

The First World War

Section 1



MAIN IDEA

Rivalries among European nations led to the outbreak of war in 1914.

Key Terms and People

Archduke Franz Ferdinand archduke of Austria whose assassination triggered World War I

Kaiser Wilhelm II German emperor during World War I

militarism policy of military preparedness and building up weapons

Triple Alliance alliance between Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy

Triple Entente alliance between Great Britain, France, and Russia

balance of power situation in which nations or alliances have equal strength

Central Powers Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire

Allied Powers Great Britain, France, and Russia

trench warfare fighting from trenches

Section Summary

CAUSES OF WORLD WAR I

In 1914 a Serbian terrorist assassinated **Archduke Franz Ferdinand** of Austria-Hungary while he was visiting Sarajevo. Nationalism had caused intense competition among European nations. They all wanted greater power and control of overseas colonies.

Kaiser Wilhelm II, emperor of Germany, knew that Germany needed a stronger military to compete.

Militarism is a policy of military preparedness and building up weapons. Germany began building up its military. Other nations began to worry about Germany's intentions. They built up their militaries to be prepared. Nations also formed alliances, or partnerships. Germany formed the **Triple Alliance** with Austria-Hungary and Italy. Great Britain, France, and Russia formed the **Triple Entente**, another alliance. Many leaders thought the alliances provided a **balance of power**. They thought that if alliances had equal strength, it would decrease the chances of war.

However, when the archduke was killed, these alliances led Europe into war.

Where was the archduke visiting when he was killed?

Underline the members of the Triple Alliance.

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WAR BREAKS OUT

The Serbian government had provided the assassins with bombs and weapons. Austria-Hungary blamed Serbia and declared war. Russia had promised to protect Serbia, so it declared war on Austria-Hungary. Austria-Hungary's ally, Germany, declared war on Russia, and then on France, Russia's ally. To catch France by surprise, Germany invaded Belgium in August 1914. This drew Belgium's ally, Great Britain, into the war. Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire fought as the **Central Powers**. Britain, France, and Russia fought together as the **Allied Powers**. By the time the war ended, 30 other nations had been drawn into it.

The German attack on Belgium was fierce. The Germans burned anything in their path. Civilians were executed. The Germans were armed with machine guns. The French came to help Belgium. They were armed only with rifles. The Germans soon moved into France. The French stopped them at the First Battle of the Marne. In five days, 250,000 lives were lost. However, the Germans were slowed down. This gave the Russians a chance to mobilize. Then Germany had to pull some of their troops out of France. They were needed on the Eastern Front to fight the Russians.

THE WAR REACHES A STALEMATE

Both the French and the Germans dug miles of trenches. In **trench warfare**, soldiers fought in the trenches. Opposing forces used machine guns, grenades, and artillery. Anyone who went over the top was shot at. The war bogged down. Then the German military started using poison gas. The Allies soon used it as well. Soldiers began to carry gas masks for protection. These prevented the gas from working. Armored tanks were developed. Airplanes were used at first to spy. Then machine guns were mounted on planes and planes began to carry bombs.

CHALLENGE ACTIVITY

Critical Thinking: Drawing Inferences Write a three-paragraph journal entry about the life of a soldier fighting in the trenches in World War I. Describe the rain, the mud, the rats, the poison gas, and an attack.

Why did Austria-Hungary blame Serbia for the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand?

Which country did the Germans invade first?

What happened to anyone who went over the top of the trenches?

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Section 2



MAIN IDEA

The United States helped turn the tide for an Allied victory.

Key Terms and People

isolationism a policy of not being involved in the affairs of other nations

U-boats small German submarines

Lusitania passenger ship sunk by German U-boats during World War I

Sussex pledge Germany's promise not to sink merchant ships without warning and without saving lives

Zimmerman Note German telegram proposing an alliance between Germany and Mexico

Selective Service Act U.S. law requiring young men to register for the military draft

convoy system strategy of surrounding troop-transport ships with destroyers or cruisers for protection

Communists people who seek the equal distribution of wealth and the end of all private property

Section Summary

UNITED STATES STAYS NEUTRAL

Most Americans thought World War I did not concern them. They favored **isolationism**. This was a policy of not being involved in the affairs of other nations. However, U.S. businesses sold many war goods to the Allies. They could not sell to Germany because of a British blockade. Germany used **U-boats** to wage naval warfare. These were small submarines. In 1915 they sank the passenger ship *Lusitania*. This violated the laws of neutrality. Many American lives were lost. Tensions rose between the United States and Germany.

Why couldn't American businesses sell war goods to the Germans?

HEADING TOWARD WAR

The German government agreed to attack only supply ships. However, in 1916 they attacked the French passenger ship *Sussex*. President Wilson threatened to end diplomatic ties with Germany. The Germans issued the **Sussex pledge**. They promised not to sink merchant vessels without warning or saving lives.

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Germany went back to unrestricted submarine warfare in 1917. The United States ended diplomatic relations with Germany. The Germans sent a telegram called the **Zimmerman Note** to Mexico. Germany wanted Mexico as an ally against the United States. The Americans got copies of the note and called for war. A revolution in Russia removed Czar Nicholas II from power. Now Americans supported the Allies even more. When Germany sank three American merchant ships, America declared war.

Why did the United States end diplomatic relations with Germany?

AMERICANS IN EUROPE

In order to raise an army, Congress passed the **Selective Service Act**. This required young men to register to be drafted into the armed forces. Most young men went willingly. Almost nothing was ready for the new recruits. Still, training for the soldiers was intense. General John J. Pershing led the American Expeditionary Force that sailed to Europe. To transport the troops, a **convoy system** was used. This called for surrounding troop-transport ships with cruisers and destroyers for protection.

Underline the name of the leader of the American troops.

Meanwhile, **Communists** took over Russia. They believed there should be an equal distribution of wealth and no private property. They pulled Russia out of the war. The Germans pushed the Allies back to the Marne River. American troops were a major factor in the war. They helped stop the German advance.

THE WAR ENDS

The Germans launched a last attack at the Second Battle of the Marne. They lost, and the Allies pushed them back into Belgium. In the Battle of the Argonne Forest, the Americans suffered 120,000 casualties. However, the Central Powers lost the will to keep fighting. On November 11, 1918, a truce, or armistice, went into effect.


Where did the Germans launch their last attack?

CHALLENGE ACTIVITY

Critical Thinking: Elaborate Before the United States entered the war, many Americans went to Canada and volunteered to fight on the side of the Allies. Write two paragraphs telling whether you might have done this or not, and why.

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Section 3



MAIN IDEA
 The United States mobilized a variety of resources to wage World War I.

Key Terms and People

Liberty bonds a form of loan to the government to pay for the war

Bernard Baruch head of the War Industries Board during World War I

National War Labor Board organization to settle disputes between workers and management during the war

Committee on Public Information organization to promote American support for the war

George Creel head of the Committee on Public Opinion

propaganda posters, newspaper stories, and other materials designed to influence people's opinions

Schenck v. United States Supreme Court decision explaining limits of free speech

Section Summary

MOBILIZING THE ECONOMY

Going to war was a huge and expensive thing to do. Congress passed the War Revenue Act to pay for the war. The act established very high taxes. The government also borrowed money. Much of the money was borrowed from Americans who bought **Liberty Bonds**. The War Industries Board was formed to regulate all materials needed for the war effort. **Bernard Baruch** headed the board. American industrial production increased 20 percent.

The Food Administration was formed to manage and increase food production. Americans planted vegetables in “victory gardens.” There were “meatless Mondays” and “wheatless Wednesdays.” Since alcohol used up grain, people were encouraged not to drink it. In 1918 the Eighteenth Amendment banned the manufacture, sale, or transportation of alcoholic beverages. The Fuel Administration made sure that military needs for fuel would be met. Supplies from America were vital to the struggling Allies. The power of manufacturing and farming gave a needed boost to the American economy as well.

What were two ways the government raised money to pay for the war?

How did the Eighteenth Amendment help the war effort?

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Section 3

MOBILIZING WORKERS

Profits of many corporations rose sharply during the war. Prices went up. Workers' wages did not go up enough to make up for the higher prices. Workers had to work longer hours, sometimes in dangerous conditions. These conditions led many workers to join labor unions. The **National War Labor Board** was formed to help prevent strikes. The Board judged disputes between workers and management. It also set policies to improve working conditions. Many women took jobs that men had left to go into the military. They made great contributions to the war effort.

In 1918 and 1919 there was a severe flu epidemic. About half of the American troops who died in the war died from influenza. The disease killed 600,000 Americans.

Why did many workers join labor unions during the war?

INFLUENCING PUBLIC OPINION

Wilson had to change the minds of those Americans who had been against the war. He created the **Committee on Public Information**. It was headed by **George Creel**, a former reporter. Creel used **propaganda** to promote American support of the war. Propaganda is material designed to influence people's opinions. Movie stars and artists encouraged people to support the war.

Americans began to distrust anything that was German. Anti-German feelings grew after German secret agents planted a bomb in New York. Congress passed laws that limited Americans' freedom. They punished people for speaking out against the war or refusing military duty. Charles Schenck was one of many people jailed for violating the new laws. In ***Schenck v. United States***, the Supreme Court ruled that freedom of speech could be limited if it caused danger for the country.

Why did Wilson form the Committee on Public Information?

What was the result of *Schenck v. United States*?

CHALLENGE ACTIVITY

Critical Thinking: Contrast As a result of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the USA PATRIOT Act was passed. It limits certain freedoms in order to allow the government to investigate suspected terrorists. Write two paragraphs contrasting this act with the laws limiting freedom of speech during World War I.

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Section 4



MAIN IDEA

The Allies determined the terms for peace in the postwar world.

Key Terms and People

Fourteen Points President Wilson’s plan for peace following World War I

self-determination the right of people to decide their own political status

League of Nations organization of nations that would work together to settle disputes, protect democracy, and prevent future wars

David Lloyd George British prime minister at the Paris Peace Conference

Georges Clemenceau French premier at the Paris Peace Conference

Big Four leaders of the United States, Britain, France, and Italy at the Paris Peace Conference

Treaty of Versailles treaty ending World War I

reparations payments for damages and expenses caused by the war

Henry Cabot Lodge head of the Senate Foreign Relations committee and leader of the group who wanted changes in the Treaty of Versailles

Section Summary

THE FOURTEEN POINTS

World War I caused a shocking loss of life and property. President Wilson wanted “a just and lasting peace.” He wanted to ensure that such a war would never happen again. He outlined his vision to Congress. His plan was called the **Fourteen Points**. The first four points called for open diplomacy, freedom of the seas, free trade, and reduction of the military. The fifth point proposed a system to resolve disputes over colonies. The next eight points dealt with **self-determination**. This was the right of people to decide their own political status. The fourteenth point called for creating a **League of Nations**. It would be an organization of nations working together for peace. Wilson wanted a new philosophy for U.S. foreign policy. The Fourteen Points applied the principles of progressivism. Most importantly, they stated that the foreign policy of a democratic nation should be based on morality, not just on what was best for that nation.

Why did Wilson want “a just and lasting peace”?

What did the fourteenth point call for?

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PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE

President Wilson attended the peace conference in Paris in 1919. Some people back home criticized him for leaving the country. But Wilson wanted to make his dream a reality. The Allied leaders at the conference were President Wilson, Prime Minister **David Lloyd George** of Great Britain, Premier **Georges Clemenceau** of France, and Prime Minister Vittorio Orlando of Italy. They were known as the **Big Four**. Many delegates wanted to punish Germany. Some wanted to build new nations, such as Czechoslovakia. The **Treaty of Versailles** was the result. It was much harsher than Wilson wanted. It forced Germany to disarm. It also forced Germany to pay war **reparations**. These were payments for damages and expenses of the war. The amount assessed was much greater than Germany could afford to pay. However, the treaty did create the League of Nations.

How did the Treaty of Versailles deal with Germany?

THE FIGHT OVER THE TREATY

Wilson presented the treaty to Congress. Some Democrats were in favor of the treaty. Some senators wanted to reject the treaty outright. Others were partly in favor, but wanted changes. In this group was Senator **Henry Cabot Lodge**. Wilson refused to compromise. He traveled 8,000 miles in 22 days to speak directly to the American people. Then he suffered a stroke. Lodge presented the treaty to the Senate with a list of proposed changes. Wilson refused to budge. The treaty was rejected.

What did Wilson do instead of compromising?

THE IMPACT OF WORLD WAR I

In all, the war, disease, and starvation killed more than 14 million people. It left 7 million men disabled. It cost more than \$300 billion. The war led to the overthrow of monarchies in Russia, Austria-Hungary, and Germany. It devastated European economies. The United States became the world's leading economic power.

Underline how many people were killed and disabled. Circle how much the war cost.

CHALLENGE ACTIVITY

Critical Thinking: Evaluate Write two paragraphs explaining how you would have voted on the Treaty of Versailles.