

GCSE History

Unit 4: Conflict and Tension 1894-1914

Work booklet 1 – The causes of WW1

What do I need to know for this topic?

- The Alliance System: the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente; Franco-Russian Alliance; relations between the 'Entente' powers
- Anglo-German rivalry: Britain and challenges to Splendid Isolation; Kaiser Wilhelm's aims in foreign policy (Weltpolitik) the Anglo-German naval race.
- The crises in Morocco (1905 and 1911) and the Balkans (1908–1909), and their effects on international relations.
- Slav nationalism and relations between Serbia and Austria-Hungary; the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo and its consequences.
- the events of July 1914
- the Schlieffen Plan and Belgium, the reasons why the Schlieffen plan failed

The Alliance System

By 1914 the 6 most powerful nations in Europe were divided into 2 rival alliances:



1) The Triple Alliance

Before 1870 Germany was a collection of small independent states but in 1870 these states were united into a new powerful German Empire. Following a conflict between France and the new German Empire Germany took Alsace-Lorraine (an important industrial area on the border between France and Germany) from France. Germany also formed an alliance with Austria-Hungary and Italy to guard against a revenge attack by the French.

The new Germany was very successful. By 1914 German industry had overtaken Britain's. The Kaiser (the leader of Germany) was ambitious and wanted to make Germany a world power with overseas colonies and an Empire like that of Britain and France. But the Kaiser was concerned by 'encirclement' – Friendship between Russia and France and between Britain and France were seen as an attempt to surround Germany. The Kaiser wanted to build up his own army and navy but was concerned by the vast army of Russia. Austria-Hungary was also concerned by the strength of Russia and looked to Germany for support.

Austria-Hungary was an empire made up of many different ethnic groups and nationalities (Germans, Serbs, Czechs, Slovaks, Slavs, Croats) who wanted their independence from Austria. In particular, the Serbs living in Austria wanted to be joined to Serbia. Serbia was becoming more powerful and Austria was concerned by this. Russia supported the Serbia and the Serb people. Like Germany, Italy wanted an overseas empire and hoped the other countries in the Triple Alliance would support Italian ambitions. Italy lacked the military and industrial strength of Germany.

The three countries of the Triple Alliance had agreed that if any member of the alliance was attacked they would be supported by the other members. Although this agreement was secret it seems likely that Britain, France and Russia knew about it by 1914.

2) The Triple Entente

Britain had kept out of European politics in the nineteenth century and focused instead on building up her empire. Britain's attitude became known as 'Splendid Isolation'. By 1900 Britain's attitude was beginning to change. As Germany became stronger Britain began to think of France and Russia as

potential allies rather than dangerous rivals. Britain was worried by the growing power of Germany and the Kaiser's ambitions to build up Germany's navy and empire – this was a serious threat to Britain's own empire and her naval supremacy.

Britain and France began to develop their friendship and co-operate more with each other. In 1904 they signed an agreement called the Entente Cordial which settled their colonial differences in North Africa and established a diplomatic understanding between the two countries. In 1907 Britain signed another agreement with Russia – This formed the Entente Cordial. Although Britain made no military commitment to support Britain and Russia if war broke out.

France shared Britain's concerns about Germany's growing power. France was especially concerned by Germany's growing military and industrial strength – they did not want a German invasion of France. France had therefore developed a strong friendship with Russia. As far back as 1892 Russia and France had signed a secret military alliance which promised to help the other if one of them was attacked by Germany.

Although Russia was the largest of the six European powers she was the most backward and reliant on an agricultural economy. Russia was also a traditional rival of Austria-Hungary – many Russian and Serbian people were Slavs and disliked other Slav people being controlled by Russia. Russia felt that they, not Austria, should have influence over the Slav peoples of Eastern Europe. Russia was keen to protect Serbia from Austrian dominance.

The Triple Alliance		
	What was this country concerned about?	Why did they join this alliance?
Germany		
Austria-Hungary		
Italy		
The Triple Entente		
	What was this country concerned about?	Why did they join this alliance?
Britain		
France		
Russia		

Why did alliances cause tension?

Study the cartoon below:

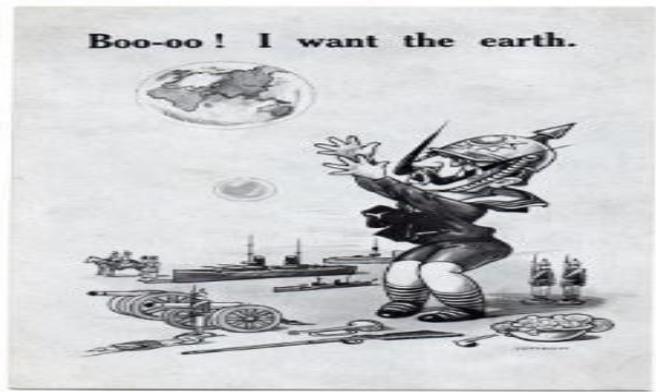
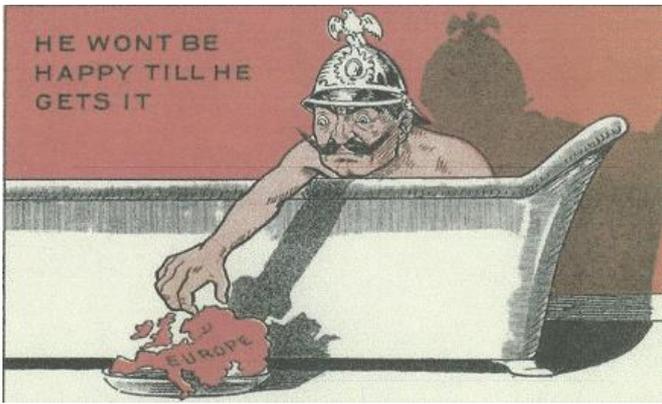


What are the dangers of the alliance system?

Anglo-German Rivalry

Write definitions for these keywords

Splendid Isolation	
Weltpolitik	
Kaiser Wilhelm II	
Dreadnought	
Naval Race	



What do these British cartoons suggest about the Kaiser before 1914?

What justification did Germany give for building up her navy?

Why was Britain concerned by Germany's plans? How did Britain react?

Whilst Britain and Germany focused on building up their navies other countries in Europe focused on building up their armies....

Countries argued that they were increasing the size of their armies for defence, in case they were attacked by members of an opposing alliance. As tensions increased in Europe countries were afraid that war would happen at some point – they did not know when but they wanted to be prepared. The problem was that although they expected war they thought war would be quick – nobody was prepared for a long drawn-out war and nobody had the funds to support a long war.

Germany	Germany's army was not the biggest in Europe but it was the best trained and the most powerful (approx. 2.2 million soldiers). The biggest problem for the Germany army was the problem that they might face fighting on two fronts (France to the West and Russia to the East) The Schlieffen Plan was devised to avoid this problem
Austria-Hungary	The Austrian army was not strong enough to fight Russia alone (approx. 1.3 million soldiers) – they relied on the support of the Germany army and the success of the German Schlieffen Plan if they were to fight Russia.
Russia	The Russian army was huge (approx. 3.4 million soldiers) but backward and ill equipped. Russia was reliant on her ability to overwhelm her enemies by sheer weight of numbers.
France	Had a large and well equipped army (approx. 1.8 million soldiers). The French plan if attacked by Germany was to charge across the border and attack deep in Germany, forcing surrender.
Britain	Britain had traditionally relied on her navy rather than her army for security. The BEF (British Expeditionary Force) consisted of about 150,000 highly trained and well equipped professional soldiers. Britain's military planners had secretly collaborated with the French when setting up the BEF – they could be sent to France to fight alongside the French army at short notice.

Who was in the strongest position by 1914? Explain your answer.

Was war inevitable before 1914? Explain your answer.

Two arguments amongst the countries of Europe increased the tension and made war more likely.....

Morocco 1905 and 1911

	What happened?	What were the results?	Why did this event increase tension in Europe?
Morocco 1905			
Morocco 1911			

Bosnia 1908



The Balkans

Explain why the Balkans was an unstable area in before 1908.

Explain what happened in the Balkans 1908

What were the results of the Bosnian Crisis?

Why did this event increase tension in Europe?

Think about the situation in Europe at the start of 1914.

Complete the speech bubbles thinking carefully about the position of each country in Europe and how they would feel.

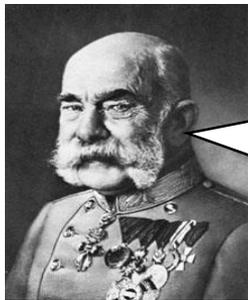


Kaiser Wilhelm II

I want

I feel

I will

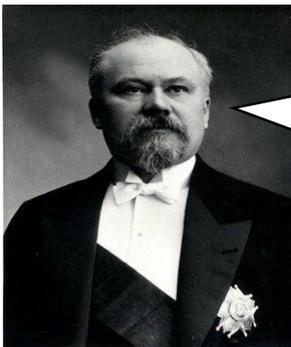


Emperor Franz
Joseph of Austria

I want

I feel

I will

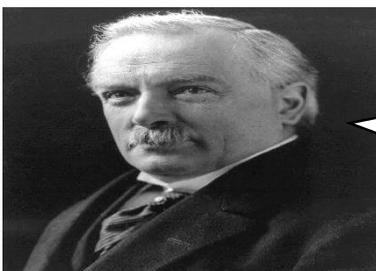


Raymond Poincaré, leader of France

I want

I feel

I will



David Lloyd George, British Prime minister

I want

I feel

I will



Tsar Nicholas II of Russia

I want

I feel

I will