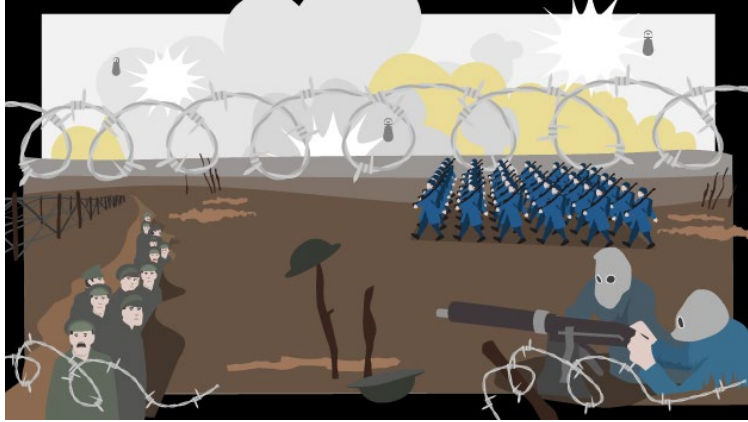


The First World War



After the murder of Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand in June 1914, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia. The countries of Europe found that the alliances they had formed dragged them into war.

Use the word **MAIN** to remember the main issues surrounding the cause of the First World War:

- **Militarism** - many countries believed it was important to build large armies and navies.
- **Alliances** - the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente were said to have been formed to help prevent war.
- **Imperialism** - European nations were creating empires and coming into conflict.
- **Nationalism** - all countries were looking out for their own interests.



Causes

Historians disagree about what 'caused' the First World War, but most trace it in some degree to the growing power of Germany. The 'balance of power' between the nations of Europe became unstable. This led them to form military alliances:

- The Triple Alliance – Germany, Austria and Italy
- The Triple Entente – France, Britain and Russia

The course of the war

In August 1914, Germany invaded France through Belgium, using its plan for war – the Schlieffen Plan. The German attack was forced back at the Battle of the Marne in September 1914. Both sides dug defensive trenches and the war ground to a halt.

For the next four years, the war on the Western Front consisted of a deadly stalemate. The battles of Verdun and the Somme in 1916 and Passchendaele in 1917 were key events where each side tried to wear the other side down.

In 1917, the Americans entered the war. Before they could arrive, the Germans made another attack in March 1918. It was successful at the start, but the Germans failed to break through. They were pushed back in August 1918. Two months later the Germans signed the **Armistice**.

Key Terms:

Alliances
Black Hand Gang
War of Attrition
Trench
Technology
Total War