

Guide to Reading

Connection

In the previous section, you learned about the events that led to U.S. involvement in World War I. In this section, you will discover how the United States prepared for war at home.

Main Idea

- The United States instituted a draft for military service, and African Americans and women took on new roles. (p. 376)
- The government used Progressive ideas to manage the economy and pay for the war. (p. 377)
- Women, African Americans, and Mexican Americans all helped to fill labor shortages created by the draft. (p. 378)

- Propaganda and limits on civil liberties were part of domestic life during World War I. (p. 379)

Content Vocabulary

conscription, victory garden, espionage

Academic Vocabulary

draft, migrate, constitute

People and Terms to Identify

War Industries Board, Bernard Baruch, Liberty Bond, Victory Bond, Committee on Public Information

Reading Objectives

- **Analyze** how the United States raised an army and won support for World War I.

- **Explain** how the economy was controlled to support the war.

Reading Strategy

Taking Notes As you read about how the United States mobilized for war, use the major headings of the section to create an outline similar to the one below.

The Home Front
I. Building Up the Military
A.
B.
C.
II.
A.
B.

Preview of Events

1917

1917

Selective Service Act and Espionage Act passed

1918

May 1918

Sedition Act passed

September 1918

Eugene Debs imprisoned

1919

1919

Schenck v. United States

The following are the main History–Social Science Standards covered in this section.

11.4 Students trace the rise of the United States to its role as a world power in the twentieth century.

11.4.5 Analyze the political, economic, and social ramifications of World War I on the home front.

The Big Idea

The fate of nations is forever changed by monumental world events. World War I brought far-reaching changes to the United States. Although many people enlisted in the army, the government instituted a draft to increase the number of combat troops. This created job vacancies and new opportunities for women and minorities. Many African Americans and Mexican Americans migrated north to work in factories, and women also took industrial jobs. Mexicans migrated to the United States to fill agricultural jobs in the Southwest. Government agencies facilitated cooperation between government and big business, rationed food and fuel, and sold bonds to raise money for the war. To ensure support for the war, Congress passed—and the Supreme Court upheld—laws restricting antiwar activities and certain civil liberties. The Supreme Court upheld limitations on free speech that threatened the safety of citizens or hindered the war effort.

Building Up the Military

Main Idea The United States instituted a draft for military service, and African Americans and women took on new roles.

Reading Connection Describe a time you were required to do something that you might not have done otherwise. Read on to learn about the selective service system.

After Congress declared war on Germany in April 1917, young men from across the nation swamped recruiting offices eager to volunteer for the war. Historian William Langer, who served in World War I, recalled the enthusiasm of the young recruits:

★ An American Story ★

“What strikes me most, I think, is the eagerness of the men to get to France and above all to reach the front. One would think that, after almost four years of war, after the most detailed and realistic accounts of the murderous fighting . . . to say nothing of the day-to-day agony of trench warfare, it would have been all but impossible to get anyone to serve without duress. But it was not so. We and many thousands of others volunteered. Perhaps we were offended by the arrogance of the German U-boat campaign, and convinced Kaiserism must be smashed, once and for all. Possibly we already felt that, in the American interest, Western democracy must not be allowed to go under. But . . . most of us, young, were simply fascinated by the prospect of adventure and heroism. . . . Here was our one great chance for excitement and risk.”

—quoted in
Doughboy War



◀ World War I
recruiting poster.

When the United States declared war against Germany in April 1917, progressives controlled the federal government. They did not abandon their ideas simply because a war had begun. Instead, they applied progressive ideas to fighting the war.

Selective Service When the United States entered the war in 1917, the army and National Guard together had slightly more than 370,000 troops. Although many men volunteered after war was declared, many felt more soldiers needed to be **drafted**.

Many progressives believed that **conscription**—forced military service—was a violation of democratic and republican principles. Realizing a draft was necessary, however, Congress, with Wilson’s support, created a new system called selective service. Instead of having the military run the draft, the Selective Service Act of 1917 required all men between 21 and 30 to register for the draft. A lottery randomly determined the order they were called before a local draft board in charge of selecting or exempting people from military service.

The thousands of local boards were the heart of the system. The members of the draft boards were civilians from local communities. Progressives believed local people, understanding community needs, would know which men to draft. Eventually about 2.8 million Americans were drafted.

Volunteers for War Not all American soldiers were drafted. Of the approximately 2 million men who volunteered, there were many reasons for deciding to enlist. Some had grown up listening to stories of the Civil War and the Spanish-American War. They saw this war as a great adventure and wanted to fight for their country’s cause. To soldiers such as Justin Klingenberg, “War consisted of following the flag over a shell-torn field, with fixed bayonet . . . pushing the Hun back from trench to trench. . . .” Although the horrors of the war soon became clear to the American troops, their morale remained high, helping to ensure an Allied victory.

African Americans in the War Of the nearly 400,000 African Americans who were drafted, about 42,000 served overseas as combat troops. African American soldiers encountered discrimination and prejudice in the army. They served in racially segregated units almost always under white officers.

Despite these challenges, many African American soldiers fought with distinction in the war. For example, the African American 92nd and 93rd Infantry

Divisions fought in bitter battles along the Western Front. Many of them won praise from both the French commander, Marshal Henri Pétain, and the United States commander, General John Pershing. The entire 369th Infantry Regiment won the highly prized French decoration, the Croix de Guerre (“war cross”), for gallantry in combat.

Women in the Military World War I was the first war in which women officially served in the armed forces, although only in noncombat positions. Women nurses had served in both the army and navy since the early 1900s, but as auxiliaries. Before World War I, nurses were not assigned ranks, and the women were not technically enlisted in the army or navy.

As the military prepared for war in 1917, it faced a severe shortage of clerical workers because so many men were assigned to active duty. Early in 1917, the navy authorized the enlistment of women to meet its clerical needs. By the end of the war, over 11,000 women had served in the navy. Although most performed clerical duties, others served as radio operators, electricians, pharmacists, and photographers.

The army still did not enlist women. Instead, it hired them as temporary clerical workers. The only women to actually serve in the army were in the Army Nursing Corps. Army nurses were the only women in the military sent overseas during the war. Over 20,000 nurses served in the army during the war, including more than 10,000 overseas.

Reading Check **Describing** How did Congress ensure that the military had enough troops to fight the war?

Organizing Industry

Main Idea The government used Progressive ideas to manage the economy and pay for the war.

Reading Connection In what ways do you help conserve food or fuel resources? Read on to learn about America’s response to the needs of the military in World War I.

The progressive emphasis on careful planning and scientific management shaped the federal government’s approach to mobilizing the American war economy. To efficiently manage the relationship



Picturing History

Women and War Although not allowed in combat, many women served in auxiliary positions, such as nursing. Here, Birmingham, Alabama, women collect money during a Red Cross parade in 1918. [In what other capacities did women serve during the war?](#)

between the federal government and private companies, Congress created special boards. These boards emphasized cooperation between big business and government. Business executives, professional managers, and government representatives staffed the boards. Their goal was to ensure the most efficient use of national resources to further the war effort.

The War Industries Board One of the first agencies established was the **War Industries Board** (WIB). Created in July 1917, the WIB’s job was to coordinate the production of war materials. At first, President Wilson was reluctant to give the WIB much authority over the economy, but by March 1918, he decided industrial production needed better coordination. The WIB was reorganized and **Bernard Baruch** was appointed to run it. Under this Wall Street stockbroker’s supervision, the WIB told manufacturers what to produce. It controlled the flow of raw materials, ordered the construction of new factories, and occasionally, with the president’s approval, set prices.

Food and Fuel Perhaps the most successful government agency was the Food Administration, run by Herbert Hoover. This agency was responsible for increasing food production while reducing civilian consumption. Instead of using rationing, Hoover encouraged Americans to save food on their own. Using the slogan “Food Will Win the War—Don’t Waste It,” the Food Administration encouraged families to “Hooverize” by “serving just enough” and by having Wheatless Mondays, Meatless Tuesdays, and

Porkless Thursdays. Hoover also encouraged citizens to plant **victory gardens** to raise their own vegetables, leaving more for the troops.

While Hoover managed food production, the Fuel Administration, run by Harry Garfield, tried to manage the nation's use of coal and oil. To conserve energy, Garfield introduced daylight savings time and shortened workweeks for factories that did not make war materials.

Paying for the War By the end of World War I, the United States was spending about \$44 million a day—leading to a total expenditure of about \$32 billion for the entire conflict. To fund the war effort, Congress raised income tax rates. Congress also placed new taxes on corporate profits and an extra tax on the profits of arms factories.

Taxes, however, could not pay for the war. To raise money, the government borrowed over \$20 billion from the American people by selling **Liberty Bonds** and **Victory Bonds**. By buying the bonds, Americans were loaning the government money. The government agreed to repay the money with interest in a specified number of years. Posters, rallies, and “Liberty Loan sermons” encouraged people to buy the bonds as an act of patriotism.

Reading Check **Summarizing** What federal agencies helped control American industries during the war?

Mobilizing the Workforce

Main Idea **Women, African Americans, and Mexican Americans all helped to fill labor shortages created by the draft.**

Reading Connection How did women and African Americans assist on the home front and the military during the Civil War? Read on to learn of their contributions to World War I.

Officials knew they needed workers to cooperate if mobilization was to succeed. To prevent strikes from disrupting the war effort, the government established the National War Labor Board (NWLB) in March 1918. Chaired by William Howard Taft and Frank Walsh, a labor attorney, the NWLB tried to mediate labor disputes that might otherwise lead to strikes.

The NWLB frequently pressured industry to grant important concessions to workers, including wage increases, an eight-hour workday, and the right of unions to organize and bargain collectively. In exchange, labor leaders agreed not to disrupt war production with strikes or other disturbances. As a result, membership in unions increased by just over one million between 1917 and 1919.

Women Support Industry The war increased work opportunities for women, who filled industrial



Picturing History

Propaganda Posters George Creel's Committee on Public Information encouraged Americans to do all they could to support the war effort. **What is the general theme of these posters? Do you think the posters were effective?**

jobs vacated by men serving in the military. These included positions in the shipping, manufacturing, and railroad industries. These new jobs for women, however, were not permanent. After the war, when the servicemen returned home, most women returned to their previous jobs or stopped working.

The Great Migration Begins With fewer immigrants and white workers being drafted, the war also opened new doors for African Americans. Wartime job openings and high wages drew thousands of African Americans to factories producing war materials. Encouraged by recruiting agents promising high wages and plentiful work, between 300,000 and 500,000 African Americans left the South to settle in Northern cities. This massive population movement became known as the “Great Migration.” It greatly altered the racial makeup of such cities as Chicago, New York, Cleveland, and Detroit.

Mexican Americans Head North African Americans were not the only group to migrate north. Continued political turmoil in Mexico and the wartime labor shortage in the United States convinced many Mexicans to head north. Between 1917 and 1920, over 100,000 Mexicans **migrated** into Texas, Arizona, California, and New Mexico, providing labor for the farms and ranches of the Southwest.

Meanwhile, tens of thousands of Mexican Americans headed north to Chicago, St. Louis, Omaha, and other cities to take wartime factory jobs. Many Mexican Americans faced hostility and discrimination when they arrived in American cities. Like other immigrants before them, they tended to settle in their own separate neighborhoods, called *barrios*, where they could support each other.

 **Reading Check** **Evaluating** How permanent were women’s advances in the wartime workplace?

Ensuring Public Support

Now Try Propaganda and limits on civil liberties were part of domestic life during World War I.

Reading Connection Under what circumstances do you believe the government has a right to limit civil liberties? Read on to learn about the limitations imposed during World War I.

Progressives in the government did not think coordinating business and labor was enough to ensure the success of the war effort. They also

| Federal Mobilization Agencies | |
|--|---|
| Agency | Purpose |
| War Industries Board | Organized industry to increase efficiency, maximizing production |
| Railroad Administration | Assumed temporary control of rail lines to modernize equipment and increase operating efficiency |
| Food Administration | Supervised agricultural production, promoted food conservation and rationing |
| Fuel Administration | Increased production of coal and oil; maintained conservation of fuel with such innovations as daylight savings time |
| National War Labor Board | Maintained cooperation between industry management and labor unions; acted as mediator to prevent and quickly settle disputes |
| Committee on Public Information | Provided propaganda to rally citizen support for all aspects of the war effort |

Chart Skills

- Interpreting Charts** Which agency worked with manufacturers and labor unions?
- Analyzing** How did the Fuel Administration’s daylight savings time plan achieve its goal?

believed that the government should take steps to shape public opinion and build support for the war.

Selling the War A new government agency, the **Committee on Public Information**, had the task of “selling” the war to the American people. The head of the CPI was journalist George Creel, who recruited advertising executives, commercial artists, authors, songwriters, entertainers, public speakers, and motion picture companies to help sway public opinion in favor of the war.

The CPI distributed pamphlets and posters, issued press releases, and arranged for thousands of short patriotic talks, called “four-minute speeches,” to be delivered at movie theaters and public halls and gathering places. The Four-Minute Men urged audiences to support the war in various ways, from buying war bonds to reporting draft dodgers to the proper authorities.

Different Viewpoints

Abrams v. United States, 1919

The Espionage Act of 1917 made it a crime to “willfully utter, print, write, or publish any disloyal, profane, scurrilous or abusive language about the government.” Although the act limited First Amendment freedoms, many Americans believed winning World War I was more important. (See page 962 for more information on *Abrams v. the United States*.)

Justice John H. Clarke delivered the majority opinion:

It is argued, somewhat faintly, that the acts charged against the defendants were not unlawful because within the protection of that freedom . . . of speech and of the press . . . and that the entire Espionage Act is unconstitutional. . . .

. . . the plain purpose of their propaganda was to excite, at the supreme crisis of the war, disaffection, sedition, riots, and, as they hoped, revolution, in this country for the purpose of embarrassing, and, if possible, defeating the military plans of the Government in Europe. . . . [T]he language of these circulars was obviously intended to provoke and to encourage resistance to the United States in the war, as the third count runs, and the defendants, in terms, plainly urged and advocated a resort to a general strike of workers in ammunition factories for the purpose of curtailing the production of ordnance and munitions necessary and essential to the prosecution of the war. . . . Thus, it is clear not only that some evidence, but that much persuasive evidence, was before the jury tending to prove that the defendants were guilty as charged. . . .

Despite these efforts to build support for the war, several groups supported draft dodgers and their right to object to serving in the war. Over the years, these groups developed into the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). Founded in 1920, the ACLU works to protect people’s rights. It focuses on three major areas of civil liberties: freedom of inquiry and expression, equality for all before the law, and due process.

Civil Liberties Curtailed In addition to using propaganda and persuasion, the government also restricted some civil liberties by passing legislation to fight antiwar activities or enemies at home.

Espionage, or spying to acquire secret government

Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., dissenting:

It is only the present danger of immediate evil or an intent to bring it about that warrants Congress in setting a limit to the expression of opinion where private rights are not concerned. Congress certainly cannot forbid all effort to change the mind of the country. Now nobody can suppose that the surreptitious publishing of a silly leaflet by an unknown man, without more, would present any immediate danger that its opinions would hinder the success of the government arms or have any appreciable tendency to do so.

In this case, sentences of twenty years’ imprisonment have been imposed for the publishing of two leaflets that I believe the defendants had as much right to publish as the Government has to publish the Constitution of the United States now vainly invoked by them. . . . I regret that I cannot put into more impressive words my belief that, in their conviction upon this indictment, the defendants were deprived of their rights under the Constitution of the United States.

A Amendment I

—Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Learning From History

1. What were the charges against the defendants?
2. On what key point did Holmes and Clarke disagree?

information, was addressed in the Espionage Act of 1917, which established penalties and prison terms for anyone who gave aid to the enemy. This act also penalized disloyalty, giving false reports, or otherwise interfering with the war effort. The Post Office even hired college professors to translate foreign periodicals to find out if they contained antiwar messages.

The Sedition Act of 1918 expanded the meaning of the Espionage Act to make illegal any public expression of opposition to the war. In practice, it allowed officials to prosecute anyone who criticized the president or the government. Combined, these laws generated over 1,500 prosecutions and 1,000 convictions.

A Climate of Suspicion The fear of spies and emphasis on patriotism quickly led to the mistreatment and persecution of German Americans. To avoid German-sounding names, advertisers began to call sauerkraut “Liberty cabbage” and hamburger “Salisbury steak.” Many schools dropped German language classes from their curricula, and orchestras stopped performing the music of Beethoven, Schubert, Wagner, and other German composers. Anti-German feelings sometimes led to violence against innocent citizens.

German Americans were not the only ones under suspicion. Mobs attacked labor activists, socialists, and pacifists. Newspapers urged Americans to monitor the activities of their fellow citizens. Americans even formed private organizations, such as the American Protective League and the Boy Spies of America, to spy on neighbors and coworkers. Secretary of War Newton Baker expressed concern about the growing intolerance:



▲ George Creel

“There is a growing frenzy of suspicion and hostility toward disloyalty. I am afraid we are going to have a good many instances of people roughly treated on very slight evidence of disloyalty. Already a number of men and some women have been tarred and feathered, and a portion of the press is urging with great vehemence more strenuous efforts at detection and punishment.”

—quoted in *Echoes of Distant Thunder*

The Supreme Court Limits Free Speech Despite protests against the government’s tactics, however, the courts generally upheld the principle behind them. Although the First Amendment specifically states that “Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press,” the Supreme Court decided otherwise, departing from a strict literal interpretation of the Constitution.

In the landmark case of *Schenck v. the United States* (1919), the Supreme Court ruled that an individual’s freedom of speech could be curbed when the words uttered **constitute** a “clear and present danger.” The Court used as an example someone yelling “Fire!” in a crowded theater. It described such an event as a situation in which freedom of speech would be superseded by the theatergoers’ right to safety. The Court’s majority opinion stated, “When a nation is at war, many things that might be said in times of peace are such a hindrance to its effort that their utterance will not be endured so long as [soldiers] fight. . . .” (See page 1007 for more information on *Schenck v. the United States*.)

Reading Check **Explaining** Why did Congress pass the Espionage Act in 1917?

HISTORY Online Study Central

For help with the concepts in this section of *American Vision: Modern Times* go to tav.mt.glencoe.com and click on **Study Central**.

SECTION 2 ASSESSMENT

Checking for Understanding

- Vocabulary** Define: draft, conscription, victory garden, migrate, espionage, constitute.
- People and Terms** Identify: War Industries Board, Bernard Baruch, Liberty Bond, Victory Bond, Committee on Public Information.
- Describe** the contributions of African Americans during the war.

Reviewing Big Ideas

- Summarizing** How did government efforts to ensure support for the war conflict with democratic ideals?

Critical Thinking

- Analyzing** How did World War I cause the federal government to change its relationship with the business world?
- Organizing** Use a graphic organizer similar to the one below to identify the effects of the war on the American workforce.

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|----------------------------------|
| Effects of War on U.S. Workforce |
| |
| |
| |

Analyzing Visuals

- Analyzing Posters** Examine the posters on page 378. How do these images encourage support for the war? How effective do you think they would be today?

Writing About History

- Persuasive Writing** Imagine that you are working for the Committee on Public Information. Write text for an advertisement or lyrics to a song in which you attempt to sway public opinion in favor of the war. **CA 11WS1.5**