

## World War I & The Great Depression

### The League of Nations

Have you ever heard of the United Nations? Today, the United Nations is an international organization made up of 193 countries including the United States. Since World War II, the group has been working together to solve international problems and challenges. Before the United Nations, however, there was the League of Nations.

After World War I, the world suddenly seemed smaller, especially to the United States. Before the war, the U.S. had felt pretty isolated from Europe. The distance across the Atlantic Ocean seemed quite large. After World War I, the U.S. and other countries realized that some events would affect almost every country in the world. Leaders from around the world wanted to organize a group made up from representatives of every country.

United States President Woodrow Wilson came up with the idea for the international problem-solving group. He spoke to Congress on January 8, 1918. His speech has been named The Fourteen Points. He communicated to Congress fourteen ideas that he thought would secure peace for the world. Here is the fourteenth point of his speech. President Wilson outlines his idea for an international league of nations.

XIV. A general association of nations must be formed under specific **covenants**<sup>1</sup> for the purpose of affording **mutual**<sup>2</sup> guarantees of political independence and territorial **integrity**<sup>3</sup> to great and small states alike...

An evident principle runs through the whole program I have outlined. It is the principle of justice to all peoples and nationalities, and their right to live on equal terms of liberty and safety with one another, whether they be strong or weak. Unless this principle be made its foundation, no part of the structure of international justice can stand...

The League of Nations was established as part of the Treaty of Versailles, the peace agreement that ended World War I. The League lasted from January 1920 to the **outbreak**<sup>4</sup> of World War II. Even before World War II, however, the League was struggling. Even though the League of Nations was President Woodrow Wilson's idea, the United States never joined. The goal of the League was to secure international peace. Yet, barely 20 years later, the world would fight a second world war. Still, the League was a very important lesson in what works and what does not work in international policy.

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<sup>1</sup> **covenants** – agreements

<sup>2</sup> **mutual** – shared

<sup>3</sup> **integrity** – wholeness, lack of division

<sup>4</sup> **outbreak** – beginning

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What did the U.S. and other countries realize after World War I?
  - A that some events would affect almost all countries of the world
  - B that some events would affect only some countries of the world
  - C that some countries needed to join together against others
  - D that some issues would affect only military people
  
2. How does the author compare the League of Nations and the United Nations?
  - A Both groups were made up of 193 countries including the United States.
  - B Both groups were founded after the end of World War I.
  - C Both groups failed to prevent the outbreak of another world war.
  - D Both groups worked to solve international problems and challenges.
  
3. The League of Nations was a great idea that struggled in practice. What evidence from the passage best supports this statement?
  - A The League was established after World War I.
  - B The United States never joined the League.
  - C The League was President Woodrow Wilson's idea.
  - D The League lasted from 1920 to the start of World War II.
  
4. "An evident principle runs through the whole program I have outlined. It is the principle of justice to all peoples and nationalities, and their right to live on equal terms of liberty and safety with one another, whether they be strong or weak."

Based on this information, what can you conclude about Wilson?

- A He believed in equality for all nations.
  - B He wanted to promote American interests.
  - C He believed all nations had the same interests.
  - D He believed weak nations could become stronger.
  
5. What is this passage mostly about?
  - A how the League of Nations became the United Nations
  - B the Treaty of Versailles that ended World War I
  - C the establishment of the League of Nations
  - D the founding of the United Nations after World War II

6. Read the following sentences: "After World War I, the world suddenly seemed smaller, especially to the United States. Before the war, the U.S. had felt pretty **isolated** from Europe. The distance across the Atlantic Ocean seemed quite large."

As used in the sentence, what does the word "**isolated**" mean?

- A close to others
- B separate from others
- C similar to others
- D upset with others

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

\_\_\_\_\_ the League of Nations was President Woodrow Wilson's idea, the United States never joined.

- A Although
- B Therefore
- C Initially
- D Particularly

8. What was the goal of the League of Nations?

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**9.** Explain why the author most likely pointed out that the United States never joined the League of Nations.

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**10.** Explain whether the League of Nations was successful and why. Support your answer using information from the passage.

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