



The End of the Ottoman Empire

Understanding the Treaties of Sèvres and Lausanne

Recommended Grade Levels: 9-12

Course/Content Area: History

Authored by: Belinda Cambre, National WWI Museum and Memorial Teacher Fellow

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- What makes the Ottoman Empire valuable to the rest of the world?
- What happened to the Ottoman Empire after the armistice of Nov. 11, 1918?
- How do the Treaties of Sèvres and Lausanne impact the Ottoman Empire?
- What is the legacy of the Treaty of Lausanne?

SUMMARY: In this set of lessons, students will focus on the Middle East in the aftermath of the First World War. They will identify locations of the area that will be important to the resolution of conflict, as well as understand why certain aspects of the Middle East, such as the straits opening a path to the Black Sea, is an important interest to rest of the world. The students will then examine the two treaties that are attempted to dispose of the Ottoman Empire, as well as other agreements that complicate the region. Finally, students will research and debate the legacy of the Treaty of Lausanne, which remains in effect today.

STANDARDS ALIGNMENT: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.3: Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.7: Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.8: Evaluate an author’s premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.9: Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

TIME NEEDED: 4-5 55-minute class periods

OBJECTIVES: *Students will:*

- Identify locations in the Middle East on a map
- Understand the British and French interest in the Middle East territories
- Identify components of the Treaty of Sèvres to the Treaty of Lausanne
- Recognize the impact treaties have on territories.

INTERDISCIPLINARY: History, Geography

THEMES & CONNECTIONS:

- Global connections
- Power, authority, and governance
- People, places, and environments

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- copies of Appendix A for each student
- copies of Appendix C and D for each student or group
- copies of Appendix E for each group negotiation
- copies of Appendix G for each student
- copies of the article “The Making of the Treaty of Sèvres of 10 August 1920”—digital link or physical copy
- copies of the article “From Sèvres to Lausanne” —digital link or physical copy

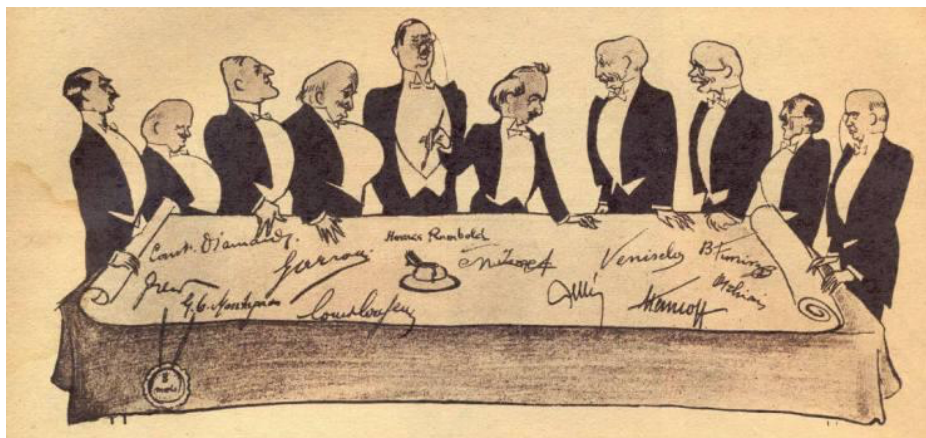
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Armistice of November 11, 1918, signaled the end of World War I for most of the world. The war in the Ottoman Empire continued for several years as peace treaties were negotiated. While the Turks wanted an armistice in October 1918, it was not until December 1919 when Britain and France begin discussions of a peace treaty.

In April 1919, the Italians claim territory promised to them by the 1915 Treaty of London, in the city of Adalia. By May 1919, the Greeks, under calls from the British, send an army to occupy the commercial city of Smyrna and nearby lands. Soon after, on June 28, 1919, the Treaty of Versailles is signed. Meanwhile, insurgent resistance forces under the leadership of Mustapha Kemal, assumed control of central Anatolia. This new leadership impacted the acceptance of treaties that would be created.

The Treaty of Sèvres was signed on August 10, 1920, between the Allied powers and Turkey, but it was never ratified. The two primary representatives for the Allied powers were the British and French governments. Italy was represented at the negotiations but was not a major player during the discussions. Each power was divided by conflicting interests, and vigorous debate and reluctant compromise likely doomed the ratification of the treaty. While the treaty's negotiations began and were presented to the Sultan, the rise of Mustapha Kemal impacted ratification and the treaty was ultimately scrapped.

Several years later, in the Swiss resort town of Lausanne, the countries of Turkey, Britain, France, Italy, Japan, Greece, Romania, and several impacted Kingdoms met to try the peace process again. This attempt was successful, and on July 24, 1923 the treaty was signed and ratified by the Grand National Assembly in Ankara on August 21, 1923. This is the only treaty still in effect from World War I.



Derso, Alois & Kelen, Emery. "Derso and Kelen's Caricature of the Signing."
<https://thelausanneproject.com/history-lausanne-treaty/>



An Egyptian illustration of Enver Pasha and Mustafa Kemal jointly opposing the 1920 Treaty of Sèvres

Source: ORHAN KOLOĞLU, *GAZİ'NİN ÇAĞINDA İSLAM DÜNYASI* (İSTANBUL: BOYUT YAYINCILIK, 1994), 111.

<https://thelausanneproject.com/2022/08/04/enver-enigma/>

LESSON 1: What makes the Ottoman Empire valuable to the world?

This lesson is a warm-up for the rest of the unit. It can be a quick activity or stretched to an entire lesson. The purpose is to familiarize students with the geography of the Middle East.

PRE-ASSESSMENT: As a pre-test, have students identify the requested locations on the map (Appendix A). The questions that follow could also be included.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

All students will need:

-- a copy of Appendix A “The Ottoman Empire”

DIRECTIONS:

1. Provide students with a copy of the map activity document. (Appendix A)
2. Direct students to identify the requested areas on the map. Students may need support to identify required locations.
3. After checking the accuracy of the map locations, have students complete the questions at the bottom of the document. These questions could be completed as a whole class discussion.

POST-ASSESSMENT:

The map could be used as a post-test if also given as a pre-test.

MODIFICATIONS/ACCOMMODATIONS:

Students may require the use of a computer or an atlas to help locate the requested areas on this map. The questions can be used as class discussion instead of an independent assignment.



LESSON 2: Negotiating the Treaty of Sèvres

In this lesson, students work as a team to negotiate their version of the Treaty of Sèvres. While they are negotiating, the teacher will announce several additional agreements, illustrating the complexity that existed with the Ottoman Empire.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

All students will need:

- a copy of Appendix C or D “The British Position” or “The French Position” depending upon which group they are assigned
- a copy of the article “The Making of the Treaty of Sèvres of 10 August 1920”
- a copy of Appendix E will be needed for each group as they record their negotiations

OPENING:

Show students the following video discussing the end of World War I and the resulting treaties.

“Treaties of Sèvres and Lausanne:” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fY73jNmWfHc>

DIRECTIONS OVERVIEW:

1. Refer to Appendix B for a complete set of directions for the treaty negotiation process.
2. Provide students with a copy of A.E. Montgomery’s article, “The Making of the Treaty of Sèvres of 10 August 1920.” The article explains the process used between the British and French negotiators. After the powers met in Paris, they continued to negotiate through memoranda and agreed to meet again in London. This process was lengthy, and the article presents to students the idea that this was not a simple arrangement between the powers. If this article is not an appropriate level for students, this step can be skipped.
3. Assign students to groups representing the two powers. Provide students the background statements that summarize their side’s position.
4. Students will work in a group to decide how the Ottoman Empire will be divided. Each side will draw on their map the area they wish to maintain and the area they wish to allow the other side to have. Students should use different colors to represent how the map will be divided.
5. After sufficient time for groups to prepare, moderate a discussion between the two groups. Ask the students to identify the areas they may both agree and represent that on the TREATY map. For areas of disagreement, have them try to civilly work to an agreement.
6. In the next lesson, students will learn how the Treaty of Sèvres unfolds.

ASSESSMENT:

The students’ performance and/or completed work can be used as assessment.

MODIFICATIONS/ACCOMMODATIONS

This activity can be modified for small group work instead of whole class discussion, depending upon class size.

LESSON 3: Comparing the Treaties of Sèvres and Lausanne

In this lesson, students will compare the two treaties that impacted the Ottoman Empire after the war, the Treaty of Sèvres and the Treaty of Lausanne. If students have not participated in Lesson 2, provide the students with the necessary background of the treaties.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

All students will need:

- a copy of Appendix G “Comparing the Treaties”
- a copy of the article “From Sèvres to Lausanne”

DIRECTIONS:

1. Provide students with a copy of Appendix F, “Comparing the Treaties.”
2. As a class (or in small groups), have students complete the column for Treaty of Sèvres.
3. Have students access the article “From Sèvres to Lausanne” linked on the appendix.
4. Students should complete the remainder of the chart using the article. The article describes a component of the Treaty of Sèvres and then follows with how that provision was impacted by the Treaty of Lausanne.
5. After completing the chart, have students answer the questions. These questions can also be used for a whole class discussion.

ASSESSMENT:

The completed assignment can be used as an assessment.

MODIFICATIONS/ACCOMMODATIONS:

Students may require the use of a computer to access the required article. If digital access is not available, provide copies of the article.

LESSON 4:

What is the legacy of the Treaty of Lausanne?

In this lesson, students will look at the effects of the Treaty of Lausanne and its legacy today. The year 2023 marks the 100th anniversary of the longest-lasting peace treaty from WWI.

DIRECTIONS:

1. For this culminating activity, students will debate the legacy of the Treaty of Lausanne. To do so, assign students to groups which will answer the question, “Was the Treaty of Lausanne fair to Turkey?”
2. Provide students time to research their positions.
3. In groups, students will create a one-page position statement with evidence cited from their research in support of their question.
4. Poll students on their positions.
5. If students have affirmative and negative responses to the question, divide students into groups with representatives of each side. If not, lead students in a discussion of the question prompting them to consider aspects of the other side.
6. In the small groups, have students read their position statements to the rest of the group members.
7. Students should identify points both sides agree on and respond to those they do not agree. Remind students to begin those statements with, “I hear you say..., but we believe...”

MATERIALS NEEDED/ SOURCES:

Students should consult the internet for sources for their position statements. The following links can be provided to begin the search.

Sofuoglu, Murat. 2018. “Turks still debate whether Treaty of Lausanne was fair to Turkey.” *TRT World*, January 26, 2018.
<https://www.trtworld.com/magazine/turkey-still-debates-whether-treaty-of-lausanne-was-a-fair-peace-deal-14632>

The Lausanne Project:
<https://thelausanneproject.com/>

ASSESSMENT:

Student performance in the debate or written response could be used as an assessment for this task.

MODIFICATIONS/ACCOMMODATIONS:

If students are not able to conduct research on their own, provide resources directly to the student groups.

Appendix A: The Ottoman Empire

The Ottoman Empire, as it was in 1900, is illustrated in the white spaces in the center of the map shown below. Use the map to respond to the prompts below.



Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ottoman_Empire_%281900%29.png

Part One: Identify the following on the map above:

1. Black Sea
2. Mediterranean Sea
3. Anatolia
4. Constantinople (Istanbul)
5. Greece
6. Thrace
7. Smyrna
8. Russia

Part Two: Answer the following questions:

1. Using the map, describe why the Ottoman Empire might be valuable to the West?

2. Why might Russia be interested in this area?

3. How might Greece play a role in this area?

Appendix B: Negotiating a Treaty - Teacher Directions

In this lesson, students will conduct a mock treaty session by assuming the roles of the British and French governments discussing how to handle the Ottoman Empire post-WWI.

To Begin:

1. Divide the students into groups representing the British and French governments. Depending on the size of the class, you may choose to have students work in smaller groups or dividing the whole class into two groups.
2. Provide each group with the appropriate position statement for the government they are representing.
3. Appoint group leaders, or have students choose: 1) a leader to lead these discussions, 2) a recorder to keep notes and draw the map, and 3) a diplomat (or two) to participate in the discussions. If necessary, you can create additional roles to provide all students with a role.
4. Within their country groups, have students read their position statement and identify the priorities they want to enforce.
5. On the map provided on their position chart, have the recorder draw and label the map. Have students discuss and draw on the map the areas they would allocate to other countries to possess. How does their country wish to see this part of the world redrawn after the war? If possible, have students identify the different areas in different colors.
6. If students need prompting, offer the following countries to consider and identify if they will allocate territory to other countries or people: Russia, Italy, The United States, Greece, Turkey, the Armenians.
7. After time to discuss and create their map to bring to the treaty negotiations, announce that negotiations will begin.
8. Remind the delegates that they must have a statement prepared to share at the negotiations. The statement must lay out what their country wants.

The Negotiations:

9. Make sure that the room is set up so that diplomats from each country have space to meet, and the rest of the group members can participate if necessary. If possible, configure the classroom to have the diplomats meet in the center of the class, with the others able to watch. If working in small groups, this can be completed with multiple negotiations occurring simultaneously.
10. Have the diplomats meet. Provide them with a starting announcement:
“We the delegates of the British and French Governments convene here in Sèvres to determine how to dispose of the Ottoman Empire. We will begin by letting the British government present their thoughts and then we will hear from the French government delegate. After that we will begin the negotiations to come to agreement.”
11. After a significant time negotiating, interrupt their work and announce the following:
“Wait. It looks as though there was already an agreement in place between these two governments.”
12. If necessary, allow students to read the Sykes-Picot Agreement (APPENDIX F)

13. Ask students if and how this impacts their work. After discussion, allow students to resume their work.
14. The groups should be provided a clean copy of the map (Appendix E) once they have come to agreement as what the map will look like. Recorders will collaborate to identify the group's compromises about the map.
15. After groups are finished, debrief with the students. Suggested questions to ask include:
 - a. Describe the process of negotiation in your groups.
 - b. Did the Sykes-Picot Agreement impact your discussion? How?
 - c. How did the map of the Sykes-Picot Agreement mirror your map, or the map of the actual Treaty of Sèvres? (A copy of the map can be found here: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Treaty_of_S%C3%A8vres_1920.svg)
 - d. Is your resulting decision (the treaty) fair to Turkey? To the Armenians? Explain.
 - e. Is it fair to allow the victors to redraw the map of this part of the world? Explain.

Appendix C: Negotiating a Treaty - The British Position

Below is the position of the British government. Your group will use this information as you negotiate this Treaty.

The British government saw the rise of Kemalism (the future Atatürk who would rebel and create modern-day Turkey) as not justification for any drastic modification of the Allied's plans. Turkey cost Great Britain in blood and treasure, and according to the British, they must pay the price for this loss and for their barbaric treatment of the Christian minority population. Their treatment of the Armenians shocked the world, and the empire must be punished. Further, the Allies should suppress Turkish power by depriving Turkey of its guardianship of the straits. This ensured British naval and military predominance at Constantinople. The British rejected French claims for Turkish integrity and argued that they should not own the straits nor have a capital. They were concerned that the French would become a strong influence in the Ottoman territory, and the British supported the occupation of the Greeks in Smyrna.

On the map below, identify which part of the Ottoman Empire should be divided and given to each interested party. Identify if you will allocate territory to Great Britain, France, Italy, Russia, or another country. Also, identify if (and where) you would allocate territory for the Armenians



Source: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Ottoman-Empire/The-empire-from-1807-to-1920>

SOURCE: Montgomery, A.E. "The Making of the Treaty of Sèvres of 10 August 1920." *The Historical Journal* 15 no.4 (Dec., 1972): 775-787

Appendix D: Negotiating a Treaty: The French Position

Below is the general position of your assigned major power. Read the following to inform your work.

The French suffered little from the Turks. Prior to the conflict, the French loaned millions to the Turkish government, so if the Ottoman Empire were to be divided, France stood to potentially lose its securities and interests in the region. The French urged the British to preserve Turkish integrity for this reason, but also argued for an independent Armenia and the Greek withdrawal from the area. France supported compensating Greece for withdrawal with parts of Thrace. The Turkish state would remain intact over Asia Minor and secure control over sources of revenue. The Turks would be able to pay back the loan!

After the initial meeting and position statements, the two governments sent various memoranda. The French Minister of Foreign Affairs countered that Turkey must be preserved but emasculated. The country could remain territorially whole, but demilitarized and subject to financial control. The push for an independent Armenia would no longer be supported.

On the map below, identify which part of the Ottoman Empire should be divided and given to each interested party. Identify if you will allocate territory to Great Britain, France, Italy, Russia, or another country. Also, identify if (and where) you would allocate territory for the Armenians.



Source: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Ottoman-Empire/The-empire-from-1807-to-1920>

SOURCE: Montgomery, A.E. "The Making of the Treaty of Sèvres of 10 August 1920." *The Historical Journal* 15 no.4 (Dec., 1972): 775-787.

Appendix E: The Map of the World

Provide each group with this map to identify their final treaty negotiations. If available, represent each country's allocated territories with a different color. Label or create a map key to identify.



Source: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Ottoman-Empire/The-empire-from-1807-to-1920>

Appendix F: The Sykes-Picot Agreement

The Sykes-Picot Agreement: 1916

It is accordingly understood between the French and British governments:

That France and Great Britain are prepared to recognize and protect an independent Arab states or a confederation of Arab states (a) and (b) marked on the annexed map, under the suzerainty of an Arab chief. That in area (a) France, and in area (b) Great Britain, shall have priority of right of enterprise and local loans. That in area (a) France, and in area (b) Great Britain, shall alone supply advisers or foreign functionaries at the request of the Arab state or confederation of Arab states.

That in the blue area France, and in the red area Great Britain, shall be allowed to establish such direct or indirect administration or control as they desire and as they may think fit to arrange with the Arab state or confederation of Arab states.

That in the brown area there shall be established an international administration, the form of which is to be decided upon after consultation with Russia, and subsequently in consultation with the other allies, and the representatives of the Shereef of Mecca.

That Great Britain be accorded (1) the ports of Haifa and Acre, (2) guarantee of a given supply of water from the Tigres and Euphrates in area (a) for area (b). His Majesty's government, on their part, undertake that they will at no time enter into negotiations for the cession of Cyprus to any third power without the previous consent of the French government.

That Alexandretta shall be a free port as regards the trade of the British empire, and that there shall be no discrimination in port charges or facilities as regards British shipping and British goods; that there shall be freedom of transit for British goods through Alexandretta and by railway through the blue area, or (b) area, or area (a); and there shall be no discrimination, direct or indirect, against British goods on any railway or against British goods or ships at any port serving the areas mentioned.

That Haifa shall be a free port as regards the trade of France, her dominions and protectorates, and there shall be no discrimination in port charges or facilities as regards French shipping and French goods. There shall be freedom of transit for French goods through Haifa and by the British railway through the brown area, whether those goods are intended for or originate in the blue area, area (a), or area (b), and there shall be no discrimination, direct or indirect, against French goods on any railway, or against French goods or ships at any port serving the areas mentioned.

That in area (a) the Baghdad railway shall not be extended southwards beyond Mosul, and in area (b) northwards beyond Samarra, until a railway connecting Baghdad and Aleppo via the Euphrates valley has been completed, and then only with the concurrence of the two governments.

That Great Britain has the right to build, administer, and be sole owner of a railway connecting Haifa with area (b), and shall have a perpetual right to transport troops along such a line at all times. It is to be understood by both governments that this railway is to facilitate the connection of Baghdad with Haifa by rail, and it is further understood that, if the engineering difficulties and expense entailed by keeping this connecting line in the brown area only make the project unfeasible, that the French government shall be prepared to consider that the line in question may also traverse the Polgon Baniyas Keis Marib Salkhad tell Otsda Mesmie before reaching area (b).

For a period of twenty years the existing Turkish customs tariff shall remain in force throughout the whole of the blue and red areas, as well as in areas (a) and (b), and no increase in the rates of duty or conversions from ad valorem to specific rates shall be made except by agreement between the two powers.

There shall be no interior customs barriers between any of the above mentioned areas. The customs duties leviable on goods destined for the interior shall be collected at the port of entry and handed over to the administration of the area of destination.

It shall be agreed that the French government will at no time enter into any negotiations for the cession of their rights and will not cede such rights in the blue area to any third power, except the Arab state or confederation of Arab states, without the previous agreement of his majesty's government, who, on their part, will give a similar undertaking to the French government regarding the red area.

The British and French government, as the protectors of the Arab state, shall agree that they will not themselves acquire and will not consent to a third power acquiring territorial possessions in the Arabian peninsula, nor consent to a third power installing a naval base either on the east coast, or on the islands, of the red sea. This, however, shall not prevent such adjustment of the Aden frontier as may be necessary in consequence of recent Turkish aggression.

The negotiations with the Arabs as to the boundaries of the Arab states shall be continued through the same channel as heretofore on behalf of the two powers.

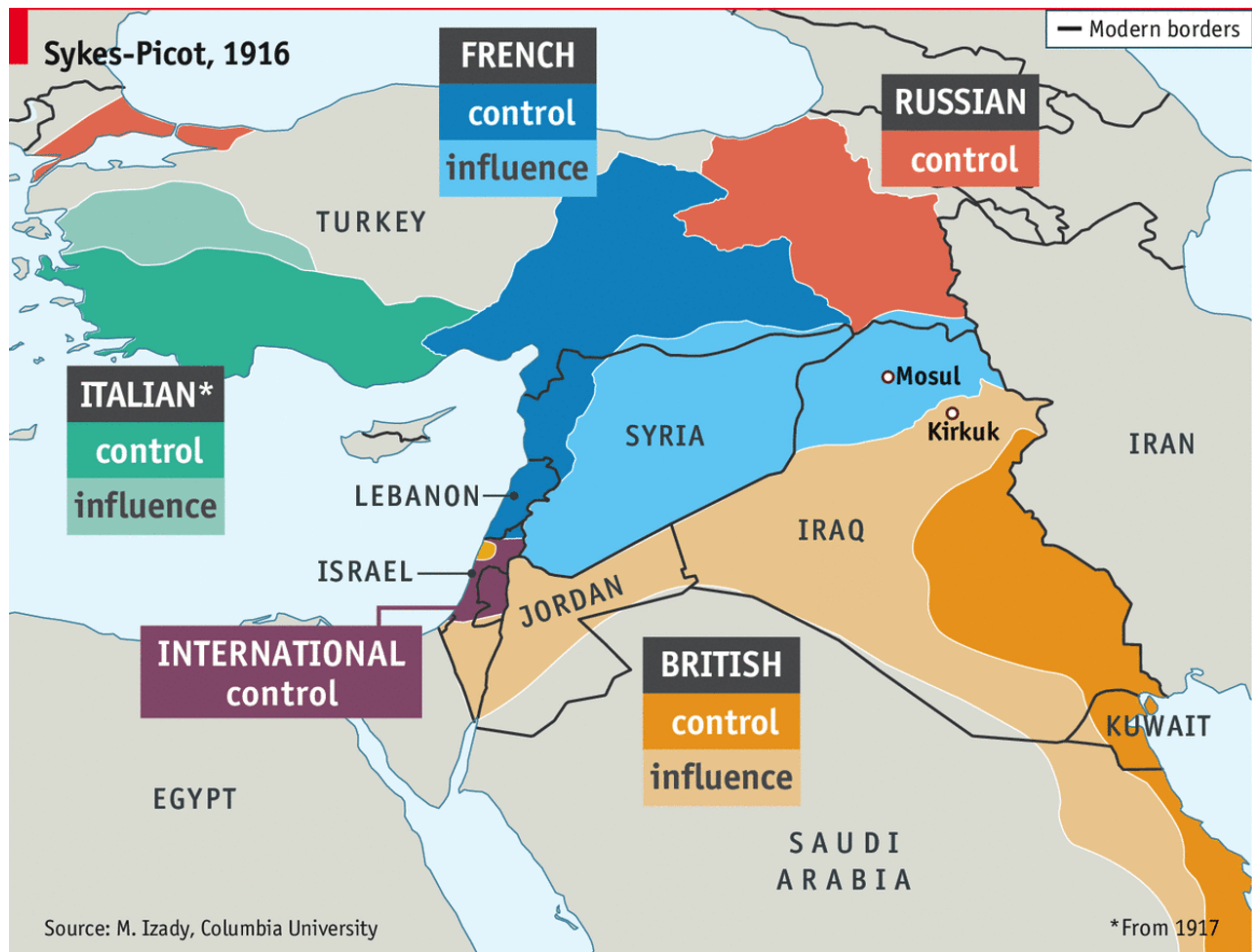
It is agreed that measures to control the importation of arms into the Arab territories will be considered by the two governments.

I have further the honor to state that, in order to make the agreement complete, his majesty's government are proposing to the Russian government to exchange notes analogous to those exchanged by the latter and your excellency's government on the 26th April last. Copies of these notes will be communicated to your excellency as soon as exchanged. I would also venture to remind your excellency that the conclusion of the present agreement raises, for practical consideration, the question of claims of Italy to a share in any partition or rearrangement of turkey in Asia, as formulated in article 9 of the agreement of the 26th April, 1915, between Italy and the allies.

His Majesty's government further consider that the Japanese government should be informed of the arrangements now concluded.

Source: Yale Law School. n.d. "The Sykes-Picot Agreement: 1916." Accessed July 21, 2022. https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/sykes.asp

Map of Proposed Areas following the Sykes-Picot Agreement



Economist.com

Source: "Sykes-Picot 100 years on." *The Economist* (May 16, 2016)

<https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2016/05/16/sykes-picot-100-years-on>

Appendix G: Comparing the Treaty of Sèvres to the Treaty of Lausanne

The Treaty of Sèvres was not ratified. Three years later, Turkey, Britain, France, Italy, Japan, Greece, Romania, and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes negotiated and signed the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923. Read the article “From Sèvres to Lausanne” to find out how the provisions of each treaty differed. Then, complete the chart below and answer the questions that follow.

You can find the article here: https://www.jstor.org/stable/2189228#metadata_info_tab_contents

According to the treaties,

What will happen to...?	Treaty of Sèvres	Treaty of Lausanne
the land		
the Armenians		
the Straits		
reparations		
capitulations		

Using the information on your chart, answer the following questions:

1. How do the treaties differ?
2. In your opinion, under which treaty would the Ottoman Empire benefit most? Explain why.
3. In your opinion, under which treaty would the European nations benefit most? Explain why.

Further Resources:

Comments about the Sykes-Picot Agreement, available at <https://theconversation.com/the-sykes-picot-agreement-and-the-making-of-the-modern-middle-east-58780>

The Lausanne Project, available at <https://thelausanneproject.com/>

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- Smith, Leonard V.: Post-war Treaties (Ottoman Empire/ Middle East) , in: 1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War, ed. by Ute Daniel, Peter Gatrell, Oliver Janz, Heather Jones, Jennifer Keene, Alan Kramer, and Bill Nasson, issued by Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin 2014-10-08. DOI: [10.15463/ie1418.10357](https://doi.org/10.15463/ie1418.10357). Accessed from https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/post-war_treaties_ottoman_empire_middle_east
- Sofuoglu, Murat. 2018. "Turks still debate whether Treaty of Lausanne was fair to Turkey." *TRT World*, January 26, 2018. <https://www.trtworld.com/magazine/turkey-still-debates-whether-treaty-of-lausanne-was-a-fair-peace-deal-14632>
- "Sykes-Picot 100 years on." *The Economist* (May 16, 2016) <https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2016/05/16/sykes-picot-100-years-on>
- Yale Law School. n.d. "The Sykes-Picot Agreement: 1916." Accessed July 21, 2022. https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/sykes.asp