

**2006 HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION**  
**Modern History****Section I (continued)****Question 2 (10 marks)**

Explain why US entry into World War I proved to be the most significant of the war's turning points.

Use Sources A and B and your own knowledge to answer this question.

The US entry into the war had a number of impacts - on the morales of the Allied and German soldiers and the morales of the civilians in, particularly Britain and Germany. It proved to be the "decisive blow" (Webb) which would result in victory.

The US declared war on Germany in April 1917 after a number of incidents including the sinking of the *Lucitania* in 1915, a neutral American ship (as shown in Source A), and the Zimmerman Telegram incident in 1917. The announcement of the USA's entry into the war added to the war weariness felt by German soldiers and civilians alike, and increased the feeling of imminent victory felt by the Allies.

Although war was declared in 1917, US forces would not arrive ~~at~~ the Western Front until mid-1918 (as shown in Source A) and a decision

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was made by the German military to attempt one last breakthrough in the spring of 1918 (as shown in Source A).

"The defeat of Russia in the east had allowed Germany to send massive reinforcements" (source A) to the Western Front and the German offensive, or 'Operation Michael' was underway by March 1918 (source A). Initially the Germans achieved great success (as demonstrated by Source B), as they pushed the French and British forces back and came within 30km of Paris - the original target of the Schlieffen Plan. The reserves from the Eastern Front helped achieve this as "fresh German reserves" (source B.) were able to continue to attack Allied lines.

However, the entry of the US into the war had more of a psychological effect on soldiers, increasing the morale of the Allied forces (shown in source B) and adding to the seeming futility of the war for the Germans. The Allied counter-offensive began on August 8th 1918 ('the "black day" in the German army' - Ludendorff) and with fresh US troops the feeling of 'finishing the job' reached a peak as Germany was defeated and the armistice was signed on November 11th 1918.

Although the US entered the war in mid-1918, it proved to be a major turning point as it demonstrated how the tactic of attrition warfare eventually had effects on German morale and led to Allied victory.

End of Question 2