

Name _____ Date _____ Class _____

The Great War: World War I Begins



The Great War Begins: World War I

Industrial pursuits had increased in various European nations. Competition and rivalry for resources and power appeared throughout the continent. Numerous areas were also experiencing a surge in nationalism. Nationalism is extreme devotion to your own country or ethnic group, while viewing others as inferior. Nationalism makes world peace fragile because various nations embrace arrogance and a willingness to use force against their neighboring countries.

As industrialization increased the products many nations possessed, it also grew their military supplies. In eras before the 1900s, guns were primitive and took a long time to reload.

Industrialization had changed all of this. Weapons were rapidly increasing in their capabilities. This radically changed warfare. Various nations in Europe began to improve weapons and build up gargantuan arsenal supplies. This massive buildup of weapons and aggressive willingness to use them is called militarism.

#1: What is Nationalism? What is Militarism? How did the presence of Nationalism and Militarism impact the world in the early 1900s?

European nations and the USA increased their influence around the world in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Imperialism is when a large nation controls a weaker area for industrial pursuits. European nations controlled various areas in Africa and Asia for their own benefit. Yet, this fostered an atmosphere of aggression in the world. European nations competed with each other over these territories, making them vulnerable to pursue war with one another. Likewise, the imperialistic nations risked war with the natives of the various areas they were trying to control.



Conflict came about due to European imperialism. For instance, imperialism led conflict with native Africans as Europeans sought to control Africa. Also, competition led to conflict between European nations as each country tried to gain control of areas in Africa.

#2: What is Imperialism? Why would any nation want to practice Imperialism? What risks would a country take by pursuing Imperialism?

Just in case war broke out, many nations started forming teams and alliances to protect each other. Yet, this actually made war more likely. If there was no war yet, but everyone was choosing teams, then it would only take two nations from rival teams to throw everyone into war. Germany, Italy, and Austria-Hungary formed the Triple Alliance, also called the Central Powers. Britain, France, and Russia formed the Triple Entente, also called the Allies.

#3: How could forming alliances before any nation was even at war actually make a nation more vulnerable to get involved in a war?



Princip's assassination of Ferdinand WAS THE METAPHORICAL SPARK that started the fire of WW I.

Powder Keg #1: Powder Keg #2: Powder Keg #3: Powder Keg #4:

Nationalism Militarism Imperialism Alliances



Nationalism, Militarism, Imperialism, and Alliances had a set a stage for potential war. All that was needed was any two nations from opposing teams to fight each other. If this occurred, the other "teammates" would have to defend their fellow alliance member. Austria-Hungary and Russia each wanted to control the Balkan Peninsula for a warm sea port. Many Serbs living in this region did not want to be controlled by outside, foreign powers; they wanted independence and to unify a renewed government.

A group called the Black Hand formed to resist outside influence on the Balkan Peninsula and create a new, unified government. A Black Hand member, Gavrilo Princip (1894-1918), assassinated Arch Duke Franz Ferdinand (1863-1914) who was visiting the region in nearby Sarajevo. Furious, Austria-Hungary, led by Emperor Franz Joseph the 1st (1848-1916), eventually invaded the region. Russia then mobilized to keep Austria-Hungary from gaining the Balkan Peninsula. Germany, led by Kaiser Wilhelm the 2nd (1859-1941), came to the defense of Austria-Hungary. Great Britain and France showed up to defend Russia. The system of alliances was meant to protect member nations from outside conflict. Yet, it made them more vulnerable for war. They had to defend their fellow members. While they may have avoided having to participate in a war rooted in foreign skirmishes, if they had never made alliances, the alliances made them all intertwined. Once the Allies came to defend Russia and Germany came to defend Austria-Hungary, the Great War had begun.

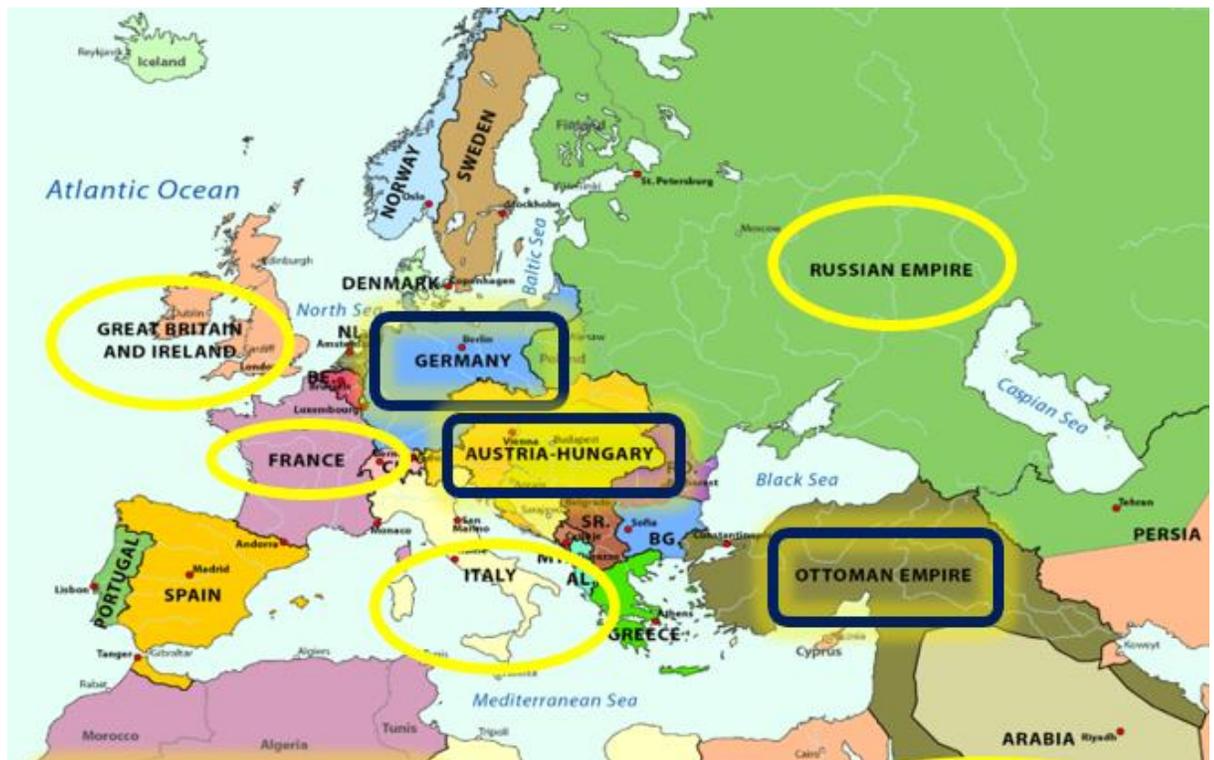
#4: How was Gavrilo Princip's assassination of Arch Duke Franz Ferdinand the "spark" that ignited World War I?

When war broke out, Italy did not continue on with the Central Powers. They left the group. Yet, another major power took Italy's place, the Muslim Ottoman Empire, led by the Minister of War, Ismail Enver Pasha (1881-1922). Germany promised increased trade and to develop a railroad to connect their region with the Ottomans. Germany sent troops to the French border. This was called the Schlieffen Plan. Alfred Graf von Schlieffen (1833-1913), a German military leader, created this plan to attack France first, then Russia, since France was viewed as a greater threat.

By August of 1914, Europe was thrown into war. Various leaders had to guide their nations as violence erupted. The British, initially having as their Prime Minister Herbert Henry Asquith (1852-1928) and

later David Lloyd George (1863-1945), declared war on Germany. In France, Raymond Poincare (1860-1934) was the President of France, when war broke out. He played a major role in France's commitment to support Russia.

Georges Clemenceau (1841-1929) emerged as the Prime Minister of France and played a great role toward the end of the war, becoming more influential towards the war's end than Poincare. A Pacific power, Japan, also joined the Allies and supported them against the Central Powers. Okuma Shigenobu (1838-1922) served as Prime Minister of Japan, when they joined the Allies. The Japanese Navy attacked German imperial interests in the Pacific. Italy started off aligned with the Central Powers. Yet, Italian Prime Minister Antonio Salandra (1853-1931) refused to help. Italy claimed Germany and Austria-Hungary were the aggressors and initiators of the conflict.



**The Central Powers:
The Triple Alliance**

*Though once a member
of the Central Powers,
Italy joined the Allies.*

**The Allies:
Triple Entente**

Germany invaded France and made it the edge of Paris. Yet, the Allies forced Germany to retreat. At the First Battle of the Marne, in September of 1914, named after the nearby Marne River, massive fighting broke out. Each side dug trenches hundreds of miles on the Western Border of France. This meant neither side could advance.



Trench Warfare

Neither side could advance and remained in the trenches they had dug. The trenches kept evolving and growing in complexity. The trenches created an atmosphere where soldiers were vulnerable to the spread of disease. They had little shelter and meager access to food. Trench foot was a very real threat, a condition where the wetness and coldness made feet very vulnerable to infection. The trench warfare dragged the conflict on with neither side able to initiate a successful campaign against the other.

As each side sought to advance beyond the trenches, they utilized industrial technology. The Germans started lobbing poisonous gas into opposing trenches. The Allies used the same techniques. This horrific method would suffocate and torture soldiers to death. Soldiers were able to resist the gas attacks through using gas masks. The breakthrough out of the trenches came not with gas, but with the use of tanks.

#5: What was Trench Warfare? What dangers did soldiers face in Trench Warfare?

Between July and November of 1916, the Battle of the Somme, named after a nearby river, took place. Britain and the Allies started using tanks that soldiers could shelter behind to move out of the trenches. This was the most costly battle on the Western Front. One million casualties occurred in the battle. In the Battle of the Somme, the Allies gained ground, but only a few miles, rendering the battle as an inconclusive victory for either side. The new invention of the tank helped break the stalemate of trench warfare. Tanks were primitive and advanced as the war continued. The Allies had better success with tanks as the war continued. Tanks made advancing beyond the trenches possible.

Germany found itself fighting a two front war. They were fighting France in the west and Russia in the east. The Schlieffen Plan called for the attack of France first, but Russia was still at war with the nation in the east. Tsar Nicholas II (1894-1917) led Russia in its military attacks Germany and the Central Powers. Many Serbs fought alongside Russia against Germans and Austro-Hungarians. Russia had early successes. Yet, Germany eventually gained the upper hand in the Eastern Front. In the Gorlice–Tarnow Offensive (May to June of 1915), Russia was forced out of Poland and lost all hopes of attacking Austria-Hungary. The Central Powers were defeating the Russians. Yet, fighting a two front war was wearing down the Germans.

#6: How was the stalemate caused by Trench Warfare finally overcome in WW I?

Answers:

#1: What is Nationalism? What is Militarism? How did the presence of Nationalism and Militarism impact the world in the early 1900s?

Nationalism is extreme devotion to one's nation or ethnic group and viewing others as inferior. Militarism is the massive buildup of weapons and the willingness to use them. The presence of these two practices in the world in the early 1900s made the chances for hostilities and wars very likely.

#2: What is Imperialism? Why would any nation want to practice Imperialism? What risks would a country take by pursuing Imperialism?

Imperialism is when a powerful nation controls another region of the world, typically for industrial pursuits. Nations would do this to gain more raw resources and increase their wealth. They risked conflict with natives and other imperialistic powers.

#3: How could forming alliances before any nation was even at war actually make a nation more vulnerable to get involved in a war?

It seems that joining a team would increase a nation's might. This seems intuitive that a nation would be less likely to go to war. Yet, it can actually make that nation more likely to go to war. All it would take would be any team member getting attacked then all members would have to fight. If a nation did not join an alliance, and the alliance went to war, they would not have to go.

#4: How was Gavrilo Princip's assassination of Arch Duke Franz Ferdinand the "spark" that ignited World War I?

Nationalism, Imperialism, Alliance, and Militarism had already set the stage for World War I. If any nation in the Central Powers got into a conflict with a member of the Allies, all member nations would be at war. Austria-Hungary and Russia both wanted to control the Balkan Peninsula. When Gavrilo Princip assassinated Arch Duke Franz Ferdinand, a member of the Austrian Royalty, Austria-Hungary invaded. Russia feared this would give Austria-Hungary an advantage in the Balkan Peninsula and attacked them. This brought the Central Powers and the Allies into World War I. Therefore, Princip's assassination of Ferdinand ignited the war.

#5: What was Trench Warfare? What dangers did soldiers face in Trench Warfare?

When the Central Powers and the Allies faced off in France, neither side could advance. The vast weapons buildup of each other halted this. To protect themselves, each side dug hundreds of miles of trenches. This created a stalemate. While trenches protected them from getting shot, it also made them vulnerable to disease, trench foot, eventually poisonous gas, and other dangers.

#6: How was the stalemate caused by Trench Warfare finally overcome in WW I?

Eventually, the Allies started using tanks. This allowed soldiers to move forward and use the tanks as shields. The Germans also started using tanks. Therefore, tanks broke the stalemate of trench warfare in WWI.