**Structured Question: The Peace Treaties after World War One**

As you have 40 minutes on the question, it’s a good idea to aim (roughly) for about 8 minutes on (a), 12 minutes on (b) and 20 minutes on (c).

**The Peace Treaties after World War One**

**a. What did Wilson hope to achieve from the peace settlement of 1919–20? [4]**

**b. Why did Clemenceau and Lloyd George disagree over how to treat Germany? [6]**

**c. ‘The Treaty of Versailles was a fair settlement.’ How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. [10]**



**Student follow-up task based on model answers**

**The Peace Treaties after World War One**

**Suggested Tasks**

▪ Start by filling in the gaps.

▪ Underline any facts that you did not already know.

▪ Try to identify how these answers could be IMPROVED.

▪ Consider what tips you would give yourself about how to improve your performance in the real examination which is coming up in the Summer.

**a. What did Wilson hope to achieve from the peace settlement of 1919–20? [4]**

Wilson’s main objectives for the peace settlement centered around his \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Points for a new and more stable world order and a ‘just and lasting peace’. In terms of Territory, Wilson did not want the former colonies of Germany and her allies to be carved up between the victorious allies but instead made ‘mandates’ of the new League of Nations, who would place them under the protection of those allies who would be required to prepare them for self-government. He wanted to see \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ return to France as he felt this had been stolen from France in 1871. For other disputed territories he favoured self-determination through the use of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (referenda). He wanted reparations to be kept to a low level so that Germany could quickly recover and not want revenge. He accepted the need for German disarmament, but only as the first step towards world disarmament. He did not want Germany to be blamed entirely for the war, and wanted Germany to be made a member of the new \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ as quickly as possible.

**b. Why did Clemenceau and Lloyd George disagree over how to treat Germany? [6]**

One reason they disagreed is because they were very different personalities from different countries. Lloyd George was “The Welsh \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_”, a famously pragmatic politician keen to rebuilt Germany as a trading partner for the British Empire, whereas Clemenceau was “The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_”, an aggressive, vengeful character who was keen to ensure Germany could not attack France in the future as she had done twice in the previous 50 years.

A second reason they disagreed concerned territory. Clemenceau was obsessed with the return from Germany of the ‘lost provinces’ of Alsace-Lorraine which had been taken from France in the year \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Lloyd George however, although realising the necessity of this, was concerned about making France too strong on the continent in place of Germany. As leader of a sea-based empire, he was more concerned instead with obtaining control of Germany’s former colonies in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

A final reason they disagreed was over reparations and armaments. Lloyd George wanted reparations to be at a reasonable level so that Germany could quickly recover as a trading partner for Britain, and wanted to get hold of the German fleet for Britain so that his empire could continue to ‘rule the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_’. Clemenceau though was more interested in high reparations to permanently cripple Germany, and to totally disarm Germany so she could no longer threaten France – an idea which Lloyd George was totally unacceptable as this would create a power vacuum in the heart of Europe and encourage attacks upon Germany from her neighbours.

**c. ‘The Treaty of Versailles was a fair settlement.’ How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. [10]**

There were several ways in which the Treaty of Versailles can be described as fair. Firstly, the territorial terms can be considered fair. Alsace-Lorraine was not so much given as returned to France – it had been seized by the Germans following their victory in the 1871 Franco-\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ War – and the Polish \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ was given to the reconstituted (note: not created) state of Poland because it needed access to the sea for reasons of trade. Giving Eupen-\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to the Belgians can also be seen as fair because Germany had invaded their country in 1914 as part of the Schlieffen Plan. Secondly, the reparations terms can be considered fair. True, the Germans were compelled to sign a ‘blank cheque’ but this was precisely because the Big Three needed more time to calculate the scale of the damage in order to come up with a fair figure. The alternative was either to present the Germans with a totally rushed sum, or to lengthen the negotiations which would have had a devastating influence on the Germans because the allied blockade would have had to stay in place in the meantime, leading to even more civilian starvation in a country already ravaged by the “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Winter” and the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Pandemic. Finally, even the issue of armaments and the League can be considered fair. True, Germany’s army was reduced to a defence force of only 100,000 men, but this was regarded in the Treaty as merely the first step towards world disarmament (as per Wilson’s 14 Points). Similarly, Germany was indeed banned from joining the League at first, but only until she had proven herself ‘peace-loving’ and she therefore ultimately joined in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ as a full council member.

On the other hand, it is possible to argue that the Treaty was unfair. For example, the treaty was a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (a ‘dictated peace’). In other words, Germany had no powers of negotiation and simply has no choice but to sign the treaty presented to them. They were simply summoned into the Hall of Mirrors at the Palace of Versailles in Paris (deliberately chosen by the French to humiliate the Germans since this is where they declared the creation of the Second Reich after the War of 1871) and ordered to sign. Certain terms of the treaty were considered particularly unfair to impose on the Germans. Brockdorff-\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, the German delegate, made a particular point in his speech that Article \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ – the infamous ‘War Guilt’ clause – was unfair because “over 50 years the imperialism of all states has poisoned the international situation”. The historian John \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ agreed that this was a “stigma on an entire nation”. By forcing the Germans to accept guilt in this part of the diktat, the imposition of other harsh terms could be justified – for example forcing Germany to sign a ‘Blank Cheque’ with regard to reparations (the sum was finally settled at £6.6 billion in 1921), cutting the army down to a meagre 100,000 men and sacrificing the Polish Corridor and Danzig to the Poles, thereby splitting Germany into two pieces.

In conclusion, the Treaty of Versailles was harsh, but understandable. In the words of Ruth \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, “Compared to the harsh Treaty of Brest-Litovsk which Germany had imposed on defeated Russia in 1918, the Treaty of Versailles was quite moderate...both territorially and economically”.

**Teacher notes / model answers**

**The Peace Treaties after World War One**

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**a. What did Wilson hope to achieve from the peace settlement of 1919–20? [4]**

Wilson’s main objectives for the peace settlement centered around his 14 Points for a new and more stable world order and a ‘just and lasting peace’. In terms of Territory, Wilson did not want the former colonies of Germany and her allies to be carved up between the victorious allies but instead made ‘mandates’ of the new League of Nations, who would place them under the protection of those allies who would be required to prepare them for self-government. He wanted to see Alsace-Lorraine return to France as he felt this had been stolen from France in 1871. For other disputed territories he favoured self-determination through the use of plebiscites. He wanted reparations to be kept to a low level so that Germany could quickly recover and not want revenge. He accepted the need for German disarmament, but only as the first step towards world disarmament. He did not want Germany to be blamed entirely for the war, and wanted Germany to be made a member of the new League of Nations as quickly as possible.

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One reason they disagreed is because they were very different personalities from different countries. Lloyd George was “The Welsh Wizard”, a famously pragmatic politician keen to rebuilt Germany as a trading partner for the British Empire, whereas Clemenceau was “The Tiger”, an aggressive, vengeful character who was keen to ensure Germany could not attack France in the future as she had done twice in the previous 50 years.

A second reason they disagreed concerned territory. Clemenceau was obsessed with the return from Germany of the ‘lost provinces’ of Alsace-Lorraine which had been taken from France in 1871. Lloyd George however, although realising the necessity of this, was concerned about making France too strong on the continent in place of Germany. As leader of a sea-based empire, he was more concerned instead with obtaining control of Germany’s former colonies in Africa.

A final reason they disagreed was over reparations and armaments. Lloyd George wanted reparations to be at a reasonable level so that Germany could quickly recover as a trading partner for Britain, and wanted to get hold of the German fleet for Britain so that his empire could continue to ‘rule the waves’. Clemenceau though was more interested in high reparations to permanently cripple Germany, and to totally disarm Germany so she could no longer threaten France – an idea which Lloyd George was totally unacceptable as this would create a power vacuum in the heart of Europe and encourage attacks upon Germany from her neighbours.

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