AP European History

Mr. Henderson

Essay: World War I and the Versailles Treaty

*Prompt: The Versailles treaty assigned "war guilt" to Germany, and historians have debated the fairness of this ever since. While it is certainly true that there are many causes for World War I, is it also true that Germany should bear primary responsibility for the start of the war?*

1. Intro
   1. **Thesis: The congress of Vienna ultimately caught Germany between two extremes of reparations and failed due to intense emotional involvement on the both sides.**
   2. **Thesis: The Treaty of Versailles ultimately caught Germany between two different opinions and failed due to intense emotional commitment on both sides.**
2. Points/Sources to Cover
   1. The Terms of the "War Guilt" clause
   2. Important distinction: is Germany at fault vs. should they be punished
   3. Georges Clemenceau's *French Demands for Security and Revenge* (Perry p. 299)
   4. Sigmund Freud's *A Legacy of Embitterment* (Perry p. 308)
      1. From the introduction: "Sigmund Freud said that World War I's fury would shatter the bonds of a common European civilization and engulf Europeans in hatred for years to come"

It could be acceptable. I think you are trying to contrast the US and Wilson's commitment to an idealistic war, and France and Clemenceau committed to revenge. Or do you mean that the war was caused by passion on both sides prior to the war, and Germany was no more guilty than any other power? I think you need to refine this to be more specific and clear.

Articles 231–248 of the Treaty of Versailles (later deemed the "war guilt" clause) obliged Germany to disarm, make substantial territorial concessions and pay heavy reparations to certain countries.

1. Terms
   1. Alsace and Lorraine are property of France
   2. Because Germans used up French coal/iron reserves, France uses Saar (in Germany) for 15 years
   3. Germany must forfeit all colonies which are divided amongst European powers
   4. German fleet is required to be dismantled or turned over to the British
   5. German army is reduced to 100,000 men and conscription is made illegal
   6. German army cannot have artillery, tanks, or submarines
   7. German is required to pay reparations of an undesignated amount to France and Britain (eventually $60 billion dollars)
   8. Germany is forced to accept the "War Guilt Clause" wherein they accept full responsibility for the war
   9. Wilson demands that a *League of Nations* be formed