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**GREAT WAR, FLAWED PEACE,
AND THE LASTING LEGACY
OF WORLD WAR I**

★



THE UNITED STATES
WORLD WAR ONE
CENTENNIAL COMMISSION

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NHD
NATIONAL
HISTORY DAY

VERSAILLES TO VIETNAM

THE LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF THE PEACE PROCESS



GUIDING QUESTION: How did the Paris Peace process that ended World War I impact Vietnam?

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WHY?

I wrote this lesson to help students make connections between events in history, particularly between World War I and the Vietnam War.

OVERVIEW

Using primary sources, students will read and analyze two documents to connect the Paris Peace process to the independence movement in French Indochina. They will examine and discuss Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points and the petition submitted to the U.S. Secretary of State by Nguyen Ai Quoc (alias of Ho Chi Minh). In groups, students will pose as Secretary of State Robert Lansing and make a recommendation to President Wilson.

OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this activity, students will be able to

- > Identify the goals of Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points; and
- > Explain how the Paris Peace process in 1919 impacted Vietnamese citizens.

STANDARDS CONNECTIONS

CONNECTIONS TO COMMON CORE

- > CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.
- > CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

DOCUMENTS USED

PRIMARY SOURCES

Letter from Ho Chi Minh to Secretary of State Robert Lansing
Nguyen ai Quoc [Ho Chi Minh] to Secretary of State Robert Lansing [translation], June 18, 1919
National Archives and Records Administration (5049414).
<https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/ho-chi-minh-lansing>

President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points (1918). Woodrow Wilson, Fourteen Points Speech, January 8, 1918
National Archives and Records Administration (Record Group 46)
<https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=62>

MATERIALS

- > President Woodrow Wilson's 14 Points (1918) handout
- > Letter from Ho Chi Minh to Secretary of State Robert Lansing handout
- > Versailles to Vietnam Instruction Sheet
- > Memorandum to the President handout

ACTIVITY PREPARATION

- > Make one copy of President Woodrow Wilson's 14 Points (1918) for each student.
- > Make one copy of Letter from Ho Chi Minh to Secretary of State Robert Lansing for each student.
- > Make one copy of the Versailles to Vietnam Instruction Sheet for each student.
- > Make one copy of the Memorandum to the President handout for each group of four or five students.

PROCEDURE

ACTIVITY ONE: PRESIDENT WILSON'S FOURTEEN POINTS (30 MINUTES)

- > Divide the class into groups of four or five students each.
- > Distribute one copy of President Woodrow Wilson's 14 Points (1918) to each student. Ask students to individually read the preamble of the document (first two paragraphs).
 - » Ask each student to underline, circle, or highlight **one sentence** in the preamble that he/she feels is significant.
 - » Ask each student to underline, circle, or highlight **one phrase** in the preamble that he/she feels is significant.
 - » Ask each student to underline, circle, or highlight **one word** in the preamble that he/she feels is significant.
 - » Direct students to share in their groups which sentences, phrases, and words they chose and why.
- > Begin a class discussion by asking, *Thinking about the words, phrases, and sentences you and your group members chose, what insights do you have about the document?*
- > Review the main ideas in the rest of the document, particularly noting point five and the concept of self-determination.

ACTIVITY TWO: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS (45-60 MINUTES)

- > Distribute a copy of the Versailles to Vietnam Instruction Sheet to each student. Read the background information and directions with students and explain their task.
- > Distribute a copy of the transcript of the letter from Nguyen Ai Quoc (Ho Chi Minh) to each student. Ask groups to read over the letter and answer the questions together in their groups.
- > Tell students to imagine they are Secretary of State Robert Lansing. Working together, each group will use the Memorandum to the President handout to write a memo to President Wilson advising him on how to respond to the petition from Ho Chi Minh.

- > Inform the students of the actual response by the U.S. and lead a debrief discussion.
 - » *Although Ho Chi Minh received a note saying that the petition would be shared with President Wilson, there was no further response. Why do you think the U.S. failed to respond and ultimately sided with the French?*
 - » *Why do you think President Wilson's idea of self-determination was difficult to achieve?*
 - » *How did the American decision impact the Vietnamese people?*
- > Inform students of what happened to Ho Chi Minh.
 - » *Ho Chi Minh moved to Russia and China in the 1920s and 1930s and turned to communism. He then returned to Vietnam and led the independence movement.*

ASSESSMENT

- > Each group will turn in one copy of their Versailles to Vietnam Instruction Sheet and Memorandum to the President.
- > The Memo Grading Rubric can be used to score the written memo.

METHODS FOR EXTENSION

- > Students with more interest in the effect of the Treaty of Versailles on other nations can research the impact the peace process had in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. They can research the nations created from the breakup of the Austrian-Hungarian and Ottoman empires following the war and the long term effects it had on those regions.
- > Students can research the progression of Ho Chi Minh's life after the peace process in order to trace how he became the leader of North Vietnam and his role in the Vietnam War.

PRESIDENT WOODROW WILSON'S FOURTEEN POINTS (1918)

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION (RECORD GROUP 46)

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; and that programme, the only possible programme, as we see it, is this:

- I. Open covenants of peace, openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view.
- II. Absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas, outside territorial waters, alike in peace and in war, except as the seas may be closed in whole or in part by international action for the enforcement of international covenants.
- III. The removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers and the establishment of an equality of trade conditions among all the nations consenting to the peace and associating themselves for its maintenance.
- IV. Adequate guarantees given and taken that national armaments will be reduced to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety.
- V. A free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined.
- VI. The evacuation of all Russian territory and such a settlement of all questions affecting Russia as will secure the best and freest cooperation of the other nations of the world in obtaining for her an unhampered and unembarrassed opportunity for the independent determination of her own political development and national policy and assure her of a sincere welcome into the society of free nations under institutions of her own choosing; and, more than a welcome, assistance also of every kind that she may need and may herself desire. The treatment accorded Russia by her sister nations in the months to come will be the acid test of their good will, of their comprehension of her needs as distinguished from their own interests, and of their intelligent and unselfish sympathy.
- VII. Belgium, the whole world will agree, must be evacuated and restored, without any attempt to limit the sovereignty which she enjoys in common with all other free nations. No other single act will serve as this will serve to restore confidence among the nations in the laws which they have themselves set and determined for the government of their relations with one another. Without this healing act the whole structure and validity of international law is forever impaired.

PRESIDENT WOODROW WILSON'S FOURTEEN POINTS (CON'T)

VIII. All French territory should be freed and the invaded portions restored, and the wrong done to France by Prussia in 1871 in the matter of Alsace-Lorraine, which has unsettled the peace of the world for nearly fifty years, should be righted, in order that peace may once more be made secure in the interest of all.

IX. A readjustment of the frontiers of Italy should be effected along clearly recognizable lines of nationality.

X. The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity to autonomous development.

XI. Rumania, Serbia, and Montenegro should be evacuated; occupied territories restored; Serbia accorded free and secure access to the sea; and the relations of the several Balkan states to one another determined by friendly counsel along historically established lines of allegiance and nationality; and international guarantees of the political and economic independence and territorial integrity of the several Balkan states should be entered into.

XII. The Turkish portion of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development, and the Dardanelles should be permanently opened as a free passage to the ships and commerce of all nations under international guarantees.

XIII. An independent Polish state should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea, and whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant.

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.

In regard to these essential rectifications of wrong and assertions of right we feel ourselves to be intimate partners of all the governments and peoples associated together against the Imperialists. We cannot be separated in interest or divided in purpose. We stand together until the end.

For such arrangements and covenants we are willing to fight and to continue to fight until they are achieved; but only because we wish the right to prevail and desire a just and stable peace such as can be secured only by removing the chief provocations to war, which this programme does remove. We have no jealousy of German greatness, and there is nothing in this programme that impairs it. We grudge her no achievement or distinction of learning or of pacific enterprise such as have made her record very bright and very enviable. We do not wish to injure her or to block in any way her legitimate influence or power. We do not wish to fight her either with arms or with hostile arrangements of trade if she is willing to associate herself with us and the other peace-loving nations of the world in covenants of justice and law and fair dealing. We wish her only to accept a place of equality among the peoples of the world, -- the new world in which we now live, -- instead of a place of mastery.

LETTER FROM HO CHI MINH TO SECRETARY OF STATE ROBERT LANSING
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION (5049414)

To his Excellency, the Secretary of State of the Republic of the United States, Delegate to the Peace Conference.

Excellency,

We take the liberty of submitting to you the accompanying memorandum setting forth the claims of the Vietnamese people on the occasion of the Allied victory.

We count on your great kindness to honor our appeal by your support whenever the opportunity arises.

We beg your Excellency graciously to accept the expression of our profound respect.

For the group of Vietnamese Patriots

[signed] Nguyen Ai Quoc (Nguyen the Patriot)

56, Rue Monsieur le Prince, 56

-Paris-

Demands of the Annamese People

Since the victory of the Allies, all subject peoples are filled with hope at the prospect that an era of right and justice is opening to them by virtue of the formal and solemn engagements, made before the whole world by the various powers of the agreement in the struggle of civilization against barbarism.

While waiting for the principle of national self-determination to pass from ideal to reality through the effective recognition of the sacred right of all peoples to decide their own destiny, the inhabitants of the ancient Empire of Annam, at the present time French Indochina, present to the noble Governments of the entente in general and in particular to the honorable French Government the following humble claims:

- (1) General amnesty for all the native people who have been condemned for political activity;
- (2) Reform of Indochinese justice by granting to the native population the same judicial guarantees as the Europeans have, and the total suppression of the special courts which are the instruments of terrorization and oppression against the most responsible elements of the Vietnamese people;
- (3) Freedom of press and speech;
- (4) Freedom of association and assembly;
- (5) Freedom to emigrate and to travel abroad;
- (6) Freedom of education, and creation in every province of technical and professional schools for the native population;
- (7) Replacement of the regime of arbitrary decrees by a regime of law;
- (8) A permanent delegation of native people elected to attend the French parliament in order to keep the latter informed of their needs;

The Vietnamese people, in presenting these claims, count on the worldwide justice of all the Powers, and rely in particular on the goodwill of the noble French people who hold our destiny in their hands and who, as France is a republic, have taken us under their protection. In requesting the protection of the French people, the people of Annam, far from feeling humiliated, on the contrary consider themselves honored, because they know that the French people stand for liberty and justice and will never renounce their sublime ideal of universal brotherhood. Consequently, in giving heed to the voice of the oppressed, the French people will be doing their duty to France and to humanity.

For the group of Vietnamese Patriots

Nguyen Ai Quoc
(Ho Chi Minh)

VERSAILLES TO VIETNAM INSTRUCTION SHEET

Background Information

France became interested in Vietnam in the 1850s during the era of imperialism. They sought to extend their influence in the world and gain access to resources and overseas markets for products. When the French began to colonize Vietnam it was divided into three regions, Tonkin in the north, Annam in the center, and Cochinchina in the south. Over the next 40 years, France took control of the region, including Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, and renamed it French Indochina. As a French colony during World War I, the country sent troops to assist in the war.

When World War I ended, a young man named Nguyen Ai Quac (Ho Chi Minh) was in Paris during the Treaty of Versailles peace process with other Vietnamese men to request that Annam be given more autonomy. Ho Chi Minh wrote a letter to American Secretary of State, Robert Lansing, with his request. The United States President, Woodrow Wilson, had been championing the idea of self-determination. The French were opposed to granting more self-rule to Vietnam.

Directions: Read the letter to Secretary of State Lansing and answer the following questions.

1. What is the hope of “all subject peoples” (those living under colonial rule)?

2. Read over all points. Do they ask for independence from France?

3. What is amnesty?

4. Why would it be important to the Vietnamese to reform the justice system?

5. Explain why the freedoms of speech, press, association, and assembly are important.

6. Why do you think the French limited the ability of the people in Vietnam to emigrate?

7. Why would access to education be crucial to the Vietnamese?

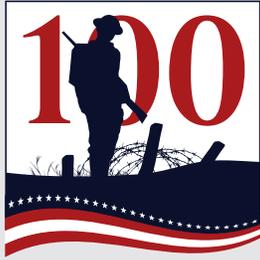
8. What are they asking for in point 8?

9. What do you think is the purpose of the final paragraph in the letter?

10. Why would the French have been opposed to the requests in this letter?

MEMO GRADING RUBRIC

| | Advanced | Proficient | Basic | Emerging |
|----------------------------------|---|--|---|---|
| Introduction of Problem | <p>Situation is clearly identified and defined in significant detail.</p> <p>Purpose of memo and problem are clearly stated.</p> <p>Necessary background is clearly explained.</p> | <p>Situation is identified and defined.</p> <p>Purpose of memo and problem are stated.</p> <p>Necessary background is explained.</p> | <p>Situation is somewhat identified and defined, more details are needed.</p> <p>Purpose of memo and problem are vague or unclear.</p> <p>Necessary background is minimal.</p> | <p>Situation is not identified and defined.</p> <p>Purpose of memo and problem are not stated.</p> <p>Necessary background does not exist.</p> |
| Analysis of the Situation | <p>Options for action are explained with significant detail.</p> <p>Potential consequences of each option are identified and evaluated.</p> | <p>Options for action are explained with some detail.</p> <p>Potential consequences of each option are identified but not evaluated.</p> | <p>Options for action are explained at a very basic level.</p> <p>Potential consequences of each option are minimally discussed.</p> | <p>Options for action are not explained.</p> <p>There is no attempt to discuss the consequences of each option.</p> |
| Recommendation | <p>Advised course of action is explained in detail.</p> <p>Potential problems are identified and solutions proposed.</p> <p>Possible future research is identified.</p> | <p>Advised course of action is explained.</p> <p>Potential problems are identified but solutions are not proposed.</p> <p>Some future research is identified.</p> | <p>Advised course of action is explained with little detail.</p> <p>Potential problems may be identified.</p> <p>Little future research is identified.</p> | <p>Advised course of action not explained.</p> <p>Potential problems and solutions are not addressed.</p> <p>Possible future research not identified.</p> |
| Organization and Style | <p>Memo is well-organized, logical, and coherent using an appropriate tone.</p> <p>Memo is easy to read and understand.</p> <p>Vocabulary is effective and conveys meaning.</p> <p>Memo includes proper grammar and spelling.</p> | <p>Memo is logical and coherent using an appropriate tone.</p> <p>Memo is mostly easy to read and understand.</p> <p>Vocabulary is effective.</p> <p>Memo includes proper grammar and spelling with only minor errors present.</p> | <p>Memo is somewhat organized using an mostly appropriate tone.</p> <p>Memo is challenging to read and understand.</p> <p>Vocabulary is somewhat effective.</p> <p>Memo includes significant grammar and spelling errors.</p> | <p>Memo is disorganized or does not use an appropriate tone.</p> <p>Memo is challenging to read and understand.</p> <p>Vocabulary is largely ineffective.</p> <p>Memo includes major grammar and spelling errors that impede understanding.</p> |



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