ally. But later that year V. I. Lenin came to power with a promise to pull Russian troops out of the war. Early in 1918, Lenin signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (brest lih TAWHK) with Germany. The treaty ended Russian participation in World War I.

Russia’s withdrawal had an immediate impact on the war. With Russia out of the struggle, Germany could concentrate its forces on the Western Front. In the spring of 1918, the Central Powers stood ready to achieve the great breakthrough they had sought for so long.

**Checkpoint** How did Russia’s loss of morale affect the strategic position of the Allies in World War I?

### The United States Declares War

Soon after the Russian Revolution began, however, another event altered the balance of forces. The United States declared war on Germany. Many factors contributed to the decision of the United States to exchange neutrality for war in 1917.

**Why Join the Allies?** Many Americans supported the Allies because of cultural ties. The United States shared a cultural history and language with Britain and sympathized with France as another democracy. On the other hand, some German Americans favored the Central Powers. So did many Irish Americans, who resented British rule of Ireland, and Russian Jewish immigrants, who did not want to be allied with the tsar.

Germany had ceased submarine attacks in 1915 after pressure from President Wilson. However, in early 1917, Germany was desperate to break the stalemate. On February 1, the German government announced that it would resume unrestricted submarine warfare. Wilson angrily denounced Germany.

Also, in early 1917, the British intercepted a message from the German foreign minister, Arthur Zimmermann, to his ambassador in Mexico. In the note, Zimmermann authorized his ambassador to propose that Germany would help Mexico “to reconquer the lost territory in New Mexico, Texas, and Arizona” in return for Mexican support against the United States. Britain revealed the Zimmermann note to the American government. When the note became public, anti-German feeling intensified in the United States.

**Declaring War** In April 1917, Wilson asked Congress to declare war on Germany. “We have no selfish ends to serve,” he stated. Instead, he painted the conflict idealistically as a war “to make the world safe for democracy” and later as a “war to end war.”

The United States needed months to recruit, train, supply, and transport a modern army across the Atlantic. But by 1918, about two million American soldiers had joined the war-weary Allied troops fighting on the Western Front. Although relatively few American troops engaged in combat, their arrival gave Allied troops a much-needed morale boost. Just as important to the debt-ridden Allies was American financial aid.
The Fourteen Points Though he had failed to maintain American neutrality, Wilson still hoped to be a peacemaker. In January 1918, he issued the Fourteen Points, a list of his terms for resolving this and future wars. He called for freedom of the seas, free trade, large-scale reductions of arms, and an end to secret treaties. For Eastern Europe, Wilson favored self-determination, the right of people to choose their own form of government. Finally, Wilson urged the creation of a “general association of nations” to keep the peace in the future.

Checkpoint What are three factors that led the United States to enter the war?

Victory at Last

A final showdown on the Western Front began in early 1918. The Germans badly wanted to achieve a major victory before eager American troops arrived in Europe. In March, the Germans launched a huge offensive that by July had pushed the Allies back 40 miles. These efforts exhausted the Germans, however, and by then American troops were arriving by the thousands. The Allies then launched a counterattack, slowly driving German forces back across France and Belgium. In September, German generals told the kaiser that the war could not be won.

Uprisings exploded among hungry city dwellers across Germany. German commanders advised the kaiser to step down. William II did so in early November, fleeing into exile in the Netherlands.

By autumn, Austria-Hungary was also reeling toward collapse. As the government in Vienna tottered, the subject nationalities revolted, splintering the empire of the Hapsburgs. Bulgaria and the Ottoman empire also asked for peace.

The new German government sought an armistice, or agreement to end fighting, with the Allies. At 11 A.M. on November 11, 1918, the Great War at last came to an end.

Checkpoint Why did Germany ask the Allies for an armistice in November 1918?

Celebrating the Armistice

Around the globe, crowds celebrated the end of the war. Here, British and American soldiers and civilians wave the American and French flags in relief and jubilation.

Progress Monitoring Online

For: Self-quiz with vocabulary practice
Web Code: rba-2631

Terms, People, and Places

1. For each term, person, or place listed at the beginning of the section, write a sentence explaining its significance.

Note Taking

2. Reading Skill: Summarize Use your completed outline to answer the Focus Question: How did the Allies win World War I?

Comprehension and Critical Thinking

3. Summarize What measures did wartime governments take to control national economies and public opinion?

4. Recognize Effects What impact did wartime failures have on Russia?

5. Draw Conclusions Describe how the entry of United States into the war was a turning point.

6. Analyze Information Reread the poem by Siegfried Sassoon. What does it suggest about the effects of trench warfare?

Writing About History

Quick Write: Gather Evidence to Support Thesis Statement Suppose you are writing an essay with the following thesis statement “Women played a critical role in World War I.” Write three questions like the two below that would help you gather evidence to support this thesis.

- What types of things did women do during the war?
- Why was this work important?