

Name:

Date:

Class:

Problem Analysis

Directions: Analyze how the sinking of the RMS Lusitania played a pivotal role in America entering WWI by dissecting the problem. Describe the people and/or agencies involved, the setting, and the key events that produced a certain solution/outcome. Then reflect on the consequences of this solution/outcome.

People or Agencies Involved

The Problem

The Setting

The Events

The Solution/Outcome

Consequences of the
Solution/Outcome

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KEY

People or Agencies Involved

The British and German governments and naval forces/military ships.

Private merchant and passenger ships carrying goods, supplies and munitions across the Atlantic and North Sea (including the Lusitania).

The American government and President Woodrow Wilson.

The Problem

The Royal Mail Ship Lusitania was a passenger ship carrying 1,959 civilians that was hit by a German U-boat torpedo killing 1,198 men, women and children including 128 Americans.

The Setting

In August 1914 the British declared war on Germany and declared the entire North Sea area a war zone, significantly impacting Germany's trade and supply lines.

In February 1915 the Germans retaliated by declaring the seas around the British Isles as a war zone and began targeting any ships they suspected to be aiding the British.

The Events

The German Embassy issued a warning about civilian sea travel during war.

The RMS Lusitania disregarded the warning and entered the waters around the British Isles carrying civilians and munitions.

On May 7, 1915, the Lusitania was hit by a torpedo launched from a German U-boat off the coast of England.

The Solution/ Outcome

The sinking of the RMS Lusitania caused outrage in America being labeled as an unprovoked attack on civilians (including women and children).

President Wilson demanded an apology from the German government and assurances that there would be no similar incidents in the future.

Consequences of the Solution/Outcome

Germany did not want America to enter what was still at that time a predominately European affair on the side of the British/Allied forces and issued a formal apology then suspended attacks on passenger ships in August 1915.

The United States was able to remain out of the war for another two years before Wilson's policy of cautious neutrality was tested again.