**Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ HW#5 –WWI**

**Due Tues. 3/12/13**

**American Neutrality**

In the beginning of World War I, the United States decided to remain neutral. Many Americans felt the war in Europe did not involve them. They did not want to become involved in a dispute between European countries that had been going on for years. It was difficult, however, for Americans not to take sides. Many Americans were born in foreign countries or were children of parents who were born in foreign countries.

Some of these people sympathized with the countries where they, or their parents and grandparents, were born. Some American citizens whose relatives came from Germany, Austria, or Ireland supported the Central Powers. Irish Americans disliked the British because they controlled Ireland. The majority of Americans, however, supported the Allied Powers. The United States shared language, customs, and traditions with the Allies. Many Americans were of British descent. President Wilson believed that a German victory would threaten the American form of government and beliefs.

Both the Allied Powers and the Central Powers tried to gather support for their sides by publishing information to try to persuade people to accept their views. This propaganda, or information designed to influence opinion, included horror stories about the wrongdoings of their opponents. The Allied ***propaganda*** was more effective in America where most people sympathized with the British.

For a time, Americans continued trading with both sides. Britain blockaded German ports, making trade with Germany difficult. American ships were searched and goods were often seized as they entered German ports. While the United States protested these actions, Britain was not sympathetic. As a result of the blockade, the United States was unable to continue trading with Germany. American trade with the Allies increased. American banks loaned millions of dollars to France and Britain to help pay for the war. The war benefited the economy of the United States. Germany was angry that the United States, which called itself neutral, was helping the Allies.

In February 1915, Germany vowed that their U-boats, or submarines, would sink any ship entering or leaving British ports. President Wilson warned Germany that he would hold them responsible for any casualties, but Germany ignored the warning. In May 1915, a German U-boat sank the *Lusitania,* a British passenger ship, off the coast of Ireland. More than 1,000 people were killed, including 128 Americans. The sinking outraged Americans. It was later learned that some of the cargo on board the *Lusitania* included war supplies.

A French passenger ship, the *Sussex,* was also torpedoed by a German U-boat months later. Afterwards Germany agreed to the Sussex Pledge, meaning it would warn neutral ships and passenger vessels before attacking them. The Germans also offered to pay Americans injured in the sinking incidents. Germany agreed to the Sussex Pledge in an effort to keep the United States from entering the war.

**The End of Neutrality**

The United States built up its military forces as a precaution. Congress passed laws in 1916 that provided the money needed. New warships were built, and the size of the army was doubled. Most Americans did not want the United States to go to war. The Democrats’ slogan, “He Kept Us Out of the War” helped President Wilson to become elected in 1916 for a second term.

In early 1917, Germany broke the Sussex Pledge. Germany announced that it would sink all merchant vessels sailing to Allied ports without warning. The Germans knew this action might prompt the United States to enter the war, but they believed they could win it before the United States became involved. As a result, President Wilson cut off diplomatic ties with Germany.

Americans became outraged over a secret telegram that Britain intercepted. The German foreign minister, Arthur Zimmerman, had sent Mexico a telegram. He promised to help Mexico take over Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona from the United States. He also promised financial support in exchange for Mexican help in the war. The telegram was published in newspapers across the country.

A few weeks later, Russians revolted and overthrew the monarchy, a government ruled by a monarch. They formed a temporary democratic government and promised free elections. The new government wanted to defeat Germany. President Wilson and other Americans believed they would help the Allies. The Allies were fighting to protect democracy, a government run by the people. They were fighting against a government controlled by one person with all of the power, or an ***autocracy.***

In March 1917, four American ships were attacked and sunk by the Germans, killing 36 people. President Wilson now believed that American neutrality had to end. He thought long and hard before asking Congress to declare war in April 1917. It was not an easy decision. After some debate, most members of Congress passed a declaration of war to defend the rights of the United States. Representative Jeannette Rankin of Montana, the first woman to serve in Congress, voted against war along with 55 others.

In May Congress passed the Selective Service Act, which created the military draft. Men aged 21 to 30 (and later from 18 to 45) were required to register. Out of the 24 million men who registered, 3 million were called to serve in the military. Two million more men volunteered. Thousands of women were allowed, for the first time, to serve in the armed forces. They were only allowed to do noncombat work, however. More than 300,000 African Americans joined the army and navy.

The marines would not accept African Americans at the time. Racism and discrimination continued in the military, just as they did in daily life. Most African Americans were given low-level jobs, but 40,000 fought bravely in combat. The first American to receive the French Croix de Guerre (Cross of War) for bravery was an

African American named Henry Johnson. The French government also awarded one African American regiment with medals for bravery.

**Supplying the Allies**

In 1917 the Allied forces were suffering. Allied soldiers were exhausted after years of trench warfare, and they were running out of food and supplies. One out of four ships that left British ports was sunk by German U-boats. Some French troops would not continue fighting.

The entry of American forces into the war made a great difference. The United States joined Britain in destroying German submarines, allowing badly needed supplies to arrive in Britain. Then teams of navy destroyers protected groups of merchant ships on their journeys to Great Britain. The merchant ships and navy destroyers traveled together in groups called ***convoys.*** The convoy system successfully protected the ships.

In Russia the Bolsheviks, a group of Communists, revolted in November 1917 and overthrew the democratic government. In December 1917, the Russians were taken out of the war by Vladimir Lenin, a Bolshevik leader, because troops were needed to set up the new Communist government. Lenin signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with Germany in March 1918. Germany acquired Poland, the Ukraine, and other territories. Germany was able to move thousands of troops to the Western ***Front,*** or line of battle,

in France.

The Germans attacked the Allied troops with great force. They pushed Allied forces back to within 40 miles of Paris. The Americans arrived in France in June 1917, but were not ready for fighting until the spring of 1918. The American troops in Europe, under the command of General John J. Pershing, were known as the

American Expeditionary Force (AEF). Pershing insisted that the American troops remain a separate unit. France welcomed their arrival. From early June 1918 through the middle of July, American forces helped battle the Germans at Chateaux-Thierry on the Marne River and the forest of Belleau Wood. French and American troops fought off German attacks along the Marne and Somme Rivers. They stopped the German offensive and began one of their own. More battles followed east and west of Verdun. In November the Allied forces finally pushed the Germans back. The Allies broke through enemy lines, bringing the fighting to German soil.

**The End of the War**

The German forces retreated. They knew their chances of winning the war were small since the American troops had joined the Allied forces. The Germans were experiencing severe shortages of food and supplies.

In October 1918, the Germans asked the United States for an agreement, called an ***armistice,*** to end the war. President Wilson agreed, with certain conditions attached. His conditions were that Germany accept his plan and promise not to begin any new hostilities. Germany also had to remove all troops from Belgium and France. President Wilson would negotiate only with civilian, not military, leaders. Before an agreement was reached, Germany became a republic. The new leaders, who forced Emperor Wilhelm II to give up his throne, agreed to the conditions of Wilson’s armistice. The war ended with the signing of the armistice on November 11, 1918.

**Mobilizing the Nation**

Americans began the process of ***mobilization*** after declaring war against Germany in 1917. The United States gathered resources and made preparations for war. Americans felt the effects of this preparation in their daily lives. The National War Labor Board was formed in April 1918. It persuaded business owners to give in to workers’ demands for eight-hour work days, extra pay for overtime, equal pay for women, and the right to form and join unions. By meeting these demands, workers agreed not to go on strike. The government wanted to ensure there were enough workers to produce the important materials needed for the war. Industries expanded to meet the demand for supplies and weapons. There were not enough workers. Men left to serve in the military, and European immigration was limited during the war. Women and minorities helped fill the job openings. Women took jobs usually reserved for men. Job opportunities led thousands of African Americans from the rural South to cities in the North. Mexican immigration increased as a result of job opportunities in the United States.

The United States spent about $32 billion on World War I. The government sold war bonds, or Liberty Bonds, to the American people to pay for two-thirds of this cost. The government raised taxes, required more people to pay income taxes, and taxed business profits at a higher rate. Wealthy Americans paid as much as

70 percent of their income in taxes. All of this was done to pay for the costs of the war.

Americans produced food for the Allies, as well as for the people of the United States. The government created the Food Administration headed by Herbert Hoover. The Agency encouraged voluntary rationing, or limiting the amount of food consumed. Americans ate less and produced more food, which allowed them to increase food exports to other countries.

The government created the War Industries Board, which supervised the production of manufactured goods. Factories were converted to manufacture war-related goods. The board also set the prices for necessary goods.

The newly created Committee on Public Information ran the greatest propaganda campaign in the history of the United States. The campaign’s mission was to create public support for the war. Many Americans were opposed to the United States’s involvement in the war. The committee tried to persuade the citizens of the United States that the war was a fight for democracy and freedom. The committee published and distributed pamphlets, posters, articles, and books with pro-war messages. It provided information and advertisements concerning the war to newspapers. Four- minute Speeches were patriotic talks given before movies and plays.

**Americans and the War**

World War I affected Americans in positive and negative ways. It helped the economy of the United States by increasing jobs and the production of food and manufactured goods. The war effort took away some of the freedoms American citizens had won.

Racial tensions were present in America before and during the war. People were not tolerant of individual differences. From 1914 to 1920 the Great Migration led African Americans from the South to cities in the North. Almost 500,000 African

Americans settled in crowded living conditions in segregated Northern cities. White mobs attacked some African American communities, killing people and burning houses. The worst race riot happened in July 1917 in East St. Louis, Illinois. The Committee on Public Information tried to quiet citizens who opposed the war,

such as some German Americans and Irish Americans who supported the Central Powers. ***Socialists,*** people who believed all industries should be publicly owned, were also against the war. They believed that only wealthy people would benefit from the fighting. ***Pacifists,*** people who did not support the use of violence, were another group opposed to the war.

The Committee on Public Information tried to quiet ***dissenters,*** those opposed to the war, by saying they were not patriotic. Congress passed a series of laws that aimed to quiet dissenters. The ***Espionage*** Act of 1917 provided harsh penalties for spying. It also penalized people who helped the enemy or interfered with recruiting people for the army. The Sabotage Act and the Sedition Act passed by Congress in 1918 made saying, printing, or writing anything negative about the government criminal offenses. Any of these acts would be considered ***sabotage,*** or secret actions to damage the war effort. Thousands of people were arrested and convicted under these laws. Those convicted included many immigrants, Socialists, pacifists, and labor activists. German Americans were under suspicion. In some areas, anything to do with Germany, including playing German music and teaching German as a foreign language, was not permitted. German-sounding words were even given new names. Many German Americans did not tell anyone that they were from Germany or were descendants of

Germans.

Most Americans supported these harsh acts. During wartime, many believed traitors and disloyal Americans should be punished. Some people spoke out against these laws.

**Answer the following questions in complete sentences.**

**1.** Why did the United States wish to remain neutral?

**2.** What caused the United States to declare war against Germany?

**3.** In what ways did the United States make a difference in the outcome of the war?

**4.** Why did Germany ask the United States for an armistice?

**5.** What sacrifices did the government ask the American people to make in order to fund the war?

**6.** What constitutional rights did American citizens lose during the war?