

Year 8 History Knowledge Organiser – Causes of WW1.

The First World War killed millions of people. Historians have debated the causes of the war and who was responsible ever since. By 1914, the countries of Europe had armed themselves heavily and divided themselves into two opposing camps. With many of these countries having large empires in other parts of the world, it created a perfect environment for a global war.

Key Events

1905: Kaiser Wilhelm travels to Morocco and gives a speech supporting independence in the country. This angers France greatly.
1906: The British produce the first Dreadnought battleship, beginning the naval race.
1907: The Triple Entente is formed of Britain, France and Russia. The countries agreed that they would help each other if a war broke out.
1908: Austria-Hungary takes over Bosnia, angering Russia and Serbia.
1911: France takes over Morocco, which leads the Kaiser to send a gunboat to a port in Morocco, escalating tension.
28th June 1914: Franz Ferdinand and his wife are assassinated in Sarajevo.
28th July 1914: Austria-Hungary declare war on Serbia in retaliation for the murder.
1st August 1914: Germany declare war on Russia to protect Austria- Hungary.
3rd August 1914: Germany declares war on France and begins the Schlieffen Plan, invading Belgium on its way to capture Paris.
4th August 1914: Britain declares war on Germany, fulfilling its promise to protect neutral Belgium.



Key Terms

Triple Alliance	A political alliance between Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy.
Triple Entente	A political alliance between Britain, France and Russia.
Arms Race	A competition between countries to make the most weapons.
Nationalism	The belief that your nation is more important or better
Imperialism	When a country wants to take over other countries to create an Empire.
Militarism	The belief that a country should have a very strong military.
Dreadnought	A type of battleship popular at the time.

Key People

Franz Ferdinand	The heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary. His murder in 1914 is seen as the final straw which led to war.
Gavrilo Princip	A terrorist for the Black Hand Gang. He assassinated Franz Ferdinand in June 1914.
Kaiser Wilhelm II	The Emperor of Germany until 1918. He wanted Germany to become the most powerful state in Europe.
Tsar Nicholas II	The Russian Emperor. He made the decision to enter the war to protect Serbia.

