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PREFACE:

HINDSIGHT vs. FORESIGHT

When we study history, it is all too easy to sit in judgment of those who came before us. We read it after the fact; we see it in hindsight. Given the benefit of such 20/20 hindsight, some historical figures seem to have been very misguided or downright silly in their decisions. Why didn't they anticipate the consequences of their choices? How could they have been so shortsighted? Sports enthusiasts call this sort of analysis "Monday morning quarterbacking." However, it's not so easy to laugh at the follies of past decision makers if we are confronted with decisions in history before we learn the actual results. In such a situation, we find ourselves making some of the same mistakes that historical characters made, and we sometimes commit new errors they did not make. This method of studying history, which we might call "foresight history," is far more challenging—and engaging—than the traditional retroactive method to which we are inured.

In short, when we learn history by hindsight, we risk becoming more arrogant and complacent. If, on the other hand, we learn history by *foresight*, by casting ourselves in the role of those historical figures and making decisions as they did—without knowing the outcome—we can learn humility and gain a great deal of empathy for them. Students in my classes constantly exclaim, "This is hard!" as opposed to, "This is boring!"

Foresight history also helps students improve key decision making skills they will use again and again as citizens. Schools of law, medicine, business, and nursing, along with the military and many other institutions, use case-study methods, where students are forced to make decisions about a particular case and then analyze their thinking. If each of these varied disciplines values decision making so much, shouldn't we be training all our future citizens how to make good decisions?

History provides many benefits for those who study it. Historical knowledge can be liberating all by itself, letting us draw back the veil of ignorance and see the present with eyes enlightened by the past. The more knowledge of history we possess, the better we understand our societies and ourselves. Study and evaluation of primary sources, discussions of motives, debates about significance, analysis of causes and effects, and many other strategies are vital to history courses. The lessons here on decision making support and enhance these other methods of studying history, rather than replacing them with a more "practical" type of history.

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INTRODUCTION

THE *DECISION MAKING IN WORLD HISTORY* SERIES

The lessons in the books of the *Decision Making in World History* series are meant to be used independently within a standard world history course in middle school, high school, or college.

The lessons have four main goals:

- 1. Make History More Interesting.** Simply giving students the problems, having them make decisions, and then telling them what the people involved actually did will keep student interest high. It's exciting to make decisions before you know what the historical characters actually did. It's dynamic learning and it's open-ended. Students enjoy comparing their decisions to those of their classmates and to the decisions actually made by the historical figures. Even if you decide to use the lessons without giving instruction on how to perform the skills involved in decision making, students will still enjoy learning history this way. This increased interest should also lead to increased reading comprehension. After all, when students read their texts, they will actively search for what actually happened and will want to compare it with what they chose.
- 2. Improve Decision Making Through Experience.** The primary way people learn to make better decisions is through the process of making decisions, both good and bad. Students therefore become more sophisticated decision makers with every choice they make. By giving students many chances to make decisions in which they can learn from mistakes and surprises, we can speed up the process of making them savvy decision makers. For example, students who decide to have a foreign government overthrown and then see many negative consequences of their decision will think twice before trying that again and will be skeptical of such a plan if proposed in the present day. Experience itself becomes the teacher.
- 3. More Complex Ethical Thinking.** Ethical questions will arise regularly, and by discussing their positions students will develop more complex moral arguments and understandings. Note, however, that these lessons are not aimed primarily at ethical reasoning. To focus primarily on ethical reasoning, consult *Reasoning with Democratic Values* by Alan Lockwood and David Harris (New York: Teacher's College Press, 1985).
- 4. Improve the Use of Decision making Skills and Reflection on Those Skills.** While experience is an important element that helps students improve their decision making skills, they will develop those skills even more quickly if they learn specific subskills, which can then become guidelines for thinking through decision making problems. The instruction is based on the skills of the **P-A-G-E** model, which is outlined later in this book. One of the teaching strategies emphasizes (in the section "Reflecting on Decision Making") journal writing, in which students reflect on the problems they encounter, including how they could improve their own decision making. If you can get students to reflect on how to improve on decisions they've just made, they will learn to be more reflective in general.

GUIDE TO THOUGHTFUL DECISION MAKING

Student Handout 1

WELCOME TO “FORESIGHT” HISTORY!

The problems in the *Decision Making in World History* series will challenge you to make choices about events in world history before you know what actually happened in those events. This is learning history in a foresighted way—first you decide, then you find out what really happened—rather than hindsight history, where you just find out what happened. You will get at least two benefits from this method of learning history: first, you will improve your decision making skills. Someday, when you avoid buying a “lemon” of a used car that would have wasted thousands of dollars in repairs, you can thank your history teacher for helping you build your decision making skills. Second, it’s fun to learn history as though it’s a cliffhanger mystery, where you’re eager to find out if your decision worked or ended in disaster. But don’t forget to concentrate on the actual historical decision that was made and how it turned out. You can learn a lot about your own decision making through these problems, but you’re mainly in class to learn history and to understand what really happened, not what could have happened.

WHAT IS DECISION MAKING?

You’ve learned about problem solving in other courses such as math and science, and you’ve encountered problem solving when you’ve tried to build something or fix something. Decision making resembles problem solving in some ways (for example, it involves defining a problem and thinking of alternatives) but it’s different from problem solving in that there is no one right answer. The lessons in this book involve “messy” problems; even long after the event, people often disagree about what the best decision was or should have been.

DECISION MAKING AS EXPERIENCE

Experience teaches you how to make good decisions. Every decision that you make—whether good or bad—better equips you to make good decisions in the future. For example, you would probably feel safer being treated by a doctor who had a lot of experience than by a brand-new doctor. The historical problems your teacher gives you will provide you with experience in making decisions in general and will help you become a better decision maker in your role as a citizen. You won’t just have learned about history, you will have experienced it. For some of these lessons, you will feel that you made good decisions; for others, you may feel that you’ve made errors in judgment. As you go along, try to reflect on your experiences as well as on your thinking about decision making.

LESSON 1:

ASSASSINATION IN SARAJEVO, 1914

For Teachers

INTRODUCTION

■ Overview

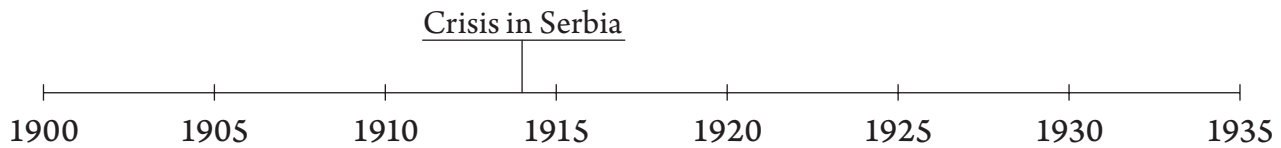
The Great War was one of the salient events of the twentieth century, a catastrophe for Europe that spawned a host of effects that were wondrous in their importance. In this lesson students will have the opportunity to make decisions to avoid or stumble into the general war. The story is gripping, rather like a mystery novel, but it is also quite complex. The negotiations went from country to country over a period of more than a month. Only three or four key decision points, depending on the option chosen, are included in the lesson, but it is nevertheless a challenge for many students to keep straight. It's a challenge well worth the effort. Students will experience the difficulties of deciding when to compromise and when to hold their ground. It will teach them more about the causes of the Great War, or any war, than memorizing the four MAIN (militarism, alliances, imperialism, nationalism) causes of World War I.

■ Vocabulary

- Archduke Francis Ferdinand—Austro-Hungarian leader who was assassinated by Serbs
- Black Hand—Serbian nationalist group involved in the assassination of the archduke
- Serbia—Slavic country in southeastern Europe
- Slavs—ethnic group in Europe sharing language and cultural traditions
- Bosnia-Herzegovina—areas in southeastern Europe taken over by Austria-Hungary in 1908
- alliance (military)—an agreement between two or more countries to support each other militarily in attack or defense
- kaiser—German emperor or king
- tsar—Russian emperor or king
- von Schlieffen Plan—German military plan to defeat France quickly before Russia could mobilize
- mobilization—the process of preparing soldiers for war
- Balkans—the area of small countries in southeastern Europe

HISTORICAL CONTEXT IN 1914

Student Handout 1



On June 28, 1914, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife were assassinated in Sarajevo. (See map.) This is very serious, as the archduke was in line to become the next emperor after the elderly Franz Joseph's reign was over. Three of the six men involved in the assassination plot confessed. They said they were armed and trained by a Serbian nationalist group, the Black Hand, and they detailed how Serbian border guards helped them cross the border into Austria-Hungary, carrying weapons they obtained from the Serbian military. All of the countries in Europe want to avoid a general war, but these countries have their own fears and different national interests.

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY AND SERBIA

Austria-Hungary is an empire made up of 13 nationalities, 16 languages, numerous religions, and several separatist groups. Many of these groups would be happy to break away from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Serbia is the biggest threat to the security of the empire, because Serbia incites Slavic people to fight for independence (see map). Nearly half, 47 percent, of the people in Austria-Hungary are Slavic, so if they obtain their independence, the empire will surely fall apart.

There has been trouble between Austria-Hungary and Serbia for many years. In 1903, Serbian nationalists assassinated their own pro-Austrian king and queen, who were replaced by pro-Russian leaders. The Serbs were very upset in 1908 when Austria-Hungary took over Bosnia and Herzegovina, areas with a Slavic majority that Serbia was hoping to take over. It is interesting that the city of Sarajevo, where the assassination took place, is located in Bosnia. In the Balkan Wars ending last year (1913), Turkey and Bulgaria—which was backed by Austria-Hungary—were defeated, while Serbia doubled in size. For the past year, Serbian newspapers have been predicting the break-up of Austria-Hungary. Serbia is supported by France, which has given military aid to and modernized the Serbian army, and especially by Russia, which is a Slavic country and supports Slavic peoples such as the Serbs.

Austria-Hungary's army is about four times larger than the Serbian army but is outnumbered compared to the combined strength of Russia and Serbia. The power of Austria-Hungary has steadily declined in the past 15 years, and defense spending in Austria-Hungary is far below the level in Russia. The leaders of Austria-Hungary are hoping that their alliance with Germany will prevent Russia from attacking. If the Russians do attack, the military leaders of Austria-Hungary

Lesson 1: Assassination in Sarajevo, 1914

MAP, EUROPE 1914

