Abstract

This role play has been designed to illustrate the diplomatic processes that were at work during the Versailles Conference in 1919. Students adopt the role of nation delegates negotiating a treaty to be signed. Germany was not involved in the negotiation but is required to sign or else.

Group Size

Designed for high school students, the role play may be applied to other levels. Six nation groups are involved: Great Britain, France, Germany, USA, Italy, New Central European Nations (Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Austria). The role play itself does not specify the number in each group.

Learning Opportunities

Participants take on the roles of the nations each of which is led by the head of the government. Participants learn historical facts and gain a greater appreciation of the diplomatic process that formed the Versailles Treaty.

Time and Setting

Set in 1919 at the Hall of Mirror in Versailles Palace, France.

Resources

The historical treaty is at http://net.lib.byu.edu/~rdh7/wwi/versailles.html The BBC has a collection of video resources only available to UK: http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningzone/clips/Versailles%20Treaty

Learning Activities

- Students meet first within their own delegations. They must establish in writing their demands from the other groups and they must write what they are willing to give up as a nation. They write a rough draft called a "proposal" using a chart of "concessions" and "demands" on each side of the page.
- Students then meet in the Hall of Mirrors. Each nation will present its demands and concessions. The teacher summarizes these.
- A sample treaty is distributed and the delegations fill in blanks. For each blank, the delegations vote on the topic.
- Students sign the treaty according to national delegations.
• If time remains, students debate the treaty in a mock Senate and discuss how history would have been different if such a treaty had been approved by the Senate.

Links
Several slightly different versions are available from the web including:
http://www.greenfield.durham.sch.uk//NewFiles/The%20Treaty%20of%20Versailles%20negotiation%20game.doc