

World War I Timeline

Date	Event	Location	Significance
June 28, 1914	Archduke Ferdinand assassinated	Sarajevo, Bosnia	Unsteady alliances erupt into war as Russia, Serbia's ally, begins to mobilize
August 1, 1914	Germany declares war on Russia and France		Although guaranteeing Belgian neutrality, Germans march through Belgium into France.
August 1914	Nations align for war		Bulgaria and Turkey join Germany and Austria-Hungary in the Central Powers. France, England, Russia (later Japan and Italy) join the Allied Powers
August 4, 1914	Wilson declares U.S. neutrality	Washington, D.C.	Reflecting strong public opinion, Wilson states that U.S. will not join the war
February 15, 1915	Germany declares waters around British Isles a war zone		Neutral vessels are warned of potential u-boat attacks. Wilson warns Germany that it would be accountable for any loss of American life
May 7, 1915	Lusitania sunk by Germans	Off coast of Ireland	Torpedoed without warning, the Lusitania sinks in 18 minutes, killing 1198 (128 Americans)
September 1, 1915	Arabic Pledge	Berlin	Germany promises not to sink unarmed liners following sinking of British liner Arabic
May 31, 1916	Sussex Pledge	Berlin	Following sinking of French steamer Sussex, Germany again agrees to "visit and search" rules, but insists that Great Britain should also agree to obey international laws regarding freedom of the seas
November 1916	Wilson wins 1916 presidential election	U.S.	Declaring "he kept us out of war," Wilson and Democrats barely defeat Hughes and Republicans (277 to 254 in electoral college)

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January 22, 1917	Wilson calls for "peace without victory"	Washington, D.C.	Frustrated with his efforts to mediate a peace, Wilson becomes convinced that both sides needed to cease hostilities
January 31, 1917	Germany resumes unlimited submarine warfare	Berlin	Confident that U.S. help would be too late, Germany seeks to starve England into submission
February 1917	Zimmermann note discovered	Berlin to Mexico City	Foreign minister Zimmermann asks Mexico to join Germany in exchange for return of southwest U.S. British intercept message
February 1917	Wilson asks Congress for greater powers	Washington, D.C.	Senate, led by La Follette of Wisconsin, refuse to grant Wilson power to wage an undeclared naval war
March 15, 1917	Russian Revolution deposes Czar Nicholas	Russia	Instability in Europe encourages Wilson to act
April 2, 1917	Wilson asks for declaration of war	Capitol Building, Washington, D.C.	"The world must be made safe for democracy," Wilson insists
May 1917	Food Administration formed	Washington, D.C.	Herbert Hoover heads effort to conserve food and boost agricultural output
May 1917	Creel Committee issues official propaganda	Washington, D.C.	Daily "Official Bulletins" seek to convince Americans of the crusade for freedom and democracy and the bestial nature of the "Huns"
May 1917	War Industries Board created	Washington, D.C.	Led by Bernard Baruch, the WIB set prices and determined what goods should be produced by private industry
May 28, 1917	Selective Service Act passed	Washington, D.C.	Nearly 10 million men are listed and a lottery chooses first 687,000 to serve. Eventually 3,000,000 men serve as draftees in the war

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January 1918	14 Points declared	Capitol Building, Washington, D.C.	Wilson lists his goals for a war-free world, including a League of Nations
May 28, 1918	Cantigny	North of Paris	First victory for American troops
May 1918	Chateau-Thierry	France	French and American troops block German advance
June 1918	Belleau Wood	France	American forces suffer heavy losses but defeat Germans
July 1918	Second Battle of the Marne	France	Allied forces defeat Germans who begin retreat east
September to November 1918	Meuse-Argonne	Eastern France	Gen. Pershing loses 120,000 men (10%) of his troops in heavy fighting
October 1918	Sedan	Eastern France	American troops cut German supply lines 50 miles behind German front
November 11, 1918	Germans surrender, expecting a peace drawn up under Wilson's generous 14 Points	Compiègne, France	Worst war in world history is over. 10 million soldiers killed, 10 million civilians die from disease and starvation
June 28, 1919	Treaty of Versailles signed	Versailles, France	Germany signs treaty drafted by "Big Four" which includes huge reparation demands