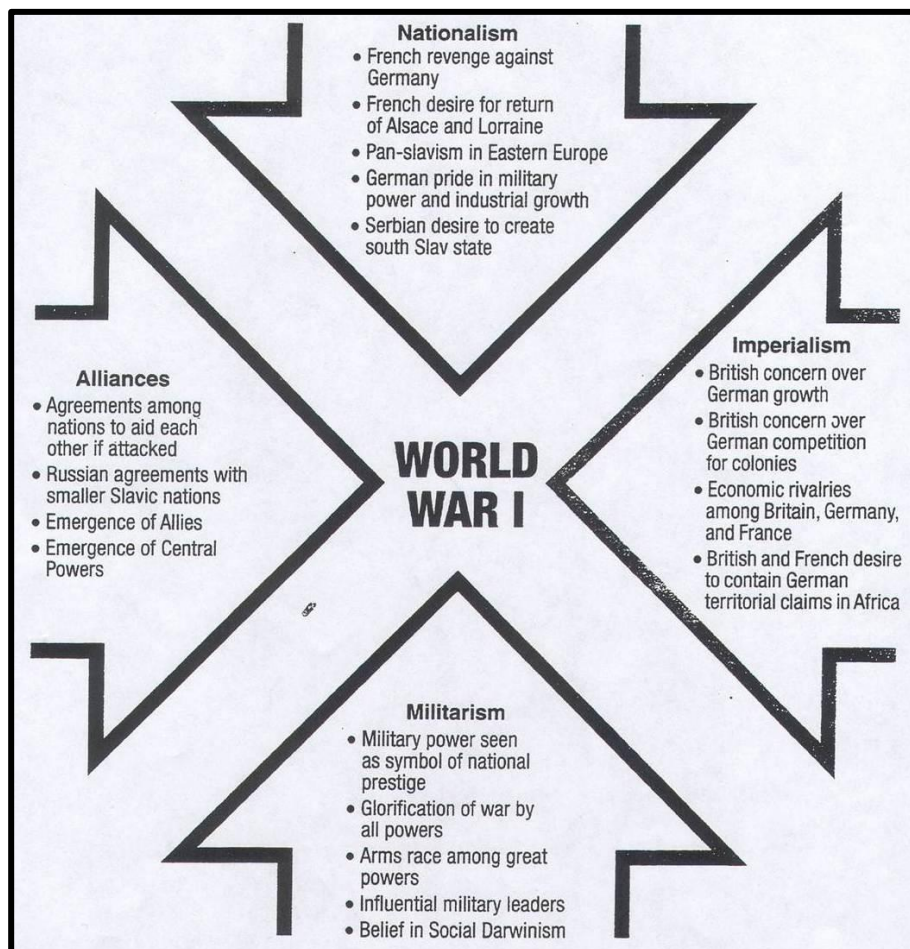


Causes of World War I

Enduring Understanding: The influence of both world wars and the worldwide Great Depression are still evident. To understand the effects these events had on the modern world you will explain the causes of World War I, including militarism, alliances, imperialism, nationalism, the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the impact of Russia's withdrawal from, and the US entry into the war.



There were four major causes of World War I: (**Militarism, Alliances, Imperialism, and Nationalism**). The 'driving' force was nationalism. Many nations were included in an empire and wanted independence from that empire, such as the **Austro-Hungarian** and **Ottoman Empires**. The empires included different ethnic groups which created rivalry within the empires. Because of these rivalries, different countries began to make military alliances. Russia, France, and England formed one alliance, and Germany, Italy, and Austria-Hungary had another. There was a desire to build colonies in order to gain wealth by exploiting natural resources and trade (imperialism). To be stronger and build an empire, countries built up their armies and navies (militarism). With all this competition, the stage was set for war.



The assassination of the **Archduke Franz Ferdinand** was the 'spark' or event that triggered the start of the war. This occurred in the **Balkan Peninsula**, which is the Greek area of Europe known as the "powder keg of Europe." This area was called a "powder keg" because of ethnic tensions that could explode at any moment. When the future leader of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, was assassinated by a Serbian nationalist who wanted independence for his country. People like Gavrilo Princip, the Serbian assassin, that wanted independence are called **nationalists**. This assassination was the "spark" that ignited the powder keg, starting World War I. Because there were so many alliances at this time, much of Europe quickly got involved. Russia joined Serbia, and Germany joined Austria-Hungary.



Assassination of Archduke Ferdinand



Soldiers in the Trenches

New weapons and **trench warfare** (fighting from two opposing trenches) made WWI different and more deadly than previous wars. New technology included long-range artillery, poisonous gases, gas masks, submarines (U-Boats), tanks, machine guns, airplanes, and flame throwers. By 1915, the war had bogged down into a costly **stalemate**. A stalemate is a deadlock in which neither side is able to defeat the other.

Section Review

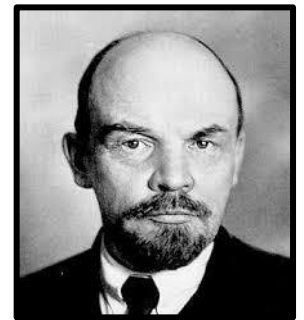
1. What was the 'spark' that started WWI?
2. What made World War I different from previous wars?
3. Name the members of the two opposing alliances in Europe prior to WWI.
4. What is militarism?
5. What is nationalism?
6. What is a stalemate?

There were three main fronts (areas) of WWI: the **Western Front**, the **Eastern Front**, and the **Italian Front**. The majority of trench fighting was in the Western Front between the French and British on one side and the Germans on the other side. The Eastern Front included fighting between the Germans and the Russians. On the Italian Front, the Italians and French fought against the Germans and Austro-Hungarians.



Czar Nicholas II and Family

Russia pulled out of WWI in 1918 leaving Germany to focus all of its attentions on the Western Front. The Russians wanted out of the war for several reasons. They were unhappy over high taxes, working conditions, and political rights, and **Czar Nicholas II** couldn't seem to manage those problems. He was an authoritarian monarch, and he didn't have the support of the people. As a result of these issues, the working class revolted in 1917. This is known as the **Bolshevik Revolution** (Russian Revolution). The Bolsheviks, led by **Vladimir Lenin**, executed the Czar and withdrew Russia from the Eastern Front by signing a treaty with Germany known as **The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk**. Germany's focus now went to fighting the British and French on the Western Front.



Vladimir Lenin

Section Review

7. In what front did trench warfare take place?
8. How did the Russian leaving World War I impact Germany?
9. What group led the Russian/Bolshevik Revolution?
10. What were some causes of this Russian/Bolshevik Revolution?
11. What were some results of the Bolshevik Revolution?

The United States entered World War I the same year that Russia withdrew from the war, and this had a major impact on the future Allied victory. The U.S. was **neutral** (didn't support either side) at the beginning of the war. American businesses had made loans to the Allies for trading purposes, and the American public wanted the U.S. to maintain our traditional connection to Great Britain. Germany's use of **unrestricted submarine warfare**, which is Germany's policy of sinking any Allied ship with their U-Boats, made Americans and President Wilson angry when innocent Americans were killed in these attacks. After the British passenger ship, **Lusitania**, was sunk in 1915, the Germans promised to restrict the use of their U-Boats, and the United States remained out of the war. President Wilson promised "to keep us out of the war."



Sinking of the Lusitania



Political Cartoon Depicting the Zimmerman Note

Later, the **Zimmerman Telegram**, which was written by a German official to Mexico, was intercepted by the British and published in the newspapers. Americans were very upset. The Zimmerman Note promised land in America to Mexico in exchange for Mexico attacking the U.S. When the Germans resumed unrestricted submarine warfare in April of 1917, President Wilson asked Congress to declare war on Germany. The U.S. army, known as the American Expeditionary Force, aided the Allies by stopping the Germans on the Western Front in France. An **armistice** (cease-fire) was signed November 11, 1918, and the fighting between the Allies and the Central Powers was over.

Section Review

12. Why did the US join World War I?
13. What was the Lusitania?
14. Why did Germany send the Zimmerman Telegram?
15. What is unrestricted submarine warfare?
16. What is armistice?

Sources

Cover Image 1: "The Great War." PBS. PBS, n.d. Web. 18 June 2014.
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Image 2: "Why Was The Sinking of The Lusitania Important?" About.com 20th Century History. National Defense. Canadian Navy., n.d. Web. 14 June 2014.

Image 3: "World War I Picture - Political Cartoon of President Woodrow Wilson." World War I Picture - Political Cartoon of President Woodrow Wilson. National Archives, n.d. Web. 17 June 2014.

Image 4: "German Trenches, Trench Warfare, Somme River, World War I." History.com. A&E Television Networks, n.d. Web. 17 June 2014.

Image 5: "Zimmerman Telegram." Soldiers Mail. 1917 Watchful Waiting, Feb. 1917. Web. 17 June 2014.