause World War II?

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 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 sewed 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?
Step Two: Establishing the Context (continued)

Answers to Background Essay Questions

1. What were the years of World War I?
   1914-1918

2. What were the military and civilian death totals of World War I?
   10,000,000 military personnel died; 7,000,000 civilians died.

3. What were three causes of World War I?
   Imperialism, nationalism, a tangle of alliances, military buildup

4. Why were the German people not prepared to accept the harsh peace terms of the Versailles Treaty?
   The German press did not accurately report the course of the war. They believed the war had been closer to a draw. Also, little of the war had been fought on German soil.

5. Who were the three government leaders that shaped the Versailles Treaty?
   French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau, British Prime Minister David Lloyd George, and Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States

6. What was Germany's role at the Versailles conference?
   Germany had no meaningful voice.

7. How did the goals of Georges Clemenceau and Woodrow Wilson differ?
   Clemenceau wanted Germany to be punished, to pay for the war, and be unable in the future to make war with France and the rest of Europe. Wilson was primarily interested in establishing political independence for deserving national groups and in creating a League of Nations that would work for world peace.

8. What was the concern of English treaty representative George Maynard Keynes?
   The treaty contained harsh terms that Germany could not meet and that would cause bitterness and future conflict.

9. Define these terms:
   mustard gas: one of several gases used in combat by both sides in World War I. About 4% of World War I military deaths are believed to have been from gas.

   combatant: an individual or a nation that fights

   carnage: massive, large-scale slaughter

   Western Front: line of trenches in northeastern France where Germany and its allies faced off against the French and British and their allies.

   Eastern Front: The war zone in Eastern Europe that stretched from the Baltic Sea in the north to the Black Sea in the south. It was much longer and more fluid than the Western Front.

   League of Nations: Organization established by the Versailles Treaty whose main purpose was to promote world peace. It was not successful in stopping World War II and was replaced by the United Nations in 1945.
Background Essay Questions

1. What were the years of World War I?

2. What were the military and civilian death total in World War I?

3. What were three 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?

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

1915 – German sinking of British luxury liner Lusitania kills 1,198 people including 128 Americans.
1916 – Battle of Verdun. German and French armies fight almost the whole year. One million people on both sides die or are wounded.
1917 – April: United States declares war on Germany.
1919 – June 28: Treaty of Versailles is signed by delegates of Germany and Allied Powers.
1932 – Unemployment rate in Germany reaches 30%.
1933 – January 30: Adolf Hitler is named Chancellor of Germany.
Step Three: Understanding the Question and Pre-Bucketing

Understanding the Question

1. What is the analytical question asked by this Mini-Q?
   How did the Treaty of Versailles help cause World War II?

2. What terms in the question need to be defined?
   Treaty of Versailles

3. Rewrite the question in your own words.
   How did the Treaty of Versailles, which ended World War I, help lead to World War II?

Pre-Bucketing

Teacher Note: As students suggest their bucket labels, draw bucket sets on the board. At this stage, students are simply looking for generic labels that provide a framework for organizing the essay.
Understanding the Question and Pre-Bucketing

Understanding the Question

1. What is the 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 any clues from the Mini-Q question and the document titles on the cover page, think of possible analytical categories and label the buckets.
Step Four: Document Analysis

Document A: German Territorial Losses (map); Mein Kampf

Content Notes:

- Together, the lost German areas produced 60,800,000 tons of coal. When Germany lost this land, it was a major loss for the German economy. For comparison, Germany was using 139,000,000 tons of coal before the war. After the industrial land was given away, Germany only had access to about 78,000,000 tons of coal per year, a little more than half of what it had been using before.

- The Versailles Treaty also required Germany to permanently give up its colonies. German colonies included all or part of the modern nations of Tanzania, Rwanda, Cameroon, Namibia, and Botswana, as well as Pacific territories, such as Samoa and the Marshall Islands. The British took over most of Germany’s overseas colonies soon after the war began.

- Adolf Hitler wrote his book Mein Kampf while he was imprisoned in Germany for attempting to overthrow the government in the 1923 “Beer Hall Putsch.” The book is partly an autobiography, though it is more significantly a political manifesto. Mein Kampf, which translates to “My Struggle,” focuses on three things: the need for German expansion, or Lebensraum; the “Jewish Peril”; and the need for a single strong ruler, or Führer, to lead Germany out of its problems. Throughout the book, Hitler emphasizes a zeal to revive German morale and power, which he believed had been ravaged unfairly by the Versailles Treaty.

Teaching Tips:

Discuss the Document Analysis questions:

1. What territories did Germany lose due to the Versailles Treaty?
   - Polish Corridor, Alsace Lorraine, and a piece of Denmark

2. East Prussia remained a part of Germany. Why might the loss of the Polish Corridor and Danzig have been especially difficult for Germans?
   - Germany was now split in two because of the loss of the Polish Corridor. Danzig is located on the Baltic Sea and served as an important port city, so losing it would also hurt the German economy.

3. Why might life have been difficult for Germans who lived in the lost territories?
   - Germans who lived in regions acquired by other nations might have lacked any sense of loyalty to their new nation, and may have been resentful of them. They also may have been discriminated against by the citizens of these countries that had just fought a brutal and destructive war against Germany.

4. How does Hitler suggest Germans should respond to the Versailles Treaty?
   - Hitler’s writing suggests that Germans should use “blood” and “the sword” to restore the frontiers. In other words, violence would be necessary.

5. How does this document explain how the Versailles Treaty helped cause World War II?
   - The document shows that the territorial and population losses required of Germany by the Versailles Treaty were especially difficult for Germany to sustain because this territory was often valuable in resources and industry. People who lived in regions that were exchanged in the Versailles Treaty were often resentful of their new nations and kept their loyalty to Germany. It also shows that Germans (for example, Hitler) felt angry and insecure because of the loss of territory, and were very eager to retake the land by force.
Document A

Source: German Territorial Losses, Versailles Treaty, 1919. Map created from various sources.

Note: The Treaty took coal-producing areas 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. Why might life have been difficult for Germans who lived in the lost territories?

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?
Step Four: Document Analysis

Document B: Treaty of Versailles, Article 160

Content Notes:

- US President Woodrow Wilson made a speech to a joint session of Congress 10 months before World War I ended in which he outlined his Fourteen Points. Like the Treaty of Versailles, the Fourteen Points addressed armaments and military terms of the future peace. Rather than singling out Germany for punishment, Wilson argued for “open covenants of peace,” “freedom of navigation upon the seas,” and guarantees given and taken that “national armaments will be reduced to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety.” These broad, idealistic generalizations were much less punitive than the Treaty of Versailles.

- Although Germany increased its armaments more than any other European country in the years before World War I, all the countries in Europe increased arms production. Going into the war, Russia had the second largest number of armaments, next to Germany. When the war began, Britain’s navy was the largest in Europe.

- During the war, Germany stepped up its use of U-boats to damage enemy ships whether they were for military, merchant, or luxury liner use. In May of 1915, a German submarine sank the British luxury liner, the Lusitania, killing 1,198 people. The US then demanded no further attacks on civilian ships, and when Germany instead escalated attacks, the US had one of its official reasons for joining the war. The Treaty of Versailles placed Germany’s navy under severe prohibitions. For example, it could not possess any submarines, and only vessels weighing less than 10,000 tons were allowed.

Teaching Tips:

Discuss the Document Analysis questions:

1. What is the total number of German military troops allowed by Article 160 of the Versailles Treaty?
   100,000

2. How does Article 160 define the role of the army?
   The Article notes that the German army, “shall be devoted exclusively to the maintenance of order within the territory and to the control of the frontiers,” which is meant to ensure that Germany uses its forces only for self-defense and not to attack other nations.

3. Which of the countries in the cartoon image has the largest combined army of reservists and peacekeepers?
   France had the largest combined army. There were 660,000 full-time peacekeepers and 4,100,000 reservists. Poland had the second largest army. Even tiny Belgium had a bigger army than Germany did after the Treaty of Versailles.

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?
   The chain being held by France implies that Germany is surrounded by larger, more powerful enemies who owe allegiance to France and will be ready to harm Germany when France wishes. This imagery and the larger and imposing figures representing other nations suggest that Germans felt extremely insecure about their military’s ability to protect them, because it suggests that they are watched and flanked by stronger and hostile forces.

5. How does this document explain how the Versailles Treaty helped cause World War II?
   It shows that the German military had been substantially reduced as a result of provisions in the Versailles Treaty. This military weakening contributed to unsettling insecurity among Germans and distrust of their neighbors, which likely led to the widespread belief that – in addition to being unfairly and excessively punished – Germany needed to rearm in order to protect itself.
Document B


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.

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 does this document explain how the Versailles Treaty helped cause World War II?
Step Four: Document Analysis


Content Notes:

- The initial amount of reparations required of Germany was originally slated to be over twice as much (269 billion gold marks), but was gradually reduced in 1921 to 132 billion gold marks.
- Despite the enormous economic problems in Germany following World War I, Germany did not have to rebuild bridges, roads, schools, and businesses as did many other nations—particularly France and Belgium—because no major battles of the war were actually fought in Germany.
- Germany paid only a small portion of its reparations payments. Germany received three times as much in loans from the Allies than it paid out. Reparations by themselves did not ruin the German economy, but right-wing parties threatened to overthrow the Weimar Republic for agreeing to them. This made the political situation between the wars very unstable.
- Germany completely repaid its World War I reparations obligations on October 3, 2010, which was also the 20th anniversary of the reunification of the country. Germany had suspended payments in 1931 amid the global financial crisis and with the rise of Adolf Hitler as chancellor in 1933. In 1953, West Germany agreed under a revised plan to continue payments, which included a provision to repay outstanding interest if and when the nation reunified.

Teaching Tips:

Discuss the Document Analysis questions:

1. Why was Germany required to pay reparations for World War I?

   The reparations were compensation for the damage done to the civilian populations and property of the Allied Powers. They also were created to punish Germany for its role in the war.

2. When were the reparation payments set to begin and what was the date by which they were required to be fulfilled?

   They were set to begin on May 1, 1921 and to be fulfilled within thirty years, by May 1, 1951.

3. In 1929, what was the reduced amount of reparations Germany was required to pay? In German gold marks? In 2010 US dollars?

   112 billion gold marks which equals 341 billion 2010 US dollars.

4. What could the Inter-Allied Reparations Commission do in the case that Germany fell behind or failed to make reparations payments?

   It was authorized to change the date of the payments or the way in which the payments could be made, but it could not cancel the payments.

5. How does this document help explain how the Treaty of Versailles contributed World War II?

   The document does two things: It specifies the huge amount of money (351 billion in 2010 US dollars) that Germany had to pay. Germany paid little in the 1920s, only 2 billion marks between 1929 and 1933, and nothing after Hitler came to power in 1933. This refusal or inability to pay suggests humiliation and anger and a cause for World War II.
Document C


**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. If, however ... Germany fails to [meet] her obligations, any balance remaining unpaid may ... be postponed for [future payment] or may be handled [in another way that] the Allied and Associated Governments ... shall determine.


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

**Document Analysis**

1. Why was Germany required to pay reparations for World War I?

2. When were the reparation payments set to begin and what was the date by which they were required to be fulfilled?

3. In 1929, what was the reduced amount of reparations Germany was required to pay? In German gold marks? In 2010 US dollars?

4. What could the Inter-Allied Reparations Commission do in the case that Germany fell behind or failed to make reparations payments?

5. How does this document help explain how the Treaty of Versailles contributed to World War II?
Step Four: Document Analysis

Document D: Treaty of Versailles, Article 231.

Content Notes:

- Adolfo Hitler rallied the sense of humiliation and rage within Germany—much of it related to the War Guilt Clause—to build the Nazi party from a right-wing fringe group to a leading party. However, Hitler’s response to the Great Depression was a more important factor in Hitler’s increased popularity. After Hitler gained power in 1933, rearmament and public works projects such as building the Autobahn (roadways) created many jobs. Unemployment figures looked better than they really were because Hitler did not allow Jews and most women to work so they were not counted in the totals.

- The War Guilt Clause evolved from a report commissioned to determine the cause of World War I. In the report issued in December 1918, US Secretary of State Robert Lansing noted, “The War was premeditated by the Central Powers together with their allies, Turkey and Bulgaria, and was the result of acts deliberately committed in order to make it unavoidable. Germany, in agreement with Austria-Hungary, deliberately worked to defeat all the many conciliatory proposals made by the Entente [Allied] Powers.”

- Ulrich von Brockdorff-Rantzau was a diplomat who led the German delegation at Versailles. He was frustrated by the exclusion of Germans from the proceedings that led to the treaty, and with the inclusion of the War Guilt Clause. He stated at the time, “We know the power of the hatred which we encounter here, and we have heard the passionate demand that the vanquishers may make us pay as the vanquished, and shall punish those who are worthy of being punished. It is demanded from us that we shall confess ourselves to be the only ones guilty of the War. Such a confession in my mouth will be a lie...”

Teaching Tips:

Discuss the Document Analysis questions:

1. What is the main idea of Article 231 of the Treaty of Versailles?
   - The main point of the Article, which is often referred to as the War Guilt Clause, is that Germany and its wartime allies are held responsible for the death and destruction of World War I.

2. How did most Germans feel about the Treaty of Versailles?
   - The Versailles Treaty included many provisions, such as the War Guilt Clause, that left Germans with a deep sense of humiliation.

3. According to historian Laurence Moyer, why did many Germans admire Adolf Hitler?
   - Hitler was able to make Germans feel proud of themselves and Germany. By criticizing the Treaty of Versailles and ultimately refusing to pay reparations or follow the disarmament rules, Hitler restored German pride.

4. How does this document explain how the Treaty of Versailles helped cause World War II?
   - The document shows that War Guilt Clause of Article 231 caused the German people to feel a sense of humiliation about their loss in World War I. Adolf Hitler focused on the shared German hatred for the treaty to help rally German pride, which quickly led to the military build-up and invasions that started World War II.
Document D


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

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.


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. How did most Germans feel about the Treaty of Versailles?

3. According to historian Laurence Moyer, why did many Germans admire Adolf Hitler?

4. How does this document explain how the Treaty of Versailles helped cause World War II?
Step Five: Bucketing – Getting Ready To Write

Task One: Bucketing

A  Territorial Losses
B  Military Restrictions
C  Economic Reparations
D  War Guilt Clause

Task Two: Thesis Development and Road Map

The Chicken Foot

The Versailles Treaty produced German anger and humiliation sowing the seeds for World War II. It did this through imposing:
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.

Thesis Development and Road Map

On the chicken foot 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.
Step Six: From Thesis to Essay Writing

Mini-Q Essay Outline Guide

Working Title: How Did the Versailles Treaty Help Cause World War II?

Paragraph #1
Grabber: There can never be an excuse for Nazi atrocities.
Background: Treaty of Versailles was designed to make World War I “War to End All Wars.”
Stating the question with key terms defined: So how did it help contribute to an even more devastating war less than 20 years later?
Thesis and roadmap: The Treaty of Versailles punished Germany too harshly in four key ways: by imposing provisions that resulted in territorial losses, military restrictions, economic reparations, and the War Guilt Clause.

Paragraph #2
Baby Thesis: The Treaty of Versailles contributed to World War II by severely weakening Germany through territorial losses.
Evidence: Germany was forced to give up all colonial possessions (mainly in Africa).
Germany lost 13% of its territory and about 10% of its population.
Argument: Punishing Germany was understandable and in line with other treaties, but as carried out the Treaty of Versailles was too harsh. Especially difficult because territory lost was rich in resources; Germans now living in other countries resented these nations and often remained loyal to Germany.

Paragraph #3
Baby Thesis: Another important connection between the Treaty of Versailles and the start of World War II was the restrictions on Germany’s military.
Evidence: Germany was restricted to no more than 100,000 troops and no reserves.
Prohibitions kept German navy extremely small
Argument: Because Germany’s military was so restricted and relatively small compared to neighbors, the German people felt very insecure. This made them more likely to support military attacks on Germany’s neighbors as World War II began.

Paragraph #4
Baby Thesis: A third factor linking the Versailles Treaty to World War II was the heavy economic reparations imposed on Germany.
Evidence: Cost of reparations required by Germany to give to Allied nations was US$31.5 billion (equal to $400 billion today; too much for the German economy to handle.
Germany spent almost that much on World War I.
Argument: Reparations were so high that Germany ended up falling behind on them and eventually stopped making them; had already shaken Germany economy; led to social problems throughout Germany.

Paragraph #5
Baby Thesis: A final and critical way the Treaty of Versailles contributed to World War II was how the War Guilt Clause sparked a cultural sense of humiliation in Germans.
Evidence: The War Crimes Clause (Article 231) stated that Germany must accept all responsibility for starting World War I.
Germans felt this clause was unfair, excessive, and meant to humiliate them.
Argument: Humiliation sparked quest for revenge and desire to fight again among Germans, which found expression and leadership in Adolf Hitler.

Paragraph #6 Conclusion: The Treaty of Versailles had an enormously difficult task. Intentions may have been good and it did not alone cause World War II. But its strict punishment of Germany played a significant role in leading to the kind of catastrophic conflict it was meant to prevent.
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.
Mini-Q Sample Essay: Non-Proficient
How Did the Versailles Treaty Help Cause World War II?

The Versailles Treaty really wasn't a treat at all, especially for the Germans. Treats are supposed to be good, like when I give my dog a treat. The Germans got bad treats which made them angry enough to start fighting again.

The first bad treat was land (Doc A). It was taken away and given to other people which is like losing your arm.

Next was their soldiers were all put in chains and made to stand at attention which is like torture.

Finally, was all the fines they had to pay to repair the damage. This made them go bankrupt (Doc D). Fines are not a treat.

So that's pretty much it. Bad treats meant another war fought by Hitler.

Mini-Q Sample Essay: Proficient
How Did the Versailles Treaty Help Cause World War II?

There is no excuse for the horrible things Nazi Germany did during World War II. But we get a better idea how that war started by learning about how World War I ended. The Versailles Treaty was created by the winners of World War I, like France, Great Britain, and the United States, to make peace. So how did it help contribute to an even worse war less than twenty years later? It was mainly because it was too hard on Germany's territory, military, economy, and national pride.

The Versailles Treaty contributed to World War II by taking too much of Germany's land. In addition to being forced to give up all of its remaining colonial possessions Germany also lost a lot of its territory and population to some of the countries it fought in World War I (Doc A). Not only that, but the people who lived in these regions often hated their new nation and kept their loyalty to Germany.

Another thing the Versailles Treaty did was put heavy restrictions on Germany's military. It makes sense that countries that had suffered because of Germany, such as France, would want to keep Germany from starting another war, but the treaty went too far by making Germany so weak. Germany was only allowed 100,000 troops (Doc B), which was way less than all its neighbors. This made the German people very nervous.

The Versailles Treaty also helped bring economic instability to Germany because of reparations. There were many economic problems not related to the treaty, but the high cost of reparations Germany was required to pay to repair the damage it did to other nations in World War I were too much for Germany to handle. The total cost of reparations was about $341 billion in 2010 US dollars (Doc C). These payments were so high and the economy so bad, that Germany eventually stopped making them. Even so, they had already shaken the already weak German economy. That made Germans feel angry at the Allies.

Finally, the Versailles Treaty contributed to World War II because it helped build a sense of cultural humiliation in Germans. The War Guilt Clause said that the Germans must accept all responsibility for the war. Germans felt this wasn't fair and was meant to humiliate them. So when Adolf Hitler came around promising to fight their enemies again and this time win the war, many Germans felt proud (Doc D).

The Versailles Treaty tried to do something extremely difficult—bring peace after an awful war. But because it was so harsh and punished Germany in many different ways, it ended up helping to cause World War II.
Mini-Q Sample Essay: High Proficiency

How Did the Versailles Treaty Help Cause World War II?

War is never a one-sided affair. Between 1914 and 1918, a war that most thought would last only a few months raged across Europe and killed over 17 million people. The Treaty of Versailles was written by the victorious Allies who hoped to end all wars forever. Unfortunately, within 20 years, World War II started and lasted for six long years with even deadlier results. Although the Treaty of Versailles did not cause World War II all by itself, some of its requirements placed too much of the responsibility for World War I on Germany. The Treaty of Versailles helped cause World War II because it punished Germany too harshly in four ways. It took away too much territory, it reduced the size of its military, it placed excessive economic restrictions on Germany, and it stripped Germany of its pride.

One key way that the Versailles Treaty contributed to World War II was by severely weakening Germany geographically and politically with territorial losses. Though punishing Germany was understandable, the territorial and population losses required of Germany by the Versailles Treaty were very harsh. In addition to being forced to give up all of its remaining colonial possessions (mostly in Africa), Germany also lost about 13% of its territory and 10% of its population to some of the countries it fought in World War I (Doc A). These losses were especially difficult for Germany to sustain because the territory given to other nations was often valuable in resources and industry (Doc A). Furthermore, the people who lived in regions that were given to other countries were often resentful of their new nation and kept their loyalty to Germany.

Another important connection between the Versailles Treaty and the start of World War II was the restriction placed on Germany's military. Again, the victorious nations of World War I, such as France, were justified in trying to establish rules that would prevent Germany from becoming a military menace. After all, Germany invaded France and Belgium, not the other way around (BGE). But the restrictions were so severe—including a cap of 100,000 troops with no reserves—that Germans ended up feeling very insecure (Doc B). Germany was also only allowed a very small navy, and its overall military capacity was way below its neighbors (Doc B).

A third factor linking the Versailles Treaty to World War II was the way it helped bring economic instability to Germany through heavy reparations. The reparations, which were outlined in by Article 232 of the Treaty of Versailles, were meant to force Germany to pay for damage done to the civilians and property of Allied nations during the war (Doc C). The total cost of reparations was about $3411 in 2010 US dollars. The reparations were too much for Germany to handle. Germany had spent a little more than that on all of World War I and had rebuilding of their own to do (Doc C). Though required, these payments were so high that Germany ended up falling behind on them and eventually stopped making them.

A final and critical way the Versailles Treaty contributed to World War II was how it helped spark a cultural sense of humiliation in Germans. Article 231 insisted that Germany and its allies accept all responsibility for World War I (Doc D). There was no mention of a Serbian assassinating an Austro-Hungarian Archduke, only blame on Germany. That, combined with the excessive reparations payments required by Article 232 and 233, made many Germans feel that the whole treaty was unfair, excessive, and meant to humiliate them. This led masses of Germans to want to seek revenge. In his speeches, Adolf Hitler used the War Guilt Clause to prove that Germany had been treated unfairly and to suggest that Germany needed to rise again to challenge its humiliators (Doc D). That challenge eventually became known as World War II.

Writing a peace treaty at the end of the world’s deadliest conflict up to that time must have been a difficult task. Although it is understandable that people in Europe wanted to blame someone for the 17 million deaths and untold suffering, the Treaty of Versailles was a mistake. In retrospect, stripping Germany of territory, military protection, economic prosperity, and national morale was too harsh. It made Germans very angry, and although it was not the only cause of World War II, it played a significant role in leading to exactly the kind of conflict it was meant to prevent.