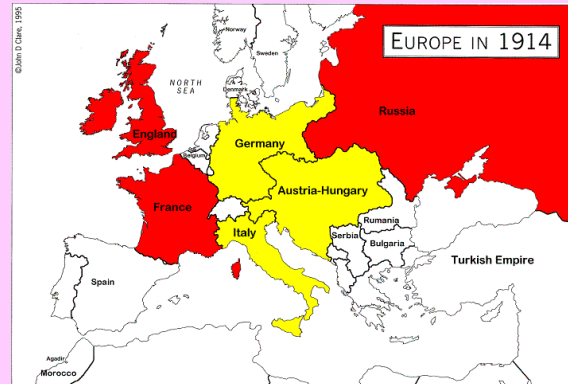


Chronology, events and people

At the beginning of the 20th century life in Britain was very different for ordinary people, mainly due to the lack of technology in people’s lives and homes. Most European countries had empires some dating back hundreds of years; newer countries like Germany and Italy were keen to build up empires too and almost the whole of Africa was ‘ruled’ by European powers –this was called **imperialism**. The European countries were also building up weapons and their armed forces (**militarism**) and they joined together to form **alliances** with each other. Britain, France and Russia came together to form the **Triple Entente**, while Austria-Hungary, Germany and Italy formed the **Triple Alliance**. As a result the situation was becoming very tense, and people became very **patriotic** and strongly supported their own countries. At the same time some people wanted independence from the empires that ruled them, especially in Austria-Hungary which was made up of many different people speaking different languages; this is called **nationalism**. These were all **long-term causes**. The trigger for war came on 28 June 1914 when Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary, and his wife were assassinated in Sarajevo by someone wanting Bosnia to be part of Serbia and break away from Austria-Hungary. Countries started to **mobilise** and on 4 August Britain declared war on Germany and the Triple Alliance and World War I began. In Europe as the two armies moved towards each other they dug **trenches** for protection and to stop the opposing armies getting any further, resulting in **stalemate**. These trenches formed the **Western Front** and stretched from the English Channel, through Belgium and France to Switzerland. Fighting also took place along an Eastern Front with Russia, in Turkey and the Middle East and also at sea in the North Sea, the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, making it a World War.

Key words

Ally / Allies –a country or countries that fought with Britain in WWI.
Alliance –a group of countries that fight together against a common enemy.
Armed forces –fighting forces of a country, such as the British Army and Royal Navy.
Arms –weapons of war.
Conscientious objector –someone who refuses to fight for moral reasons.
Conscription –compulsory joining of armed forces.
Front line –the first line of trenches facing the enemy.
Imperialism –taking over other countries to build up an empire.
Kaiser –the king of Germany.
Militarism –the building up of arms and armed forces.
Mobilise –a country gets ready for war.
Nationalism –a very strong belief that your country is best.
Patriotism –strong loyalty to your country.
Propaganda –information that might not exactly lie, but may not tell the whole truth.
Recruitment –getting men to join the armed forces.
Stalemate –when enemy countries cannot make any headway against each other.
Trenches –a series of deep ditches where soldiers on both sides lived and fought from on the Western Front.
Triple Alliance –Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy } These countries agreed to help
Triple Entente –Britain, France and Russia } each other if there was a war.
Tsar –the king of Russia.
Western Front –the lines of fighting trenches that stretched from the English Channel to Switzerland across Belgium and France.



Key dates of WWI

- 28th June 1914 – The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand
- 4th August 1914 – Great Britain declares war on Germany
- 7th August 1914 – Lord Kitchener calls for 100,000 men to sign up
- 22nd August 1914 – The BEF (British Expeditionary Force) arrives in France
- 25th December 1914 – Christmas truce on the Western Front
- 25th April 1915 – Allied landings at Gallipoli
- 2nd February 1916 – Britain introduces conscription
- 31st May 1916 – The Battle of Jutland
- 1st July 1916 – First day of the Battle of the Somme
- 19th January 1917 – The USA declares war on Germany
- 12th October 1917 – Battle of Passchendaele
- 6th February 1918 – The Representation of the People Act
- 11th November 1918 – Armistice
- 28th June 1919 – The Treaty of Versailles signed