The League of Nations
Revision PowerPoint
What was the League of Nations?

• An idea of American President Woodrow Wilson following the first world war.
• An international police force made up of representatives of many countries.
• An organisation that would allow disputes to be settled without resorting to war, based in Geneva (neutral).
Differing views on how the League should operate:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>America</th>
<th>Britain</th>
<th>France</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>A world parliament where representatives would meet regularly to decide on matters which affected all of them.</td>
<td>A temporary organisation that would meet during emergencies.</td>
<td>A strong League capable of enforcing decisions with its own army.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Each of these types of League has advantages and disadvantages:

Although France’s idea of a strong League would mean it could be an effective force, the League was meant to be centred on peace. Potentially, its own army could provoke another war.

Britain’s simpler idea would mean that the League would merely dealing with emergencies rather than working on preventing them from occurring in the first place.

America’s version of the League would be expensive and a complicated to organise, although it might have been the most effective version in terms of keeping peace.
However, the idea of joining the League was not popular with all Americans...

| Many Americans did not think the Treaty of Versailles was fair. As the League was linked with the treaty, they did not want to be a part of it | Americans wanted to stay out of disputes that might enter their troops into the kind of carnage of the first world war |
| Others wanted to avoid the economic cost of joining the League | Many Americans were anti-French or Anti-British. They thought the League would be run by these countries and did not want to get involved in their affairs |
Wilson’s party lost the election in 1919. His opponents promised to follow a policy of isolationism (staying out of international affairs). And so America did not join the League of Nations.
Aims of the League

1. Discourage aggression from any country

1. Encourage co-operation in business and trade

1. Encourage disarmament

1. Improve working and living conditions for people across the world
When it opened, some countries were not members of the League:

**America:** had become isolationist

**Germany:** As a defeated country who was blamed for starting the Great war, Germany was not invited to join

**Russia:** Were not invited to join the League, mainly due to their Communist government
The Structure of the League of Nations

- Assembly
- Court of International Justice
- Secretariat
- Council
- International Labour Organisation

Special Departments (Commissions):

- Mandates
- Health
- Drugs
- Refugees
- Leprosy
- Slavery
- Minorities
- Transit
- Communication
Successes in the 1920s

With the League’s help over 400 000 prisoners of war were returned home.

The slavery Commission brought about the freeing of over 200 000 slaves in British-owned Sierra-Leone and organised raids against slave owners and traders in Burma.

The Health Committee worked hard to defeat leprosy and malaria. It later became the World Health Organisation.

Sweden accepted the League’s decision to give the Aaland islands to Finland. The two countries thereby avoided going to war for them.

The League divided Upper Silesia between Germany and Poland after a plebiscite showed a clear divide. Both countries accepted this decision.
1929 Wall Street Crash!

This is MAJOR turning point for the league:

* Many members of the League were now focussed on solving domestic problems.
* The crash created a depression in Europe causing unemployment and poverty. Dictators rose to power as they promised a solution to problems. These were new problems for the League to face.
* Had a major effect on Japan who relied heavily on international trade. This would eventually contribute towards the invasion of Manchuria.
What were the reasons for the League of Nations' failures during the 1930s?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-interest</td>
<td>We have our own problem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absence of important</td>
<td>TOV it was meant to protect was unfair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Troops</td>
<td>Decisions were slow.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sanctions were ineffective.</td>
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You need to know how each of these contributed towards the League's failures.
Exam-style questions

What were the main aims of the League of Nations?

What was the structure of the League of Nations?

Why did America not join the League of Nations?

Explain how the views of Britain, France and America differed as to how the League should be run.

Explain why some countries were not members of the League when it opened.

Explain the successes that the League had during the 1920s.