

## The Causes of the First World War: *The Alliance System, Anglo-German Rivalry and the Outbreak of war*

### KEY WORDS

**World War One:** A global conflict involving the main European Powers and their empires from August 1914 to November 1918.

**Long term cause:** Factors/causes which happen a long time before an event takes place.

**Short term cause:** Factors/causes which happen just before an event takes place – usually a catalyst.

**Militarism:** An emphasis on military ideals and strength. Wanting your country to have a strong army and navy.

**Alliances:** A group of countries who promise to support and protect each other. Rival groups have rival alliances.

**Imperialism:** The desire to conquer colonies, especially in Africa. This brought the powers in conflict: Germany wanted an empire. France and Britain already had empires.

**Nationalism:** The belief that your country is better than others. This made nations assertive and aggressive.

**Triple Entente:** Alliance between Great Britain, France and Russia.

**Triple Alliance:** Alliance between Germany, Italy and Austria-Hungary.

**Western Front:** Zone of fighting where Germany engaged armies to its west in WWI.

**Trench Warfare:** Is a type of land warfare using occupied fighting lines consisting largely of trenches, in which troops are significantly protected from the enemy's small arms fire and are substantially sheltered from artillery.

**Prussia:** Was a major military and economic power in Central Europe during the 18th and 19th centuries. Prussia included half of modern Poland and all but southern Germany.

### KEY INDIVIDUALS

**Archduke Franz Ferdinand:** Next in line to be ruler of Austria-Hungarian Empire. Assassinated in 1914 in Bosnia.

**Field Marshall Moltke:** The chief of staff of the Prussian Army for thirty years, he is regarded as the creator of a new, more modern method of directing armies in the field.

**Gavrillo Princip:** Serbian Nationalist. Member of Black Hand. Assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand.

**King George V:** King of the United Kingdom and the British Dominions, and Emperor of India 1910 - 1936.

**Tsar Nicholas II:** Leader of Russia 1894 - 1917

**Kaiser Wilhelm II:** Emperor of Germany, 1888 - 1918

**Alfred von Schlieffen:** Creator of the plan for German invasion of France through Belgium.

### How do you know Question ( 4 marks)

- 1) Source C is critical of Britain's Entente Cordial with France. How do you know? Explain your answer using source C and your contextual Knowledge.

### Factors Question (16 marks+ 4 SPaG)

- 1) 'The main reason for conflict in the Balkans was the weakness of the Turkey Empire.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer.
- 2) 'Militarism was the main reason that war broke out in 1914.' How far do you agree with the statement? Explain your answer.

### Write an account Question (8 marks)

- 1) Write an account of how Germany became a powerful and ambitious European State.
- 2) Write an account of how events in the Balkans during the summer of 1914 led to the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand.

### Source Usefulness Question (12 marks)

- 1) Study sources A and How useful are sources A and B to a historian studying the aims of Kaiser Wilhelm II.

**Source C:** A cartoon showing how, by 1915, Germany viewed the Entente Cordial that was signed between Britain and France in 1904; the eagle represents Germany.



Source Type

Author

Date

Purpose



**Source A:** The cover from a German journal published in 1909; it indicates that European countries are scared of Germany

Germany is a young and growing empire. She has a worldwide commerce which is rapidly expanding, and which patriotic Germans will not restrict. Germany must have a powerful fleet to protect her commerce and interests, even in the most distant seas. She expects those interests to go on growing, and she must be able to champion them manfully in any quarter of the globe.



**Source B:** Adapted from an interview with the Kaiser, published in the London Daily Telegraph, 28<sup>th</sup> October 1908; readers would have found the Kaisers buildup of arms alarming.

# Key Events Timeline

**KEY:**

**M**ilitarism

**A**lliances

**I**mperialism

**N**ationalism

## Splendid Isolation (1885- 1902 )

Britain avoided permanent alliances as it was content alone. It was a rich, powerful country with an outstanding navy and huge empire that it didn't want to lose.

## The Kaiser and Weltpolitik (1898)

The growth of the German navy began so that Germany could expand its empire.

## Triple Entente (1907)

The mutual aid agreement between France, Britain and Russia was made.

## (May 1914)

Field Marshall Moltke called for Germany to launch preventative war against Russia.

## The Dual Alliance (1879)

The agreement that Germany and Austria-Hungary would come to the other's aid in the face of attack by Russia.

## Schlieffen Plan (1905)

The German plan to quickly invade and defeat France was created by Von Schlieffen.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Moroccan crisis (1911)

Germany sends gunboat in protest at French action, Britain and France feared Germany was building a Naval base and would start war.

## War Begins ( 28<sup>th</sup> July 1914)

Austria-Hungary declares war on Serbia. Russia mobilises troops.

## Invasion of Belgium ( 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1914)

Germany invades Belgium. Britain declares war on Germany due to a pact that Belgium and Britain had called 'The Treaty of London' 1839 which meant that Britain would go to Belgium's aid when needed.

1900

1910

1905

1914

1915

## The Triple Alliance (1882)

Italy joined Germany and Austria-Hungary's alliance in hope that it could gain power and support it expired in 1915.

## Franco-Russian Alliance (1894)

France and Russia become Allies, they would now assist each other if Germany and the Triple Alliance attacked.

## The Kaiser and Weltpolitik (1897)

The imperialist foreign policy adopted by the German Empire during the reign of Emperor Wilhelm II. The aim was to transform Germany into a global power.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Moroccan crisis (1905)

The Kaiser tells Morocco that Germany will support them instead of France at the Algeiras conference. Morocco wants the support of France, the Kaiser is humiliated.

## The Black Hand Gang 1911

Serbian nationalist group 'The Black Hand' formed.

## The Assassination of Franz Ferdinand (28<sup>th</sup> June 1914)

Archduke Franz Ferdinand assassinated by Gavrilo Princip of Serbian nationalist group 'The Black Hand.'

## The July Crisis ( 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1914)

Serbia refused Austria-Hungary demand to pay compensation.

## The Schlieffen Plan( 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1914)

Germany declares war on France. Initiates Schlieffen plan..

## Balkans Crisis (1908-9)

Austria takes control of Bosnia when the Ottoman Empire crumbles, Serbian anger threatens to cause war and turns to Russia for help.

## The First World War Stalemate: *The Schlieffen Plan, The Western Front and the wider world*

### KEY WORDS

- Outflanked:** Move around the side of an enemy to outwit them.
- Stalemate:** A position where both sides are drawing because no side can make an attack, they are stuck, no one is winning.
- Eastern Front:** The front line to the East of Germany where Austria- Hungary, Germany and Russia fought.
- Western Front:** The front line to the West of Germany where Germany France and Britain fought.
- No man's land:** The land between the trenches.
- Attrition:** Wear away the enemy. Instead of fighting to take enemy lines, they were fighting to take lives, supplies and equipment.
- Counter-attack:** An attack which followed an enemies attack to try and regain land taken.
- Trench Foot:** A painful condition of the foot where it swells and develops open sores because it is wet and cold.
- Shell Shock:** A mental health condition that was caused by constant fear of death, usually occurred after witnessing close friends be killed in terrible ways.
- Bombardment:** A continuous attack with bombs, shells, or other missiles.
- Rifle:** A standard lightweight gun given to all soldiers that was deadly accurate.
- Bayonet:** A 40cm knife attached to the end of the rifle for close combat if a soldier ran out of bullets.
- Artillery:** A large gun that was used to fire bombs over a long distance.
- Shrapnel:** Fragments of a bomb, shell, or other object thrown out by an explosion
- Reconnaissance:** Keeping an eye on what the enemy was doing and spotting artillery.
- Dogfights:** A battle in the air between fighter aeroplanes at close range.
- Zeppelin:** A German airship used for both reconnaissance and dropping bombs.
- Blockade:** Controlling the seas and stopping supplies getting to the enemy, in hope they will starve them to surrender.
- ANZAC troops:** Troops of the British Empire from Australia and New Zealand. Australian and New Zealand Army Corps.
- U-Boats:** AKA submarine. Used under the water to wage war.
- Q- Ships :** Were heavily armed warships disguised as supply ships to trick U-boats.
- Convoy System:** Supply ships sailed close together in large groups protected by warships.

### Write an account Question (8 marks)

- Write an account of events that took place during the war at sea.

### Factors Question (16 marks + 4 SPaG)

- The resistance of the Allies was the main reason why the Schlieffen Plan failed. How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer.

### How do you know Question (4 marks)

- Study Source C. The source supports the French fighting at Verdun. How do you know?

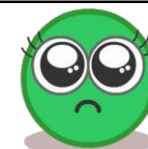
### KEY INDIVIDUALS

- Winston Churchill:** Was Britain's Home Secretary in 1910 and took charge of the British Navy in 1911 during the Naval Race with Germany. Had a military background and was seen as a war hero. He led the Gallipoli Campaign.
- Anthony Fokker:** A Dutch aircraft engineer who produced the first fighter aircraft with machine guns in the propellers of aeroplanes.
- General Douglas Haig:** A senior officer of the British Army. Head of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF).
- General Erich von Falkenhayn:** Prussian minister of war and second chief of Germany's General staff (Generals who create plans of attack).
- Marshal Joseph Joffre:** A french General who served as Commander- in- Chief of the French army on the Western Front at the beginning of WW1.
- Admiral Reinhard Scheer:** Commanded the German High Seas Fleet in WW1. He devised the plan for the Battle of Jutland.
- Admiral Sir David Beatty:** British admiral of the fleet, who commanded Britain's battle cruisers at the Battle of Jutland.



**Source C:** From a British newspaper May 1916; it shows the Kaiser and his son; in the caption Prince Wilhelm says, 'Father, we need a higher pile to see Verdun'.

Source Type  
Author  
Date  
Purpose



We can see the attackers coming. Our big guns fire, machine guns rattle, rifles crack. They are working their way towards us. They are French, we recognise their helmets. They have already suffered badly before they reach our trench. Our machine gun wipes out a whole line of them, but then it starts to jam, and they move in.

We retreat, and throw grenades at them as we leave. We get to the protection of the support trench and turn to face the enemy.

Our artillery fires furiously, stopping the enemy attack. We counterattack and drive them back through our original trench and beyond it. We are on the heels of our retreating enemy and reach their trenches almost at the same time as they do. But we cannot stay there long and we retreat back to our own position

**Source D:** Adapted from a book called 'All Quiet on the Western Front' written in 1929 by a German soldier who fought in the trenches.

### Source Usefulness Question (12 marks)

- Study Source D and E. How useful are these sources to a historian studying trench warfare? Explain your answer using Sources D and E and your contextual knowledge.

**Source E:** A painting by the Canadian artist William Barnes, of Canadian troops fighting at the Western Front in May 1915; it shows an attack which left 150 Canadian troops alive.



# Key Events Timeline

**KEY:**

Land – Western Front

Land – Other Fronts

Sea

Air

## First aeroplanes in Warfare (1914)

Used mainly for reconnaissance. Later machine guns were fitted to the front of the plane and pilots could take place in dogfights.

## The Battle of Jutland (31<sup>st</sup> May 1914 )

The Germans sent out a small number of ships as bait into the North Sea to see if the British went in to attack but there was a larger number of German ships to attack them. A British ship was sunk in 20 minutes, 4 more followed. When the rest of the British fleet got there the German ships sailed North. Fearing another trap the British Navy did not follow.

## Japan declare war on Germany (August 1914)

Japan Capture all of Germanys colonies in the Pacific Ocean.

## Italy Joins the War (1915)

Italy joins Britain, France and Russia. They fight Austria-Hungary through the Julian Alps between 1915-1917.

## North Sea declared a 'war zone' (November 1914)

Ships who enter that area, enter at their own risk. Britain starts a naval blockade of Germany, cutting off their supplies by sea.

## The Gallipoli Campaign (February 1915 )

The British aims were to capture Constantinople, remove Turkey from war and relieve Russians. Instead when Britain attempted their Naval attacks they found that there were mines in the water so had to change to an attack on land. Turkey who sided with Germany were prepared and waiting for the British and ANZAC troops. In the end the Gallipoli campaign was a massive failure for the British for a variety of reasons including poor planning, heat spreading disease, poor leadership and out of date maps.

## Convoy System (April 1917 onwards)

Supply ships sailed close together in large groups protected by warships. **July- August 1917** only 5 of 800 ships bringing supplies to Britain were sunk.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> U-Boat Campaign (February 1917 )

Germany had over 100 U-Boats. They destroyed 500 supply ships heading for Britain in 8 weeks and by April left Britain with food supplies that would last for only 6 weeks.

## Battle of Tannenburg (23<sup>rd</sup>- 30<sup>th</sup> August 1914)

Battle of Tannenburg between Germany and Russia. German defeat the Russian Second Army.

## The Sinking of the Lusitania (May 1915 )

As part of their U-boat campaign, Germany sank a British passenger liner from New York to Liverpool. 1000 passengers drowned including 128 Americans. German scaled back their U-Boat attacks after this.

1915

1917

1914

## 1<sup>st</sup> U-Boat Campaign (May 1914 onwards)

Germany sent their U-Boats to attack all ships entering British waters. This was 'unrestricted submarine warfare'. Britain responded with mines and Q-Ships.

## The Battle of Marne (5<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> September 1914)

Advancing German army stopped before Paris at Battle of Marne. German advance stopped by BEF and French forces, including those sent from Paris in taxi cabs. Germans dig in and four years of trench warfare begins.

1916

## Battle of Verdun (21<sup>st</sup> February – 18<sup>th</sup> December 1916)

Germans attempt to inflict crippling losses on French army. Britain responds with action in the Somme.

## Battle of the Somme (1<sup>st</sup> July – 18<sup>th</sup> November 1916)

Main allied attack on Western front. Over 1m casualties on both sides. Britain lost 20,000 troops in the first day with 60,000 casualties.

## Bomber planes (By 1917)

Aeroplanes were being used to drop bombs on their enemies and their home fronts.

## Race to the Sea (12<sup>th</sup> September 1914)

Both sides moved north, trying to outflank each other as they headed to the Channel ports

## First Battle of Ypres (October – November 1914)

Allies managed to hold onto the Channel port. 'Slaughter of the Innocents' occurred.

## The Schlieffen Plan ( 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1914)

Germany declares war on France. Initiates Schlieffen plan..

## Battle of the Passchendaele (July – November 1916)

Also known as the Third Battle of Ypres. Britain and its Empire fought Germany in extreme muddy conditions to gain control of the hills of the south. Britain lost 400,000 soldiers and Germany 300,000 soldiers.

## Battle of Mons (23<sup>rd</sup> August 1914)

Greatly outnumbered BEF met German army and surprised Germans with 'rapid fire'

## Trench warfare begins (12<sup>th</sup> September 1914)

The first trenches were dug. Technology such as machine guns, artillery and gas were used to try to break the stalemate. Young soldiers live in dirty, unhealthy, frightening trench conditions.

## The first tank is used (15<sup>th</sup> September 1916)

A British invention the tank was bullet proof and could go over rough ground and crush barbed wire. It was first used at the **Battle of the Somme**.

## Ending the war: *Changes in Allied Forces, Military developments in 1918 and Germany Surrenders*

### KEY WORDS

- Abdicate:** A monarch gives up their claim to the throne.
- Bolshevik:** Far left communists who followed Lenin and wanted a violent revolution.
- Desert:** Abandon (a person, cause, or organization) in a way considered disloyal or treacherous.
- Neutrality:** The country refuses to pick a side in conflict.
- Hurricane Bombardment:** A very quick and intense artillery attack.
- Salient:** A bulge in the front line. It can be attacked from all angles.
- Home Front:** It is a British term which describes the full participation in war effort back at the countries homeland.
- Armistice:** An armistice is a formal agreement of warring parties to stop fighting.

### KEY INDIVIDUALS

- General Ferdinand Foch:** A French general who served as the Supreme Allied Commander during the First World War.
- General Erich Ludendorff:** Was a top German military commander in the latter stages of World War I.
- Vladimir Lenin:** Was a Russian revolutionary, politician, and political theorist.
- General Douglas Haig:** A senior officer of the British Army. Head of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF).
- Woodrow Wilson:** The American President during WW1. He was an advocate for world peace and kept America neutral until they felt that had to join the war. He was one of the BIG 3 who determined what the terms were for Germany following the war.
- David Lloyd George:** The British Prime Minister at the end of WW1. He was one of the BIG 3 who determined what the terms were for Germany following the war.
- Georges Clemenceau:** The French Prime Minister at the end of WW1. He was one of the BIG 3 who determined what the terms were for Germany following the war.
- General Paul von Hindenburg:** Was a German general and statesman who commanded the Imperial German Army during World War I and later became President of Germany in 1925.

### Factors Question (16 marks + 4 SPaG)

- 1) 'Appointing General Foch as the Supreme Allied Commander was the main reason for the failure of Ludendorff's Spring Offensive.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer.

### How do you know Question (4 marks)

- 1) Study Source B. This source supports the Allies. How do you know? Explain your answer using Source B and your contextual knowledge.



**Source B:** A cartoon from Punch magazine on 31<sup>st</sup> July 1918; it shows General Ludendorff and had the title, 'A Champagne counteroffensive'.

Source Type  
Author  
Date  
Purpose



### Source Usefulness Question (12 marks)

- 1) Study Sources C and D. How useful are these sources to a historian studying the reasons why Germany asked for a ceasefire in 1918?

**Source C:** From a speech made in the German parliament by General Hindenburg in November 1919.

In spite of the superiority of the enemy in men and materials, we could have brought the struggle to a favourable conclusion if determined and unanimous cooperation had existed between the army and those at home. The Germany Army was stabbed in the back. It is plain enough on whom the blame lies.

**Source D:** In 1919, Hindenburg gave evidence to a German government enquiry about why Germany lost the war; this cartoon from the humorous German magazine Simplicissimus, November 1919, comments on his evidence; the cartoon shows him revealing a theatrical performance.



### Write an account Question (8 marks)

- 1) Write an account of the USA's entry into the war.
- 2) Write an account of how new technology and tactics tried to solve the problems of trench warfare.

# Key Events Timeline

**KEY:**

Germany

Russia

The Allied Armies

USA

## Revolution puts Lenin in charge; wants to end war (October 1917)

Lenin was smuggled back into Russia and in November Lenin and his supporters staged a second revolution, overthrew the provisional government and created his own. They decided to make peace with their enemies on the **26<sup>th</sup> October**, and then Russia withdraws from the war.

## Revolution overthrows the Tsar (February 1917)

Riots and strikes broke out across Russia. As well as that soldiers refused to follow orders. This was because the Tsar was a poor leader and the Tsarina caused many Russians at home to suffer. No one was loyal to the Tsar anymore so he had to abdicate on the **15<sup>th</sup> March**. The Tsar and his family were quickly captured and imprisoned.

## Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (3<sup>rd</sup> March 1918)

Treaty of Brest-Litovsk – Russia must pay 6,000 million DM, lost ¼ population, 1/3 wheat producing areas to go to Germany.

## The Second Battle of the Somme (21 August – 3 September 1918)

Australian, British and French troops started to capture towns and cities along the Somme that were originally dominated by the Germans.

## German Sailors mutiny at Wilhelmshaven, shortly followed by Kiel (28<sup>th</sup> October 1918)

German soldiers and sailors no longer were loyal to the Kaiser and turned against him, disobeying his rules.

## The Kaiser abdicated (9<sup>th</sup> November 1918)

The German people were suffering, the army was losing and very few people were loyal to the Kaiser, they no longer wanted him to rule. As his country turned against him, he was forced to abdicate. Friedrich Ebert the leader of the SPD took over as the temporary leader of Germany and the Kaiser ran away to Holland.

## French counter-offensive at the Marne (15<sup>th</sup> July 1918)

The Allies joined under a new tactic joined together under the command of Foch and attacked the salient that was left due to the 'stormtroopers' pushing forward during Ludendorff's spring offensive. The Germans lost around half a million men as part of the Ludendorff Spring Offensive. From then on the allied armies started pushing the Germans back by launching smaller attacks along the front line.

## Battle of the Aims (8<sup>th</sup> August 1918)

It was a coordinated attack from the British and French which countered the German spring offensive. It resulted in German surrender in November 1918. This began the 'Hundred Days'.

1917

1919

## USA declared war on Germany (6<sup>th</sup> April 1917)

After the Germans sunk the Lusitania and 8 other American ships. The Zimmerman Telegram was the last straw. American joined Britain and France. Bringing money, supplies and fresh new troops with them.

## Zimmerman Telegram (March 1917)

Britain's Royal Navy intercepts the German telegraph promising weapons to Mexico if they went to war with the US.

1918

## Ludendorff's Spring Offensive (21<sup>st</sup> March - 15<sup>th</sup> July 1918)

As the USA were joining the war and Russia had left, Ludendorff felt it was time to move all the Germans to the Western Front and launch one last attack. The Germans left the Hindenburg Line and enacted a series of offensives. Highly trained and heavily armed 'Storm troopers' pushed through the line at weak points and moved rapidly. Other troops were to follow. It was highly successful and pushed through the allied lines, advancing 65km in 3 weeks. Unfortunately, rapid advancement meant it was difficult to keep troops supplied. As well as this Germany had heavy losses and didn't have well trained troops to replace them. Finally, troops were tired and weak from lack of rations (impact of blockade).

## Turkey requested an armistice (30<sup>th</sup> October 1918)

## Austria-Hungary concluded armistice with allies (3<sup>rd</sup> November 1918)

## Captured Hindenburg Line (September 1918)

The Germans were pushed back to the Hindenburg line and Allied armies began small attacks on the Germans along the line hoping to stretch out and wear down the enemy. By October the Allied armies had completely broken down the line. The Germans started to retreat leaving behind weapons, equipment and supplies. As they left they tried many techniques to slow down the allies. Most military leaders accepted at that point that the war had ended.

## The Armistice (11 am, 11<sup>th</sup> November 1918)

In a train carriage German politicians and representatives of the Allies met in a railway carriage. Germany signed the Armistice and the first world war ended at 11am on 11<sup>th</sup> November.

## The Treaty of Versailles (28<sup>th</sup> June 1919)

The BIG 3 and other country leaders came together to create a treaty full of terms for Germany to abide by. It was signed in Versailles on 28<sup>th</sup> June 1919. Germany took the blame for the whole of WW1.