

Paris Peace Conference Simulation

On November 11, 1918, Allied military leaders and German civilian and military authorities signed an armistice to end military action, thus signaling an end to the First World War. World leaders then faced the gargantuan task of drafting a peace treaty. The Allied Powers and their minor allies met in Paris from January 1919 to January 1920 to set the terms of peace for the defeated Central Powers and their allies. They met at Versailles palace outside of Paris to create a final peace plan. In total, 27 countries sent negotiating delegations to attend the conference. Several additional delegations representing nations aspiring to get recognition for independence also attended. The leaders of the United States, Great Britain, France, and Italy (the so-called “Big Four”) made the major decisions and set the agenda for the conference. Germany, Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire and their allies, as the defeated countries, were not invited to attend until the final details of the peace treaties had already been agreed upon. Russia, although originally part of the victorious Allied Powers, was not invited to attend because its leaders had concluded a separate peace with Germany in the spring of 1918, and by the start of the conference, was in the midst of a civil war. In the end, the discussions at the Paris Peace Conference led to the signing of major peace treaties, the most significant of which was the Treaty of Versailles, which dealt with Germany. The Treaty of Saint-Germain called for the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Treaty of Sevres partitioned the Ottoman Empire into Allied mandates. The Treaty of Neuilly and the Treaty of Trianon reduced the size of Bulgaria and Hungary.

In this simulation, you will represent one specific country’s interest at the Paris Peace Conference. You and your counterparts from other countries must review a set of proposed peace terms, and come to a consensus on how the peace terms should be written.

Preliminary Research

The following eight delegations will be represented at this conference:

- United States
- Britain
- France
- Italy
- Japan
- Germany*
- Kingdom of the Hejaz
- Zionist Organization

You and your group will be assigned to be representative of one of these delegations. Prior to the classroom simulation, please conduct research about your country’s or organization’s aims at the conference. Your research portfolio should address the following questions:

1. What was your country’s place in wartime alliances?
2. How did your country get involved in the war? (Was your country invaded, did your country declare war on another because of commitments to an alliance, etc.)
3. How many troops from your country fought in the war?
4. How many deaths and casualties did your country suffer during the war?
5. What was your country’s total wartime expenditure?
6. What territorial losses did your country suffer?
7. What were your country’s three most important goals at the Paris Peace Conference?

Additional question for Kingdom of the Hejaz:

- How did the war affect your cause for statehood?

Alternative questions for the Zionist Organization:

- Because the Zionist Organization was not a country, the questions above do not apply for students representing this group. Instead, students should research the following:
 - What is Zionism?
 - Who were the most significant leaders in the Zionist movement in 1914?
 - What is the significance of Palestine for the Zionist movement?
 - Which countries supported the Zionist movement and why?
 - What was the Balfour Declaration and why was it significant for the Zionists?

*About Germany’s role in this simulation: Germany, as one of the defeated powers, was not invited to negotiate the terms of the treaty. In this classroom simulation, however, Germany will be represented so students can examine the extent to which the Treaty of Versailles and the Paris Peace Conference was a victor’s peace.

Suggested Reading and Additional Resources:

Dockrill, Michael and Donald Fisher, ed. *The Paris Peace Conference, 1919: A Peace Without Victory?* London: Palgrave, 2001.
Macmillan, Margaret. *Paris 1919: Six Months That Changed the World*. New York: Random House, 2001.
Williamson, David. *War and Peace: International Relations 1914-45*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1994.

Optional Background Information for Kingdom of Hejaz: The details below should help students representing the Kingdom of the Hejaz structure their background research.

You are a representative from THE KINGDOM OF THE HEJAZ. Your leader is the Sharif of Mecca, Hussein bin Ali. During the war, the Sharif of Mecca owed allegiance to the Ottoman Empire, an ally of the Central Powers. As an Arab leader, the Sharif Hussein was suspicious of Turkish nationalists in the Ottoman government. In June 1916, with assurance of British support in establishing an independent Arab kingdom from Syria to Yemen, the Sharif Hussein allied with Britain and France to declare an Arab revolt against the Ottoman Empire. While the Sharif's forces were expelling Turks from the Arabian Peninsula, he declared himself king of an independent Hejaz, a territory in the western parts of the Arabian Peninsula. Ever since the terms of the secret Sykes-Picot Agreement were leaked in November 1917, you've become increasingly suspicious of the British. Your main concern is to ensure that the British honour their agreement to support the Sharif's vision of an independent Arab kingdom from Syria to Yemen.

Optional Background Information for the Zionist Organization: The details below should help students representing the Zionist Organization structure their background research.

You are a representative from THE ZIONIST ORGANIZATION. You are a group of European and American Jews dedicated to the cause of establishing a Jewish national homeland in Palestine, a territory with immense religious significance to Jews. Since the 1880s, Jews had been immigrating to Palestine to set up small agricultural communities. By 1915, the Jewish population was around 80,000, among a population of roughly 590,000 Arabs (which included Muslims and Christians). In November 1917, the British Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour wrote a letter to Britain's most prominent Jewish citizen to endorse the government's support for the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine (the Balfour Declaration). This public show of support galvanized the Zionist movement even further, and you are prepared to present proposal outlining the step for how this new Jewish state should be established.

Useful primary sources for each delegation

Text of the Treaty of Versailles, selected points, <http://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/1919versailles.html>

USA: Wilson's Fourteen Points, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/wilson14.asp

Britain: Lloyd George's on the origins of war, June 1917,

<http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/lloydgeorgespeech1917.htm>

France: Clemenceau's Paris Peace Conference opening address,

http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/parispeaceconf_clemenceau.htm

Italy: Treaty of London 1915, [https://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/The_Treaty_of_London_\(1915\)](https://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/The_Treaty_of_London_(1915))

Japan: K. K. Kawakami, Japan and World Peace, Ch. 3 and 4, at <https://archive.org/details/japanandworldpe00kawagoog>

Germany: German peace delegation's letter to Clemenceau, May 1919,

http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/parispeaceconf_germanprotest1.htm

Kingdom of the Hejaz: Sykes-Picot Agreement 1916, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/sykes.asp; text of the Treaty of Sevres, <http://www.hri.org/docs/sevres/>

Zionist Organization: Proposal to Paris Peace Conference, <http://www.peaceforourtime.org.uk/page71.html>; Balfour Declaration, https://archive.org/stream/BehindTheBalfourDeclaration-BritainsGreatWarPledgeToRothschild_491/BehindTheBalfourDeclaration_BritainsGreatWarPledgeToLordRothschild_djvu.txt

https://archive.org/stream/BehindTheBalfourDeclaration-BritainsGreatWarPledgeToRothschild_491/BehindTheBalfourDeclaration_BritainsGreatWarPledgeToLordRothschild_djvu.txt

Paris Peace Conference Simulation – Instructions

ROLE: UNITED STATES PREPRESENTATIVE

1. Based upon your research, consider each of the peace terms listed below from your delegation’s perspective.
2. Please use the Google form provided to your class to rank each peace term on a Likert scale, with 1 being strongly disagree to 5 being strongly agree.
3. In the chart below, please write down why you gave the Likert scale score you did for each peace term.
4. For peace terms that you have identified as ones you disagree or strongly disagree with, please write a proposed change to that peace term.
5. Please use the Google form provided to your class to indicate your delegation’s top 3 preferences for terms you would like to change.
6. Once the Conference moderator has received votes from all the delegates, and the three peace terms to be revised have been selected, the session will move towards open debate about possible revisions to these specific peace terms. At this point, each delegation should be prepared to offer suggestions for the revisions.

<u>Peace Terms</u>	<u>Reason</u>	<u>Changes</u>
1 Abolish secret treaties.		
2 Recognize national self-determination (new countries should be formed based on the congruence of ethnicity and territorial boundaries)		
3 Reduction of arms and weapons for all countries		
4 Formation of a League of Nations to promote international collaboration in preserving peace		
5 Germany’s overseas colonies should be turned over to collective governance by the international community.		
6 All countries that participated in the war should bear some financial responsibility for war damages		
7 Germany should be allowed to maintain its pre-war national boundaries		
8 Turkey’s independence should be confirmed, but the remaining territory of the former Ottoman Empire should be governed by the League of Nations		

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ROLE: BRITISH REPRESENTATIVE

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ROLE: FRENCH REPRESENTATIVE

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ROLE: ITALIAN REPRESENTATIVE

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ROLE: GERMAN REPRESENTATIVE

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ROLE: JAPANESE REPRESENTATIVE

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ROLE: KINGDOM OF THE HEJAZ REPRESENTATIVE

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ROLE: ZIONIST ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVE

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Post-Simulation Assessment:

Each individual delegate at the Paris Peace Conference will write a diary entry reflecting on the challenges of coming up with a peace treaty that satisfies all parties' interests AND contributes to lasting peace.

Please write a 400-500 word diary entry that answers the following questions:

1. Which country did you represent?
2. What 2 (TWO) factors made it difficult to create a peace treaty that would genuinely contribute to lasting peace?
3. What factor made it difficult to create a peace treaty that satisfies the interests of the country/organization you represent?

To answer questions 2 and 3, please reference one detail from the simulation Paris Peace Conference proposed peace terms, one detail from a primary source related to your country's role in the Paris Peace Conference, and one detail from the simulation discussion.

4. Do you feel your country/organization was taken seriously at the conference? Why? You must reference ONE specific detail from the REAL Treaty of Versailles.

Notes for teachers:

- Delegations from the Zionist Organization and the Kingdom of the Hejaz are represented at this simulation to encourage students to consider the consequences of the First World War for Arab-Israeli relations in the Middle East.
- The Google form ranking mechanism for each proposed peace term: instructors should create the Google form for this simulation to facilitate the operation of the simulation. At the end of the simulation, instructors could even instruct students to analyze their ranking of the proposed peace terms in comparison to other delegations' rankings. This information can also be used to evaluate the extent to which students understood their country's objectives at the Paris Peace Conference.
- The instruction for students to vote for top 3 preferences for changing the terms of the Paris Peace Conference is designed to prompt student consideration on the most significant issues under debate at the Paris Peace Conference.