

Research Lesson Plan: Chronology of U.S. Involvement in World War I
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Targeted Grade Level: 9-12

Essential Question: How might chronological thinking improve our understanding of the past?

Formative Assessment Prompts:

Day 1

Instructional Chunk #1: What position did President Wilson & the United States take when WWI erupted? Did that position change or remain the same over time?

Instructional Chunk #2: Why did the United States enter World War I?

Instructional Chunk #3: How might chronological thinking be used to understand the past?

Day 2

Instructional Chunk #4: What do historians think caused the U.S. to enter World War I?

Instructional Chunk #5: How did U.S. foreign policy change or remain the same over time from 1796-1919?

Standard Addressed:

History 1 [Chronology] Grades 9-12: Students will analyze historical materials to trace the development of an idea or trend across space or over a prolonged period of time in order to explain patterns of historical continuity and change.

Problematic Prior Knowledge (PPL) Addressed

- The President has the power to declare war.
- Events have singular causes.
- Timelines should be constructed linearly.

Activating Strategies:

Strategy 1: Story - Will's Fall.

Strategy 2: Story - Edith's Entries.

Key Vocabulary to preview

- Unrestricted
- Propaganda
- Autocracy
- Central Powers
- Allied Powers
- Spatial
- Proportional
- relational

Teaching Strategies:

Materials Needed:

- Resources 1-8.
- Separate attachments:
 - Chronology Cards
 - Cause Cards

Instructional Chunk #1:

Lesson Question: Why did the United States enter World War I?

Discussion Question: What was the cause of Will's fall?

1. Procedures:

- Ask students to write down their answer to the following question: Why did the United States enter WWI? Ask volunteers to offer responses. [pay attention to whether the students focus on a single or multiple causes but don't bring this to their attention yet]
- Activating Activity: Have the students read the Story entitled *Will's Fall* (see **Resource 3**).

Discussion Question: what caused Will's fall? [students often gravitate toward a single cause of historic events. This activating activity encourages them to think about multiple causation]

- Refer students back to the Resources on the floor.
- Place the resource labeled *Wilson Declares Neutrality* just to the right of the *WWI Erupts* page.
- Tell students that they are now going to examine reasons [or **causes**] why the U.S. entered WWI and use the causes that appear on handouts to construct a chronology. Ask for volunteers to help build the chronology. [this is where you might ask about tendencies to identify single causes of events. At the end of this procedure, emphasize how most events have multiple causes]
- Distribute copies of the "Cause Cards" on **Resource #4** (slides copied from separate PowerPoint) to the selected volunteers. Ask them to read what is on their paper then place the "cause" where it should appear on the timeline that is evolving on the floor. Model what you want them to do with the first "Cause" - *Germany Establishes War Zone Around Britain*. (eliminate dates on cards and have students predict dates then provide actual dates.)

2. Debrief: ask the students...

- What caused the U.S. to intervene in WWI?

- b. How might chronologies be helpful in understanding the past?
- c. What point(s) about chronological thinking does the story of Will's Fall and this "Cause Card" activity highlight? [historical events have multiple causes and they should be illustrated effectively in well designed chronologies]

Instructional Plan:

Instructional Chunk #2:

Scaffolding Questions:

- What position did President Wilson & the United States take when WWI erupted?
- Did that position change or remain the same over time?

1. Procedures:

- a. Present the scaffolding questions presented above with the students. Tell them that this lesson will focus on these questions.
- b. Briefly note that WWI erupted in Europe in 1914. Project the map "Europe at War" (**Resource 1**) on p. xviii. of *American Voices from World War I* by Adriane Ruggiero. Highlight the countries that made-up the Central and Allied powers. Ask students if they think there might be reasons why the American people might have been leaning toward either the Allies or Central powers at the outset of the war.
- c. Lay out the WWI Chronology papers (see separate attachment labeled **Chronology Charts**) on the floor so that *WWI Erupts* is in the middle and *US Options A & B* are on the left and right side of *WWI Erupts* with distance between the three papers so that additional papers can be placed in between.
- d. Document Analysis: Distribute or project copies of the following "Documents" (see **Resource 2: US Policy During World War I**) one at a time. Ask the students why each document is significant? What does it tell us about the United States policy during World War I?

After discussing both documents, ask students – "What changed over time? What remained the same over time?"

2. Debrief: ask the students

- a. How did US policy change between 1914 and 1917?
- b. On which side did the United States ally itself during World War I?

Instructional Chunk #3:

Lesson Question: How might different types of chronological thinking be used to understand the past?

1. Procedures:

- a. Tell students that this lesson is aimed at expanding their approaches to constructing or conceptualizing chronologies or timelines.
- b. Have students look at the timeline that they laid out on the floor. What are some advantages and disadvantages to its format? [Note: most students organize chronologies in linear fashion which can lead to misrepresentations about the past e.g. May suggest one cause i.e. one closest to focal event; Masks relationships with other causes; Associates causes/changes exclusively with events; overlooks “states of affairs” e.g. nationalism & arms race missing (see HSL, 44); Usually assigns no weight to causes; Appropriate spacing often lacking (reflect actual distances from one event to another); Prior events look like they caused each other when they may not have. (HSL, 52); Often do not distinguish “required” v “sufficient” causes.]
- c. Brainstorm: what are other ways to organize chronologies logically?
Pick two only
 - i. Spatially – appropriately distanced from events studied.
 - ii. Proportionally – shows varying weights of causes.
 - iii. Webbed – shows interconnectedness of causes.
 - iv. Pidgeon foot – show multiple causation.
 - v. Required v sufficient causes - suggest which causes had to exist for the event to occur.
 - vi. Relational – show events that did or did not cause each other.
- d. Divide the class into small groups and assign them each a different type of chronology. Ask them to construct a new chronology of US intervention into WWI based on the type to which they were assigned. Then, ask them to present & explain their timelines to the rest of the class.

2. **Debrief:** ask the student “are linear timelines the best ways to organize historic events?”

End of day 1

Day 2

Instructional Chunk #4: What do historians think caused the U.S. to enter World War I?

This lesson engages students in an analysis of changing interpretations of the reasons for U.S. entry into World War I. It also provides opportunities for students to critique the work of historians and other commentators who argue for singular causes.

1. Procedures:

- a. Have students read “Edith’s Entries” on **Resource #5** and ask, *what does this story illustrate?* [what is written is often determined by when it is written]
- b. Distribute Sources 2-12 on **Resource #6** along with the date card associated with each source to 12 volunteers. Tell the students that they will be chronologically organizing and analyzing different historian’s interpretations of the causes of U.S. intervention into WWI. Their task will be to...
 - i. Determine whether the historians’ interpretations stayed the same or change over time.
 - ii. Speculate on how the historians’ interpretations may have been affected by when they crafted them.
 - iii. Challenge or agree with the historians’ interpretations and explain why.
- c. Model what you want the students to do using Source 1.
- d. Begin with the student who has Source 2. Ask him or her to come to the center of the room and layout the Source 2 information on the floor, with the date that the interpretation was published on top and the historian’s or other individual’s interpretation on the bottom. Ask the volunteer to...
 - i. identify the person who wrote the source.
 - ii. identify when the source was written
 - iii. paraphrase the historian’s interpretation.
 - iv. ask the rest of the class how the person’s interpretation may have been influenced by WHEN it was written.
 - v. [Sources 2-12] The volunteer should also ask whether the interpretation remained the same or changed from the previous ones.

2. Debrief: ask the students...

- a. Is history fact or interpretation?
- b. How might what a person writes be influenced by when he or she writes it?

Instructional Chunk#5

1. Procedures

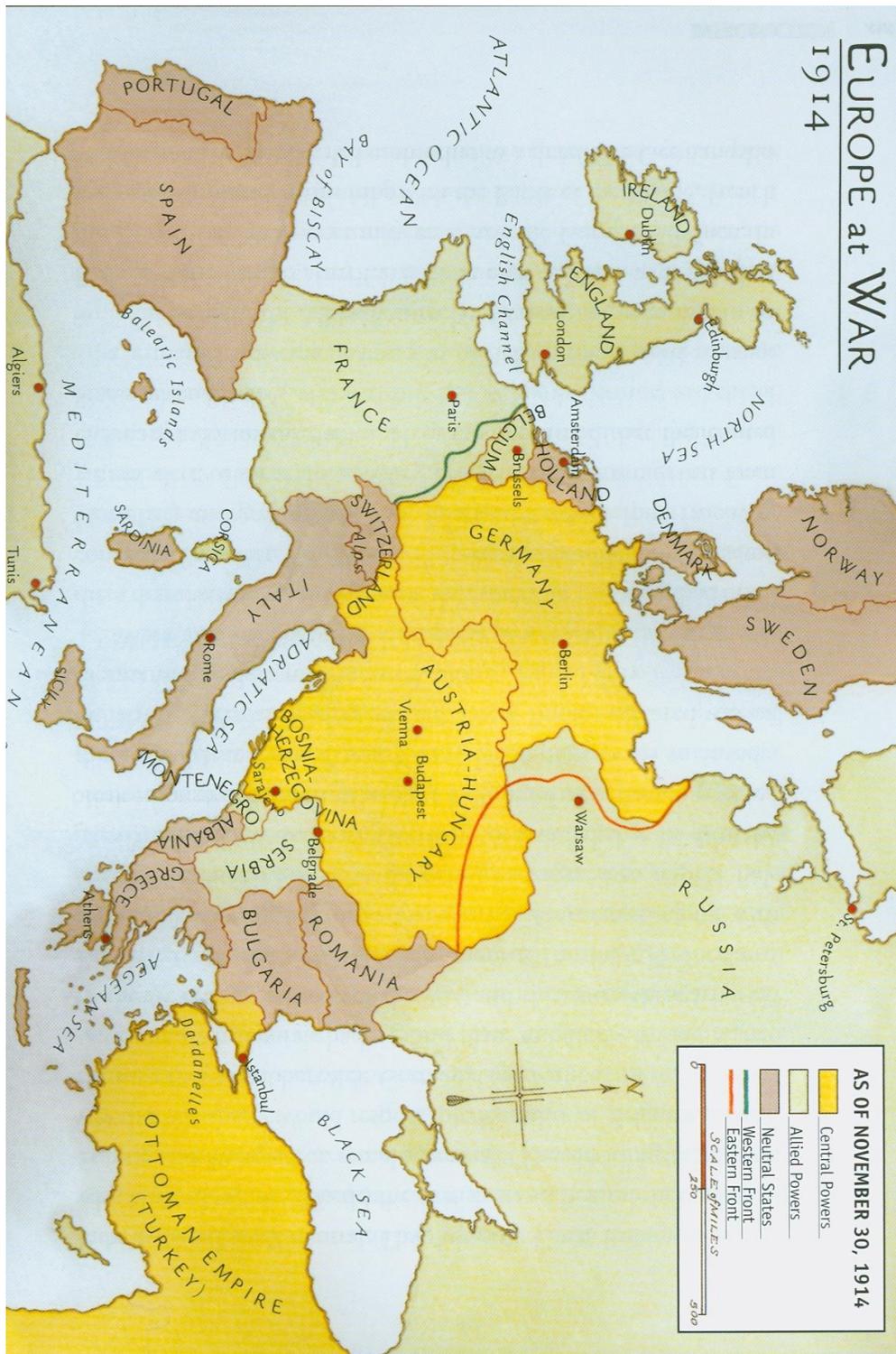
- c. Simulated Parole Board Hearing (see Resource #7). Tell students to assume roles as members of a parole board. Two convicts have filed for parole. The students have to decide who, if anyone, will be paroled. This lesson is designed to get students to think about the importance of analyzing continuity and change. Some convicts change, others do not. Most things in history change, some do not.
- d. Transfer: Distribute copies of **Resource #8**. Ask students to read and analyze American foreign policy statements from 1796 – 1919. Ask students to
 - i. Identify any pattern of continuity or change over time, and
 - ii. Explain patterns detected.

Summarizing Strategy:

Dog Tag Summarizer- A *dog tag* is the informal name for the identification tags worn by military personnel, named such as it bears resemblance to actual dog tags. The tag is primarily used for the identification of dead and wounded and essential basic medical information for the treatment of the latter, such as blood type. Dog tags were used extensively in the U.S. for the first time in WWI. See **Resource #9 for directions**. Suggest that the students have to record/summarize what they have learned in this unit (or lesson) in case the information dies from their memory. Include their names and date of learning.

Resource 1

Europe Taking Sides in 1914



Resource 2

US Policy During World War I

Document 1

“The effect of the war upon the United States will depend upon what American citizens say and do...”

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...”

President Woodrow Wilson (August 19, 1914)

Document 2

“With a profound sense of the solemn and even tragical character of the step I am taking...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...”

We are glad, now that we see the facts...to fight for the ultimate peace of the world and for the liberation of its peoples...The world must be made safe for democracy.”

President Woodrow Wilson (April 2, 1917)

Discussion Questions

- What changed over time?
- What remained the same over time?

Resource #3
Activating Story – Will's Fall

Will's Fall

Will's father decided to take him on a little trip on Saturday. They would go hiking on Will's favorite trail, where he learned how to climb across trees that had fallen over small creeks and jump across a series of rock laying across the side of the trail. There was a light rain falling that day. Will got to invite his two best friends whom he wanted to impress with his creek-crossing and rock-jumping skills.

Will's dad told him to wear his hiking boots because the soles gripped slippery rocks. But Will chose to wear his sneakers. When they got to the trail, Will showed his friends the rock-hopping game that he invented. He challenged them to a rock-hopping race which he lost. He was pretty upset. So, he decided to challenge them to a competition to see who could cross the tree that had fallen across the creek. Ryan went first, fell, and had to be taken to the hospital after his head hit the ground and he fell unconscious.

Discussion Question: What was the cause of Will's fall?

Resource #5
Story of Edith's Entries

Edith's Entries

Edith was a student in Mr. Elcnuma's US history class. At the end of the first week of school, Mr. Elcnuma saw Edith in the hallway just before class and complimented her on how well she was doing. Edith ran home and wrote the following in her diary: *"I love Elcnuma. He is my favorite teacher."*

Three weeks later, Edith received her grade for her first US history test. It was a D. She went home that night and wrote the following in her diary: *"I hate Mr. Elcnuma! U.S. history stinks!"*

Discussion Question: What does this story illustrate?

Resource #6

Historians Weigh in on the Cause of US Entrance into World War I

Source 1

Never before have democracy and autocracy met face to face in a knockout fight for domination of the world. The issue heretofore has not been clearly defined, or the combatants been unevenly matched, or the field of battle has been too restricted. Usually autocracy was too cunning to come into the open field and fight a democracy that had been aroused. It was only when democracy was unfledged or unprepared or in a stupor that autocracy asserted all its brutality and mercilessness.

Editorial, "Liberty Draws the Sword," Washington Post, April 4 1917

Source 2

. . .the Wall Street Junkers in our country. . .have wrung their countless millions from your sweat, your agony and your life's blood, in a time of war and in a time of peace. . . These are the gentry who are today wrapped up in the American flag. And that is war in a nutshell. The master class has always declared the wars; the subject class has always fought the battles, while the subject class has had nothing to gain and all to lose –especially their lives.

Speech of labor leader and Socialist Party spokesman, Eugene Debs, Canton Ohio, June 16, 1918

Source 3

It must be remembered. . . that the resumption of German submarine warfare. . .was the excuse and not the real reason for our entering the war. President Wilson. . .viewed the conflict as one in which England was upholding the cause of civilization.

Mr. Wilson was never in fact neutral. . . [H]e had one set of concepts and procedures for Great Britain and the Entente and quite another for the Central Powers. . . .

Mr. Wilson. . .decided to enter the war on the side of the Entente as soon as he was convinced that England could not win decisively without American aid.

Harry Elmer Barnes, *The Genesis of the World War*, 1929

Source 4

The American people launched themselves into the war with an emotional hysteria that can only be understood by recognizing the power of propaganda in generating common action. . . .

It was not the cause for American entrance into World War. But that it was a cause, and a powerful one, it seems impossible for the historian today to deny.

James Duane Squires, *British Propaganda at Home and in the United States*, 1935

Source 5

It has sometimes been asserted that the entrance of the United States into the World War was the result of the influence of certain "interests," . . .

There is no scrap of evidence supporting this thesis.

Of his own conscience he made it [the decision to enter the war] because in no other way could he see how to protect American lives and property. It was the German submarine warfare and nothing else that forced him to lead America into war.

Charles Seymour, *American Diplomacy during the War*, 1936

Source 6

. . . our entrance into the war was caused directly and solely by the German use of the submarine and that to the last President Wilson worked to keep America out of war.

Newton D. Baker, Wilson's secretary of war, *Why We Went to War*, 1936

Source 7

In the summer of 1914 the American people were as busy as ever making and trying to sell goods at an advantage.

It just so happened, perhaps unfortunately, that the best of the new customers were the Allied governments. . .

At first they could pay for their purchases.

But there was a limit to the gold, securities and imports available to pay for American goods.

New York bankers found the answer.

Americans bought bonds to pay themselves for goods sold to the Allies.

But in time the Allies were in another jam. They were in danger of losing the War. . . . As Ambassador Page informed President Wilson in March, 1917, defeat for the Allies meant an economic smash for the United States. The following month, President Wilson called on Congress to declare war on the German Empire. . . .

Charles A. Beard, *The Devil Theory of War*, 1936

Source 8

The basic reason appears to have been that Allied practices hurt only American property rights. The United States could lodge protests, and perhaps collect damages when the war was over. The German submarine took American lives. And there seemed to be no proper recompense for lives. So the United States fought Germany.

Thomas A. Bailey, *Diplomatic History of the United States*, 1946

Source 9

. . . the first World War signaled the decline of Europe from its pre-eminence in world politics.

The United States and Germany became embroiled because of their differing attitudes towards British control of the seas. Germany felt that she should challenge that control in the interest of her own freedom of action. . . . but unlike Germany, the United States was not rebellious against Britain's predominant position.

This essential difference between American and German attitudes towards Great Britain underlay the progressive estrangement and eventual rupture of German-American relations.

Edward H. Buehrig, *Woodrow Wilson and the Balance of Power*, 1955

Source 10

At its start the First World War was neither an ideological struggle nor in a real sense a world conflict.

The two great democracies, it is true, were fighting alongside each other. But they were also in alliance with Tsarist Russia, the most reactionary of the powers.

In the ideological spectrum, the Entente occupied the two extremes and the Central Powers lay somewhere in between.

In the crucial year 1917, all this changed. With the entrance of the United States, the conflict in truth became a world war. And with the first Russian Revolution, only a month before, the Entente attained an enviable ideological unity. Now that Italy and America had been added to the coalition – and Russia had cast off its exhausted despotism – five great democracies were ranged in one camp.

H. Stuart Hughes, *Contemporary Europe: A History*, 1961

Source 11

. . . the Zimmerman telegram altered the course of history. In itself the Zimmerman telegram was only a pebble in the long road of history. But a pebble can kill a Goliath, and this one killed the American illusion that we could go about our business happily separate from other nations.

Barbara W. Tuchman, *The Zimmerman Telegram*, 1966

Source 12

Perhaps one should conclude that the reasoning which took Wilson and the American people away from the feelings of August 1914 to the remarkable singleness of purpose on April 6, 1917, was a view of balance of power, but not the traditional view. The decision in 1917 was emotional, grounded in the belief, indeed conviction, that right, in the person of the Allies, was battling wrong, personified by the Central Powers. There was abroad, so Wilson and his fellow Americans believed, a highly organized, savage campaign against decency and morality, and in the early spring of 1917 evil was weighing heavily in the balance against good.

Robert Ferrell. *American Diplomacy*, 1969

**Resource 7
Parole Disposition**

Applicant A		Applicant B	
<p align="center">Applicant History</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <u>March 2003</u>: parent killed in a street fight. ■ <u>May 2003</u>: arrested for shoplifting ■ <u>April 2005</u>: arrested for armed robbery. ■ <u>August 2008</u>: arrested for auto theft (sentenced to 2 years in prison). ■ <u>January 2009</u>: begins serving 2 year sentence. ■ <u>January 2009 – February 2010</u>: no reported incidents while in prison. 		<p align="center">Applicant History</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <u>November 2005</u>: enters alcohol treatment program. ■ <u>July 2007</u>: arrested for shoplifting. ■ <u>December 2006</u>: arrested for stealing social security checks. ■ <u>February 2007</u>: arrested for breaking into Value City. ■ <u>October 2008</u>: arrested for auto theft (sentenced to 2 years in prison). ■ <u>January 2009</u>: began serving 2 year sentence. ■ <u>January 2009-February 2010</u>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1st reprimand – pushing prison guard. ■ 2nd reprimand – stealing cigarettes. ■ 3rd reprimand – knife found in jail cell. 	
Disposition: Parole – Yes	No	Disposition: Parole – Yes	No
Explanation:		Explanation:	

Resource 8
American Foreign Policy 1796 - 1919
Continuity or Change Over Time
(abbreviated version)

Document 1

It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world;

President George Washington (Farewell Address, 1796)

Document 2

...It is still the true policy of the United States to leave the parties [Europeans] to themselves, in hope that other powers will pursue the same course. . . .

President James Monroe (Seventh Annual Message to Congress, 1823)

Document 3

All this will be our future history, to establish on earth the moral dignity and salvation of man -- the immutable truth and beneficence of God...her high example shall smite unto death the tyranny of kings, hierarchs, and oligarchs...

John L. O'Sullivan (1839)

Document 4

...this government required of ... Spain the unqualified concession of the following precise demands:

1. The relinquishment of all claim of sovereignty over and title to Cuba.
2. The cession to the United States of Puerto Rico and other islands under Spanish sovereignty in the West Indies...
4. The immediate evacuation by Spain of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and other Spanish Island in the West Indies.
5. The occupation by the United States of the city, bay, and harbor of Manila...

President William McKinley (Instructions to Peace Commissioners, 1898)

Document 5

Chronic wrongdoing, or an impotence which results in a general loosening of the ties of civilized society, may in America, as elsewhere, ultimately require intervention by some civilized nation, and in the Western Hemisphere the adherence of the United States to the Monroe Doctrine may force the United States, however reluctantly, in flagrant cases of such wrongdoing or impotence, to the exercise of an international police power.

President Theodore Roosevelt (Annual Message to Congress, 1904)

Document 6

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 Woodrow Wilson (Address to Congress, August 1914)

Document 7

The world must be made safe for democracy. Its peace must be planted upon the tested foundations of political liberty. We have no selfish ends to serve. We desire no conquest, no dominion. We seek no indemnities for ourselves, no material compensation for the sacrifices we shall freely make. We are but one of the champions of the rights of mankind....

...we shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts - for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own Governments, for the rights and liberties of small nations, for a universal dominion of right...

President Woodrow Wilson (Address to Congress April 1917)

Document 8

...The program of the world's peace, therefore, is our program; and that program, the only possible program, as we see it, is this:

XIV. A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike.

President Woodrow Wilson (Speech to Congress, January 1918)

Document 9

"The United States is the world's best hope, but if you fetter her in the interests and quarrels of other nations, if you tangle her in the intrigues of Europe, you will destroy her powerful good, and endanger her very existence."

Senator Henry Cabot Lodge (July 1919)

Resource 9
Dog Tag Summarizer

Directions: use the space within the dog tag to summarize what you have learned from this unit or lesson.

