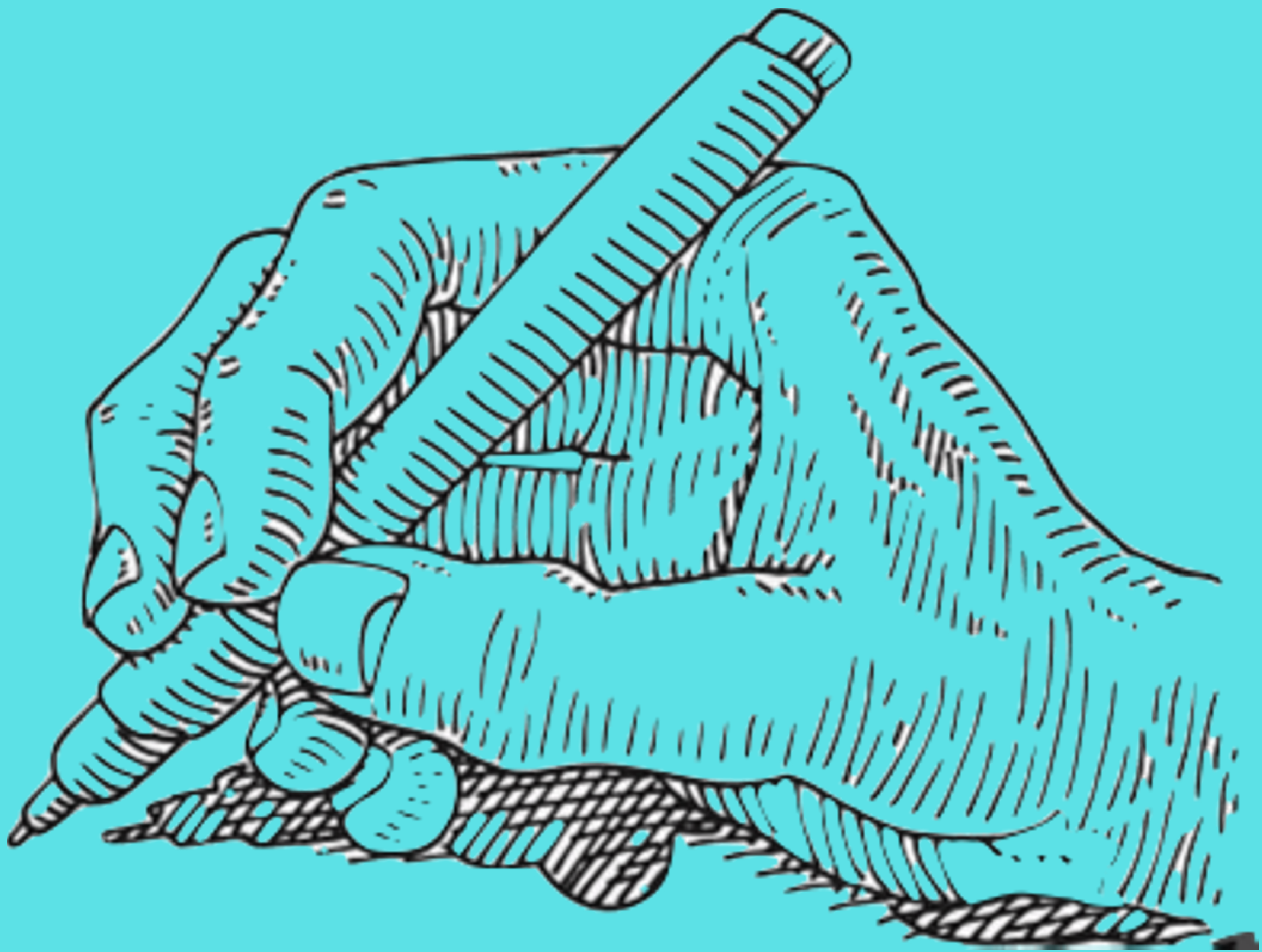


History GCSE

CIE Paper 1

The Treaty of Versailles

Model Answers



- **2 Model Answers**
- **Revision Notes**

Treaty of Versailles Questions: Model Answer 2

At the Paris Peace Conference, the victorious allies decided the outcomes.

(a) What were the territorial terms of the Treaty of Saint Germain? [4]

The Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye which was signed in 1919 but came into effect in 1920, established the Republic of Austria. This Republic comprised of most of the German-speaking regions of the Habsburg state. Also crucially, this Treaty officially registered the breakup of the Habsburg Empire. This Treaty had several territorial terms imposed on the losing countries in the war. The Austrian Empire gave up territory, leading to the newly created states of Czechoslovakia, Poland, as well as the Kingdom of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs which was later renamed Yugoslavia in 1929. Austria also relinquished the South Tyrol, Trieste, Trentino and Istria to Italy and Bukovina to Romania. Another important rule in the Treaty was the banning of Austria from unifying with Germany – restricting both countries within their territories and maintaining that they must maintain independence from each other both politically and territorially.

(b) Why was the work of the peacemakers at the Paris Peace Conference difficult? [6]

From January to June in 1919, twenty-seven countries met in Paris, France to produce the Treaty of Versailles – officially ending the First World War. Despite the large number of countries involved, the conference was dominated by the “Big Four” Allies: USA, UK, France and Italy. However the work of these peacemakers was fairly difficult primarily because the leaders had fundamentally different perspectives on how to handle the end of the War, as well what would be appropriate steps to punish Germany for its involvement in the War. To be sure, USA’s President Woodrow Wilson and the French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau had vast differences in how to approach Germany. Clemenceau still felt threatened by the Germans as he believed that despite its defeat, it possessed the potential capacity to re-emerge as a dominant European power, which may once again attack France. Although Germany did not immediately threaten French security, Clemenceau wanted to draft a Treaty designed to protect France in the future and to provide for its enforcement.

However President Wilson had a different perspective as he was far more sympathetic towards Germany. He considered the French emphasis on punishing and weakening Germany as excessive. What Clemenceau saw as a requirement for future security, Wilson viewed as an act of unnecessary revenge and a violation of the liberal world order he hoped to establish under the League of Nations. President Wilson failed to recognise that he and Clemenceau disagreed more fundamentally over the methods for achieving their shared goals than over the goals themselves. They both hoped to achieve a permanent peace with Germany but advocated different means to accomplish that end. This therefore made the work of the peacemakers at the Paris Peace Conference difficult because there was often tension and conflict on which Clauses should be adopted in the Treaty of Versailles – meaning that the final Treaty satisfied no one.

(c) ‘German hatred of the Treaty of Versailles was justified.’ How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. [10]

Germany, which was seen as an aggressor state, would not be able to act on its aggressive tendencies.

Additionally, France suffered significantly during the War as much of the fighting in the War happened in many of its northern provinces, meaning its economy was also decimated. The reparation payments were simply a fair solution to France's need to rebuild – as much of the fighting in France was against the German troops – hence the high reparation payments were a consequence of Germany's actions and France was justified in simply seeking repayment for its losses.

To conclude, while the Allies such as France had a reason to impose highly punitive conditions on Germany for its role in the War, it seems that to a large extent German hatred towards the Treaty was justified. The Treaty was highly punitive, meaning that Germany's economy would struggle to recover. Additionally the Treaty forced Germany to accept conditions that were unfair and completely untrue – such as its role in starting the War. Finally, the Treaty would ultimately cause extreme resentment within Germany to escalate – sowing the seeds of instability – meaning had it been more lenient, Germany would not be so resentful towards the Allies. Whilst it was essential for the Allies to punish Germany, German resentment towards the extremely harsh measures of the Treaty were to a large extent justified.

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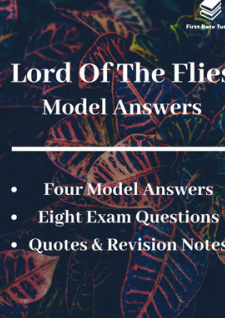
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