The Causes of World War One

In this module you will learn:

1. FOUR new words
2. SIX factors which underlay the outbreak of the First World War [ANIMAL]
3. TWO rival alliances
4. SEVEN countries
5. EIGHT crises which preceded the war [BiG FaT BABA]
6. The story of the Assassination of Franz Ferdinand
7. FOUR steps by which the murder of Franz Ferdinand led to the outbreak war [ARSE], including.
8. THIRTEEN key dates in the ‘slide to war’.

You must do the following written work:

- A cloze exercise on the Background to War
- FIVE explanations of how the five background factors made war easier.
- A cloze exercise on the Crises preceding the war.
- An analysis of the Crises pre-1914: Nationalism/ Imperialism/ Militarism/ Alliances
- A 200-word description of the murder of Franz Ferdinand.
- A cloze exercise on the Four Steps to War
- A description of the Schlieffen Plan
- An explanation of the slide to war, July-August 1914

Have you read:

- Ferriby and McCabe, Modern World History for AQA, sections 1.1 and 1.2
- Ben Walsh, Modern World History, Chapter 1
- Peter Moss, History Alive 4, chapter 2.
- Greg Hetherton, Britain and the Great War, section 2
- Christopher Culpin, Making History, chapter 2.
- Tony Howarth, Twentieth Century History, Chapter 4.
The argument which follows suggests that Europe in 1914 was RIPE for war to break out - that the causes of World War One went back long before 1914, and had so set Europe at odds that it only needed a tiny spark to push all Europe into war.

You will need to understand, not only WHAT the situation was in 1910-14, but HOW each element made war more likely...

1. Awful governments

Not only were many of the governments of Europe autocracies (ruled by one man), they had stupid and corrupt governments. Very few of the countries of Europe were democracies - it is hard for a democracy to go to war because the people (not just an individual ruler) need to agree to go to war.

Remember also that in these days there was no idea of going to war for the 'right' reasons - many people in those days thought it was alright to go to war simply to win more power and territory for the ruler.

In such a Europe, outbreak of war was less of an issue than - say - the recent war in Iraq.

2. Nationalism

EVERYONE was nationalist in those days, and this helped cause war in two ways:

a. It made the people of countries like Britain, Germany and France more bellicose (warlike). French politicians like Clemenceau and Poincare (who had been around in 1870) HATED the Germans. People were enraged when someone insulted their country.

b. It made the races ruled by Turkey (such as the Romanians and the Bulgarians) and by Austria-Hungary (such as the Serbs) want to be free. In the Balkans this was called ‘Panslavism’ because the people who wanted to be free were all Slav races. The most nationalistic of all were the Serbs – Serbia had became an independent country by the Treaty of San Stefano in 1878, but in 1900 many Serbs were still ruled by Turkey and Austria-Hungary, and Serbia was determined to rule over them all. This led to rebellions and terrorism which destabilised the Balkans.
3. Imperialism
Countries who believed that they were superior thought it was alright to conquer and rule others – particularly if they were inhabited by races they thought were inferior. France, Belgium and Italy had colonised vast areas of Africa in the 19th century. In 1900, the British Empire covered a fifth of land-area of the earth.
a. This led to clashes between imperialist powers. Britain was trying to conquer Africa from Cairo (in the north) to Cape Town (in South Africa). France was trying to conquer Africa from the Atlantic to the Red Sea. In 1898 their two armies met, at Fashoda in the Sudan, almost causing a war.
b. Most of all, it led to HUGE tension when Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany decided that HE wanted some colonies too!

4. Militarism
All the nations of Europe were militaristic, but the governments of Germany and Austria-Hungary were especially so. All the countries of Europe built up their armies and navies.

Another thing that the countries of Europe did was to train all their young men so that if there was a war they could call, not only on the standing army, but on huge numbers of trained reservists. Thus (including reservists) the countries could call upon:
• Germany: 8.5 million men
• Russia: 4.4 million
• France: 3.5 million
• Austria-Hungary: 3 million

And as one country increased its armies, so all the others felt obliged to increase their armed forces to keep the ‘balance of power’.

It is important to realise that - although in 1914 the German army was the biggest and best in the world - the Russian army was growing the fastest, and German generals were worried that, in a few years time, they would not be able to defeat Russia so easily.

Source C
The German answer to all our talk about the limitation of armaments is: Germany shall increase to the utmost of her power...
I have lived among Germans, but with the best will in the world I can see no solution to the present collision of ideals but war.
A lecture given in 1913 by JA Cramb
JA Cramb was an Englishman who went to university in Germany, and who loved Germany.

Source D
The Naval ‘War Cabinet’ of 1912
General von Moltke [head of the army] said: I believe war is unavoidable; war the sooner the better. But we ought to do more to press to prepare the popularity of a war against Russia. The Kaiser supported this. Tirpitz [head of the navy] said that the navy would prefer to see the postponement of the great fight for one and a half years.
From the Diary of Admiral Muller, 8 December 1912
Some historians say that this proves that Germany was wanting war in 1912, although others say that it records a general discussion of no great significance.

Armed forces of Europe in 1914:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Soldiers</th>
<th>Warships</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>2,200,000</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria-Hungary</td>
<td>810,000</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>750,000</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>1,125,000</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>711,000</td>
<td>185</td>
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New Words
Nationalism: the strong belief that your nation is better than others.
Imperialism: the desire to build an empire for the benefit of the mother country.
Militarism: the control of government and policies by the armed forces, and a willingness to build up the armed forces and to consider a military solution for foreign relations problems.
Alliances: treaties of friendship and support between countries who promise to support each other in a war.

Did You Know?
The politicians of 1914 did not see - as we do today - the build-up of armed forces or the system of alliances as threats to peace; they thought that they would KEEP the peace by acting as a deterrent to any nation thinking of attacking them. They believed peace would be kept by a BALANCE OF POWER between the two alliance blocks.
5. **Alliances**

As well as seeking protection in the size of their armies, the countries of Europe sought protection by forming alliances. At first, Bismarck had kept Germany friendly with Russia. Kaiser Wilhelm overturned this, and concentrated instead on the [Dual Alliance of 1879](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dual_Alliance) between Germany and Austria-Hungary - which became the [Triple Alliance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triple_Alliance) (or Central Powers Alliance) when Italy joined in 1882.

Alarmed by this strong central bloc:

a. France in 1894 made an alliance with Russia, and
b. In 1904 France made an agreement with Britain called the [Entente Cordiale](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Entente_Cordiale) (= 'Friendly Relationship’ – not a formal alliance, but a promise to work together).
c. In 1907, Britain made an entente with Russia, thus forming the Triple Entente (France, Russia, Great Britain).
d. In 1902 Britain made a naval treaty with Japan.
e. The Triple Entente alarmed Germany, which felt itself surrounded by the France-Russia alliance.

The countries of Europe thought that the alliance system would act as a deterrent to war; in fact it tied the countries together so that, when one country went to war, the others felt themselves obliged to follow.

6. **List of events**

So it was against this background of long-term underlying tensions that the countries of Europe were pushed into war by a sequence of events after 1900 which we will explore:

1899-1900: Boer War
1900: German Navy Law
1905-6: First Moroccan Crisis
1908: *Daily Telegraph* article
1908-9: Bosnian crisis
1911: Agadir Crisis (2nd Moroccan Crisis)
1912-13: Balkan Wars
1914: Assassination at Sarajevo

**Extra:**
For each of the background ‘pressures-towards-war’ 1-5, explain how it helped to bring war nearer.
The countries of Europe in 1914

Turkey
A very weak despotism, ruled by a corrupt government. Turkey was known as ‘the sick man of Europe’. Once, Turkey had ruled all of the Balkans, but now the peoples of that area were rebelling and driving the Turks out – this created a significant area of instability in Europe: ‘the Balkan pressure-cooker’.

Germany
Germany was massively powerful, with the most up-to-date industry in the world. Germany had become a united country for the first time in 1870-1. At first, the Chancellor Otto von Bismarck was careful not to annoy other countries, but after 1890 the slightly-mad Kaiser Wilhelm II took over the government.

Austria Hungary
Had once been a strong empire, but now the government was weak and divided (the Austrians and the Hungarians hated each other). Austria-Hungary had been built up by marriage and diplomacy during the Middle Ages, and was known as the ‘polyglot (many languages) empire’ because of all the different races in it. The Habsburg rulers were stupid and inbred, and Emperor Franz Josef was old and autocratic.

Italy
A new country formed in 1866. A weak ruler, chaotic governments and a pathetic army. The Mafia and corruption everywhere.

Russia
Russia was huge but backward. Nicholas II was a weak and ineffectual ruler, dominated by his wife and the ‘mad monk’ Rasputin. He kept power by setting the Cossacks on the mob, and by his Okhrana (secret police). Russia lost a war to Japan disastrously in 1904.

France
France was a democracy, but the French government was weak. In 1870-1, when Germany was trying to become a united country, France had gone to war to try to stop it. The Germans won the war easily, and took the area of Alsace Lorraine from France. The French were desperate for revenge.

Britain
Britain was a democracy with a huge empire, but until 1900 Britain believed in ‘splendid isolation’ – keeping out of affairs in Europe. Neither do you want to go running away with the idea that Britain had an efficient or modern government. The army was still dominated by the aristocracy, and women were not given the vote until 1918.
The Growing Crisis, 1900-1914

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<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Effect(s)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1. Boer War 1899-1900</strong>&lt;br&gt;Britain was fighting a colonial war to conquer South Africa against the Dutch Boer settlers there. The war was going badly. Kaiser Wilhelm announced that he supported the Boers, and that Britain had no right to conquer South Africa.</td>
<td>• The British were outraged, and developed the idea that Germany wanted to challenge Britain's role as a world empire.</td>
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<td><strong>2. German Navy Law, 1900</strong>&lt;br&gt;In 1900 Kaiser Wilhelm began to build up the German navy, announcing that he wanted Germans to sail all over the world and take for Germany 'a place in the sun'. After 1906, he began to build numbers of the new, large 'Dreadnought' battleships, which were more powerful than any other ship.</td>
<td>• The British thought that Germany wanted to challenge British sea power - the basis of Britain's greatness&lt;br&gt;• A strong navy would also allow Germany to threaten British colonies overseas.&lt;br&gt;• Britain made an alliance with Japan in 1902, so as not to have to worry so much about the Pacific.&lt;br&gt;• Britain also began to build Dreadnoughts. The British government had planned to build four Dreadnoughts in 1909, but when Germany refused to limit the number of ships it was building, the British public protested, demanding: 'We want eight and we won't wait'. Britain and Germany thus had a naval arms race.&lt;br&gt;• By 1914, the British navy was much larger than the German navy, so it is arguable that this was NOT a cause of World War I.</td>
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<td><strong>3. First Moroccan Crisis, 1906</strong>&lt;br&gt;France hoped to conquer Morocco in Africa, and one of the points of the Entente Cordiale (1904) was that the British would help them. But in 1905, Kaiser Wilhelm visited Morocco and promised to protect Morocco against anyone who threatened it.</td>
<td>• The French were furious with Germany.&lt;br&gt;• The British saw it as yet another attempt by Germany to build a German Empire to rival Britain's empire.&lt;br&gt;• A Conference was held at Algeciras (1906), where Britain, Russia and France, forced Germany to promise to stay out of Morocco. This annoyed Germany.&lt;br&gt;• In 1907, Britain and Russia, alarmed by German ambitions, made an Entente.</td>
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<td><strong>4. Telegraph Article, 1908</strong>&lt;br&gt;Kaiser Wilhelm gave an interview to the Daily Telegraph newspaper, in which - although he claimed that he wanted to be friends with Britain - he said that the English were 'mad', said that the German people hated them, and demanded that: 'Germany must have a powerful fleet to protect her interests in even the most distant seas'.</td>
<td>• The article outraged the British.&lt;br&gt;• It convinced them that Germany wanted to challenge the British Empire overseas.</td>
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**Did You Know?**<br>It has been suggested that imperial rivalries were a long-range cause of World War I. It has also been said that they were a safety valve, drawing off European energies that might otherwise have erupted in war sooner.

**Source A**<br>You English, are mad, mad, mad as March hares. What has come over you that you are so completely given over to suspicions quite unworthy of a great nation? ...<br>• I have said time after time that I am a friend of England ... but you make things difficult for me.<br>• My task is not the easiest. The prevailing sentiment among large sections of the middle and lower classes of my own people is not friendly to England...<br>Interview with Kaiser Wilhelm II in the *Daily Telegraph*, 28 October 1908
5. **Bosnian crisis, 1908**  
Turkey had been in decline for a long time. In 1908 there was a revolution in Turkey, and Austria-Hungary took advantage of this to annex (take over) the Turkish state of Bosnia.

- Serbia was furious, because Bosnia included many Serbs whom it had hoped to rule. This eventually led to the assassination at Sarajevo and the First World War.
- Serbia asked her ally Russia to help, and Russia called a European Conference, expecting support from France and Britain. However, Britain and France did NOT support Russia, no conference took place, and Russia had to back down and was humiliated - but Russia vowed not to back down again. This, again, was to help to cause the war in 1914.

6. **Agadir Crisis, 1911**  
There was a revolution in Morocco, and the French sent in an army to put it down, then took over the country. In the middle of this, Kaiser Wilhelm sent the gunboat Panther to the Moroccan port of Agadir.

**Source B**  
Germany is deliberately preparing to destroy the British Empire. We are all to be drilled and schooled and uniformed by German officials. Britain alone stands in the way of Germany's path to world power and domination.  
from an article in the *Daily Mail* newspaper, 1909

**Source C**  
Now we know where our enemy stands. Like a flash of lightening in the night these events have shown the German people where its enemy is... When the hour of decision comes we are prepared for sacrifices, both of blood and of treasure.  
From a speech made in the Reichstag (the German parliament) by the Kaiser, November 1911

7. **Balkan Wars, 1912-13**  
As Turkey continued to grow weaker, in 1912 Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria (calling themselves the Balkan League) attacked Turkey and captured almost all the remaining Turkish land in Europe. Sir Edward Grey, the British Foreign Secretary, arranged a peace conference in London, but in 1913 the Bulgarians, unhappy with the deal they had got, attacked Serbia - but were defeated.  
Britain and Germany got together and used their influence to bring the war to an end (Treaty of Bucharest, 1913)

- Serbia became the most powerful Balkan state, and felt confident enough to threaten Austria - the Serbian Prime Minister Pasic said: 'the first round is won; now for the second round - against Austria'.
- The Kaiser took Sir Edward Grey's cooperation as a sign of Britain's weakness. When the next crisis happened, he assumed that Britain would co-operate again.

8. **Assassination at Sarajevo, 1914**  
On 28 June 1914 Gavrilo Princip, a Bosnian Serb, shot Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary.

- This started a sequence of events which led to World War One.

### Extra:
For each of these 'crises' 1-8, explain whether it is an example of:
- Nationalism
- Imperialism
- Militarism
- Alliances in action.
The Murder of Franz Ferdinand

1. In Serbia, after 1908, a terrorist group called Union or Death (nicknamed the ‘Black Hand’) had waged a terrorist war to free Bosnia from Austrian control. The Austrian Army wanted to destroy the Black Hand by attacking Serbia. In the summer of 1914, Austria sent 70,000 troops on military manoeuvres in Bosnia to try to scare the Serbian government. On 28 June 1914, the Archduke Franz-Ferdinand and his wife visited Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia, to review these troops.

2. It was the Archduke's wedding anniversary. It was also Serbia's National Day – a day linked with Serbian nationalism, and with the assassination of foreign rulers. Waiting for Franz Ferdinand, lined up along the Appel Quay, Sarajevo's main road, were six young men. They were armed with pistols and bombs supplied by the Black Hand. They were going to try to murder Franz Ferdinand.

3. Austrian spies in Serbia had reported that there was going to be an assassination attempt. Pasic, the Prime Minister of Serbia, had also told the Austrian government that there was going to be trouble. Franz Ferdinand ignored these warnings. Only 120 policeman were on duty in Sarajevo, and they were so excited that they forgot to watch the crowds, and looked at the procession instead.

4. To reach the Town Hall the procession had to drive along the Appel Quay. There were a few shouts of Zivio! ('Long may he live!') At 10.10 am, as the procession drew near the Cumuria Bridge,

5. The order of conspirators as the procession passed down the Appel Quay was:

   Near the Cumuria bridge:
   1st Mehmed Mehmedbasic: told a friend that he could not get a clear opportunity; told Albertini in 1937 that a policeman had approached him just as he was to throw the bomb.
   2nd Vaso Cubrilovic: told investigation that felt sorry for the Duchess. Told Albertini that he was badly placed.
   3rd Nedeljko Cabrinovic: wearing a long black coat and a black hat, asked a policeman to tell him which car the Archduke was in; seconds later he had knocked the cap off a hand grenade against a metal lamp-post and aimed it at the Archduke seated in the open car. The bomb had bounced off the folded-back hood of the Archduke's car and blew up the car behind, killing two officers and injuring about twenty people. Cabrinovic swallowed poison, but it failed to work. After stopping to see what had happened, Franz Ferdinand's car sped to the Town Hall.
   4th (landward side) Cvetko Popovic: told a friend that could not see FF because he was short-sighted. Told the trial he lost his nerve.

   Near the Latin bridge:
   5th Gavrilo Princip: At his trial, said that the Archduke's car sped past him on its way to the Town Hall after Cabrinovic's bomb, while he went to see what was happening

   At the Imperial Bridge:
   6th Trifko Grabez: Told the investigation that he could not bring himself to do such a thing. At the trial stated that two policemen were behind him. Told his friend that he did not want to wound innocent bystanders.

10. At the Town Hall, Franz Ferdinand furiously cancelled the rest of the tour. Potiorek (the Austrian Governor) suggested returning by a different route to the one advertised; however, he forgot to tell the chauffeurs. On the journey, therefore, the front car took a right-hand turn into the narrow Franz Joseph Street. Potiorek told the driver to turn round and go back. The driver stopped (in front of Schiller's Store) and began to reverse. Standing there, on his way home, was Gavrilo Princip. He stepped forward and fired two shots at Franz Ferdinand.

11. The first bullet struck the Archduke, the second - aimed at Potiorek - hit the Duchess. At first nobody moved. People thought that the assassin had missed. Then the Duchess slumped forward. The bullet had gone through the side of the car, her corset and her right side. 'Sopherl! Don't die! Stay alive for our children!' cried the Archduke, but she died as he spoke. Franz Ferdinand outlived her only a short time; a bullet had pierced the right side of his coat collar, cut the jugular vein and lodged in the spine. It was 11.30 am, June 28, 1914.
Four Steps to War, June-Aug 1914  [ARSE]

The nations slithered over the brink into the boiling cauldron of war without any trace of apprehension or dismay... The nations backed their machines over the precipice ... not one of them wanted war; certainly not on this scale.

Lloyd George was a minister in 1914 and Prime Minister during the war.

There was no "slide" to war, no war caused by "inadvertence," but instead a world war caused by a fearful set of elite statesmen and rulers making deliberate choices.


Five weeks after the assassination of Franz Ferdinand on 28 June 1914, there was a world war. How did such a thing happen?

1. Austria declares war
   What was Austria-Hungary to do? It is important to realise that Austria hated Serbia anyway. Nationalism threatened the very existence of the 'polyglot empire', and the Austrian Chief of Staff General Hotzendorf had asked for a 'surprise' war to destroy Serbia more than 20 times in the eight years after 1906.
   So the assassination was used by Austria as an opportunity to sort out the Serbs:

   5 July: Austria-Hungary approached the Germans and got a promise (the so-called 'blank cheque') that they could rely on Germany's support.

   23 July: The Austro-Hungarian government sent Serbia an ultimatum containing ten really tough demands. Failure to meet all of these demands, they said, would result in war. (They expected Serbia to reject the ultimatum, which would give Austria-Hungary an excuse to invade.)

   25 July: But the Serb government did not reject the ultimatum. Instead it sent a reply in which it agreed to everything EXCEPT part of demand 6. It was SO conciliatory that, after reading it, Kaiser Wilhelm wrote on 28 July: 'the reply amounted to a capitulation in the humblest style, and with it there disappeared all reason for war'.

   28 July: Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia.

Source A
The Austrian government was not much concerned to punish the crime of Sarajevo. They wanted to punish a different crime - the crime that Serbia committed by existing as a free national state.
AJP Taylor, Europe: Grandeur and Decline (1967)
AJP Taylor was a respected, but outspoken, historian

Source B
The sentence that caused a war
6. The [Serbian] Government considers it its duty as a matter of course to begin an investigation against all those persons who have participated in the outrage of June 28th and who are in its territory. As far as the cooperation in this investigation of specially delegated officials of the [Austro-Hungarian] Government is concerned, this cannot be accepted, as this is a violation of the constitution and of criminal procedure.

Serbian Response to the Ultimatum, 25 July, 1914

Did you know?
The historian Paul Schroeder, in 1972, suggested that the question should not be why war broke out in 1914, but why not before? What snapped in 1914? The answer, he said, was Austria-Hungary.
2. Russia mobilises

The Serbs had wrong-footed the Austrians. Whereas, on 28 June, everyone in the world had supported the Austrians, now they looked unfair, unreasonable and war-mad. As the Austrian army shelled Belgrade (the capital of Serbia) the Serbians called up their army and asked their ally, Russia, for help. What was Russia to do?

24 July: Russia did not want war. The Russian Grand Council decided - if Serbia was invaded - not to give military support, but to appeal to a conference of the Great Powers. Even the mad Rasputin warned that a war would destroy Russia.

29 July: But the Tsar Nicholas had already let down Serbia in the Bosnian crisis of 1908. And - he told the Kaiser in a telegram - it was a matter of right and wrong (see Source C). Nicholas decided to mobilise (call up) his army.

31 July: At first, Nicholas hoped to mobilise only against Austria-Hungary, but - when his generals told him that this was impossible - he was forced to order a general mobilisation (against Germany as well as Austria-Hungary). However, he sent a telegram to the Kaiser assuring him that the mobilisation was NOT against Germany.

3. Schlieffen Plan

What was Germany to do? To allow a country to mobilise against you without response, said the Germans, was like allowing someone to hold a loaded gun to your head without doing anything.

It is important to realise that the Schlieffen Plan for mobilisation was a plan of attack - so Germany mobilising, and Germany going to war, were one and the same thing.

And the Schlieffen Plan did not allow for a situation like that in 1914. Things were going wrong for Germany - Russia was mobilising, but France showed no sign of going to war to help the Russians. Now Russia was mobilising and was going to be ready too soon - every day that passed gave the Russian army one more day to get ready. When the German Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg asked General Moltke: 'Is the Fatherland in danger?' the reply was: 'Yes'.

1 August: The Kaiser, therefore, gave the order to mobilise and Germany declared war on Russia.

3 August: claiming that French planes had bombed the German town of Nuremberg, Germany declared war on France.

4 August: with German troops on the march to invade France, the French declared war on Germany.

Source C

An unjust war has been declared on a weak country. The anger in Russia shared fully by me is enormous. I foresee that very soon I shall be overwhelmed by the pressure forced upon me and be forced to take extreme measures which will lead to war. To try and avoid such a calamity as a European war I beg you in the name of our old friendship to do what you can to stop your allies from going too far.

Nicky
Telegram, Tsar Nicholas to Kaiser Wilhelm, 29 July 1914

Nicholas and Wilhelm were cousins, and had been great friends.

The Schlieffen Plan

Germany's Plan for mobilisation – called the Schlieffen Plan after the German Chief of Staff Alfred von Schlieffen – was based on three ideas:

a. If there was a war, Germany would have to fight France AND Russia.

b. France was weak (Germany had defeated France in ten weeks in 1870).

c. Russia was strong but slow (Schlieffen estimated that it would take Russia 6 weeks to mobilise).

The Schlieffen Plan, therefore, was developed as a huge hammer blow at Paris, using 90% of the German army, which would take France out of the war quickly (allowing Germany to get its army back to fight Russia).

Source D

This American cartoon shows Serbia being attacked by Austria-Hungary, who is then attacked by Russia, who is then attacked by Germany, who is then attacked by Britain and France. Each says: 'Leave him alone or I'll...
4. **England joins in**

The British Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, had spent the crisis trying to get the different countries to negotiate.

**1 August:** Grey proposed to Germany that Britain would stay neutral if Germany did not attack France. Kaiser Wilhelm wanted to agree, but when he tried to pause the invasion, his generals told him that he couldn't.

**2 August:** The Schlieffen Plan had an error. It planned for the German army, when it attacked France, to go through Belgium. The day after declaring war on Russia, therefore, the Germans asked permission for their army to pass through Belgium. The Belgians refused! So the next day, Germany invaded Belgium.

**4 August:** Britain was obliged by a treaty of 1839 to help Belgium in the event of an invasion. Therefore, Britain sent Germany an ultimatum demanding, by midnight, a German promise to withdraw from Belgium. The Germans were amazed: 'For a scrap of paper, Great Britain is going to make war?' asked Bethmann-Hollweg.

That night, crowds gathered in Parliament Square in London. As Big Ben struck 11 pm (midnight in Berlin) they sang *God Save the King*, and then ran home crying: 'War! War! War!' As Grey watched the crowds leave, he commented: 'The lights are going out all over Europe: we shall not see them lit again in our lifetime'.

**Source E**

*Image E* a cartoon in *Punch*, 12 August 1914.

Notice how the cartoon shows Belgium as a threatened child, and the stereotyped figure of Germany as an aggressive military man with sausages.

**Source F**

The greatest war of modern times, and perhaps in the whole history of the human race, was begun by Germany using the crime of a schoolboy as an excuse.

*The Great War - the Standard History* (1914)

A British patriotic magazine published weekly

**Source G**

*Image G*

All over Europe, people greeted war with joy and enthusiasm. 'These people are very anxious to send our soldiers to face death', commented Lloyd George to the Prime Minister as they walked to the House of Commons.

**Extra:**

Debate as a whole class: 'Who was to blame for World War One?'

- Think of arguments which justify your opinion
- Develop points which disprove any arguments which might be presented against you.
Revision Questions

1. What was the name of Germany’s ruler, 1888-1918?
2. What was the title of Germany’s national anthem and what does it mean?
3. What is Nationalism?
4. What was Pan-Slavism?
5. What happened at the Treaty of San Stefano in 1878?
6. What did Kaiser Wilhelm say in 1901 that he wanted for Germany?
7. What is militarism?
8. How much of the globe did the British Empire cover in 1900?
9. What was Britain’s ambition in Africa?
10. Where and when did French and British colonial ambitions clash?
11. What is imperialism?
12. How big was the German army in 1914?
13. How many men (including reservists) could Germany call up if there was a war?
14. How many warships did Great Britain have in 1914?
15. Whose army was growing fastest?
16. Why did politicians try to build up huge armed forces and military alliances?
17. Who was the German Army Chief of Staff in 1914?
18. What did the Moltke believe about war, and why?
19. What was the Dual Alliance?
20. What was the Triple Alliance?
21. What was the Triple Entente?
22. Which country did Britain make a naval agreement with and why?
23. Who was the ‘sick man of Europe’?
24. Who was Otto von Bismarck?
25. When had Italy become a united country?
26. Who dominated the Russian Tsar Nicholas II until 1916?
27. Which country had defeated Russia in a war?
28. What had happened to France in 1870?
29. Name two nationalist French politicians who hated Germany for France’s defeat in 1870.
30. What was Britain’s foreign policy advocate, and what does this mean?
31. Which British war did Kaiser Wilhelm criticise?
32. What did the German Navy Law of 1900 say?
33. What did people mean by ‘We want 8 and we won’t wait’?
34. What provoked the First Moroccan Crisis?
35. How was the first Moroccan Crisis solved?
36. Who was ‘mad, mad, mad as March hares’?
37. What does the word ‘annex’ mean, and who annexed who in 1908?
38. What provoked the Second Moroccan Crisis?
39. How was the Second Moroccan crisis solved?
40. What was the Balkan League?
41. How was the Second Balkan War ended?
42. When was Archduke Franz Ferdinand shot?
43. Name the 6 assassins waiting for Franz Ferdinand along the Appel Quay. Who actually tried to kill him?
44. What was the name of the Serbian terrorist group?
45. What was the name of the Austrian governor of Sarajevo?
46. What was the ‘polyglot empire’?
47. Who was General Hotzendorff and why was he important?
48. What was the ‘blank cheque’?
49. What is an Ultimatum?
50. When was the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia?
51. Which point of Austria’s ultimatum did Serbia reject and why?
52. What did Tsar Nicholas II think of the Austrian declaration of war?
53. Why was it significant that Nicholas ordered a ‘general mobilisation’?
54. What was the name of Germany’s military plan and why?
55. Why was the Schlieffen Plan going wrong in August 1914?
56. What did Bethmann-Hollweg ask Moltke and what was the reply?
57. Why did Germany declare war on France?
58. Why did Britain declare war on Germany?
59. What did Bethmann-Hollweg call the Anglo-Belgian treaty of 1839?
60. When did Britain declare war on Germany?