



The League of Nations

IGCSE Cambridge
International Relations since 1919



2

2.1

Background WWI

Before WWI

Many people were against the arms race and wanted world peace. Some people started to see themselves as 'Internationalist' - acting in the best interests of the world. There were 'League of Nations' societies in Britain, France & USA.

HORRORS OF WWI

People were shocked by the war and wanted to stop another war from starting - 8 million people had died.

US PRESIDENT WILSON

As one of his 'Fourteen Points' Wilson had the idea of a League of Nations. He hoped that the League would make sure there would not be another war.

“ A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording general guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small nations alike.

USA NOT JOIN LEAGUE

Even though US President Wilson was the biggest supporter of the League, people in the USA were against the idea. The politicians voted against joining the League. They wanted to stay out of European problems. This was called 'isolationism' - staying by yourself

2.2

The Paris Peace Conference

Victorious countries met to discuss what to do after WWI; how to deal with Germany & other countries & what the world should be like after 1919

Big Three at the Conference

Leaders of USA, France & Britain dominated the conference

2.3



USA President

Woodrow Wilson



Peace: 'Fourteen Points' plan

- . no more secret treaties . countries had less weapons & smaller armies .
- . self-determination - people choose their leaders, no empires or colonies
- . France to regain Alsace-Lorraine
- . Poland to be independent
- . new organisation to protect all countries: 'The League of Nations'

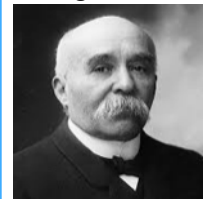
Punish: punish Germany but not too much

2.4



France Prime Minister

George Clemenceau



The French people wanted revenge. The fighting had destroyed farms, factories and towns in France. 3 million people killed and wounded over 3 million

Revenge: Germany to pay for the war

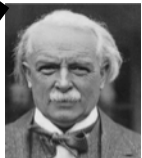
- Punish:** to humiliate Germany by taking land & blame them for the war - pay reparations
- Peace:** make Germany weak with small armed forces

2.5



Britain Prime Minister

David Lloyd George



The British people wanted revenge for the suffering, but Lloyd George did not want to punish too harshly or Germany might become communists or get revenge later.

- Peace:** less powerful army & navy for Germany
- Punish:** take away German colonies (make Britain stronger)

2.6

Clemenceau got his way at the Conference, and the Treaty of Versailles punished Germany harshly.

Wilson did insist on the **League of Nations** being set-up, so all the Peace Treaties did have the League as part of the agreement.

The agreement was called:

The Covenant of the League of Nations:

- . how the League would be organised
- . how members would behave towards each other

Based in: Geneva, Switzerland

First Secretary General of the League: Sir Eric Drummond

To what extent was the League of Nations a success?

Background to the League of Nations

2a

i

Who said? Wilson, Clemenceau or Lloyd-George

"We believe in self-determination"

. Wilson . Clemenceau . Lloyd-George .

"Germany must be made to pay for the war"

. Wilson . Clemenceau . Lloyd-George .

"We must not punish Germany too harshly"

. Wilson . Clemenceau . Lloyd-George .

"Keep Germany weak"

. Wilson . Clemenceau . Lloyd-George .

"No more secret treaties"

. Wilson . Clemenceau . Lloyd-George .

"Germany might turn communist"

. Wilson . Clemenceau . Lloyd-George .

ii

Read the statement & decide whether it is True or False

	Statement	T	F
1	Wilson believed in 'fourteen points'		
2	Lloyd-George was the leader of the USA		
3	People in the USA loved the idea of the League of Nations		
4	Clemenceau wanted to punish Germany the most after WWI		
5	Lloyd-George did not want to punish Germany too harshly		
6	The new League of Nations was based in New York		
7	The Paris Peace Conference was in 1914		
8	All the Peace Treaties had the League included		
9	The USA preferred a policy of 'isolationism' after WWI		
10	The leaders of USA, UK & France dominated the Peace Conference		

To what extent was the League of Nations a success?

How far did weaknesses in the League's organisation make the failure inevitable?

2

2.7

2.8

Covenant of the League of Nations

Weaknesses

. Collective security:

the idea that all countries would act together for the common good was very idealistic - not likely to happen. There was too much self-interest - countries looking after their own interests first, (being selfish).

Disputes:

sometimes members thought it was best to let a member be aggressive and give in rather than stand up to it and cause more problems.

. Military action

the League had no army. Members did not want to use force against other members.

. Covenant:

written by the winning countries, so many countries disliked and did not trust it from the start. Many Germans saw the League as an excuse to make Germany weak and suffer

Covenant

Aims & rules of the League: 24 articles

Membership

Article 1: 44 member countries signed in 1919

New members join at any time if two thirds of members agree

Not members: USA (their choice), Germany, USSR

Main bodies

Articles 2 - 7: set-up the main bodies of the League

Assembly, Council, Secretariat, Permanent Court of International Justice, International Labour Organisation

Agencies: disarmament, slavery, drugs, health, refugees, mandates etc

Military

Articles 8 & 9: reduce military spending & limit weapons production

Disputes that might lead to war

Articles 10-17: articles to settle problems between countries

Members not to be aggressive towards each other

Disputes to go to the League to be settled through discussion - if fail then go to arbitration

A member not accept a League's decision could have economic sanctions against them

Members not trade or key supplies stopped

If economic sanctions not work then League could take military action

Treaties

Articles 18-21: banned secret treaties or treaties that could lead to war

Colonies

Article 22: set-out the taking away of colonies from those who lost in WWI

Labour

Article 23-25: improve labour conditions, stop drug trafficking between members and work closely with organisations like the Red Cross

Covenant

Article 26: covenant changed if the Council & Assembly agree



To what extent was the League of Nations a success?

How far did weaknesses in the League's organisation make the failure inevitable?

2b

Read the statement & decide whether it is True or False for the League

	Statement	T	F
1	Aims & rules in 24 Articles		
2	League had a large army		
3	Covenant written by all countries		
4	Germany, USSR & USA not members at the start		
5	Formed after World War I		
6	Deal with refugees		
7	Stop drug trafficking		
8	Covenant written by victorious allies		
9	USA a member		
10	Membership discussed at Yalta		
11	Many Germans did not like the League		
12	Support international law		
13	Reduce military spending		
14	All countries that sign to be a member have to agree to all rules		
15	Took German colonies		

test your knowledge

To what extent was the League of Nations a success?

How far did weaknesses in the League's organisation make the failure inevitable?



2

League of Nations

2.9

COUNCIL

- . Four permanent members: UK, France, Italy, Japan
- . Four non permanent members
- . Dealt with problems when Assembly not meeting
- . Organise sanctions against a country
- . All council members had to agree on a decision

Council met on average 5 times a year:
a total of 107 times between 1920 and 1939

Japan from
1920 to 1933

Germany from
1926 to 1933

USSR from
1934 to 1939



2.10

COURT of JUSTICE

Permanent Court of Justice

- . Based in the Hague (Netherlands)
- . 15 judges
- . Elected by the General Assembly
- . Advises on legal issues for Council & Assembly

2.11

PEACEKEEPING

- . Any problems be to be solved at the League
- . Council can impose:
 - . Economic Sanctions (stop trade & finance)
 - . Military action: members join forces
 - Collective Security
- (relied on a few strong military countries)

2.12

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- . Where countries discussed issues & problems
- . Met once a year (but additional meetings could be called)
- . Each member country had one vote (1 country = 3 representatives)
- . Decisions taken by majority (not all decisions but many)
- . Controlled how much the League spent
- . Elected the non permanent members of the Council

42 founding members:
19 left by 1946

Germany joined in
1926 and left in 1933
over limiting size of
armies

Soviet Union joined in
Sept 1934 and was
expelled in Dec 1939

It was very difficult to get
everybody to agree. It was
Compromises were made on many
issues.

2.13

- . Civil servants paid by the League:
Sir Eric Drummond Sec. General
- . Administrators
- . Prepared reports for the council
- . Divided into parts:
Finance, Health, Disarmament, Drugs
- . Based in Geneva, Switzerland

SECRETARIAT



To what extent was the League of Nations a success?

How far did weaknesses in the League's organisation make the failure inevitable?

2c

League of Nations : structure

	Main features	marks /10
COUNCIL		
SECRETARIAT		
COURT of JUSTICE		
PEACE KEEPING		
GENERAL ASSEMBLY		

To what extent was the League of Nations a success?

How far did weaknesses in the League's organisation make the failure inevitable?

2

2.14

League of Nations : agencies & commissions

MANDATES

The League (France, UK & Italy) look after countries until they could manage themselves.

SLAVERY

Looked at the problem of slavery from 1922.
Slavery Convention 1926:
stopped slavery in many areas by 1932, but still existed in other places

DRUGS

Committee of Experts of Drugs to monitor the manufacture of drugs & reduce the illicit trade in drugs.
Difficult to stop poppy (heroin) but some countries continued as poor farmers made money from it.

TRADE

Organised a conference in 1920 to help countries affected by WWI. Help increase international trade by encouraging business, uniform rules and regulations.

TRANSPORT

1921: Committee plus conferences to discuss common rules for ports & railways. Help & advice to members.

LABOUR

Improve working conditions
Suggest ways to help workers
Some countries improved wages, conditions, stopped child labour

Commissions, agencies & committees

ARMY & NAVY

Persuade countries to reduce size of armies & navies.
Conferences 1921, 1926, 1930, 1932-4
1935: reduce number of ships
No other agreements

WOMEN

Committee of Traffic of Women & Children. Work with govts & others to stop the trafficking of women & children.
Committee on the Status of Women to look at the legal status of women around the world & the issue of equality

HEALTH

Health organisations to share expertise & to stop epidemics such as typhus, leprosy, malaria & yellow fever

REFUGEES

1920: 500,000 refugees from WWI
1921: helped 1.5 million refugees who fled from communist Russia
1919-23: helped Greeks fleeing Turkey
1921: Commission for Refugees
Raised money, gave medical aid, built houses

INTELLECTUAL

1922: Commission on Intellectual Co-operation - help intellectual organisations, share research, protect intellectual rights

To what extent was the League of Nations a success?

How successful was the League in the 1920s?

2d

Read the statement & decide which Commission, Agency or Committee it was:

. Mandates . Disarmament . Slavery . Women . Doping . Trade . Transport .
. Refugees . Intellectual . Labour .

EXAMPLE:

Look after countries until they can manage themselves

Answer: *Mandate*

Improve working conditions

i

Discuss common rules for ports & railways

ii

Share medical expertise

iii

Personalise health care to reduce the size of armies

iv

Helped Greeks fleeing Turkey

v

Stop heroin being grown

vi

To stop epidemics like leprosy & typhus

vii

Helped 1.5 million Russians resettle

viii

Help encourage business with unifying rules & regulations

ix

Share research between universities etc.

x

Improve equality around the world

xi

To what extent was the League of Nations a success?

How far did weaknesses in the League's organisation make the failure inevitable?

2

2.15

League of Nations : agencies

MANDATES

Areas controlled by Ottomans & Germany - taken off them under the Treaties signed at Versailles and now looked after by the Allies.

Mandate Commission

Article 22 of the Covenant

Class A Mandates:

- (former Ottoman Empire)
- . can become independent states (under supervision)
- . Palestine - Jordan 1948 (UK)
- . Syria & Lebanon 1945 (France)
- . Iraq 1932 (UK)

Class B Mandates:

- (former German empire)
- . need more control from mandate countries
- . Rwanda & Burundi 1962 (Belgium)
- . Tanzania 1961 (UK)
- . Togo 1956 (UK/France)

Class C Mandates:

- (former German & Ottoman Empire)
- . Africa & Pacific Islands
- . New Guinea 1975 (UK/AUS)
- . Tanzania 1961 (UK)
- . SW Africa (UK/SA)

2.16

HEALTH

Health Commission

Article 23 of the Covenant

Health organisations to share expertise & to stop epidemics such as typhus, leprosy, malaria & yellow fever

Health Section

- worked with members & non members of the League
- . linked individual countries shared information & expertise

Health Bureau

- . member & non members
- . countries shared information & expertise

Health Advisory Council

- worked with members & non members of the League
- . linked individual countries shared information & expertise

2.17

DISARM

Disarmament Conferences

Aim

- Persuade members to reduce their armies & navies

Action

- . Washington Naval Conference 1921
- . Disarmament Conferences 1921 '26, '30
- . 1932-37 World Disarmament Conference in Geneva
- once Germany pulled out in 1933 nothing much happened

Success

- Naval Conference led to reduction in number of warships

Failure

- Conferences produced no agreements
- Germany demanded a large army, but France wanted them to have nothing
- Germany withdrew from League in 1933

2.18

REFUGEE

Refugee Organisation

Aim

- To relocate refugees back to their homes after World War I.

Action

- Led by Norwegian explorer: Nansen
- Raised money, gave medical aid, designed houses, built houses
- Nansen passport for stateless people

Success

- 1920: 500,000 refugees from WWI
- 1921: helped 1.5 million refugees who fled from communist Russia
- 1919-23: helped Greeks fleeing Turkey
- 1921: Commission for Refugees

To what extent was the League of Nations a success?

How far did weaknesses in the League's organisation make the failure inevitable?

2e

League of Nations : agencies & commissions

	Main features	Success 10
MANDATES		
HEALTH		
DISARM		
REFUGEES		

To what extent was the League of Nations a success?

How successful was the League in the 1920s?

2

2.19

Successes for the League of Nations

PROBLEM

- . Islands belonged to Finland, but Sweden claimed them.
- . Most people on the island wanted to be ruled by Sweden.

LEAGUE ACTION

- . Both countries went to the League
- . League decided:
 1. Finland keep lands
 2. People keep Swedish language

RESULT

- . Both sides did what the League said
- . League action seen to be effective
- . Both sides wanted a settlement



The Aaland Islands 1920

Finland v Sweden

2.20

PROBLEM

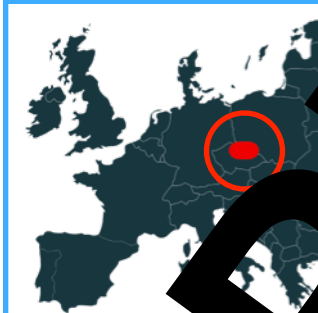
- . Upper Silesia rich in minerals
- . After WWI both Germany and Poland claimed it
- . Treaty of Versailles gave it to Poland - Germany complained so ...
- . Plebiscite (vote) held:
 - 60% for Germany,
 - 40% for Poland
- . Some areas very German others very Polish
- . British & French soldiers tried to keep the peace
- . League asked to sort out the problem

LEAGUE ACTION

- . League set up a commission (Brazil, Belgium, China & Spain)
- . Commission said:
 - Poland =
 - 35% land (50% people)
 - some of the best land

RESULT

- . Both countries signed an agreement in 1922
- . There was peace in the region until WWII
- . Both sides complained about the decision
- . Decision very unpopular in Germany - part of Hitler's plan to get rid of the Treaty of Versailles and the League



Upper Silesia 1921

Poland v Germany

To what extent was the League of Nations a success?

How successful was the League in the 1920s?

2

2.21

Successes for the League of Nations

PROBLEM

LEAGUE ACTION

RESULT



Mosul, Iraq 1924

Turkey v Iraq

. GB claimed that Mosul was Iraqi & Turkey claimed it was part of the 'historical heartland' of Turkey

. Treaty of Lausanne 1923: border between Turkey & Iraq should be sorted out within 9 months between Turkey & GB

. Turkey & GB could not agree on a border

. 6 August 1924: GB & Turkey went to League to sort out (resolve) the problem

. Mosul Commission (3 men) set-up to study the problem

. Council of the League agreed with the commission & recommended Treaty of Lausanne

. Treaty of Lausanne: Mosul should be part of Iraq

. Based on the 'Brussels Line' Turkish culture to be kept

. Protection for Christians in the area

. Both sides accepted the Treaty but only after Turkey took the decision to the Court of International Justice & they agreed with the Council decision

. Without agreement a large war was likely

. Turkey given some of the profits from oil by Britain

2.22

PROBLEM

LEAGUE ACTION

RESULT



Greek War 1925

Greece v Bulgaria

. Fight between Greece & Bulgaria

. Greek captain's soldier killed soldier killed after running after his dog by Bulgarians (unclear what happened)

. Greeks demanded:

. full apology
. punishment of those reps.
. payment of 2 million french francs to the families

. Greek army invaded Bulgarian town of Petrich to force them into meeting the demands

. Bulgaria complained to the League

. League ordered both countries to stop fighting

. Greeks to withdraw from Bulgaria

. Threatened to use sanctions if Greece not stop

. Greece withdrew its soldiers

. League said Greece was at fault

. Greece to pay a fine of £45,000

. League stood up to the aggressor

. Greece complained that Italy was not punished over Corfu

. Greece said one rule for powerful countries & another for other countries

To what extent was the League of Nations a success?

How successful was the League in the 1920s?

2f

How successful was the League of Nations?

The Aaland Islands 1920	Upper Silesia 1921	Mosul 1924	Greco-Turkish War 1925
Good	Good	Good	Good
Bad	Bad	Bad	Bad
/10 Comment	/10 Comment	/10 Comment	/10 Comment
What would you have done?	What would you have done?	What would you have done?	What would you have done?

To what extent was the League of Nations a success?

Failures of the League in the 1920s & 1930s

2

Failures for the League of Nations

2.23

PROBLEM

- . Border dispute between Greece v Albania
- . Both countries took their dispute to the League
- . League set up a commission: Italy, UK & France
- . Chairman was Tellini from Italy, but Greece said he was biased towards Albania
- . Tellini & others killed the border
- . Greece & Albania blamed each other
- . Italy blamed Greece and made a apology
- . many funeral
- . death for the murderers
- . inquiry inc. Italians
- . Greece met most but not all of the demands
- . Italian leader Mussolini launched an attack on Corfu, killing some civilians

LEAGUE ACTION

- . Greece asked the League to do something
- . Mussolini said Council of Ambassadors should deal with it not the League
- . If the League deal with when they would be the League of Nations
- . Council of Ambassadors the decision:
- . meet all the Italian demands
- . inquiry into deaths led by Japan
- . Greece had to pay the Italians for occupying Corfu

RESULT

- . Both sides did what the Council of Ambassadors League said
- . Corfu was returned to Greece
- . League failed to stand-up to the more powerful country: Italy (founder of the League & Council member)
- . Britain & France not want to go against Italy
- . Mussolini got his way & his reputation grew in Italy



Corfu Incident 1923



To what extent was the League of Nations a success?

Failures of the League in the 1920s & 1930s

2

2.24

Failures for the League of Nations

	PROBLEM	LEAGUE ACTION	RESULT
 <p>Manchuria 1931-33</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Area rich in minerals & good farmland . Population 94% Chinese 1% Japanese . Japan leased farmland from China & had army base & railway there . Japan said Chinese tried to blow up railway tracks . Japanese invaded Manchuria in 1931 & set up its own govt. 'Manchuko' in 1932 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . China complains to the League . League orders Japan to leave whilst a commission is set up - Japan ignores the League . Lytton Commission 1932: . Japan took land by force . Japan refused to leave . League should have taken action . 'Special Assembly of the League' set up . League agreed with the commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Japan leaves League in 1933 . League rules said that if League decisions ignored then military action or sanctions should happen . Nothing happened because: . Britain did not want military action . Sanctions would be limited as Japan could trade with USA (who was not in the League) . League was weak when faced with a powerful country . Japan invaded all of China in 1937

2.25

	PROBLEM	LEAGUE ACTION	RESULT
 <p>Abyssinia 1935-36</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Only independent state in Africa . Haile Selassie . Discovered Italians in 1896 . Mussolini wanted to increase the Italian empire (had Eritrea & Somaliland) . Italian soldiers caused problems with Abyssinians in Wal Wal . Italy used this as an excuse to invade Abyssinia in Oct 1935 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . League offers to help: Italy ignores League . League condemns invasion: Italy ignores League . League sets up sanctions: Italy trades with Germany & USA . League threatens to stop oil: Italy ignores treat . Haile Selassie speaks at League: he is ignored . League stops sanctions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Britain & France ignore League to set-up secret 'Hoare-Laval' Plan with Italy . Plan gives large parts of Abyssinia to Italy . When people find out the plan is abandoned . Plan undermines League . League fails again with a powerful country . Britain & France not want to act against Italy as want to stay friends - not push Mussolini to Hitler . Italy left league in 1937

To what extent was the League of Nations a success?

Failures of the League in the 1920s & 1930s

2g

Failures of the League of Nations

Corfu Incident 1923 Greece v Italy	Manchuria 1931-33 Japan v China	Abyssinia 1935-36 Italy v Ethiopia
Good	Good	Good
Bad	Bad	Bad
/10 Comment	/10 Comment	/10 Comment
What would you have done?	What would you have done?	What would you have done?

To what extent was the League of Nations a success?

Failures of the League in the 1920s & 1930s

2h

Views of the League of Nations

i

Let us return, however, to the League of Nations. To create an organisation which is in a position to protect peace in this world of conflicting interests and egotisms will be a frighteningly difficult task

Source: Hjalmar Branting, Swedish politician, 1920

(a) What does the source tell us about the League of Nations?

ii

It must be thoroughly understood that the lost land will not be won back by solemn appeals to the God, nor by hopes in any League resolutions, but only by the force of arms.

Source: Adolf Hitler, leader of Germany, 1936

What does the source tell us about the successes of the League of Nations?

iii

The League is very well when sparrows are out, but no good at all when eagles fall out.

Source: Benito Mussolini, leader of Italy, 1924

What does the source tell us about the League of Nations?

iv

The League of Nations is the greatest humbug in history. They cannot even protect a little nation like Armenia. They do nothing but pass useless resolutions.

Source: David Lloyd George, leader of Britain, 1924

What does the source tell us about the League of Nations?

2i

To what extent was the League of Nations a success?

Essay Plan

List the succesful actions and dates inc. agencies and commissions

List the unsuccess dates with dates inc. agencies and commissions

Judgement (to what extent)

2j

test your knowledge

Main features of

League's Covenant	Collective security	Disarmament Commission
League Council	League General Assembly	Corfu Incident
Mandates	Abyssinia	Disarmament Conferences

2k

test your knowledge

Effects of

USA not being a member of the League	No League army	Britain and French self-interest
Agencies	Greek War	Corfu Incident
Manchuria	Abyssinia	Disarmament Conferences

a

4 marks:

one mark for each point + mark for detail

1. What were the main features of the Covenant of the League of Nations?
2. What were the weaknesses of the League's organisation?
3. What were the effects of the League's agencies and commissions?
4. What were the main features of the successes of the League?
5. What were the main features of the failures of the League in the 1930s?
6. What were special interests of Britain throughout the 1920s and 1930s?
7. What did the League hope to achieve when it was formed?
8. Describe the League's successes
9. Describe the League's failures

b

6 marks:

Level 2: description (2-3) Level 3: explains one reason (4-5) Level 4: explains two reasons (6)

1. What were the main features of the Covenant of the League of Nations?
2. Why did the League do nothing about Japan following the Manchurian crisis of 1931-33?
3. What were the successes of the League's agencies and commissions?
4. Why did the League fail over the Abyssinian crisis?
5. Why was the League's dependence on France and Britain?

c

10 marks:

Level 2: describes both sides (2-3) Level 3: explains one side or one explanation of both sides (4-6)
Level 4: explains both sides (7-9) Level 5: explanation of both sides + 'how far' (10)

1. How successful was the League in the 1920s? Explain your answer
2. 'The League was largely successful in the 1920s.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer.
3. 'The League is very well when sparrows shout, but no good at all when eagles fall out'. How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer.
4. To what extent was the League a success? Explain your answer
5. 'By 1936 the League was dead.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer

