



DRIVING QUESTION

In 1919 the world signed a peace. In 1939 it went back to war. Was the return to war built into the peace itself, or did twenty years of choices build it?

Students run a nation from 1919 to 1939 without being told which nation it is. At the end, the game tells them. The worksheet then makes them prove the answer with real chronology.

WHAT THIS IS

Every student runs one nation through six rounds — **1919, 1922, 1925, 1928, 1929, 1933** — on their own device. Each round has three phases: **spend a budget** (education, healthcare, infrastructure, military), **negotiate war and alliances face to face in the room**, then **buy commodities** on a market whose prices shift with the world economy.

The score is **HDI** — human development. Military units cost money *and* HDI. Education and healthcare raise it. Then 1929 arrives and takes the budget away from everyone at once.

The nations have invented names: Imaquestf, Ipadr, Cantwait, Dave. Every one is a real country, with its actual 1919 resource profile and starting HDI. **Students are not told this.** At 1939 the game reveals who they were and what that country actually did. The reveal is the lesson; protect it.

The simulation supplies the experience. The worksheet supplies the history. Do not hand out the worksheet before the reveal.

AT A GLANCE

FITS	APUSH Period 7 (1890–1945); AP World Unit 7; any interwar or WWII causes unit
GRADES	9–12. No prior vocabulary needed.
LENGTH	2 periods (~50 min). Worksheet is homework or a third day.
GROUPING	1 nation per device. Solo, or pairs sharing one screen.
CLASS SIZE	Works from 8 to 25 nations. See assignment order, page 4.
GAME	witsooth.com/games/brink.html
PRINT	Worksheet, 1 per student (after Day 2). Nation slips, 1 per device.
PREP	Cut the nation slips. Read the war rule on page 2 aloud once before you teach it.

Read this before Day 1 — the one thing that breaks this lesson

The game saves progress **in the browser on the device the student used**. There is no account and no cloud sync. If a student opens Day 2 on a different Chromebook, a different browser, or a device whose browsing data was cleared overnight, **their nation is gone and they start at 1919**.

If devices are assigned 1:1, you are fine — tell students to use the same machine and not to clear history. **If you share a cart**, have students note their cart number on Day 1 and reclaim the same unit on Day 2, or run all six rounds in one block period.

If a save is lost anyway: reassign the same nation and let them click through rounds 1–3 quickly with rough numbers. It costs five minutes and the arc survives.

The game deliberately does not resolve wars — it says *"Negotiate in the room first. Then record what happened."* The room decides; the game applies the consequences. **This is the rule you supply**, and without it Day 1 stalls the first time someone declares war.

How a war is decided in this room

1. **Declare out loud.** Name your target so the whole room hears it. A war nobody heard did not happen.
2. **Both sides read their Military Units** off the top of the War & Diplomacy screen.
3. **Higher total wins. A tie goes to the defender.**
4. **Both nations record the war** on their own device — each taps Declare War, enters the other's name, and records their own result. One Win, one Loss. The defender records too, or nothing happens to them.
5. **Alliances count as military strength.** Every alliance you hold adds **+2 Military Units**. You may hold three.
6. **Chemical weapons override the count.** An attacker who uses them wins regardless of the numbers — and pays HDI -0.10 plus \$1,500 in sanctions next round.

Why this rule and not a die roll. Alliances are free military strength; purchased units are not. Three alliances give **+6 military at no cost in money or HDI**. Six purchased units cost **\$1,200 and -0.06 HDI**. Under this rule, collective security is mathematically the better deal — and your students will find that out themselves within two rounds. Hold onto it. The debrief question that matters is: **if alliances were the better deal, why did the 1930s go the other way?**

DAY 1 1919–1925 · The peace, the first shock, the false recovery

≈50 MIN

TARGET

Students can explain what their nation traded away to get what it bought.

TIME	WHO	WHAT HAPPENS
0–5	TEACHER	Hand out nation slips. Students open the game and select <i>their assigned nation only</i> . Say nothing about the reveal. If asked why the names are silly: "They're placeholders."
5–12	TEACHER	Frame it: "It is 1919. The war is over. You have \$10,000 and twenty years." Explain HDI in one sentence — <i>the number that says whether your people are actually living well; it is your score</i> . Project the war rule. Do not explain the hidden mechanics.
12–24	STUDENTS	Round 1 — 1919. Slowest round; they are learning the interface. Circulate. Expect the first war declaration around minute 18.
24–35	STUDENTS	Round 2 — 1922. Commodity prices fall. Nations that bought military in 1919 start feeling it.
35–46	STUDENTS	Round 3 — 1925. Recovery round. Say once, to the room: "This is the good year." Do not explain why.
46–50	TEACHER	Hard stop mid-round is fine — it saves automatically. Poll HDI aloud: highest, lowest. Exit question on a scrap of paper: "What are you optimizing for?" Collect. You will read these back on Day 2.

TARGET

Students can explain why their nation ended where it did — and separate what they chose from what they inherited.

TIME	WHO	WHAT HAPPENS
0–5	STUDENTS	Reopen the game, click Continue Game , confirm the nation and round are right. Fix any lost saves now, not at minute 20.
5–15	STUDENTS	Round 4 — 1928. Prices peak. Everyone feels rich. Let them buy.
15–27	STUDENTS	Round 5 — 1929. The crash. Finance goes to zero. Stop the room for thirty seconds when the first student reacts out loud — that reaction is the lesson. Then let them keep going.
27–38	STUDENTS	Round 6 — 1933. Final round. Expect a spike in war declarations. Note who declares and let it stand.
38–45	TEACHER	THE REVEAL — together. See the script below. Do not let students click it as they finish.
45–50	TEACHER	Two debrief questions, no more. Hand out the worksheet. Read the Day 1 exit tickets aloud without names — students hear their own 1919 priorities after learning who they were.

The reveal — say it roughly like this

As students reach 1939, tell them to stop at the reveal button and wait. When the last nation arrives:

"Hands off your keyboards. For two days you have been running a country. It was never a made-up country. Every one of you has been playing a real nation, with the resources it actually had in 1919 and the standard of living it actually had. In a second you're going to find out who you were, and what your country actually did. On three."

Then **give the room a full minute to be loud** before you ask anything. The first question is not *who were you* — they will volunteer that. Ask instead:

"Look at where you ended up. Does it make sense for who you turned out to be?"

RUNNING THE ROOM — BOTH DAYS

TEACHER MOVES THAT PAY OFF

- Require alliance offers to be made face to face, not shouted across the room. It slows negotiation to a usable pace.
- When someone asks "can I attack anyone?" — yes. Let it happen early so the room learns the war rule from a live case.
- Write the running HDI leader on the board. It changes behaviour immediately, which is itself worth discussing at the debrief.
- On Day 2, name the crash out loud when it lands: "Everyone's finance just went to zero. Everyone's."

DO NOT

- ! Do not confirm any guess about which real country a nation is, even a correct one
- ! Do not explain why finance holdings are dangerous — 1929 must land as a surprise
- ! Do not let students reach the Final screen and click Reveal on their own
- ! Do not hand out the worksheet before the reveal

HIDDEN MECHANICS – WHAT THE GAME IS DOING WITHOUT TELLING THEM

Students will report these as bugs. They are not bugs. Each one is a historical argument written into the model.

MECHANIC	TRIGGER AND COST	WHAT IT IS ARGUING
Internal instability	Nations flagged MNS (multi-national state) that spend fewer than 2 total units across education + healthcare + infrastructure in a round: −\$1,500, HDI −0.02 . A net record of 2+ war wins cancels it entirely; 1 net win halves it.	Diverse states held together without investing in their people bought unity with foreign victories instead. This is the single most important mechanic in the game.
Officer corps weakened	Two consecutive rounds of zero education : next round, war winnings are halved and losses hit harder.	Military capacity is downstream of schooling, on a lag long enough that no one connects the two.
Disease outbreak	Two consecutive rounds of zero healthcare : HDI −0.04, −\$1,000 .	Public health neglect compounds; it does not simply pause.
Civil unrest	Both of the above at once: a further HDI −0.05, −\$2,000 .	Collapsing services do not add up. They multiply.
Crash exposure	In 1929 , holding finance resources: more than 3 → HDI −0.05 ; 1 to 3 → HDI −0.02 .	The most modern, most financialized economies took the worst of it. Wealth in paper was not wealth.
Depression neglect	In 1933 , spending nothing at all on education and healthcare: HDI −0.04 .	Austerity at the trough of a depression has a measurable human price.
Chemical weapons	Unlocked at Technology ≥ 1 . Guarantees victory. HDI −0.10 and −\$1,500 in sanctions the following round.	The escape hatch from a losing war is an atrocity, and it is always available to the industrialized.
Alliance betrayal	Declaring war on your own ally: HDI −0.08, −\$1,000 , alliance dissolved.	Reputation is a resource with a real balance.
Market supply	Per-round purchase caps apply to each nation separately . There is no shared class-wide pool.	Nothing — this is a modelling limit. Do not promise students they are competing for scarce goods; they are not.

WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD WALK OUT ABLE TO DO

FROM THE SIMULATION

- Explain the tradeoff between arming a state and developing it, in their own numbers
- Describe what a global credit collapse does to a government with no reserves
- Account for why a nation with real resources can still be poor

FROM THE WORKSHEET

- Sequence ten interwar events and justify the order causally
- Evaluate a famous quotation by its provenance, not its plausibility
- Distinguish necessary from sufficient causes of the 1939 war
- Defend a periodization of 1919–1939 with evidence

Teacher eyes only — this page contains the reveal

Do not project or leave face-up. Assign nations by their invented names only.

NATION ASSIGNMENT — ASSIGN IN THIS ORDER

Ranked by debrief value — assign from the top down, so a class of twelve still gets a complete argument. **Assign Ipadr and Oilba Gulf together:** Japan and the oil it went to war for.

#	IN-GAME NAME	REALLY	WHY IT EARNS ITS PLACE
1	Dave	United States	The APUSH anchor. Could have shaped the peace; chose not to.
2	Imaquestf	Germany (Weimar)	Industrial, resentful, broke. Mirrors 1919–1939 move for move.
3	Ipadr	Japan	Tech 5, oil 2 — the Pacific War as two numbers.
4	Cantwait	British Empire	Won the war, could not afford the peace.
5	Alsoilstan	Soviet Union	Resource-rich, HDI 0.37. Industrialized while others crashed.
6	Banqwait	France	Demanded the harshest peace; its finance holdings then collapsed.
7	Gonawait	Italy	The "mutilated victory" — militarism as answer to humiliation.
8	Soclosistan	Poland	Restored after 123 years; partitioned again in 1939. Closes the loop.
9	Oilba Gulf	Dutch East Indies	Oil 8 — what Japan went to war for. Pair with Ipadr.
10	Nythgposblistan	Czechoslovakia	The successor-state success story. None of it mattered at Munich.
11	Madeupistan	Austria	An empire reduced to a city; annexed without a shot.
12	Onistan	Hungary	Lost two-thirds of its territory at Trianon.
13	Metu Gulf	Iraq	Invented at Versailles; instability designed into the borders.
14	Mayboil Gulf	Romania	Ploiești oil made it critical — and a target.
15	Iranout	Persia / Iran	Resources controlled by outside powers. The name is a hint.
16	Cudwait	Canada	Wheat economy wrecked by the commodity collapse.
17	Singlwait	Australia	Exporter wholly dependent on British demand.
18	Imok	Turkey	Rebuilt from the Ottoman collapse.
19	Liquablistan	Yugoslavia	Held together by force; the clearest MNS case.
20	Isolow	Greece	Lowest starting HDI. Defaulted in 1932.
21–25	Lotoil · Zipoil · Muchoil · Watewart · Ikan	Mexico · Argentina · Venezuela · Belgium · Netherlands	Commodity exporters and prosperous neutrals — proof the Depression reached nations that did nothing wrong.

WORKSHEET KEY – SECTION 1 SEQUENCE

#	LTR	DATE	EVENT AND THE DETAIL WORTH PRESSING ON
1	B	28 Jun 1919	Versailles signed — deliberately on the fifth anniversary of the Sarajevo assassination, in the hall where the German Empire had been proclaimed in 1871.
2	I	19 Nov 1919	Senate rejects the treaty with reservations 39–55, then again without them. On 19 Mar 1920 it fails a final time, 49–35 — seven votes short of the required two-thirds.
3	G	Oct–Dec 1925	Locarno. Negotiated 5–16 Oct, signed in London 1 Dec. Western borders guaranteed; eastern borders submitted only to arbitration. The hinge of the whole worksheet.
4	C	27 Aug 1928	Kellogg–Briand Pact, Paris. Fifteen original signatories including Germany, Italy, and Japan; forty-seven more joined later.
5	E	Oct 1929	Wall Street crash. The most arguable placement in the causation sort — structural condition or immediate trigger? Both are defensible if argued.
6	A	Sep 1931	Manchuria invaded. The Lytton Report was announced 2 Oct 1932; Japan gave formal notice of withdrawal from the League 27 Mar 1933.
7	D	30 Jan 1933	Hitler appointed Chancellor. Students routinely place this before Manchuria — it comes after. Germany left the League in Oct 1933.
8	F	Mar 1936	Rhineland remilitarized — breaking Versailles <i>and</i> Germany's own signature at Locarno eleven years earlier.
9	J	Sep 1938	Munich. Czechoslovakia was not at the table.
10	H	1 Sep 1939	Poland invaded — twenty years and sixty-five days after Versailles was signed.

Section 5 bookends: League → A · Demilitarized Rhineland → F · Czechoslovakia → J · Poland restored, and war renounced in 1928 → H.

Section 4 sort: a defensible split puts B, I, G, C, E as structural and A, D, F, J, H as precipitating. Accept any placement of E (the crash) that is argued rather than guessed — that is the best thing in the room to disagree about.

DEBRIEF – PICK THREE

QUESTIONS THAT WORK

- Who bought military units, and what did they cost you in HDI? Now — who formed alliances, and what did those cost?
- Whose HDI *rose* across the Depression? What did they do that the rest of you didn't?
- Somebody used chemical weapons. What did the room do when you announced it?
- Who was invaded and felt something unfair happened? Name it precisely.
- The nations that ended lowest — look at your reveal. Were you poor because of what you did, or because of what you started with?**

CONTINGENCIES

- Behind schedule:** cut the Market phase in rounds 2 and 3. Never cut it in round 4 — the bubble round is what makes the crash mean anything.
- One period only:** play rounds 1, 4, 5, 6. You lose the recovery years but keep the arc.
- Absent on Day 2:** attach them to a neighbouring nation as its foreign minister.
- Reading support:** pre-cut the Section 1 event bank into strips so students physically sort them.
- Extension:** the three highest and three lowest HDI nations each make a 60-second case for why they ended there.

SOURCES BEHIND THE WORKSHEET

- Foch attribution:** Winston Churchill, *The Gathering Storm* (Cassell, 1948), p. 7, which gives no source; *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* traces it to Paul Reynaud, *Mémoires* (1960/1963). Commandant Bugnet's *En écoutant le maréchal Foch* (1929) does not contain it. No contemporaneous 1919 record is known.
- Lloyd George:** *Some Considerations for the Peace Conference Before They Finally Draft Their Terms* (the Fontainebleau Memorandum), 25 March 1919.
- Keynes:** *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* (December 1919), Chapter VII, "Remedies."
- Senate votes:** United States Senate historical office, "Senate Rejects the Treaty of Versailles."
- Locarno and the Beck remark:** Józef Beck, then Poland's military attaché in Paris, quoted in Michael Brecher, *The World of Protracted Conflicts* (Lexington, 2016), p. 204.
- Kellogg–Briand:** US Department of State, Office of the Historian, "The Kellogg-Briand Pact, 1928."
- Abyssinia sanctions:** contemporary accounts of the League's sanctions regime, which excluded oil, coal, and iron and left the Suez Canal open.