

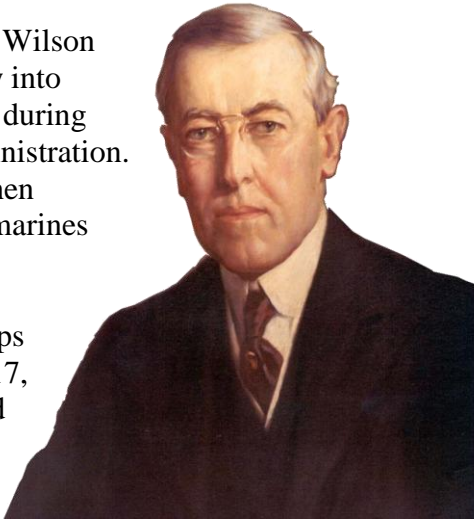
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# WILSON'S WAR MESSAGE

As World War I broke out in Europe, President Wilson was careful to try and keep the United States out of war. He declared a policy of neutrality and pledged not to choose sides.

As President Wilson advised entry into World War I during his first administration. However, when German submarines sank several American merchant ships in March 1917, Wilson asked Congress for a



declaration of war. The following is an excerpt from his speech to Congress on April 2, 1917:

***“the new [German] policy has swept every restriction aside. Vessels of every kind...have been ruthlessly sent to the bottom [of the ocean] without warning and without thought or help or mercy for those on board...The present German submarine warfare...is a war against all nations...Our motive will not be revenge or the victorious assertion of the physical might...but only the vindication of right, of human right...There are...many months of...sacrifice ahead of us. It is a fearful thing to lead this great peaceful people to war...but the right is more precious than peace, and we shall fight for democracy...as [we] shall bring peace and safety to all nations and the world itself at last free.”***

As Wilson prepared to lead his American people into war, he reminded them why they were fighting:

***“...we shall fight for the things which we have carried nearest our hearts – for democracy...for the rights and liberties of small nations, for...peace and safety to all nations...”***

1. Did President Wilson want the United States to get involved in the war when it first broke out?

Explain. \_\_\_\_\_

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2. What events convinced Wilson to change his mind? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. On what side did the United States enter the war? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Why is the President asking Congress to declare war? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Why does Wilson feel it is important for the US to enter the war? \_\_\_\_\_

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