



WWI 1914 - 1918

Year 8 History

ABSTRACT

This booklet will introduce you to the key events before and during the First World War. Taking place from 1914 – 1918, millions of people across the world lost their lives in what was supposed to be ‘the war to end all wars’. Fighting on this scale had never been seen before. The work in this booklet will help you understand why such a horrific conflict began.

Ms Marsh

Why did the First World War begin?

L.O: I can explain the causes of the First World War.

1. In what year did the war begin?
2. In what year did the war end?
3. How many years did it last?

(Do now answers at end of booklet)

The First World War begun in August 1914. It took the world by surprise, and seemed to happen overnight. In reality, tension between countries in Europe had been increasing for some years before. The final event that triggered war, the assassination of a young heir to the Austria – Hungary throne, demonstrates how this tension had been building.

Europe in the early 20th century was a place where newly formed countries such as Italy started to challenge the dominance of countries with empires. An empire is when one country rules over others around the world. Some countries began to demand their independence and did not want to be ruled by an empire.



The map opposite shows just how vast the empires of Europe were; Britain had control of Australia, New Zealand, Canada, East and South Africa and India. France ruled over most of central and West Africa. Other European countries were beginning to gain wealth and power; countries such as Germany, Italy and Austria – Hungary wanted their own empires to challenge the French and British dominance. This worried France and Britain, who feared they would lose significant power and wealth if other countries started to create rival empires. This desire to have an empire is known as imperialism.

Task 1 Circle the correct definition of imperialism

- When one country rules over other areas around the world
- When a country wants an empire and tries to build one
- When countries join up and become one big country

Task 2 Explain why other countries wanting an empire might lead to tension. Think about how Britain and France would feel if other countries began to gain empires of their own.

Another situation was emerging in Europe as a result of imperialism (the desire for an empire). To ensure they either gained or kept their empires countries continued to build up their military (army and navy). Each country in Europe increased the number of soldiers, weapons and ships to ensure their military strength as power – this was known as militarism. Germany in particular was quickly building up their military under the rule of their leader Kaiser Wilhelm.



As each country increased their military, it created an ‘arms race’ whereby every country wanted to ensure they had the biggest military. Therefore, countries grew suspicious of each other and anticipated conflict as everyone appeared to be preparing for a war.

Task 3 Circle the correct definition of militarism

- When a country increases the number of soldiers, weapons and ships to ensure their strength and power
- When Germany built up their army
- When countries became suspicious of each other

Task 4 Explain why countries in Europe increasing their military might lead to tension. *Think about how countries would fear and be suspicious of each other building up their armies and how they might respond.*

A further issue in Europe at this time was the role of alliances. An alliance is when a country or countries agree to support each other in any future conflicts or problems. An alliance can deter (stop) one country attacking another because an alliance would mean that the country being attacked would be supported by others, increasing the likelihood of defeat. There were two main groups of alliances in Europe, the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente. The Triple Entente was the allies of Britain, France and Russia. The Tripe Alliance was the allies of Italy, Germany and Austria – Hungary.

The map opposite shows the countries involved and their alliances. Even though the aim of the alliances was to deter a country from starting a war, the disadvantage was that one small disagreement between any two nations involved in the two alliances and all of Europe would be dragged into a war.



Task 5 Circle the correct definition of alliances

- Countries agreeing to support each other in any future conflict or issue
- Countries being friends
- Countries joining together to start a war

Task 6 Explain why countries in Europe creating alliances would lead to tension. *Think about what might happen if there was a small conflict between two opposing countries, what might it force other countries to do?*

Finally, another factor that led to tension in Europe at this time was the belief in nationalism. Nationalism is the belief that your country is the best in the world; a nationalist is extremely proud of their country to the point where they view other countries negatively. For many leaders of Europe, the best way to prove that their country was the best was to have a war with their rivals, take land from them (as Germany had done to France in 1871) and build up a rival empire and military. By being extremely nationalistic, countries were encouraged to act in potentially aggressive ways in a desire to prove their worth.

Task 7 Circle the correct definition of nationalism

- Thinking your country is good
- Thinking your country is better than others and should prove this
- Thinking other countries are better than yours

Task 8 Explain why countries in Europe being nationalistic might lead to tension. *Think about how countries proved they were better and what this might lead countries to do.*

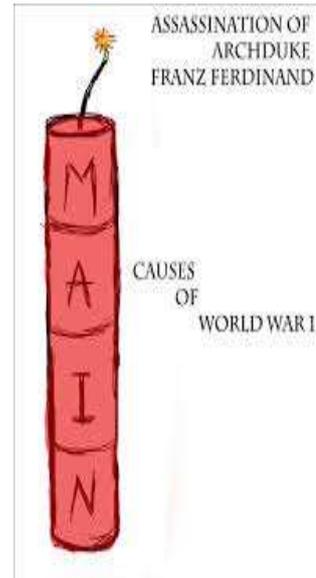
These four issues are known as the long term causes of the First World War. Each one contributed to an atmosphere of suspicion and fear in Europe that was just waiting for an event to occur that would change suspicion and fear to actual fighting and war.

The event that would change everything was the assassination of the heir (future king) to the Austria – Hungary throne.

Occurring in June 1914 in the small Bosnian town of Sarajevo, a young Serbian pulled the trigger that change the world forever.

Gavrillo Princip wanted Serbia and Bosnia to be independent from Austria – Hungary; he was part of a terrorist group called the Black Hand Gang. He shot the hier, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, and his wife Sofia, as they travelled in an open top car around the city.

Austria – Hungary claimed that that this assassination was planned by the Serbian government – the events below outline what happened next.



5 July	Germany promised total support for Austria-Hungary.
28 July	Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia – this angered Russia.
30 July	Russia mobilised her army – this alarmed Germany.
3 August	Germany implemented the Schlieffen Plan and invaded France through neutral Belgium.
4 August	Britain declared war on Germany because of an agreement with Belgium.

As you can see, it was the alliance system that the assassination triggered – Germany agreeing to support their ally Austria – Hungary quickly snowballed into a war between the Triple Entente and the Triple Alliance.

Task 9 In your own words, explain how the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand lead to the alliance system being used.

Challenge: Without the alliance system, do you think war would have still broke out?

How were Britons encouraged to fight in the First World War?

L.O: I can explain the use of propaganda to increase support for war.

1. What did groups of countries form that contributed to war?
2. Who was assassinated in June 1914?
3. Which country was neutral but still invaded by Germany at the start of war?

(Do now answers at the end of the booklet)

Recap!

The four long term causes of war (see opposite) and the assassination of an Austria – Hungarian heir had little impact on the daily life of an average Britain. So how did the government get ordinary Britons to support a war which reasons they knew very little about?

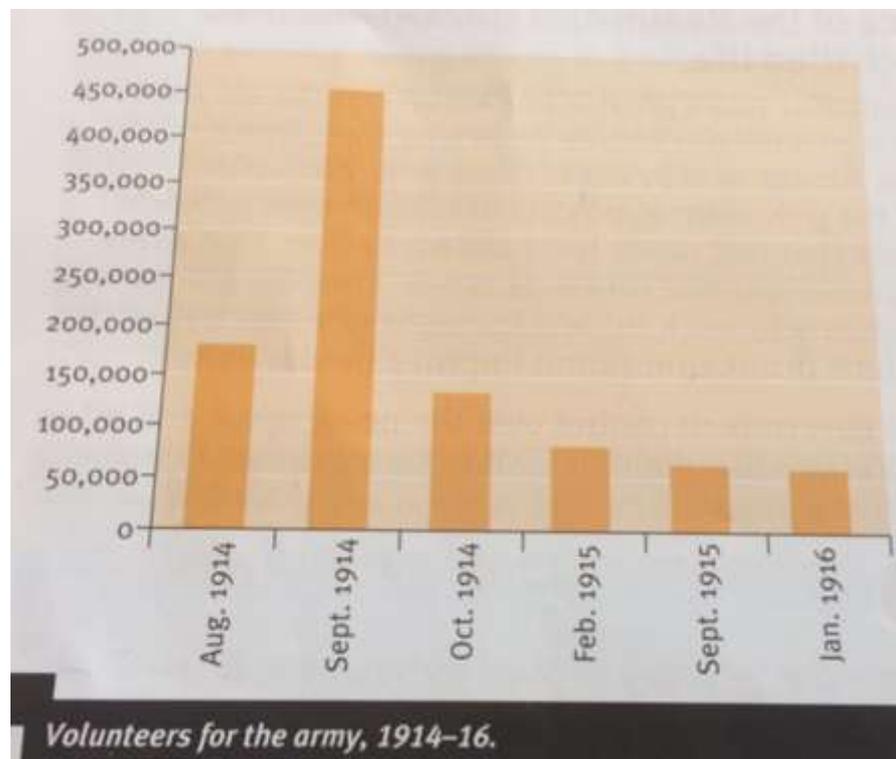
At the start of the First World War, volunteers rushed to join the armed forces. Lord Kitchener, the Minister for War, was in charge of raising an army to fight a German army of 3.7 million men. There was a surge of patriotism (love of your country), encouraged by the belief that Britain was right to go to war against an aggressive Germany.

There was also widespread misunderstanding of what the war was going to be like. People had a glorified idea of war and it was assumed that it would be over by Christmas. Over half a million men joined up in the first 6 weeks of war. By November 1914 Parliament had authorised the recruitment of 2 million men.

Task 10 Complete the comprehension questions using the information above.

- 1) What did volunteers rush to do?
- 2) How many men were in the German army?
- 3) What did people believe about Britain?

MILITARISM **ALLIANCES** **IMPERIALISM** **NATIONALISM** **CAUSES OF** **WW1**



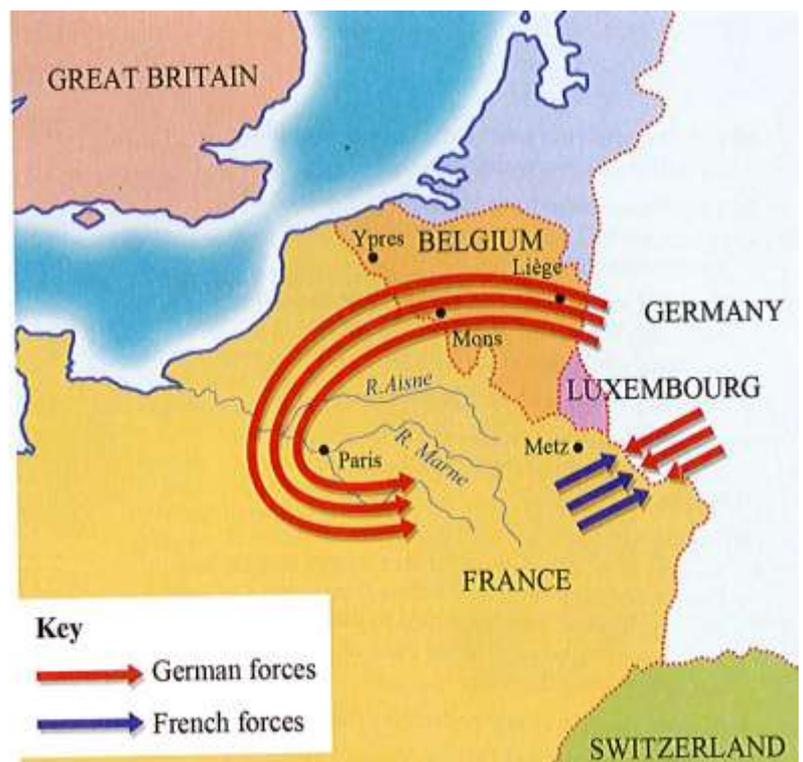
Despite the initial recruitment surge, the reality of war became clearer as it went on; by 1915 casualties were mounting fast. Civilians back home were still largely unaware of life on the Front – the government passed acts (Defence of the Realm Acts) including measures such as banning newspapers from telling the truth about casualties. Stories of victories and heroic deeds were instead reported.

A massive propaganda effort was made to try and maintain the numbers wanting to enlist (join up). Propaganda is a form of government information that is biased or misleading to promote a particular cause or viewpoint. There were many propaganda posters urging men to join up which we will study later in the booklet.

Task 11 Complete the comprehension questions using the information above.

- 4) What was there a widespread misunderstanding of?
- 5) How many men joined up in the first 6 weeks?
- 6) What were civilians unaware of?
- 7) What did propaganda posters do?

Before we look at the use of propaganda posters, we need to understand why the war was not 'over by Christmas'. Many in Britain believed it would be a short war, which initially encouraged the volunteers to join up. We know that the war lasted a lot longer – four years. The attack plan from Germany was developed many years before the outbreak of war. Their Schlieffen plan (named after a Germany army commander) failed disastrously, and ultimately led to the digging of trenches in Northern France, Belgium and Germany and the establishment of a completely new way of fighting – trench warfare.

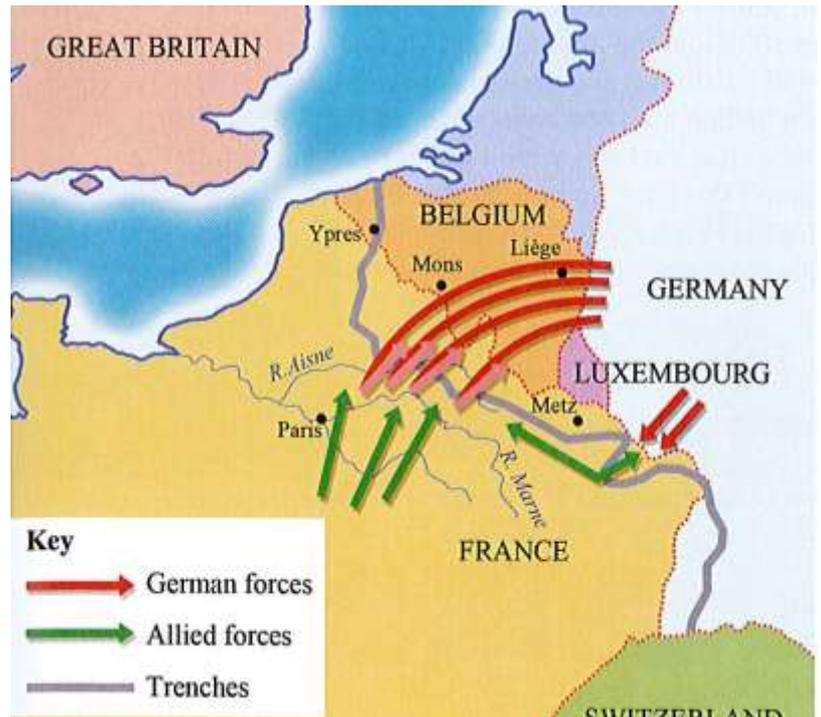


The plan

- Germany would attack France via Belgium to avoid the main French army
- Russia would be slow to mobilise (be ready for war)
- So France would be defeated in six weeks whilst Russia was still mobilising
- The German army would then move east to defeat Russia
- Belgium would not put up a fight and Britain would not get involved

The reality

- The German Army invaded Luxembourg and Belgium as planned
- The Germans were held up by the Belgian Army, backed up by the BEF (British Expeditionary Forces) whom arrived very quickly to support Belgium
- Russia mobilised in just 10 days!
- Germany was forced to withdraw troops from the Schlieffen plan to defend the Eastern Front.



- Germany were met by the French at the battle of the Marne (5-11 Sept) which halted the German advance and led to trenches being dug

Task 12 Explain the main differences between the Schlieffen Plan and what really happened

Germany assumed that Belgium would _____ when in reality they _____. Belgium was also backed up _____ which Germany did not anticipate. Germany assumed Russia would _____

_____ when in reality they _____. This meant that Germany had to _____

to defend the Eastern Front. Finally, France met Germany at the _____ which stopped the German advance and meant France was not defeated in _____ weeks.

The failure of this plan meant the war lasted much longer than Britain had prepared for, and the huge number of casualties meant more soldiers were needed to fight on the Western Front. The Western Front became the name for the line of trenches stretching from the middle of Belgium across and down through Northern France. This is how propaganda emerged as a key tool to increase support for war.

In 1914, people didn't have televisions or radios so the government had to use different methods to get their message to the people. One of the main methods was to put posters up in every city, town and village in the country.

These posters were designed to get very powerful messages across. White propaganda posters played on peoples feelings to make them think that, if you were a young man, joining the army was the 'right thing to do'. Black propaganda posters tried to created hatred towards Germans. The Government hoped that if people hated Germany and its people, there were more likely to agree with the war and join the fight.

Task 13 Give a definition or a specific example of each word to complete the table below, you may need to reread previous information in this booklet.

Key word	Specific example
Propaganda is . . .	Posters or radio broadcasts
The Western Front was the name for the line of trenches stretching from the middle of Belgium across and down through Northern France.	
Black propaganda . . .	
White propaganda was . . .	Posters

In the propaganda posters below we will analyse them to assess how effectively they might encourage or increase support for the war. The one below has been done for you, you can then complete the other analysis in the same way.

When analysing sources you can circle or label the key things in the poster you think would appeal to people and make them feel they should support the war or join up to fight.

Source A May 1915 Government recruitment poster



Task 14 Complete the table by picking out at least two key details from each propaganda poster and explain how they might make someone feel.

Source	Key things in the poster	How might they make someone feel?
A	"Lads you're wanted"	The poster is using a colloquial (slang) term for young men to appeal to a particular section of society, young men, who they needed to go and fight.
A	"Wanted" and "help"	Used to encourage a sense of pride in joining up.
A	The image of the two soldiers in the right hand corner	It creates an image in the head of the person looking at the poster who can perhaps imagine themselves in war and as a soldier. It also reminds those who haven't yet joined

up that there are already lots of men who have volunteered – it might create a feeling of guilt in those not yet fighting which could lead them to enlist.





Task 15 Explain which poster you think would be most effective in increasing support for the war

I think the most effective poster would be _____ because in the poster there are _____

This might make people . . .

Therefore they would feel . . .

Summary

“Many Britons supported the war because they were nationalistic and hated Germany” How far do you agree?

Yes, some Britons were nationalistic because they believed . . . This was common in Europe at the time because . . . (write about nationalism and how it caused tension)	No, many people supported the war because they believed it would be ‘over by Christmas’. This was . . . However in reality . . . (write about how the Schlieffen plan failed)
Moreover, propaganda was also an important in increasing support for the war. More specifically, propaganda posters were used to . . . (write about the impact of the posters and what they depicted)	Overall, my judgement is that most Britons supported the war because . . . (give your opinion with at least two reasons why you think this is true)

Lesson 1 Do now answers

1. In what year did the war begin? 1914
2. In what year did the war end? 1918
3. How many years did it last? 4

Lesson 2 Do now answers

1. What did groups of countries form that contributed to war? Alliances
2. Who was assassinated in June 1914? Archduke Franz Ferdinand
3. Which country was neutral but still invaded by Germany at the start of war? Belgium