

Year 8 Learn Sheet

Final Assessment *The causes of the First World War*



The causes of the First World War can best be summed up with the word:

MANIA

Militarism

Alliances

Nationalism

Imperialism

Assassination

Causes that were around a long time before war started

Nationalism

- At the time people thought that their country was the **best**;
- Britain had the **biggest navy and empire** in the world;
- Germany was growing in power and **wanted to prove itself to the world**;
- And countries like Serbia and Belgium **didn't want to be bossed around by bigger ones!**

Imperialism

- Nationalism led to the **building of empires** (called imperialism) which made people even prouder;
- The British Empire covered around a **25% of the world's surface**;
- A lot of European countries had made empires in **Africa**, but **Germany didn't** and it was jealous of Britain's power.

Causes that were around a few years before war started

Militarism

- As tensions grew, countries felt very worried and grew their militaries;
- **Britain was afraid that Germany would build a navy that was bigger than theirs** – so they designed a new battleship called the **Dreadnought**. By 1914 Britain had 38 Dreadnoughts, but Germany was catching up with 24!

Alliances

- Countries began to feel safer if they teamed up. **Friendships between countries is called an alliance**;
- There were 2 main alliance groups:
- The **Triple Entente** was an alliance between Britain, France and Russia;
- The **Triple Alliance** was between Germany and Austria-Hungary. Germany felt threatened by the Triple Entente because it **surrounded** them.

'Trigger' causes that exploded into war

Assassination

- The 'trigger' cause sparked off the war;
- A Serbian, **Gavrilo Princip**, shot dead **Archduke Franz Ferdinand** on the 28th June 1914;
- The Archduke was visiting **Bosnia**, a place that Austrians and Serbians both thought was theirs!
- Austria demanded that its police be allowed into Serbia to investigate the murder. The proud Serbians refused and as soon as Austria attacked Serbia, Russia (Serbia's friend) attacked Austria. Germany attacked Russia but also used it as an opportunity to invade (take over) France through Belgium. **Britain stuck up for Belgium.**