

11th Grade United States History
Document Based Question
Pat McLarty, Kathleen High School
World War I

Directions: The following question requires you to construct a coherent essay that integrates your interpretation of Documents A-G *and* your knowledge of the period referred to in the question. In your essay, you should strive to support your assertions both by citing key pieces of evidence from the documents and by drawing on your knowledge of the period.

To what extent did the United States do everything possible to stay out of World War I. Be sure to reference economic, political, and diplomatic examples to support your evaluation.

Document A

Who has registered the knowledge or approval of the American people of the course this Congress is called upon to take in declaring war upon Germany? Submit the question to the people, you who support it. You who support it dare not do it, for you know that by a vote of more than ten to one the American people as a body would register their declaration against it

In the sense that this war is being forced upon our people without their knowing why and without their approval, and that wars are usually forced upon all peoples in the same way, there is some truth in the statement; but I venture to say that the response which the German people have made to the demands of this war shows that it has a degree of popular support which the war upon which we are entering has not and never will have among our people. The espionage bills, the conscription bills, and other forcible military measures which we understand are being ground out of the war machine in this country is the complete proof that those responsible for this war fear that it has no popular support and that armies sufficient to satisfy the demand of the Entente Allies cannot be recruited by voluntary enlistments. . . .

Senator Robert LaFollette, *speech to the U.S. Senate*, April 4, 1917.
<http://www-personal.umd.umich.edu/~ppennock/doc-LaFollette.htm>

Document B

GENTLEMEN OF THE CONGRESS:

I have called the Congress into extraordinary session because there are serious, very serious, choices of policy to be made, and made immediately, which it was neither right nor constitutionally permissible that I should assume the responsibility of making...

With a profound sense of the solemn and even tragical character of the step I am taking and of the grave responsibilities which it involves, but in unhesitating obedience to what I deem my constitutional duty, I advise that the Congress declare the recent course of the Imperial German Government to be in fact nothing less than war against the government and people of the United States; that it formally accept the status of belligerent which has thus been thrust upon it, and that it take immediate steps not only to put the country in a more thorough state of defense but also to exert all its power and employ all its resources to bring the Government of the German Empire to terms and end the war.

President Wilson, *Joint Address to Congress*, 1917.

<http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=61&page=transcript>

Document C

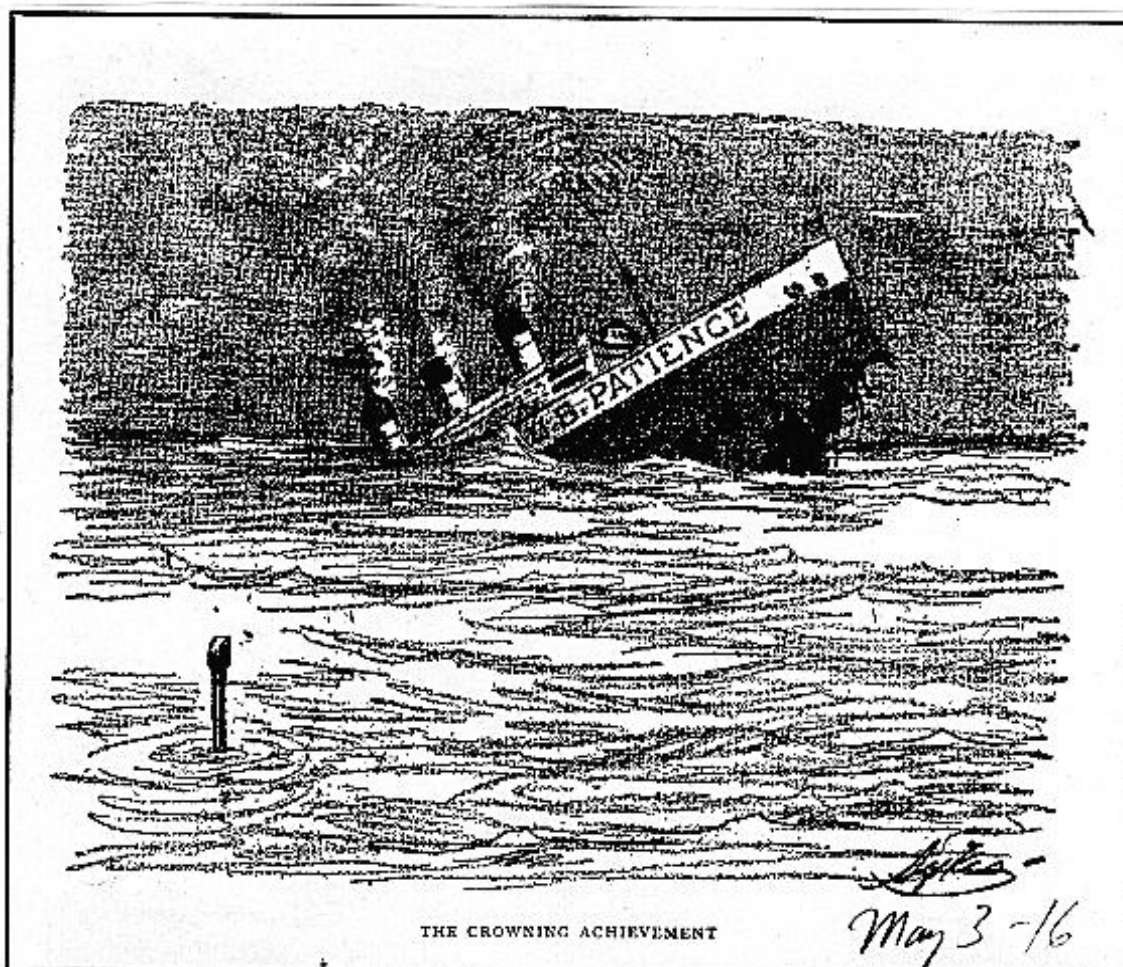
FROM 2nd from London # 5747.

"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 or 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, invite 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, ZIMMERMANN.

Decoded message text of the Zimmermann Telegram (1917).

<http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=60&page=transcript>

Document D



THIS LATEST SUBMARINE VICTIM MAY BE THE LAST

The crowning achievement (This latest submarine victim may be the last). (May 3, 1916.)

<http://rutlandhs.k12.vt.us/jpeterso/uboaatcar.htm>

Document E

The effect of the war upon the United States will depend upon what American citizens say and do. Every man who really loves America will act and speak in the true spirit of neutrality, which is the spirit of impartiality and fairness and friendliness to all concerned...

I venture, therefore, my fellow countrymen, to speak a solemn word of warning to you against that deepest, most subtle, most essential breach of neutrality which may spring out of partisanship, out of passionately taking sides. The United States must be neutral in fact, as well as in name, during these days that are to try men's souls. We must be impartial in thought, as well as action, must put a curb upon our sentiments, as well as upon every transaction that might be construed as a preference of one party to the struggle before another.

President Wilson's *Message to Congress*, August 19, 1914

Document F

It will be our wish and purpose that the processes of peace, when they are begun, shall be absolutely open and that they shall involve and permit henceforth no secret understandings of any kind. The day of conquest and aggrandizement is gone by; so is also the day of secret covenants entered into in the interest of particular governments and likely at some unlooked-for moment to upset the peace of the world. It is this happy fact, now clear to the view of every public man whose thoughts do not still linger in an age that is dead and gone, which makes it possible for every nation whose purposes are consistent with justice and the peace of the world to avow now or at any other time the objects it has in view.

We entered this war because violations of right had occurred which touched us to the quick and made the life of our own people impossible unless they were corrected and the world secure once for all against their recurrence. What we demand in this war, therefore, is nothing peculiar to ourselves. It is that the world be made fit and safe to live in; and particularly that it be made safe for every peace-loving nation which, like our own, wishes to live its own life, determine its own institutions, be assured of justice and fair dealing by the other peoples of the world as against force and selfish aggression. All the peoples of the world are in effect partners in this interest, and for our own part we see very clearly that unless justice be done to others it will not be done to us. The programme of the world's peace, therefore, is our programme;

Transcript of President Woodrow Wilson's 14 Points (1918). Transcription courtesy of the Avalon Project at Yale Law School. <http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=62&page=transcript>

Document G

General Foch has presented to us a statement of the utmost gravity, which points out that the numerical superiority of the enemy in France, where 162 Allied divisions now oppose 200 German divisions, is very heavy, and that, as there is no possibility of the British and French increasing the number of their divisions (on the contrary, they are put to extreme straits to keep them up) here is a great danger of the war being lost unless the numerical inferiority of the Allies can be remedied as rapidly as possible by the advent of American troops. He, therefore, urges with the utmost insistence that the maximum possible number of infantry and machine gunners, in which respect the shortage of men on the side of the Allies most marked, should continue to be shipped from America in the months of June and July to avert the immediate danger of an Allied defeat in the present campaign owing to the Allied reserves being exhausted before those of the enemy. In addition to this, and looking to the future, he represents that it is impossible to foresee ultimate victory in the war unless America is able to provide such an army as will enable the Allies ultimately to establish numerical superiority.

Signed
CLEMENCEAU
D. LLOYD GEORGE
ORLANDO

Message Prepared by the Prime Ministers of Great Britain, France, and Italy, Versailles, June 2, 1918. <http://net.lib.byu.edu/~rdh7/wwi/1918/amicome.html>

Score of 5:

- Thoroughly addresses all aspects of the Task by accurately analyzing and interpreting at least 4 documents
- Incorporates information from the documents in the body of the essay
- Incorporates relevant outside information including at least two documents
- Richly supports the theme or problem with relevant facts, examples, and details
- Is a well-developed essay, consistently demonstrating a logical and clear plan of organization
- Introduces the theme or problem by establishing a framework that is beyond a simple restatement of the Task or Historical Context and concludes with a summation of the theme or problem

Score of 4:

- Addresses all aspects of the Task by accurately analyzing and interpreting at least 3 documents
- Incorporates information from the documents in the body of the essay
- Incorporates relevant outside information
- Includes relevant facts, examples, and details, but discussion may be more descriptive than analytical
- Is a well-developed essay, demonstrating a logical and clear plan of organization
- Introduces the theme or problem by establishing a framework that is beyond a simple restatement of the Task or Historical Context and concludes with a summation of the theme or problem

Score of 3:

- Addresses most aspects of the Task or addresses all aspects of the Task in a limited way, using some of the documents
- Incorporates some information from the documents in the body of the essay
- Incorporates limited or no relevant outside information
- Includes some facts, examples, and details, but discussion is more descriptive than analytical
- Is a satisfactorily developed essay, demonstrating a general plan of organization
- Introduces the theme or problem by repeating the Task or Historical Context and concludes by simply repeating the theme or problem

Score of 2:

- Attempts to address some aspects of the Task, making limited use of the documents
- Presents no relevant outside information
- Includes few facts, examples, and details; discussion restates contents of the documents
- Is a poorly organized essay, lacking focus
- Fails to introduce or summarize the theme or problem

Score of 1:

- Shows limited understanding of the Task with vague, unclear references to the documents

- Presents no relevant outside information
- Includes little or no accurate or relevant facts, details, or examples
- Attempts to complete the Task, but demonstrates a major weakness in organization
- Fails to introduce or summarize the theme or problem

Score of 0:

Fails to address the Task, is illegible, or is a blank paper