

Name: _____

Class: _____

The Causes and Setting of the First World War

Directions: Using the reading to help you answer the questions that follow.

What happens when multiple countries all believe they are the best, war is the best way to earn prestige and wealth, have the strongest military, and think they have the strongest friends? Well they all fight each other in a battle royale to see who will be left standing of course. Unfortunately, this was not a video game but instead the first of a two-part global conflict that led to millions of deaths, a cratered and destroyed continent, and the discovery of just how horrible humans can be to one another for any number of reasons or beliefs. World War 1, also known as the 'Great War' or the 'War to End All Wars' would reshape our world with weapons and destruction the likes of which the planet and Humanity had never witnessed before.



It was a complicated time for the world during the early 1900's (1900-1915). **Globalization**, or the world becoming connected through communication and trade, was taking place as a result of new technologies like railroads, steam power, telegrams, networks of canals, and large amounts of factories to make goods. The world could move massive amounts of people or things across the globe in a relatively short time using large steel ships that could safely cross oceans in a matter of weeks. It was due to these technologies that some European countries were able to

establish large empires that consisted of sending resources from one country or place back to a central trading location. Great Britain was a good example of this in which countries like India and China, which were controlled by Britain at the time, would produce raw materials like cotton, silk, spices, and food. These materials then would be shipped to the British Isles where they would then be sent into the factories to become finished goods to be sold throughout Britain and the rest of the world for a profit. An unintended side effect of this **Imperialism** was that countries were interconnected by trade more so than ever before in our history and set the stage for the world we live in today in which we share ideas constantly with people from outside of our borders.



Another issue that came about with all this competition for global resources was the European powers at the time were very used to going to war with each other to settle disputes or try to conquer/disadvantage their rivals. War was seen by most European countries as honorable and glorious in a lot of ways and a common way to earn respect in society was to serve in some form of armed conflict for your nation. This created a sense of **Nationalism** which meant people would feel their country was the best of them all and winning to prove that fact was vital. Since war was so common it made sense that one of the things that would change with industrialization was war.

Guns, bullets, ships, artillery, clothing, and everything else needed for armed conflict was produced in huge amounts and in a short time. All of this weaponry was also brand new in terms of technology. Machine guns, long-range artillery,

land mines, and fast-firing rifles would be used on a large scale for the first-time during World War 1 and it would lead to horrible losses of human life.



With so much competition between nations both militarily and economically there were **Alliances** made between some countries in which they would go to war to support their allies if one of them got into a conflict. These alliances could also mean special trade deals or easier immigration and travel between countries. However, some alliances were not announced to the rest of the world and so a complex system of public and secret alliances existed in Europe when the “The Great War” began. This also meant that when the war broke out somebody was bound through an alliance to support somebody else. In a matter of months nearly 20 countries would declare war throughout Europe. By the end of the war 30

countries from 4 different continents will be involved making it the first global conflict. There would be two sides in the war. Germany, Bulgaria, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire would make up the Central Powers, while Britain, France, Italy, Russia, The United States, and Japan would make up the Allied Powers. Other smaller countries would join either side over the course of the war.



World War 1 would begin on July 28th, 1914 and last until November 11th, 1918 which is nearly four and a half years. The war begins after an Austro-Hungarian royal by the name of Archduke Franz Ferdinand is assassinated while in a car with his wife during a parade. Austria-Hungary would declare war soon after and the dominoes of alliances would begin falling. Roughly 6.5 million people will lose their lives in combat and another 13 million will lose their lives due to the war. Due to **genocide** (intentional killing of a specific group of people) and revolutions another 20 million people would die to bring the war’s total casualties to nearly 40 million people.

To make matters worse, a pandemic of the Spanish Flu broke out across the globe in 1918 around the end of the war and would ravage another estimated 50 million lives. By the end of 1925 nearly 100 million lives would be lost after only 10 years which is why today this generation of people is known as the “Lost Generation.” By 1929 the world’s economies would collapse as a result of the destruction and upheaval caused by World War 1 and the Global “Great” Depression would begin. A young, nationalistic soldier who lived through that War to end All Wars would see his country shamed on the world stage before he would see that same country ravaged by the Great Depression. That young soldier would one day become the leader of the Third Reich and the Nazi Party in which he will declare another war on a small European country that will kick off World War II.

Intro to World War I Questions:

1. What are the other two common names for World War I?
2. What is globalization?
3. Which technologies made globalization possible?
4. How did globalization affect how large World War I was?
5. In your own words, what is imperialism?
6. Does imperialism have any effect on the power or size of nations participating in the war at this time? Why?
7. Do you think there were any ties between imperialism and the desire for colonized nations to gain their independence during the war? Why would these subjugated countries view World War I as a good time to start revolutions?
8. What is an alliance?

9. Why do you think secret alliances between two or more countries created issues before the war?

10. List the Central Powers:

11. List the Allied Powers:

12. What year did the war start and how long did it last?

13. Define genocide.

14. Which events came shortly after the end of the war? How did this impact the world's populations?

15. Why do you think World War 2 will began just 20 years after World War I?