GOAL 1: Read each of the documents and classify each document as an economic, political, or moral argument for entering World War I. Bring to class.

GOAL 2: Answer the following question with evidence from your textbook as well as evidence from the document excerpts. Be prepared to present your argument with specific quotes, facts, and examples. Create a thesis to support your argument.

QUESTION: To what extent was the United States morally, economically and politically justified in entering the First World War against Germany?

1. Think about your criteria for a “just” war.
2. Consider the facts from your textbook.
3. Consider the point of view from the documents of the following individuals involved before you formulate your answer.
   - Woodrow Wilson
   - Senator George Norris
   - William Jennings Bryan
   - Claude Kitchin
   - Lord Bryce
   - Robert LaFollette
   - George Creel
   - Theodore Roosevelt
   - Robert Lansing

SENIOR GEORGE NORRIS, APRIL 4, 1917
To whom does war bring prosperity? Not to the soldier who for the…compensation of $16 per month shoulders his musket and goes into the trench, there to shed his blood and to die if necessary; not to the broke hearted widow who waits for the return of the mangled body of her husband; not to the mother who weeps at the death of her brave boy; not to the little children who shiver with cold; not to the babe who suffers from hunger; nor the millions of mothers and daughters who carry broken hearts to their graves. War brings no prosperity to the great mass of common and patriotic citizens. It increases the cost of living of those who toil and those who already must strain every effort to keep soul and body together. War brings prosperity to the stock gambler on Wall Street – to those who are already in possession of more wealth than can be realized or enjoyed…Their object in having war and in preparing for war is to make money. The enormous profits of munition manufacturers, stockbrokers, and bond dealers must be still further increased by our entrance into the war.

LORD BRYCE 1915
The German officer…knocked at the door…The officer ordered the soldiers to break down the door, which two of them did. The peasant came and asked what they were doing. His hands were tied behind his back, and he was shot at once without a moment’s delay. The wife came out with a little sucking child. One of the Germans took a rifle and struck her a tremendous blow with the butt on the head. Another took his bayonet and fixed it and thrust it through the child. He then put his rifle on his shoulder with the child up on it, its little arms stretched out once or twice. The officers ordered the house to be set on fire…The man and his wife and the child were thrown on the top.

SECRETARY OF STATE ROBERT LANSING, 1916
There is no doubt that the good relations between the US and Great Britain would have been seriously jeopardized by this unreasonable attitude…except for the fact that the British violations of law affected American property, while the German violations affected American lives…The Germans, with their genius for always doing the wrong thing in the wrong way and at the wrong time, perpetrated new crimes in their submarine campaign. These events made the complaints against the British seem insignificant and ill-timed, and aroused anew the indignation of the American people toward the ruthless commanders of Germany’s under-sea corsairs…
**Representative Claude Kitchin, 1917**

In my judgment, we could keep out of the war with Germany as we kept out of the war with Great Britain, by keeping our ships and our citizens out of the war zone of Germany as we did out of the war zone of Great Britain. And we could sacrifice no more honor, surrender no more rights, in the one case than in the other. We could resort to armed neutrality. But we are told that Germany has destroyed American lives while Great Britain has destroyed only property. But are we quite sure that the real reason for war with Germany is the destruction of lives as distinguished from property, that to avenge the killing of innocent Americans and to protect American lives war becomes a duty? Mexican bandits raided American towns, shot to death sleeping men, women, and children in their own homes. We did not go to war...I have hoped and prayed that God would forbid our country going into war with another for doing that which perhaps under the same circumstances we ourselves would do.

**George Creel, 1918**

Now let us picture what a sudden invasion of the US by these Germans would mean; sudden, because their settled way is always to attack suddenly. First, capture New York City, cut its rail communications, starve it into surrender, and then plunder it...One feeble old woman tries to conceal $20 which she has been hoarding in her desk drawer; she is taken out and hanged. Some of the teachers in two district schools meet a fate which makes them envy her...The German soldiers laugh...they manage to get drunk...robery, murder, and outrage run riot...Every horrible detail is just what the German troops have done in Belgium and France.

**President Woodrow Wilson, April 2, 1917**

I am not now thinking of the loss of property involved, immense and serious as that is, but only of the wanton and wholesale destruction of the lives of noncombatants, men, women, and children, engaged in pursuits which have always, been deemed innocent and legitimate. Property can be paid for; the lives of...innocent people can not be. The present German submarine warfare against commerce is a warfare against mankind...American ships have been sunk, American lives taken, in ways which it has stirred us very deeply to learn of...Our motive will not be revenge or the victorious assertion of the physical might of the nation, but only the vindication of right, of human right...Indeed it is now evident that its spies were here even before the war began...That it means to stir up enemies against us at our very doors the intercepted note to the German Minister in Mexico City is eloquent evidence...The world must be made safe for democracy. Its peace must be planted upon the tested foundations of political liberty. We have no selfish ends to serve. We desire no conquest...We shall be satisfied when those rights have been made as secure as the faith and freedom of nations can make them...We enter this war only where we are clearly forced into it because there are no other means of defending our rights...It is a fearful thing to lead this great peaceful people into war, into the most terrible and disastrous of all wars, civilization itself seeming to be in the balance. But the right is more precious than peace, and we shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts—for democracy...

**William Jennings Bryan, 1915**

There is no doubt as to the sentiment in Germany and the view they take is a natural one. 1st, They have warned Americans not to travel on British ships. Why do Americans take the risk? Not an unreasonable question. 2nd, If we allow the use of our flag, how can we complain, if in the confusion one of our boats is sunk by mistake? 3rd, Why be shocked at the drowning of a few people, if there is no objection to starving a nation? Of course Germany insists that by careful use she will have enough food, but if Great Britain cannot succeed in starving the non-combatants, why does she excite retaliation by threatening to do so?...It seems to me we must prevent the misuse of our flag and warn Americans not to use British vessels in the war zone unless we can bring pressure on Great Britain to withdraw threat to make bread or food contraband...

(keep going—I tried not to break up statements)
SENATOR ROBERT LA FOLLETTE, 1917
Just a word of comment more upon one of the points in the President’s address. He says that this is a war “for the things which we have always carried nearest to our hearts—for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own government.” In many places throughout the address is this exalted sentiment given expression…But the President proposes alliance with Great Britain, which, however, liberty-loving it people, is a hereditary monarchy, with a hereditary ruler, with a hereditary House of Lords, with a hereditary landed system, with a limited and restricted suffrage for one class…The President has not suggested that we make our support of Great Britain conditional to her granting home rule to Ireland, or Egypt, or India. We rejoice in the establishment of democracy in Russia, but it will hardly be contended that if Russia was still an autocratic Government, we would not be asked to enter this alliance with her just the same…In the sense that this war is being forced upon our people without their knowing why and without their approval, and that wars are usually forced upon all peoples in the same way, there is some truth in the statement; but I venture to say the response which the German people have made to the demands of this war shows that it has a degree of popular support which the war upon which we are entering has not and never will have among our people…The poor, sir, who are the ones called upon to rot in the trenches, have no organized power, have no press to voice their will upon this question of peace or war…

THEODORE ROOSEVELT, 1917
We believe that the large majority of Americans are proudly ready to fight to the last for the overthrow of the brutal German militarism, which threatens America no less than every other civilized nation. We believe that it would be an act of baseness and infamy, and act of unworthy cowardice, and a betrayal of this country and of mankind to accept any peace except the peace of overwhelming victory, a peace based on the complete overthrow of the Prussianized Germany of the Hohenzollerns. We hold that the true test of loyal Americanism today is effective service against Germany.