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| **World War I** |

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| “A War to End All Wars” (1914-1918)The **First World War** is historically important for its causes and effects more so than specific events surrounding actual battles. This page will deal with the long-range and more immediate causes of World War I, the technological advances created during the war, some aspects of WWI battles, and the far-reaching effects of the conflict on Europe and the rest of the world.

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| **Western Front** |

Europe as a Powder-KegThe **fundamental causes** of the World War I, or the Great War as it was known at the time, were Imperialism, Militarism, Alliance System, and Nationalism.

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| **Causes of World War IM.A.I.N.** |
| **Militarism**  | Imperialism and nationalism led to increased production of goods and economic stability in these countries, which resulted in an arms race. The aggressive attitude of this policy drove them into producing more weaponry, such as strong navies and armored vehicles.  |
| **Alliance System** | The **alliances** of Europe were formed for protection against each other. However, the **Triple Entente** and the **Triple Alliance** very quickly took aggressive postures towards one another. This is due in large part to the lack of any global organization designed to promote peace among the nations of the world.  |
| **Imperialism** | European countries divided up Africa and Asia to strengthen the political and economic power of the mother country. This resulted in competition among European countries. |
| **Nationalism** | Nationalism was both a uniting force and a divisive one. It resulted in Germany and Italy uniting into strong nations, and also caused the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire and Austria-Hungary.  |

At the turn of the century, war was imminent. As nationalism weakened the **Ottoman Empire**, the **Slavic** peoples of the **Balkan** region struggled to free themselves from Ottoman control. **Serbia** declared independence in 1878, allying themselves to Russia. Serbia then wanted to unite with **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, which were controlled by Austria-Hungary. Serbia could count on Russia's support, and Austria-Hungary could count on Germany's. Because of the high tensions in this area, the Balkans became known as the "**Powder Keg of Europe**." All that was needed to ignite the world into war was a spark.The SparkIn 1914, Austrian **Archduke Franz Ferdinand**and his wife were visiting **Sarajevo**, the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina. **Gavrilo Princip**, of the Serbian nationalist group called the**Black Hand**, assassinated the Archduke and his wife. Austria-Hungary made threats to Serbia, whom they blamed for the assassination. Russia supported Serbia, and readied their military for war. Germany declared war on Russia, and on France, Russia's ally. Germany then invaded Belgium as a prelude to invading France. This resulted in Great Britain declaring war on Germany, which was the start of World War I.Aspects of World War IMost of World War I was a stalemate. Entrenched positions on both sides were only able to move a few miles in a battle that lasted the better part of a year. The conditions of **trench warfare** were brutal; trench-foot, disease, lice, and inadequate supplies made fighting difficult. Advances in **technology** also played a major role. The machine gun, the tank, the airplane, the submarine, and the use of poison gas drastically changed the face of modern war, and resulted in large numbers of casualties.The Aftermath and its Impact on Subsequent EventsOverwhelming odds and weariness forced an end to the fighting with the defeat of the Central Powers. The peace conference that followed was headed by the "Big Four," **David Lloyd George** of Britain, **Georges Clemenceau** of France, **Vittorio Orlando** of Italy, and **Woodrow Wilson** of the United States. Together, they drafted the **Treaty of Versailles****,** signed in 1919, which officially ended the war. Wilson tried to institute his **14 Points** but was largely rejected. However, the **League of Nations** was created as a result and attempted to act as the peacekeeper of Europe. Unfortunately, it was weak and ineffectual due to the absence of the United States. The treaty, however, was more about revenge, than it was about forging a lasting peace. Germany was forced to accept total responsibility for the start of the war. They also were forced to pay huge reparations, and give over vast amounts of territory. The start of **World War II** is a direct result of the harsh treatment of Germany after World War I.  |