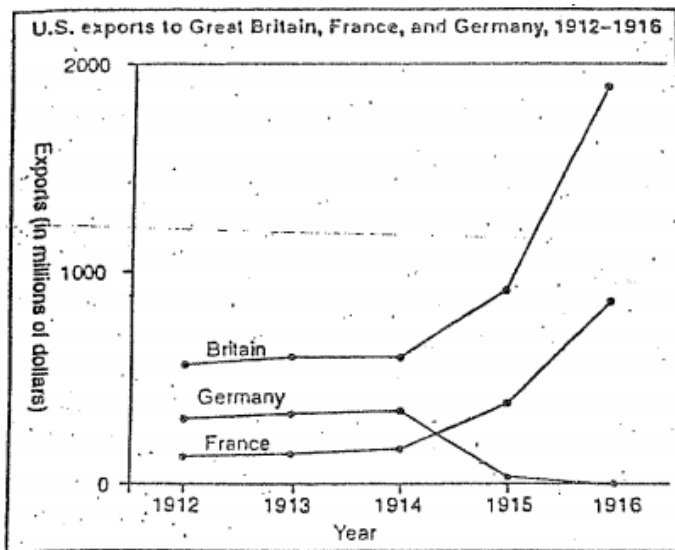


# Why did the United States enter World War I?

## Document 1 – Woodrow Wilson Proclamation, August 1914

“Every man who really loves America will act and speak in the true spirit of neutrality, which is the spirit of impartiality and fairness and friendliness to all concerned. The spirit of the nation in this critical matter will be determined largely by what individuals and society and those gathered in public meetings do and say, upon what newspapers and magazines contain, upon what ministers utter in their pulpits, and men proclaim as their opinions upon the street. . . . The United States must be neutral in fact, as well as in name, during these days that are to try men's souls.

## Document 2 – United States trade with Britain, France and Germany 1912 to 1916



## Document 3a - German Notice in local newspaper –

OCEAN TRAVEL

**NOTICE!**

TRAVELLERS intending to embark on the Atlantic voyage are reminded that a state of war exists between Germany and her allies and Great Britain and her allies; that the zone of war includes the waters adjacent to the British Isles; that, in accordance with formal notice given by the Imperial German Government, vessels flying the flag of Great Britain, or of any of her allies, are liable to destruction in those waters and that travellers sailing in the war zone on ships of Great Britain or her allies do so at their own risk.

**IMPERIAL GERMAN EMBASSY,**  
WASHINGTON, D. C., APRIL 22, 1915.

OCEAN TRAVEL

**CUNARD**

**EUROPE VIA LIVERPOOL**

**LUSITANIA**

Fastest and Largest Steamer now in Atlantic Service Sails  
SATURDAY, MAY 1, 10 A. M.

Transylvania - Fri., May 7, 5 P.M.  
Orduna, . . . Tues., May 18, 10 A.M.  
Tuscania, . . . Fri., May 21, 5 P.M.  
LUSITANIA, - Sat., May 29, 10 A.M.  
Transylvania, - Fri., June 4, 5 P.M.

Gibraltar—Genoa—Naples—Piræus

**The New York Times.**

VOL. LXXIV. NO. 20,823. NEW YORK, SATURDAY, MAY 8, 1915.—TWENTY-FOUR PAGES. ONE CENT

**LUSITANIA SUNK BY A SUBMARINE, PROBABLY 1,000 DEAD; TWICE TORPEDOED OFF IRISH COAST; SINKS IN 15 MINUTES; AMERICANS ABOARD INCLUDED VANDERBILT AND FROHMAN; WASHINGTON BELIEVES THAT A GRAVE CRISIS IS AT HAND**

**SHOCKS THE PRESIDENT**  
Washington Deeply Stirred by Disaster and Fears a Crisis.

**BULLETINS AT WHITE HOUSE**  
Wilson Needs Them Closely, but is Silent on the Nation's Course.

**RUMOR OF CONGRESS CALL**  
Loss of Lusitania Revivifies Hope of Our First Meeting in Germany.

**CAPITAL FULL OF RUMORS**  
Rumors That Linnor Was to be Sent Here Before Her Return Home.



**THE LOST LUNARD STEAMSHIP LUSITANIA**

**Admiralty Puts Embargo On News Dispatches**  
LONDON, May 8.—It is stated that the British Admiralty is not withholding any verified facts regarding the Lusitania, but declines to pass dispatches based merely on rumor.

**DEATH OF FROHMAN IS FEARED IN LONDON**  
"What is America Going to Do About It?" Asks British College of Managers.

**SOME DEAD TAKEN ASHORE**  
Several Hundred Survivors at Queenstown and Kinsale.

**STEWART TELLS OF DISASTER**  
One Torpedo Crashes into the Damaged Liner's Bow, Another into the Engine Room.

**BOATS PROMPTLY LOWERED**  
But Ship Goes Down So Quickly Many Must Have Gone with Her—No Officers Reported Saved.

**ATTACKED IN BROAD BAY**  
Passengers at Lanchester-Warrington Had Boat Struck by German Boat—The Ship Left New York.

**LONDON, Saturday, May 8.**  
The Cunard liner Lusitania, which sailed out of New York last Saturday with 1,918 souls aboard, fell at the bottom of the ocean off the Irish coast.

Document 4 – Zimmerman Telegram – Germany sent the following telegram to Mexico in early 1917. It was intercepted by the British and given to the United States.

"We intend to begin on the first of February unrestricted submarine warfare. We shall endeavor in spite of this to keep the United States of America neutral. In the event of this not succeeding, we make Mexico a proposal or alliance on the following basis: make war together, make peace together, generous financial support and an understanding on our part that Mexico is to reconquer the lost territory in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona"

Document 5 - Wilson's War Message to Congress, April, 2, 1917

The Imperial German Government's submarine warfare against commerce is a warfare against mankind. It is a war against all nations. American ships have been sunk, American lives taken, . . . but the ships and people of other neutral and friendly nations have been sunk and overwhelmed in the waters in the same way. There has been no discrimination. The challenge is to all mankind. . . .

. . . The menace to peace and freedom lies in the existence of autocratic governments backed by organized force which is controlled wholly by the will of the government, not by the will of their people.

Peace can never be maintained except by a partnership of democratic nations.

Does not every American feel that . . . hope for the future peace of the world by the wonderful and heartening things that have been happening within the last few weeks in Russia? . . . The autocracy that crowned the summit of her political structure . . . has been shaken off and the great, generous Russian people have been added to the forces that are fighting for freedom in the world, for justice, and for peace. Here is a fit partner for a league of honor.

We are glad to fight for the ultimate peace of the world and for the liberation of its peoples, the German peoples included: for the rights of nations great and small and the privilege of men everywhere to choose their way of life and of obedience. The world must be made safe for democracy. Its peace must be planted upon the tested foundations of political liberty. We have no selfish ends to serve. We desire no conquest, no dominion.

# Why did the United States enter World War I?

## Questions:

### Documents 1 and 2.

1. According to Wilson, what policy did he believe the United States should follow with regard to the war in Europe in 1914? Why do you think he believed the U.S. should follow this policy?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. According to the graph, does it appear the U.S. followed Wilson's advice? Explain.

### Document 3 a and 3 b

1. What warning did the German government give to people travelling on the Lusitania? Why do you think Germany adopted this policy?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What happened to the Lusitania on May 1, 1915? Why might the ship have sunk in 15 minutes? How might Germany have justified its action?

### Document 4

1. Why did Germany send the Zimmerman telegram to Mexico? How do you think the United States should have responded when they were told of it?

### Document 5 –

1. Explain TWO reasons why Wilson believed the U.S. should declare war on Germany. What had just happened in Russia? What was the connection between events in Russia and Wilson's argument?