• The USA never joined- personal rebuff for Wilson/Democrats + body blow to League

The Aims of the League:

A Covenant set out the aims of the League of Nations. These were:

1. To **discourage aggression from any nation**
2. To **encourage countries to co-operate**, especially in business/trade
3. To **encourage nations to disarm**
4. To **improve the living/working conditions** of people in all parts of the world

• The Covenant set out 26 Articles/rules, which all members of the League agreed to follow.
• Most important=**Article 10**: ‘the members of the League undertake to preserve against external aggression the territory + existing independence of all members of the League.’
• This article really meant **Collective Security**- by acting together, the members of the League could prevent war by defending the lands + interests of all nations

Membership of the League:

In absence of the USA, Britain + France were the most powerful countries in the League
• Italy/Japan also permanent members of the Council, but throughout 1920s-1930s it was **Britain/France who usually guided policy**: any action by League needed their support
• However, both countries were poorly placed to take on this role- **both had been weakened by WWI**. Neither country was quite the major power it had once been
• **Neither had the resources** to fill the gap left by the USA.
• Some British politicians said that if they had foreseen the American decision, they **would not have voted to join the League** either
• They felt that the Americans were the ONLY nation with the resources/influence to make the League work
• For the leaders of Britain/France the League posed a real problem- they were the ones who had to make it work, yet even at start they doubted how effective it could be