

## Document Based Question

### Why did These Events Change Wilson's Mind about War?

World War One – Middle or High School Grades

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#### Procedure:

Each student is to get a set of documents. To conserve paper, another way of distributing the document is to have them posted around the room in 'stations'. Number the students off into equal groups of students per documents (i.e....six document stations, six groups of students.) Give ample time to read and take notes (15-20 minutes) on the documents and then rotate clockwise until all documents have been viewed by all the groups. Allow for a class discussion to debrief the students' findings on the documents. The students are to write an essay, incorporating the documents to support their answer on the following: **Why did these events change Wilson's mind about war?** The essay will be graded using the FCAT six point rubric.

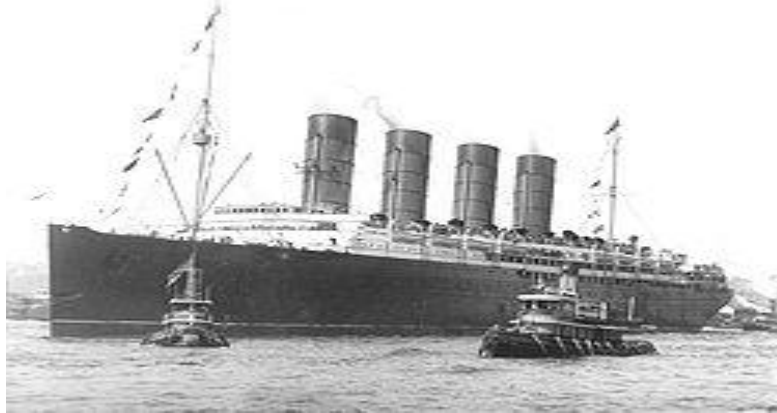
#### Time Allotted:

Two to three 60 minute periods (if documents are done in stations). Less if work is to be done as homework.

#### Material Needed:

Set of documents, paper, writing utensils.

## Document A: The Sinking of the *Lusitania*



On May 1, 1915, the (British) ship departed New York City bound for Liverpool. Unknown to her passengers but probably no secret to the Germans, almost all her hidden cargo consisted of munitions and contraband destined for the British war effort. As the fastest ship afloat, the luxurious liner felt secure in the belief she could easily outdistance any submarine. Nonetheless, the menace of submarine attack reduced her passenger list to only half her capacity.

On May 7, the ship neared the coast of Ireland. At 2:10 in the afternoon a torpedo fired by the German submarine U 20 slammed into her side. A mysterious second explosion ripped the liner apart. Chaos reigned. The ship listed so badly and quickly that lifeboats crashed into passengers crowded on deck, or dumped their loads into the water. Most passengers never had a chance. Within 18 minutes the giant ship slipped beneath the sea. One thousand one hundred nineteen of the 1,924 aboard died. The dead included 114 Americans.

Questions:

1. How many in total died? According to this account, how many were Americans?
2. Why would the Germans attack a 'non-military' target such as the *Lusitania*?

## Document B: The Sussex Pledge

(Background information)

On March 24th 1916 a German submarine in the English Channel attacked what it thought was a mine laying ship. It was actually a French passenger steamer called 'The Sussex' and, although it didn't sink and limped into port, fifty people were killed. Several Americans were injured and, on April 19th, the US President (Woodrow Wilson) addressed Congress on the issue. He gave an ultimatum: Germany should end attacks on passenger vessels, or face America 'breaking off' diplomatic relations.

Germany responded by issuing the **Sussex Pledge** that stated Germany would not sink merchant or passenger ships without first giving the ship a warning that it was about to be attacked. They would do this for the remainder of 1916, but on February 17, 1917, they began sinking all 'enemy' ships at sea.

Questions:

3. Why would the Germans give a warning to all non-military vessels they are going to be attacked?
4. Why do you think they resume unrestricted submarine warfare in February 1917?

**Document C:** Graph: U.S. Imports and Exports, 1914-1918 (In Billions...numbers are approximate)

	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918
Imports	2	1.8	2.4	2.8	2.8
Exports	2.3	2.5	5.3	6	5.9

Questions:

5. What nations do you think we were exporting goods to during this time?
6. What sort of goods do you think we were exporting?
7. How does this graph show American foreign policy? Is it isolationistic, neutral, or pro European?

Document D: Zimmerman Telegram

<b>CLASS OF SERVICE DESIRED</b> Fast Day Message <input type="checkbox"/> Day Letter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Night Message <input type="checkbox"/> Night Letter <input type="checkbox"/>		<b>WESTERN UNION</b> <b>TELEGRAM</b> <small>NEWCOMB CARLTON, PRESIDENT</small>		<b>W.C.</b> Date 3/3/17 Time Flat	
<small>Please check mark, as a check for the class of service desired. OTHERWISE THE TELEGRAM WILL BE TRANSMITTED AS A FAST DAY MESSAGE.</small>					

Send the following telegram, subject to the terms on back hereof, which are hereby agreed to:

GERMAN LEGATION  
MEXICO CITY

via Galveston

JAN 19 1917

862.2019/521

130	13042	13401	8501	115	3528	416	17214	6491	11310
18147	18222	21560	10247	11518	23677	13805	3494	14936	
98092	5905	11311	10392	10371	0302	21290	5161	39695	
23571	17504	11269	18276	18101	0317	0228	17694	4473	
22284	22200	19452	21589	67893	5569	13918	8958	12137	
1333	4725	4458	5905	17166	13851	4458	17149	14471	6706
13850	12224	6929	14991	7382	15857	67893	14218	36477	
5870	17553	67893	5870	5454	16102	15217	22801	17138	
21001	17388	7446	23638	18222	6719	14331	15021	23845	
3156	23552	22096	21604	4797	9497	22464	20855	4377	
23610	18140	22260	5905	13347	20420	39689	13732	20667	
6929	5275	18507	52262	1340	22049	13339	11265	22295	
10439	14814	4178	6992	8784	7632	7357	6926	52262	11267
21100	21272	9346	9559	22464	15874	18502	18500	15857	
2188	5376	7381	98092	16127	13486	9350	9220	76036	14219
5144	2831	17920	11347	17142	11264	7667	7762	15099	9110
10482	97556	3569	3670						

Charge German Embassy.

4.

4458	gemeinsam
17149	Friedenschluß.
14471	⊙
6706	reichlich
13850	finanziell
12224	unterstützung
6929	und
14991	einverständnis
7382	ausserseits.
158(5)7	Pa/3
67893	Mexico.
14218	in
36477	Texas
5870	⊙
17553	ken
67893	Mexico.
5870	⊙
5454	AR
16102	IZ
15217	ON
22801	A

The British intelligence intercepted this telegram from the German Minister to the German Ambassador to Mexico. It stated that if Mexico helped Germany with the war effort, they (Germany) would help Mexico get its former territory of New Mexico, Texas, and Arizona back. The British decoded this telegram in January 1917. They waited until February 24, 1917 to deliver the information to Wilson.

Questions:

8. What does the Zimmerman Telegram say?
9. Why would Germany send this to Mexico?
10. Why would the British wait over a month to give it to President Wilson?

Using the documents and knowledge gained, as well as your prior knowledge on the subject, write a well organized essay that answers the question:

**Why did these events change Wilson's mind about going to war?**

#### Works Cited:

Document A: "The Sinking of the *Lusitania*, 1915," EyeWitness to History, [www.eyewitnesstohistory.com](http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com) (2000).

Document B: United States History: Preparing for the Advanced Placement Examination. By: John J. Newman and John M. Schmalbach, Amsco Publication, 2006.

Document C: United States History: Preparing for the Advanced Placement Examination. By: John J. Newman and John M. Schmalbach, Amsco Publication, 2006.

Document D: [www.ourdocuments.gov](http://www.ourdocuments.gov)

