

To what extent did the 'Big Three' achieve their aims?

The people of Germany hated the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. But many historians have said that the countries who actually had a say in it hated it too! How happy were the 'Big Three' and the nations that they represented with the final treaty?

Objectives

- **Analyse** how satisfied the 'Big Three' would have been with the final treaty.
- **Evaluate** which of the 'Big Three' would have been the most satisfied.

Georges Clemenceau, France

Aim:	Evidence that the aim was achieved:	Evidence that the aim was not achieved:
Punishment and revenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Germany and its allies had to accept responsibility for starting the war. This damaged German pride and made them an international laughing stock. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most people wanted Germany to be destroyed, not just weakened. People felt that Clemenceau had not given them the revenge that they wanted. They voted him out of office in the next election.
Protection – reduction of Germany's armed forces and power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The German army and navy were reduced. Germany was not allowed to have tanks, submarines or aeroplanes. The Rhineland was demilitarised. Germany could not unite with Austria. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clemenceau felt that Germany should not be allowed any army at all. People in France wanted an independent Rhineland, demilitarising it simply wasn't enough.
Recover losses and reparations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 1921 the amount for reparations was set at £6,600 million. France gained the coal from the Saar for 15 years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is estimated that the war had cost France 200 billion Francs; the reparations were far less than this. France lost more soldiers during the war than any other country. Money could not make up for this. Many French people felt that they should have been given the Saar for good.

Woodrow Wilson, USA

Aim:	Evidence that the aim was achieved:	Evidence that the aim was not achieved:
Self-determination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many small nations that had been part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire were given independence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parts of the German Empire were given to the League of Nations as mandates, but in reality Britain and France ran them.
Start the League of Nations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The League of Nations was created. Forty-two countries joined the League of Nations when it was established in 1920. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The American Senate refused to join the League of Nations. During the 1920s the USA was governed by a political party that pushed for isolationism – far from the idea of collective security.
Stop future wars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Countries in the League of Nations agreed to work together to keep the peace. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wilson felt that the Treaty of Versailles was so harsh that Germany would seek revenge and that another war would follow.

David Lloyd George, Britain

Aim:	Evidence that the aim was achieved:	Evidence that the aim was not achieved:
Revenge and reparations for the people of Britain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The war guilt clause pleased the British people. Britain received reparations to help rebuild even though little damage had been done on British soil. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lloyd George worried that the Treaty was too harsh and that the people of Germany would seek revenge.
Retain naval supremacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The German army was heavily reduced. Britain was once again confident that they 'ruled the seas'. 	
Retain a trade relationship with Germany		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The German economy was crippled by the war effort, repairs and reparations. Germany was not in a strong position to trade with anyone. John Maynard Keynes, a British economist, said that the reparations would destroy the economies of Europe.
Reduce the German Empire, preserve the British Empire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the end of the First World War the British Empire was bigger than it had ever been before. Britain gained territory from the German Empire. 	
Reduce the risk of another war		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lloyd George felt that the Treaty was so harsh that Britain would have to fight another war in 25 years' time, and that the cost would be double that of the first.

► **SOURCE A**
The front cover of a French magazine from after the Treaty of Versailles was signed; the top part shows 1871, when Germany beat France in a war and took lots of French land; the bottom shows France taking things from Germany in 1919



Key Words

naval supremacy economist

Work

- Who would have been most satisfied with the Treaty, and why?
- Look at **Source A**. Does it support or criticise the Treaty of Versailles? Explain how you know this.
- Make your own cartoon or poster to represent how satisfied either Lloyd George or Wilson would have been by the final treaty.

Practice Question

'Clemenceau was the least satisfied of the "Big Three" by the Treaty of Versailles.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer.

16 marks

SPaG: 4 marks

Study Tip

Remember to give and explain a few points for both sides of the argument. Finally, write a conclusion. This should be a decisive argument that shows why you agree or disagree with the statement overall.