



# The Treaty of Versailles and Its Lasting Problems

KS4 HISTORY

Ages 11-14 ⌚ 3 min read

## What Was the Treaty of Versailles?

After **World War One** ended in **1918**, the winning countries had to decide what to do with the loser. The **Treaty of Versailles** was a peace agreement signed in **1919** that officially ended the war. The main winners - **Britain, France, America, and Italy** - met in **Versailles**, a palace near **Paris**, to decide Germany's punishment.

Think of it like when a teacher decides what punishment a student gets for breaking school rules - except instead of one person, it was a whole country being punished.

## How Did Germany Get Punished?

The treaty made **Germany** accept blame for starting the war. This wasn't entirely fair, because many countries shared responsibility. Germany had to pay **132 billion gold marks** in **reparations** (money to repay for war damage) - an enormous amount of money that would cripple their economy. The country also lost territory, had its army reduced to just **100,000 soldiers**, and faced strict limits on what weapons it could have.

Germany also lost colonies and land to neighbouring countries. **France** regained **Alsace-Lorraine**, and new countries like **Poland** were created from German territory. To Germans, this felt humiliating and deeply unfair.

Think of it like taking away a kid's pocket money for a whole year, removing their toys, shrinking their bedroom, and telling everyone it's their fault - even though other kids shared the blame.

## What Problems Did It Create?

The treaty's harsh punishments caused serious problems in Germany. The massive debt crippled the economy, causing **hyperinflation** (extreme price rises) in **1923**. German people became poor and angry. They felt betrayed and humiliated by the world.

This anger didn't go away. A political leader named **Adolf Hitler** promised to make Germany strong again and overturn the unfair treaty. His popularity grew as Germans supported his promises. By the **1930s**, **Hitler** had taken power, rearmed Germany secretly, and started taking back territory.

Many historians believe the Treaty of Versailles was too harsh. Instead of making lasting peace, it created deep resentment that led directly to **World War Two**. The lesson learned: when you punish people too severely, it often backfires and causes more conflict rather than peace.