

CHC2P Unit 1: 1914-1919: Forming Identity

Activity 1: World War I

Overview

In this activity, you will explore three important issues that all played a role in triggering World War I.

Lesson

An Introduction to War



In history, we often look at the causes of big events. Today, you will look at an event that led to the death of about 10 million people. This event is World War I - a war that lasted from 1914 to 1918. Most of the fighting in this war took place in Europe, but countries from all over the world took part and, therefore, it is called a “world war.” For example, Canada, the United States and Australia are not European countries, but they all took part in the war. You will look at the reasons why later in this activity.

As human beings, we often look for the reasons why events happen or what caused something to happen. We want to know what caused the fire in the dance hall that killed one hundred people. We want to know why, because we are naturally curious and because we wish to avoid a similar tragedy occurring in the future. We also want to know why a young person ran away from home, why a friendship was broken, and why someone was expelled from school. On the other hand, it is also important to know why good things happen.

Reasons for WWI

There are many reasons for the start of World War I. Students will examine three of the reasons:

1. Nationalism is a great love for your country. The word comes from the word "nation", which means the same as "country." Many people in Europe showed extreme nationalism. If you believe that your country is the best, how do you show your belief? For some people, it meant fighting in a war to see who was number one.

2. Alliances are agreements or “deals” between countries, to back each other up in case of trouble. The word “alliance” comes from the word “ally” or friend. In today’s society, a young person may join a

street gang for protection against people in another gang. Before the start of World War I, countries joined alliances for protection. During the war, Britain, France and Russia formed an alliance which was known as the "Triple Entente". Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy, on the other hand, had formed the "Triple Alliance".

3. An arms race is a competition between two or more countries to see who can produce the most "arms", or weapons. Before World War I, the country of the United Kingdom (also known as Britain) and the country of Germany were involved in an arms race.

The three factors mentioned above, nationalism, alliances, and the arms race, led to great tension between the countries of Europe prior to 1914. Many countries were ready for war, and in June 1914, something happened that set off the spark which would start the Great War.

Archduke Franz Ferdinand



On June 28, 1914, in the city of Sarajevo, Bosnia, a terrorist killed the man who was to be the next king of Austria-Hungary (this person is called the heir to the throne, and in this case his name was Franz Ferdinand).

Franz was in a car with his wife Sophie, when the terrorist jumped on the running board of the open car and fired a bullet into the neck of Franz and another bullet into the stomach of Sophie. Both were killed. The assassin, 18-year-old Gavrilo Princip, was arrested, tried, and later died of cancer in prison.

The "Showdown"

An act of terrorism is an act of violence, usually performed for political reasons. Gavrilo Princip belonged to a terrorist group called the "Black Hand". This group was based in the country of Serbia and they wanted to take Bosnia away from Austria-Hungary. In order to threaten Austria-Hungary, the "Black Hand" killed Franz Ferdinand and his wife.

Next, Austria-Hungary issued an ultimatum to Serbia. An ultimatum is a statement of serious consequences if certain conditions are not met. For example, a teacher may say, "Be quiet, or get out of this class Sizzle Pimp!" In 1914, Austria-Hungary's ultimatum to Serbia was: "Hand over the Black Hand, or we attack!"

In the "showdown," Serbia was backed by its friend Russia. Austria-Hungary was backed by its ally Germany. Serbia stood its ground. To back up Serbia, Russia moved troops to the borders of Germany. Germany told Russia to remove the troops from the border. Russia refused and then Germany declared war on Russia.

The Outbreak of War

Germany knew that Russia was allied with France, and therefore Germany decided to attack France. The German attack went through the neutral country of Belgium. A neutral country is a country that is on neither side in an argument. When Germany went through the neutral country of Belgium, Britain entered the war against Germany.

In 1914, Canada was a colony belonging to Britain. A colony is a country that is controlled by another country. Therefore, Canada, like Australia (another British colony), quickly volunteered to help the “mother country” of England (a part of Britain). At this time, a large percentage of Canadians had connections to England - by birth or family - and the decision to help England was a popular one.

Recent Terrorism



On September 11, 2001, terrorists attacked the World Trade Centre twin towers in New York and the Pentagon in Washington. The terrorists belonged to a group called Al Qaeda, which was based in the country of Afghanistan. After the September 11 attack, the United States issued an ultimatum to Afghanistan: “Hand over the members of Al Qaeda, or we will attack!” When the government of Afghanistan refused to listen, the United States attacked Afghanistan in order to find and punish Al Qaeda.

To get a better idea of where all of these countries were and the timeframe in which all of these dates occurred, refer to the *Interactive Map of World War I* at:
<http://www.mrzahran.com/history/mme/mapofwwi.html>

Assignment

1. How long did WWI last?
2. About how many people died in WWI?
3. Use four words to give three reasons for the start of World War I.
4. Name three countries that belonged to the Triple Alliance in 1914.
5. Who was killed on June 28, 1914 at Sarajevo, Bosnia?
6. What ultimatum did Austria-Hungary give to Serbia in 1914?
7. What country backed up Serbia in the showdown with Austria-Hungary?
8. What was Germany’s reaction when Russia moved troops to the German border?
9. What did Germany do next?
10. What two European countries were allied with (were friends with) Russia?
11. What neutral country was attacked by Germany in 1914?
12. Why did Canada enter World War I?
13. Can you think of an example of nationalism in the world today? Explain your example.
14. Describe an act of terrorism that you can recall occurring anywhere in the world recently. In your opinion, why did this action take place?

15. Complete the following comparison organizer, in which you compare terrorism in 1914 and September 11, 2001:

	June 28, 1914	September 11, 2001
Target of terrorist group:		
Name of terrorist group:		
Home country of terrorist group:		
What ultimatum was given by the country that was attacked by terrorists?		