

The United States Enters World War I

Big Idea

As you read through these passages, complete the table below to identify the effects of the war on the American workforce.

US Groups	Effects
Women	
African Americans	
Hispanics	

Organizing the Economy

Identify the Main Idea

Write the Main Idea of the passage:

Congress created special agencies to prepare the economy for war. The War Industries Board (WIB) coordinated the production of war materials. The Food Administration encouraged Americans to grow their own vegetables in **victory gardens**. The Fuel Administration introduced daylight savings time and shortened workweeks to conserve energy. The government raised money for the war through taxes and bonds.

The National War Labor Board (NWLB) tried to avoid labor strikes. For workers, it pushed for wage increases, an eight-hour workday, and the right to organize unions. In return, labor leaders agreed not to strike. Women took over many now-open industries. In the "Great Migration," many African Americans left the South to take jobs in northern factories. Many Mexicans came to the American Southwest to work for farmers and ranchers.

The Committee on Public Information (CPI) hired advertisers, artists, and others to sway public opinion in favor of the war. The government limited opposition to the war and **espionage**, or spying. Some civil liberties were suppressed.

Building the Military

Distinguishing Fact From Opinion and Formulating Questions

1. Highlight in **GREEN** one **fact** about draft boards.
2. Highlight in **BLUE** one **opinion** about draft boards.

Write two questions you have after reading the passage.

When the United States entered the war in 1917, it did not have enough soldiers. Although many people volunteered, more were needed. Many progressives believed that conscription, or forced military service, was against democratic principles. Congress, however, believed conscription was necessary. It set up a new system of conscription called selective service. It required all men between 21 and 30 to register for the draft. A lottery then randomly decided the order in which individuals were called before local draft boards. These boards selected or exempted men from military service. The members of the draft boards were local civilians. Progressives believed these community members could better decide which men to draft.

Eventually about 2.8 million Americans were drafted. About 2 million more volunteered. Some wanted to fight after hearing about German atrocities. Others wanted to fight for democracy. Many saw World War I as an opportunity for adventure and wanted to fight for their country. Troop morale was high for American soldiers during World War I, despite losses. During the war 50,000 Americans died in combat and more than 200,000 were wounded.

About 42,000 of the 400,000 African Americans who were drafted served in the war overseas. African American soldiers faced discrimination and prejudice in the army. They served in racially segregated units. They were almost always under the control of white officers. Despite this, many African Americans fought with distinction in the war. Two African American divisions fought in battles along the Western Front.

Women officially served in the armed forces for the first time in World War I. They served in noncombat positions. With men serving in combat, the armed forces faced a shortage of clerical workers. The navy enlisted women to serve as clerical workers, radio operators, electricians, chemists, and other occupations. The army, however, refused to enlist women. It hired women as temporary employees to fill clerical jobs. The only women to actually serve in the army were the army nurses. Women served as nurses in the navy, too.

Section Wrap-Up

Answer these questions to check your understanding of the entire section.

1. How did the United States raise an army for World War I?

2. How did the government control the U.S. economy to support the war?

World War I Begins

World War I Begins

Making Inferences

Reforming Government

Distinguishing Fact from Opinion

Suffrage

Comparing and Contrasting

Reforming Society

Problems and Solutions

Section Wrap-Up

Answer these questions to check your understanding of the entire section.