**Treaty of Versailles**

The treaty can be divided into a number of sections: territory/land, military, financial and general.

**Territory/Land**

* Much land was taken away from Germany:
* The [League of Nations](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/leagueofnations.htm) also took control of Germany's overseas colonies.
* Germany had to return to [Russia](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/russia_1917_to_1939.htm) land taken in the [Treaty of](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/treaty_of_brest-litovsk.htm) [Brest-Litovsk](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/treaty_of_brest-litovsk.htm). Some of this land was made into new states – Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia. An enlarged Poland also received some of this land.

**Military**

* Germany’s army was reduced to 100,000 men; the army was not allowed tanks
* Germany was not allowed an air force. Germany was allowed only 6 capital naval ships and no submarines.
* The Rhineland was made into a demilitarized zone. No German soldier or weapon was allowed into this zone. The Allies were to keep an army of occupation on the west bank of the Rhine for 15 years.

**Financial**

* The loss of vital industrial territory would be a severe blow to any attempts by Germany to rebuild its economy. Combined with the financial penalties linked to reparations, it seemed clear to Germany that the Allies wanted nothing else but to bankrupt them.
* Germany was also forbidden to unite with Austria to form one super-state.

**General**

There are three vital clauses here:

1. Germany had to admit full responsibility for starting the war. This was Clause 231 - the infamous "War Guilt Clause".

2. Germany, as was responsible for starting the war as stated in clause 231, was therefore responsible for all the war damage caused by the First World War. Therefore, she had to pay reparations, the bulk of which would go to France and Belgium to pay for the damage from the war. Quite literally, reparations would be used to pay for the damage to be repaired. The figure was eventually set at about $33 billion – a huge sum of money well beyond Germany’s ability to pay.

3. A [League of Nations](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/leagueofnations.htm) was set up to keep world peace. In fact, the first 26 clauses of the treaty dealt with the League's organization.

Germany was given two choices when it came to the treaty:

1) Sign the Treaty or   
2) Be invaded by the Allies.

**The Consequences of Versailles**

* The treaty left a mood of anger throughout Germany as it was felt that as a nation Germany had been unfairly treated.
* Above all else, Germany hated the clause blaming her for the cause of the war and the resultant financial penalties the treaty was bound to impose on Germany. Those who signed it (though effectively they had no choice) became known as the "November Criminals".
* Many German citizens felt that they were being punished for the mistakes of the German government in August 1914 as it was the government that had declared war not the people.

**Were the terms of the Treaty of Versailles actually carried out?**

* The [League of Nations](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/leagueofnations.htm) was created. This did happen even if Germany was initially excluded from it.  
  Land had to be handed over to Poland, France, Belgium and Denmark. This did happen - all the land Germany was required to hand over, was handed over. Territory put under League of Nations control was handed over to the League.
* Germany’s army had to be reduced to 100,000 men. On paper this happened. The fact that Germany side-stepped the rule did not mean that they literally broke it - though what they did was a deliberate attempt to break this term. German soldiers in the 1920’s were signed on for a short contract of service and then put in the reserves once their time had finished. Therefore, Germany never had more than 100,000 soldiers serving at any one time though they certainly had substantial reserve soldiers which boosted Hitler when he renounced the clauses of Versailles.
* Germany’s navy was reduced to 6 battleships with no submarines. This happened. Germany could not afford battleships in the aftermath of the war and most navies were now moving to smaller, faster ships that could also carry weapons that carried a punch - such as cruisers. Aircraft carriers were also being developed with greater commitment. Submariners were trained abroad - Versailles did not cover this, so it did not break the terms of Versailles - only the spirit.
* No air force was allowed. This happened but as with submariners, potential pilots were trained abroad or using gliders in Germany to educate them in the theory of flying. This did not break Versailles.
* Germany had to accept the "War Guilt Clause" and pay reparations. The former happened in the sense that Germany signed the Treaty which meant that they accepted this term on paper - if not in fact. Germany did try and pay reparations when they could do so. They did not refuse to pay in 1922. They simply could not produce what was needed that year and this led to the French invasion of the Ruhr. In the 1920’s it was the Allies who took the decision to reduce reparations and eased Germany’s plight in so doing. The first instance of refusal to pay reparations came in 1933 when Hitler announced that Germany would not pay - and the Allies did nothing.
* Therefore, throughout the 1920’s, in nearly all parts of the Treaty, the terms were carried out. It was after 1933, that there was a systematic breaking of the terms when the Nazis came to power.