

Chapter 19: Safe for Democracy: The United States and World War I, 1916–1920

Essay Questions

1. Analyze how accurate W. T. Stead was when he argued in his *The Americanization of the World: Or, the Trend of the Twentieth Century* that the source of American power was located not in military might or territorial acquisition but in its single-minded commitment to the pursuit of wealth and the relentless international spread of American culture.
2. Explain how Americans used the language of freedom when discussing foreign policy. Look specifically at the foreign policies of Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson in your answer. Did the meaning of freedom change with each administration, or stay constant?
3. It is April 1917, you are a member of Congress, and President Wilson wants a declaration of war. Justify your vote for or against war with Germany.
4. Fully discuss and examine the limitations placed on freedom during World War I. Then compare those circumstances with those during the Civil War. What was the same? What was different? Were restrictions on civil liberties justified in both cases? Be sure to utilize Debs's piece in *Voices of Freedom*.
5. Analyze why the Progressives would not embrace the cause of civil liberties. Why did they not generally speak out against the broad suppression of freedom of expression during the war? How does that reveal an obvious hypocrisy, especially in Wilson's platform, as charged by W. E. B. Du Bois in *Voices of Freedom*?
6. Compare Roosevelt's and Wilson's attitudes toward blacks. How significant were the actions of the federal government in advancing freedoms for blacks during the early twentieth century?
7. Prepare a brief biography on W. E. B. Du Bois. Analyze his arguments and evaluate his success.
8. Progressives continued to make strides during the war. Discuss the various Progressive accomplishments between 1916 and 1920. Comment on why the movement declined by 1920.
9. Explain the various debates surrounding the Treaty of Versailles. Why did the Senate ultimately refuse to ratify the treaty or join the League of Nations?
10. Woodrow Wilson's foreign policy underscored a paradox of modern American history. The presidents who spoke the most about freedom were likely to intervene most frequently in the affairs of other countries. Do you agree with this overall assessment?