**Preparing for the Versailles Conference**

The First World War (1914–1918) devastated Europe. Over 10 million people died and the part of France where there had been considerable fighting – the ‘Western Front’ – was totally destroyed. In November 1918, Germany had signed a cease-fire. It was called ‘the Armistice’. The Germans could not fight any longer. But they did not think they had surrendered!

In January 1919, delegates from 32 countries met at Versailles, near Paris, to make treaties to end the war. The meeting was known as the Versailles Conference. This activity examines the state of Europe following the war and the motives of different countries attending the conference

**Document A – Pictures of France After World War I**



1. What 3 words come to mind when looking at these pictures?

A picture of Soissons, France in 1918, showing the damage done during the war.

[](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/i?ammem/pan:@field(NUMBER+@band(pan+6a23352)):displayType=1:m856sd=pan:m856sf=6a23352)

A picture of another city in France (1918), showing the damage done during the war.

1. Imagine you are someone that lived in these cities. How would you feel after the war? What would you want to happen to the country you thought was responsible?

**Document B – Excerpt from a Speech by a British Politician Following World War I**

“Germany is going to pay. We will get everything you can squeeze out of a lemon, and a bit more. The Germans should hand over everything they own.”

From a speech in 1918 by a British politician

1. What do you think Germany is “going to pay” for?
2. What does the author mean when he says, “We will get everything you can squeeze out of a lemon and a bit more?”
3. Why do you think the British felt they had a right to punish Germany?

**Document C: A cartoon from a German Newspaper 1918**



1. In the cartoon, what creature does France represent?
2. What is France doing to Germany?
3. What point is the author trying to make about how the Allied Powers were going to treat Germany after World War One?

Germany

France