

### Source A

It is not enough just to win the war. We must win it in such a way as to keep the future peace of the world.

President Wilson,  
talking in 1918.

### Tasks

1. Work in threes. Take it in turns to imagine you are Wilson, talking to Clemenceau and Lloyd George. Tell them about your idea for the League of Nations, what it would do, and how it would work.
3. Study Source B. What effect would America's refusal to join have upon the League, did the artist think?

## The League of Nations

The League of Nations was set up because President Wilson wanted this more than anything else.

He wanted the League to be a kind of 'world parliament', where nations would sort out their arguments. He hoped this would **stop wars**. But Wilson wanted to do more than just stop war; he wanted to make the world a better place. He wanted the League to do things to **improve people's lives and jobs**. He wanted to improve public health, and to end slavery.

Wilson also hoped that the League would persuade the nations to agree to **disarmament** – to put down their weapons. That would make war impossible.

Finally, Wilson thought that the League of Nations could **enforce the Treaty of Versailles**, and persuade countries to keep the promises they had made.

### Task

Draw a spidergram of the **FOUR** aims of the League of Nations. Were the League's aims impossible, do you think?.

### America Pulls Out

But when Wilson got back home to the United States, the American Senate refused to join the League.

Americans did not want to get dragged into other countries' problems. This damaged the League a lot.



### ↑ Source B

'The Gap in the Bridge' – a British cartoon of 1919 – shows America refusing to join the League.

## The League's Failures in the 1930s

In the 1920s, the League of Nations had been quite successful. In the 1930s, it failed terribly.

This spread looks at the League's two main failures in the 1930s – in Manchuria and Abyssinia.

By 1935, most countries did not think that the League could keep the peace.

When Hitler began to break the Treaty of Versailles in the 1930s, the League was powerless to stop him (this is the next topic you will study).

The league failed, and the only way to stop Hitler was a Second World War.



### Source A

A British cartoon of 1933 shows Japan trampling all over the League, whilst Britain powders her nose.  
Other cartoons made the same point.

### Tasks

1. Read the stories about Manchuria and Abyssinia. From the stories, can you work out WHY the League failed there?
2. Read Sources B–D. Did the Abyssinian crisis 'kill' the League?
3. Who gained most from the Manchurian and Abyssinian crises?

## Manchuria, 1931



### The Dispute:

In the 1930s there was a world-wide economic depression. Japan tried to overcome the depression by building up an empire.

In 1932, the Japanese army invaded Manchuria, threw out the Chinese, and set up their own government there.

China asked the League to help.

### What the League did:

The League sent officials to study the problem (this took a year).

In February 1933 it ordered Japan to leave Manchuria.

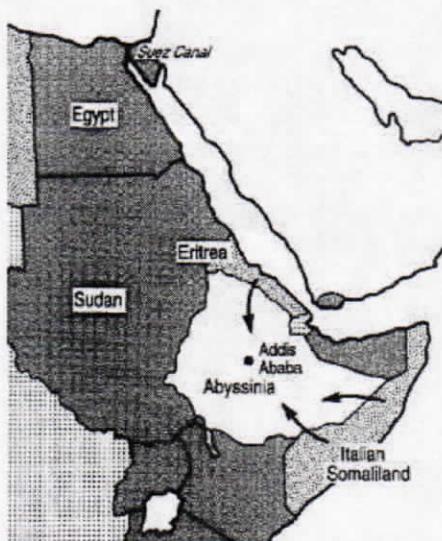
### What happened:

Japan refused to leave Manchuria. Instead, Japan left the League.

Many countries had important trading links with Japan. The League could not agree on sanctions or even a ban on weapons sales. Britain and France did not want a war, so nothing was done.

The Japanese stayed in Manchuria. The League had failed.

## Abyssinia, 1935



### **The Dispute:**

Mussolini got ready to invade Abyssinia (Ethiopia). He wanted war and glory.

Abyssinia asked the League to help.

### **What the League did:**

The League talked to Mussolini – but he used the time to send an army to Africa.

The League suggested a plan to give part of Abyssinia to Italy.

### **What happened:**

Mussolini ignored the League, and invaded Abyssinia.

The League banned weapons sales, and put sanctions on rubber and metal.

It did nothing else – in fact Britain and France secretly agreed to give Abyssinia to Italy.

Italy conquered Abyssinia  
The League had failed.

### **Source B**

The crisis was fatal to the League. Nobody took it seriously again. They got ready for the Second World War.

Written by the historian JR Western (1971).

### **Source C**

After Manchuria and Abyssinia, people decided that it was no longer any use putting their hopes in the League.

Written by the historian J Joll (1976).

### **Source D**

The League died in 1935. One day it was a powerful body imposing sanctions, the next day it was a useless fraud, everybody running away from it as quickly as possible. Hitler watched.

Written by the historian AJP Taylor (1966).



### **↑ Source E**

A British cartoon of 1935 shows international politics like a stage musical. Britain and France sing:

'We don't want you to fight,  
but by jingo if you do,  
We will probably issue a joint memorandum  
Suggesting a mild disapproval of you.'

## Task

Go back and look at pages 2–7. Study them carefully. Working as a whole class, make a spidergram of ideas why the League failed.

Now read the passage below and see how many ideas you got.

## Why the League Failed

The League failed in Manchuria and Abyssinia because it **WAS DUMB!**

Weak – the League's 'powers' were little more than going 'tut-tut'. Sanctions did not work. It had no army.

America – the strongest nation in the world never joined.

Structure – the League was muddled, so it took ages to do anything. Members couldn't agree – but decisions had to be unanimous. This paralysed the League.

Depression – the world-wide Depression made countries try to get more land and power. They were worried about themselves, not about world peace.

Unsuccessful – the more the League failed, the less people trusted it. In the end, everybody just ignored it.

Members – the League's main members let it down. Italy and Japan betrayed the League. France and Britain did nothing to help it.

Big bullies – in the 1920s, the League had dealt with weak countries. In the 1930s, powerful countries like Germany, Italy and Japan attacked weaker countries. They were too strong for the League to stop them.

## Source A

If the nations want peace, the League gives them the way by which peace can be kept.

But, League or no League, a country which is determined to have a war can always have it.

The historian HAL Fisher, writing in 1935.

## Tasks

1. Read the passage, 'Why the League Failed', and learn the mnemonic **WAS DUMB**.
2. Think about the seven reasons why the League failed. Working as a whole class, for each reason, suggest an explanation of how that reason might have caused the failure of the League.
3. Read Source A. It is HAL Fisher's 'last word' on the League (he used 35 words). Looking back through this unit, write your own 'last word' on the League, taking 35 words. Read your comment to the rest of the class.