



# WILSON AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

A re-creation of President Wilson's agonizing efforts  
to establish a League of Nations after World War I

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## PURPOSE

### Why do psychologists find Wilson's decision-making so fascinating?

President Woodrow Wilson's decision whether or not to accept any change in his Treaty of Versailles was a pivotal one in the annals of American foreign policy. Wilson wanted to lead America into the thick of world affairs; others wanted America to return to the traditional isolationism that preceded World War I.

This activity will re-create the events, circumstances, and viewpoints pressuring President Wilson as he struggled to decide if he should accept Senator Henry Cabot Lodge's compromise version of the treaty or insist that the Senate accept his original version verbatim. Through participating in this re-creation students will accomplish the following:

#### **Knowledge**

1. Explaining the reasons for World War I's outbreak and for the United States' entrance into it
2. Recognizing Wilson's idealistic aims for peace as embodied in the League of Nations and the Fourteen Points
3. Comparing reasons for and against American acceptance of the Treaty of Versailles
4. Evaluating the president's decision about compromise with Senator Lodge

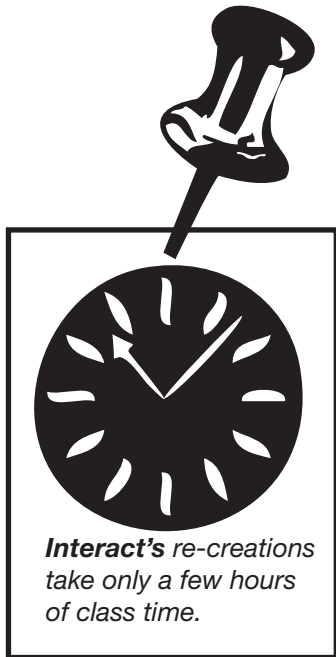
#### **Attitudes**

1. Recognizing the need for assessing all points of view in decision-making
2. Explaining how compromise is sometimes necessary to achieve one's ends
3. Prioritizing viewpoints necessary to evaluate a decision

#### **Skills**

1. Reading the Background Essay and applying its information to role-playing
2. Comparing and analyzing opposing viewpoints
3. Writing paragraphs explaining points of view
4. Evaluating components of a decision

## OVERVIEW



During three days of instruction, students will read about, role-play, and react to Wilson's ratification dilemma.

### Day 1

Motivate the re-creation by having students read portions of the Student Guide. Assigns roles/responsibilities for the actual re-creation.

### Day 2

The actual re-creation has two scenes. In the first, Senator Gilbert Hitchcock, the Democratic Senate minority leader, meets with two staunch Republicans, senators William Borah and Henry Cabot Lodge. They discuss how the Senate will likely vote on the Versailles Treaty. In the second scene, Senator Hitchcock reports to President Wilson and his wife. They discuss whether or not the president can compromise. Finally, the president makes his decision.

### Day 3

Within activity groups students use their notes while examining a 22-item UNIT TEST. The groups break up and students take the test separately. A debriefing case study over giving the United Nations "sovereignty" over the United States reunites the activity groups, which discuss and reach a conclusion about the case study. See page 8 of the Student Guide.

## SETUP DIRECTIONS



**Note:** *You will not need to duplicate the bulleted items the first time you use this re-creation, for Interact has given you different colored handouts for those students playing roles. If you choose to use the optional UNIT TEST, you will have to duplicate it. All other items necessary for the re-creation are in the Student Guide.*

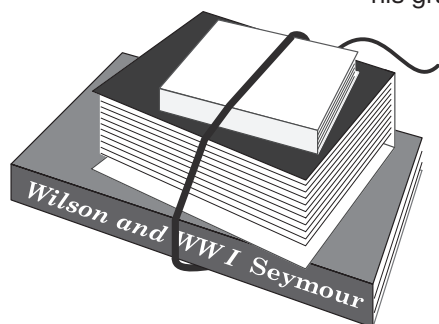
1. **Handouts** See note at left the first time you use this re-creation. For subsequent classes, duplicate the number in parentheses, using the masters in this Teacher Guide.
  - GILBERT HITCHCOCK (one: three pages, back to back)
  - HENRY CABOT LODGE (one: two pages, back to back)
  - WILLIAM BORAH (one: two pages, back to back)
  - PRESIDENT WOODROW WILSON (one: three pages, back to back)
  - MRS. WILSON (one: two pages, back to back)
  - MODERATOR (one: two pages, back to back)
  - \* UNIT TEST (optional—class set: two pages, back to back)
2. **Assigning roles** Assign the six roles in the re-creation. Other students will make vital contributions as audience members. Of course, critical roles require assigning capable students. (Senator Gilbert Hitchcock is the most demanding of all the roles in this re-creation.) Lesser roles, however, can be filled with competent but less skilled students who can receive help from you, the moderator, and fellow classmates. One of the real satisfactions in using participatory materials, we believe, is watching students grow as persons as well as historians!

*... watching students  
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well as historians!*

## ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

*Consider seeing your friendly school librarian so that she/he will set up a Wilson and the League of Nations Reserve Shelf just for your class.*

*Certain students—the one playing Wilson, for example—just might go to scholarly works such as Charles Seymour's analysis of Wilson in order to "flesh out" this/her character.*



- Bailey, Thomas, *Diplomatic History of the American People*, Appleton-Century Crofts, New York, 1969. Excellent, balanced, general description of the causes of the World War and the circumstances of our entrance. It also deals clearly with the Versailles Treaty problems.
- Bailey, Thomas, "Woodrow Wilson Wouldn't Yield," *American Heritage Magazine*, June 1957. Particularly useful and easily read account of the entire ratification struggle. Bailey clearly dissects both the problems at Versailles and the subsequent Senate problems. He rightfully views the situation as a tragic one, where more compromise might have won the day.
- Cranston, Ruth, "Myths of the League," *New York Times Magazine*, August 20, 1944. The author offers some interesting details concerning the Republican political maneuvers and examines the wide degree of support for the League of Nations among the American public.
- Duroselle, Jean-Baptiste, *From Wilson to Roosevelt: Foreign Policy in the United States, 1913-1945*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1963. Duroselle intriguingly analyzes the entire ratification affair. He writes from a French perspective and takes a detached view of American objectives and motives.
- Garraty, John A., "The Training of Woodrow Wilson," *American Heritage Magazine*, August 1956. A valuable article because it describes some of Wilson's troubles as president of Princeton. The author compellingly offers Wilson's behavior there as a foreshadowing of his later troubles with Senator Lodge.
- Garraty, John A., "Spoiled Child of American Politics," *American Heritage Magazine*, August 1955. Garraty paints an interesting portrait of Wilson's opponent, Senator Lodge. Generally sympathetic toward Lodge's case, the article is vague on the senator's specific ploys during the political struggle.
- Hoover, Herbert, "The Ordeal of President Wilson," *American Heritage Magazine*, June 1958. Former President Hoover offers an intricate defense of Wilson's ideals and goals for the Treaty of Versailles. He describes in detail how Wilson was forced to abandon his Fourteen Points in order to salvage the league.
- Link, Arthur S., *Woodrow Wilson: A Brief Biography*, World Publishing Co., Cleveland, 1963. A fine general biography of Wilson's career and contributions offering good background on the ratification effort.
- Lodge Jr., Henry Cabot, "A Communication," *American Heritage Magazine*, December 1955. Senator Lodge's grandson writes a calm and interesting response to Garraty's article about his grandfather. The younger Lodge seeks to refute some of Garraty's conclusions, stressing that his grandfather's opinions have been borne out by time.

Seymour, Charles, *Wilson and World War I*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1921. Mr. Seymour provides valuable political analysis of the Versailles Treaty and of the political infighting to gain ratification.

Thurston, Robert L., *Isolation: The U.S. and the League of Nations*, Xerox Education Publications, Connecticut, 1972. Part of an excellent Values and Decisions series, this little paperback analyzes Republican opposition to and Wilson's response to the Versailles Treaty.

## DAILY TEACHING DIRECTIONS - 1



*Be certain you have carefully planned how to integrate this re-creation with the post-World War I history chapters you have had your students read in their textbooks.*

**Before Day 1** Be sure you have thoroughly examined this Teacher Guide, the Student Guide, and the various handouts.

### Day 1

1. Introduce the topic with an interest catcher. This device will cue the students to the re-creation's theme. Use a filmstrip, movie, lecture, or anything else which you find useful. With all the furor in the world today, a news article or story about a current crisis in the United Nations might be a good jumping off point.
2. Link your interest catcher to the re-creation by handing out the Student Guide. Have the students read the Purpose and Background Essay.
3. Assign students to portray the roles. (You may choose to play the moderator yourself.) Give them their special handouts and send the advisers, critics, president, and moderator to a separate place in order to prepare for their roles.
4. Help the remaining students prepare their note-taking sheet. (See the directions in the Student Guide.)
5. Check with your role-players. Satisfy yourself that each understands his/her role and specific tasks.
6. For homework instruct everyone to finish reading the Student Guide and history textbook on World War I and the Treaty of Versailles.
7. Remind advisers and critics a) that they must write paragraphs explaining their viewpoints, and b) that these are to be ready by the beginning of Day 2.

### Day 2

1. The moderator should follow the sequential directions found in the MODERATOR handout under The Re-Creation Hour.
2. Be mindful that your own role in Day 2 is to be as unobtrusive as possible. Avoid normal teacher inclination to intervene in the discussion if it is going poorly. If the students understand their tasks and have prepared thoroughly, the re-creation will run itself.
3. Your only role is to watch the clock to be certain that all facets of the discussion get adequate time. (You may want to prearrange some signals with the president to slow down, speed up, ask for more explanation, etc.)
4. Before Day 2 ends, pick up the paragraphs your advisers/critics wrote. Then tell students what to expect for Day 3. Some options:

## DAILY TEACHING DIRECTIONS - 2



*Encourage your students to speak passionately. Work to get them truly involved in their characterizations.*

*If you have a quality class and you are considering using this re-creation next year, videotape the presidential decision so that you can show portions next year to stimulate students' performance. (Such a video is also useful for open house when you want parents to see the participatory nature of your instruction.)*

- **Option 1:** Review notes for objective exam.
- **Option 2:** Have students read the Debriefing case study in their Student Guides and then develop arguments for and against giving the United Nations “sovereignty” over the United States.
- **Option 3:** Give no overnight assignment.

### Day 3

1. Divide your class into activity groups of about five to six members each. Insure that the students who played key roles are split equally among the groups.
2. Have the groups form circles. Then give each student the UNIT TEST, which group members may discuss among themselves. **Note:** Only their notes and the test sheets may be on their desks. No pens or pencils are allowed at first.
3. Have students return to their regular seats and individually take their tests without any aid from their notes.
4. Exchange papers, score them, and have the groups reform and calculate their average scores. Give a bonus to the group members with the highest scores. Answer key: 1. d; 2. a; 3. c; 4. b; 5. b; 6. b; 7. a; 8. a; 9. c; 10. d; 11. f; 12. h; 13. a; 14. i; 15. b; 16. e; 17. g; 18. b; 19. a; 20. b; 21. a; 22. b.
5. Now move into debriefing by using the case study on giving the United Nations sovereignty over the United States. See that each group has a chairperson and a recorder.
6. Insure that each group's recorder writes down the strengths and weaknesses of each alternative the president should consider.
7. Culminate your debriefing by having members vote and choose one representative to join the other groups' representatives in front of the class for a give-and-take discussion.

# MODERATOR - 1

You have the responsibility to insure that the re-creation runs smoothly. Think of yourself as the “glue” holding together all the parts.

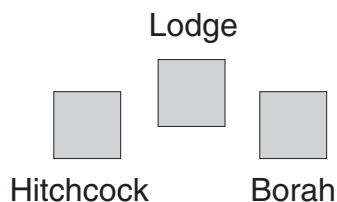
## Before the re-creation

1. Meet with the role-players and insure that all participants feel comfortable in their tasks and that they are prepared.
2. Give all role-players suggestions that will help them play their roles realistically. Point out how to talk, look, and act like the historical persons involved. For example, the student playing Borah, since he is to be a flamboyant, oratorical type, should see that his speech has fire and grace—and possibly a little pomposity. Be sure to remind the student playing Lodge to dress and use body language that make him both distinguished and somewhat haughty. Wilson, of course, has recently suffered a stroke and should be in either a bed or a wheelchair. Encourage Mrs. Wilson to hover over her husband, fixing blankets, possibly giving him “medicine,” etc.
3. Try to identify and bring to class appropriate props (e.g., bookcase full of books, American flag, bed, wheelchair, water, medicine, copies of the treaty).
4. Decide in advance how you will arrange the room realistically for each scene. Insure that role-players will sit or stand so that everyone in class will be able to see and hear what is going on. Insure that all role-players face the audience as much as possible. Draw room arrangement diagrams in advance for both scenes and show them to the role-players.

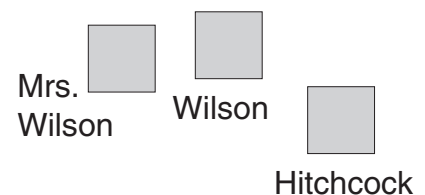


Acting  
Tip

**Note:** You will move into and out of the scene as you moderate the re-creation.



**Scene 1**



**Scene 2**

5. Write brief introductions for each scene. You will read each aloud. Cover the following in your separate introductions:
  - **Scene 1: Time**—Early November 1919. **Place**—the Senate Office Building office of Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. **Participants**—Senators Lodge, Hitchcock, and Borah. **Situation**—Senator Hitchcock has asked for this meeting in Lodge’s office during which he hopes that his two colleagues will give him suggestions about how to talk President Wilson into accepting Senator Lodge’s reservations, which the Senate has already accepted.