

How far did the 'Big Three' achieve their aims at the Paris Peace Conference?

The **Big Three**—Clemenceau (France), Lloyd George (Britain), and Wilson (USA)—each had different aims at the **Treaty of Versailles**, and while they all got some of what they wanted, none of them were fully satisfied.

1. How Far Did Clemenceau (France) Get What He Wanted?

Wanted:

- Harsh punishment for Germany, to ensure it could never threaten France again.
- Large reparations to rebuild France.
- Military restrictions on Germany.
- Return of **Alsace-Lorraine** to France.

What he got:

- ✓ **Harsh military restrictions** – Germany's army was reduced to **100,000 soldiers**, with no air force, submarines, or tanks.
- ✓ **Alsace-Lorraine returned** to France.
- ✓ **Demilitarized Rhineland**, preventing Germany from stationing troops near France.
- ✓ **Germany had to pay reparations** (132 billion gold marks).

What he didn't get:

- ✗ He wanted **Germany to be broken into smaller states**, but this was rejected.
- ✗ He wanted the **Rhineland to be fully taken by France**, but it was only demilitarized.
- ✗ Reparations were **lower than he wanted**, and later reduced.

Verdict: ★★★★☆ (Mostly satisfied, but wanted Germany weakened even more)

2. How Far Did Lloyd George (Britain) Get What He Wanted?

Wanted:

- Punishment for Germany to satisfy British public opinion.
- A strong Germany to trade with.
- Germany's navy weakened to protect Britain.
- Expansion of the British Empire.

What he got:

- ✓ **Some punishment for Germany**, including reparations.
- ✓ **Germany's navy was severely reduced**, ensuring Britain's naval dominance.
- ✓ Britain gained **Germany's colonies**, expanding the British Empire.
- ✓ **Germany was not fully destroyed**, so it could still trade with Britain in the future.

What he didn't get:

- ✗ Reparations were **high**, which he feared would hurt the European economy.
- ✗ Germany was treated more harshly than he wanted, leading to resentment.
- ✗ The treaty increased tensions, making a future war more likely.

Verdict: ★★★☆☆ (Partly satisfied, but worried Germany was punished too harshly)

3. How Far Did Wilson (USA) Get What He Wanted?

Wanted:

- A fair and lasting peace to prevent future wars.
- Creation of the **League of Nations**.
- Self-determination for nations.
- No excessive punishment for Germany.

What he got:

- ✓ **League of Nations was created**, though the USA later refused to join.
- ✓ **Some self-determination** – new nations like **Poland and Czechoslovakia** were created.

What he didn't get:

- ✗ The treaty was **harsher on Germany** than he wanted.
- ✗ Self-determination was **not applied everywhere** (e.g., German-speaking people were placed in Poland and Czechoslovakia).
- ✗ The **USA rejected the treaty** and did not join the League of Nations, weakening Wilson's vision.

Verdict: ★★★☆☆ (Mostly disappointed, as his idealistic vision was not fully achieved)

Conclusion

- **Clemenceau (France) got the most of what he wanted**, but not enough to fully secure France.
- **Lloyd George (Britain) got a mix of what he wanted**, but worried the treaty was too harsh.
- **Wilson (USA) got the least of what he wanted**, as his vision of a fair peace was ignored.

The treaty was a **compromise**, which meant **no one was fully satisfied**. This dissatisfaction contributed to **future problems**, including **Germany's resentment** and the eventual outbreak of **World War II**.

