

Title	Entangled Alliances: The U.S. Enters the Great War
Overview	In this lesson, students will identify historical trends in U.S. isolationist policy, culminating with interventionist taken in response to the Zimmermann telegram
Objectives	Students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain America's history of isolationism• Analyze historical and socio-cultural factors that fueled isolationist policy during the war's early years• Identify the causes of American entry into World War I
PA Standards	History 8.1.11.A: Evaluate chronological thinking 8.1.11.C: Evaluate historical interpretation of events 8.1.11.D: Synthesize historical research 8.3.11.A: Analyze/evaluate political contributors, 1890-present 8.3.11.C: Analyze continuity/change, 1890-present
National Standards	History Era 7 (1890 - 1930) 2B: Demonstrate understanding of the causes of World War I and why the United States intervened. Civics IV.A.2: Explain how nation-states interact with each other.
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Slide presentation• Group decryption handouts (set of five)• Encryption key and final translation
Procedures	<p>Anticipatory set: Using the slideshow, instructor opens with a blind quote. A volunteer reads it aloud. Instructor posits that it seems nearly unpatriotic in light of America's current role as global protector. (0:02)</p> <p>Instructor leads a brief review of American isolationist policy, from Thomas Paine and George Washington through the debate to enter the "Great War in Europe". (0:03)</p> <p>Lecture segues into an outline of the presidential election of 1916: Who's running, what's at stake, and how each campaigns reflected the public attitudes of the era. (0:05)</p> <p>Cooperative exercise decrypting Zimmermann telegram. Students read their decrypted messages to explain what exactly what happened to finally push the U.S. into the breach. (0:05)</p>

Class concludes with a short narrative explaining the context of the Zimmermann note, its rhetorical and practical implications, Britain's dilemma regarding its release, and its place as the "final straw" that led to the U.S. becoming an interventionist world power. (0:03)

Conclusion

"This document, the British say, won the war for the allied powers. But framed differently, this telegram started a chain reaction that finds us in Iraq today. Any questions?" (0:01)