

Section 1: Why did war break out?

International rivalry 1900–14

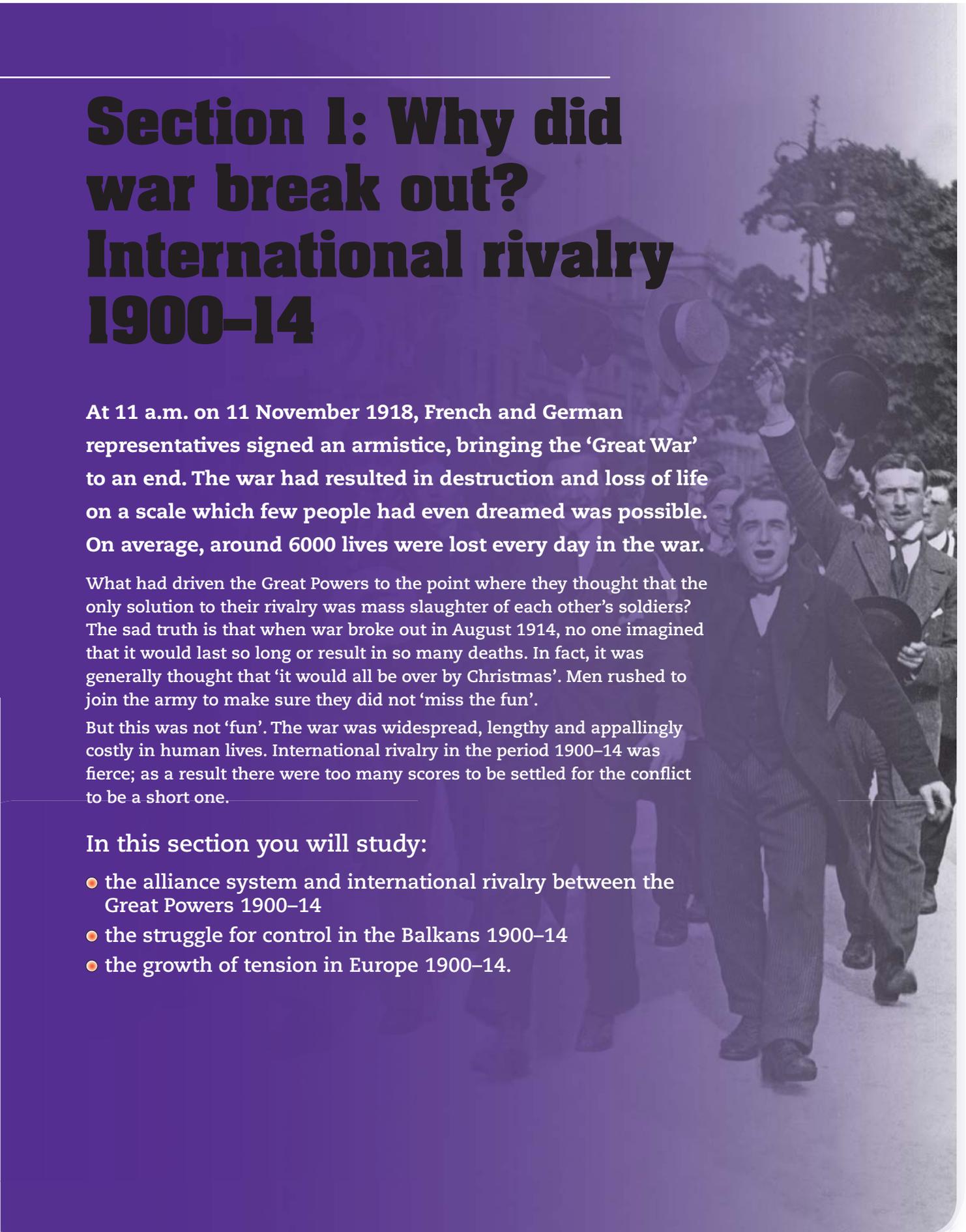
At 11 a.m. on 11 November 1918, French and German representatives signed an armistice, bringing the ‘Great War’ to an end. The war had resulted in destruction and loss of life on a scale which few people had even dreamed was possible. On average, around 6000 lives were lost every day in the war.

What had driven the Great Powers to the point where they thought that the only solution to their rivalry was mass slaughter of each other’s soldiers? The sad truth is that when war broke out in August 1914, no one imagined that it would last so long or result in so many deaths. In fact, it was generally thought that ‘it would all be over by Christmas’. Men rushed to join the army to make sure they did not ‘miss the fun’.

But this was not ‘fun’. The war was widespread, lengthy and appallingly costly in human lives. International rivalry in the period 1900–14 was fierce; as a result there were too many scores to be settled for the conflict to be a short one.

In this section you will study:

- the alliance system and international rivalry between the Great Powers 1900–14
- the struggle for control in the Balkans 1900–14
- the growth of tension in Europe 1900–14.



The world in 1900

In 1900, the world was a very different place from the one you know today. If you could go back to 1900, you would see a time when there were no computers, no email, no mobile phones or texting (telephones had only recently been invented), no television, no aeroplanes and very few cars! People at the time would not have believed that a journey to the other side of the world could be completed in less than a day.

The Great Powers

At this time, Europe contained the most powerful countries in the world and was dominated by six 'Great Powers': Britain, Germany, France, Austria-Hungary, Russia and Italy. Each of those powers wanted to control as much of the world's trade and become as wealthy as possible. This meant they were rivals.

During the nineteenth century, Britain had become rich through selling its manufactured goods around the world, particularly to its colonies. But in the early twentieth century, this British dominance came under threat as each of the Great Powers tried to outdo the others by producing more manufactured goods and selling them overseas. The country that made and sold the most goods would become richer and more powerful than the others. In particular, British dominance was being challenged in Europe by both Germany and France.

The United States

British dominance was also under threat from the 'new' power, the United States of America. By 1900 immigration into the USA meant the country had a higher population than Britain and France put together. It was only a matter of time before it produced and sold more manufactured goods and became richer and more powerful than Britain.

So there was rivalry between Britain, France and Germany – and a challenge from the USA. There was also bitter rivalry between Austria-Hungary and Russia in Eastern Europe.



Europe in 1900.



ResultsPlus

Build Better Answers

Exam question: Describe one way in which British dominance in 1900 was being challenged by other powers. (2 marks)

The examiner is looking for a developed statement: a statement that both answers the question and provides some detailed support.

■ **A basic answer (level 1):** *British power was being challenged by Great Powers such as Germany.*

● **A good answer (level 2):** *British power was being challenged by the Great Powers, such as Germany. Each of those powers wanted to control as much of the world's trade and become as wealthy as possible. This meant they were rivals.*

The Ottoman Empire (based on modern-day Turkey) controlled large areas of land in Eastern Europe. But the Ottoman Empire was growing weaker, and both Austria-Hungary and Russia wanted to take land from the **Ottomans**.

So, with so many countries in competition, you can understand that there was a real possibility of disagreement and armed conflict in the future.

The Alliance system before 1900

Learning objectives

In this chapter you will learn about:

- how the alliance system developed up to 1914
- the role of Germany in creating tension in Europe.

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The rise of Germany

By 1900, the Great Powers in Europe were beginning to divide themselves into two separate groups. A major cause of this had been the growth in power of Germany and its rivalry with other powers, particularly France.

Before 1871, Germany was a collection of small, independent states. On 18 January 1871, these states were brought together as a single country by its famous chancellor, Otto von Bismarck. As part of the unification of Germany, the king of Prussia, Wilhelm I, was crowned emperor (or *Kaiser* in German). Also in 1871, Germany defeated France in war. The Germans made France pay 200 million francs compensation and give the border territories of Alsace and Lorraine to Germany.

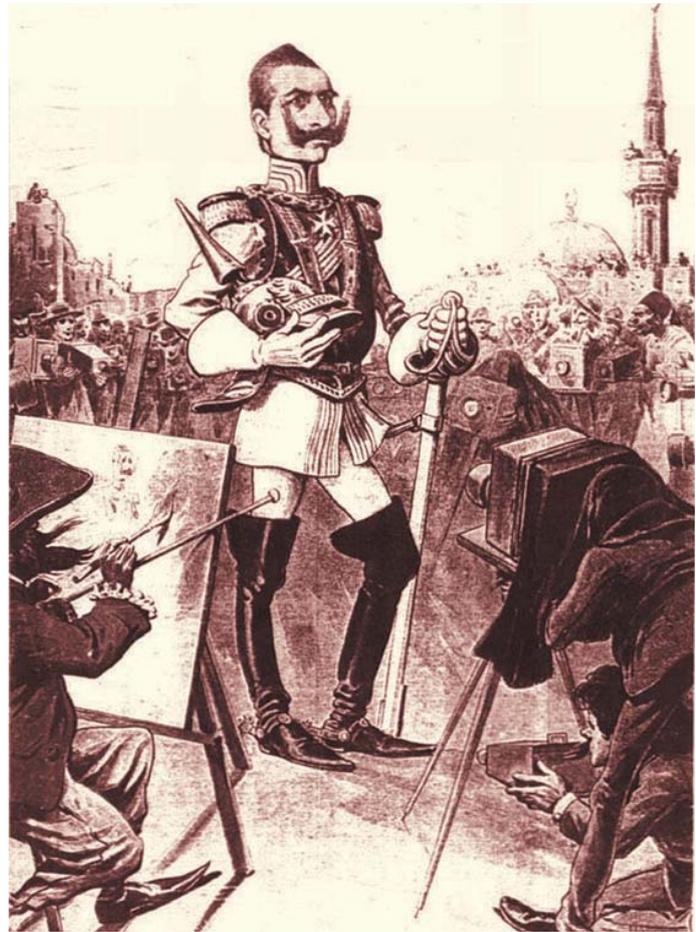
Isolating France

The Germans knew that France would look for revenge as soon as possible. To prevent this, Bismarck made agreements with other countries so that France would have no allies with which to fight against Germany in the future. In 1882 Germany signed an agreement with Austria-Hungary and Italy, known as the Triple Alliance. In 1887 they also signed an **alliance** with Russia.

Thus, by 1887 Germany had made alliances with three of the other major powers. The only possible ally for France if it wanted to attack Germany was Britain. But Britain had no interest in war in Europe. What it wanted was to maintain peace so that its huge empire was not threatened. It looked like Bismarck had successfully isolated France and kept Germany safe from attack.

Kaiser Wilhelm II

One of the main reasons why Bismarck's plans began to come undone was the character of the Kaiser, Wilhelm II. Wilhelm was an intelligent man, but he was also very moody and lacked diplomatic skills. Bismarck had worked hard to keep France isolated, but Wilhelm quarrelled with Bismarck and dismissed him from office.



A French picture of the Kaiser. Wilhelm had a withered left arm and was often photographed or drawn from a flattering angle to disguise his disability. In German pictures of the Kaiser sometimes held gloves in his left hand to make his arm appear longer. Note that the French artist has not done this.

Then he failed to renew the agreement with Russia. So Russia turned to France, and in 1893 the two countries signed the Dual **Entente** (understanding). France had found an ally.

British fears

Britain was concerned about the growth in German industrial power and the Kaiser's ambitions to build an empire like those of Britain and France. Wilhelm also planned to build huge numbers of new battleships and cruisers to make a 'great navy', and this worried the British especially. Britain had the world's strongest navy and so was safe from invasion from mainland Europe. It also used its navy to protect its empire. What would happen if Germany built a more powerful navy?

The Triple Entente

French and British fears led to secret discussions between them. In 1904 the two countries announced that they had signed the Entente Cordiale (friendly understanding). This was not an agreement to defend each other; the countries simply stated that they would not quarrel over colonies. But it was an important step in bringing the countries closer together. Three years later, in 1907, Britain also reached an agreement with Russia, so the Entente Cordiale became the Triple Entente.

A divided Europe

So the six Great Powers were divided into two separate groups.

- Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy had joined in a formal alliance in which they agreed to help each other in time of war.
- To protect themselves from the growing power of Germany, the other Great Powers – Britain, France and Russia – had joined together. Their agreement was more of an 'understanding' not to quarrel rather than a formal military alliance.

Examination question

Describe one action taken by Kaiser Wilhelm II to increase German power between 1900 and 1914.
(2 marks)



ResultsPlus

Top Tip

By the time you have read the next few pages, you will know plenty of things Wilhelm did. But remember that in the examination question above, you are being asked to describe **one** action – and this is a 2-mark question. So you need to identify the action and give a very brief description. This answer would be ideal:

Wilhelm said he would increase German power by building a great navy. He began building battleships.



ResultsPlus

Watch out!

Students often confuse the members of the Triple Alliance with the Triple Entente. Try this way to remember who is in which group. 'Entente' is a French word, so France must be in that one. The Germans were big rivals with France, so Germany must be in the Alliance, not the Entente. Four left! Austria-Hungary and Italy both have initials ('A' and 'I') in alliance, so they are in the Alliance. So the other two (Britain and Russia) must be in the Entente.

Activities

- 1 One of the skills a historian needs is to summarise information in a few words. What one-line answers would you give to the following questions?
 - Kaiser Wilhelm, it is 1907. Are you happy with the alliances you have?
 - British foreign secretary, why are you worried about Germany?
- 2 Once you have prepared your answers, ask the person sitting next to you the same questions. If you get different answers, decide whose answer is better.

Great power rivalry: the colonies

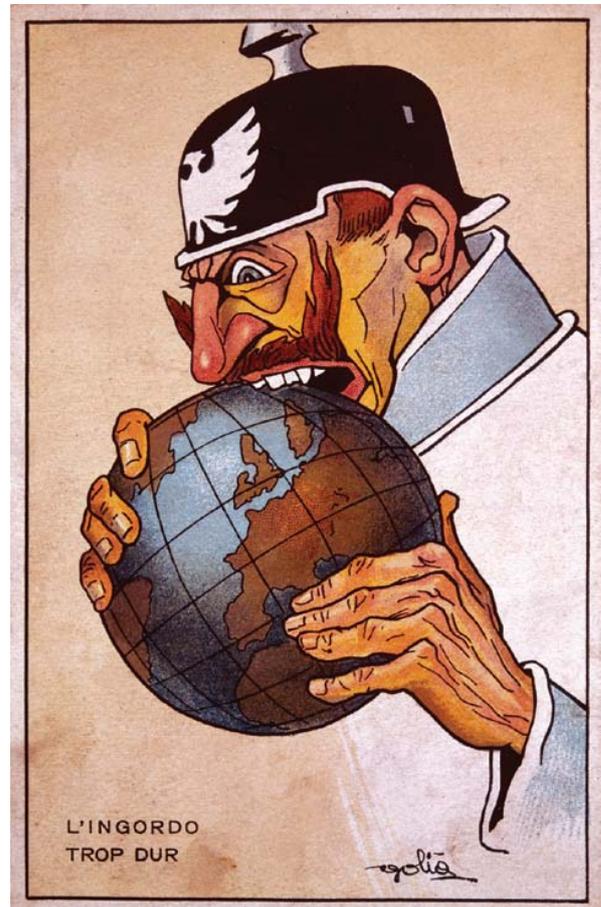
Learning objectives

In this chapter you will learn about:

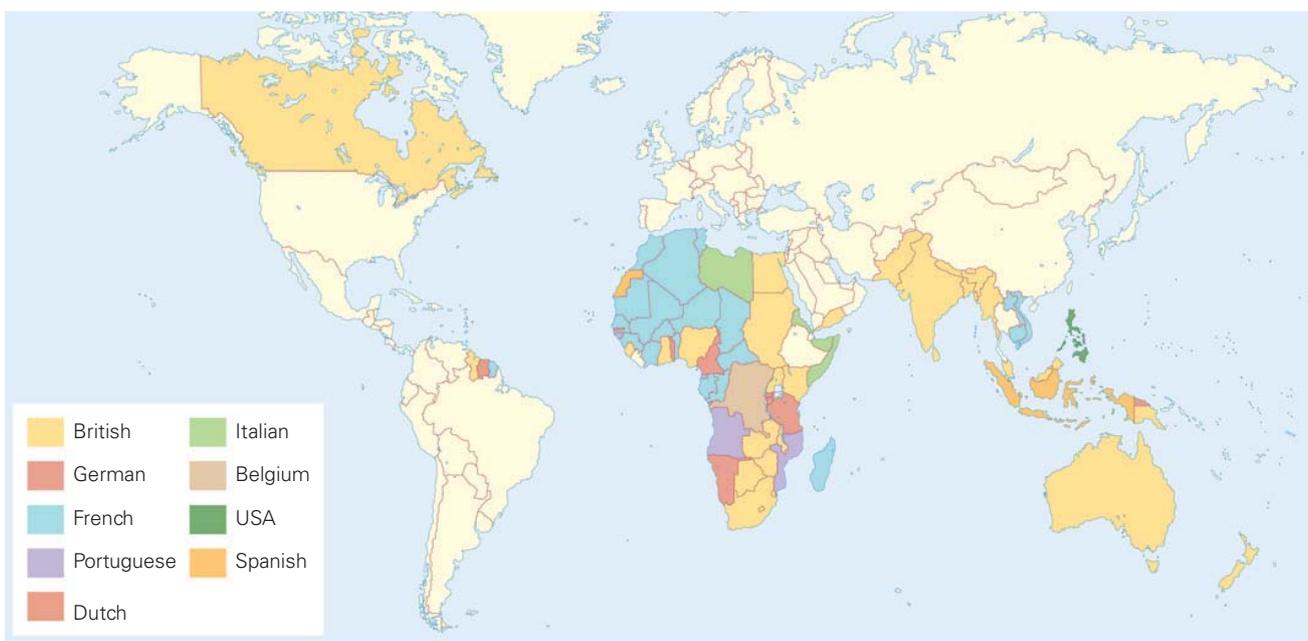
- the importance of colonies to the Great Powers
- how the Kaiser's actions threatened Britain and France.

Why colonies?

One of the issues that led to tension between the Great Powers in the early years of the twentieth century concerned the ownership of land overseas – colonies. Today, almost all countries rule themselves, but in 1914 many people lived in colonies ruled by one of the Great Powers. These colonies were very important to the European nations as they provided cheap raw materials for industry and also a place where the Europeans could sell their home-produced goods. It has been estimated that from just one of its colonies (India), Britain took over £1000 million in tax and goods in the period 1750–1900. Some colonies were also important as military or trading bases. Egypt was an important British possession because its Suez Canal was a shortcut from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea. This meant that British ships did not have to sail around Africa to get to India and the Far East.



An Italian cartoon from the period leading up to the war, showing Kaiser Wilhelm's greed for an Empire.



Overseas colonies in 1914.

German threat

Britain and France both had huge overseas empires and they were determined to keep them. This meant protecting their colonies from any country which threatened them.

Kaiser Wilhelm II wanted Germany to also have what he called 'its place in the sun'. Britain and France knew that any gains Germany made would be at their expense. So, as Germany became more threatening, Britain and France became friendlier to help each other resist German expansion.

Morocco, 1905

In 1904, Britain and France had signed the Entente Cordiale. Kaiser Wilhelm decided to test how strong that agreement was. He knew that France wanted to take control of Morocco, so in 1905 he visited the area and made a speech saying he supported the independence of Morocco. The French were furious but had to agree to hold a conference to discuss the matter at Algeciras in Spain. At that conference Britain and other countries stood by France. They said that although Morocco was independent, France had special rights in the country. Wilhelm had hoped to split France and Britain but all that he had achieved was that Britain and France moved closer together. Britain now agreed to send troops to help France if it was attacked by Germany.

The Agadir Crisis, 1911

Six years later, there was another crisis in Morocco. In 1911 there was a rebellion against the ruler, the sultan. France sent in troops to put down the uprising and used the rebellion as the opportunity to take over Morocco. The French knew that several countries would complain that their trade would be harmed if the French took control, so they offered compensation. Kaiser Wilhelm was not satisfied with this and sent a gunboat, the *Panther*, to the Moroccan port of Agadir to threaten the French. But, once again, Britain stood by its friend.

The British had the world's most powerful navy and were concerned that Wilhelm was trying to set up a base in Morocco. So the British chancellor of the exchequer, David Lloyd George, made a strong speech threatening to go to war if Germany continued to bully France. The British fleet was put on a war footing to back up Lloyd George's aggressive words. Wilhelm realised that his actions could cause war. He backed down and accepted French control of Morocco. In return, Germany received 100,000 square miles of the French Congo (a French colony in Africa), but this land was mostly worthless swamp and jungle.

Once again, Britain and France had stood firm and Wilhelm had been forced to back down. As one German complained, the Agadir Crisis had 'amused the world and ended by making us look foolish'. Wilhelm was determined that the next contest would not be one in which he looked foolish. Tension between the Great Powers was growing.

Examination question

Briefly explain the key features of the Moroccan Crisis of 1905. (6 marks)



ResultsPlus

Top Tip

Students who do well in this type of question usually do so by finding three key points (for example, what the Kaiser wanted, how the French reacted and what the outcome was) and then giving some detail to explain each point. Students who do poorly just write all they know.

Activities

- 1 The Great Powers obviously thought that having colonies was a good thing. You are an MP who has been asked to make a speech in parliament explaining why Britain should have colonies. What would you say?
- 2
 - a Make a list of the Kaiser's actions in Morocco in 1905 and 1911.
 - b Now make a list of what he was trying to achieve.
 - c Overall, what score out of 10 would you give him for his actions? Why?

Great power rivalry: the armed forces

Learning objectives

In this chapter you will learn about:

- the importance of the navy to Britain
- how Germany was threatening British naval supremacy.

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Britannia rules the waves

Britain had defeated the French at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805 and since that date had controlled the seas with the most powerful navy in the world. Britain's trade was widespread and her huge overseas empire produced great wealth for the country. As long as Britain had the world's strongest navy, it could make sure that none of the other Great Powers would try to seize parts of its empire. It could also use the navy to prevent an enemy from invading Britain. But what if another country wanted to challenge Britain's naval superiority?

In 1898, Kaiser Wilhelm announced that Germany was going to build 41 battleships and 61 cruisers. This was part of a plan to make sure that Germany could defend itself and protect its growing overseas trade. The Kaiser's ambitions caused alarm in Britain. Germany was in central Europe and needed a large army to protect its borders, so why did it need a large navy? It had only a small coastline, but Britain was an island and its power was based on its navy. As the British foreign secretary, Sir Edward Grey, said in 1909:

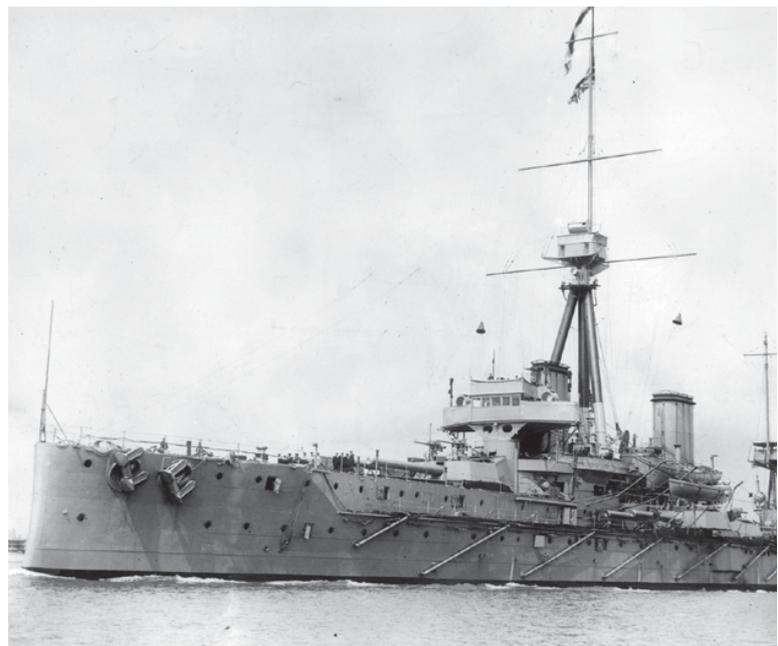
'There is no comparison between the importance of the German navy to Germany and the importance of our navy to us... it is not a matter of life and death to them as it is to us.'

Britain saw the German naval building programme as part of a deliberate policy to challenge British naval supremacy. We do not know whether this was what Wilhelm was doing; perhaps he was genuinely building a large navy to protect Germany's trade and small empire. Another possible reason for the Kaiser's actions was to frighten the British into reaching an agreement with Germany instead of France.

An 'arms race' develops

Whatever Wilhelm's intentions, Britain saw Germany's shipbuilding programme as a threat. Talks were held to try to limit the size of the British and German navies, but they broke down. Then, in 1906, the game changed. Britain launched the first of a new type of battleship, HMS *Dreadnought*. This ship was so powerful that all previous battleships were immediately out of date. Indeed, the impact of this new type of ship was so great that all battleships built after it were referred to as 'dreadnoughts'. What mattered now was not how many ships the navy had, but how many dreadnoughts it had. So if Germany could build more of these ships than Britain did, it would have a more powerful navy.

A British dreadnought. This battleship was faster, had more powerful guns and was harder to sink than any previous ship.



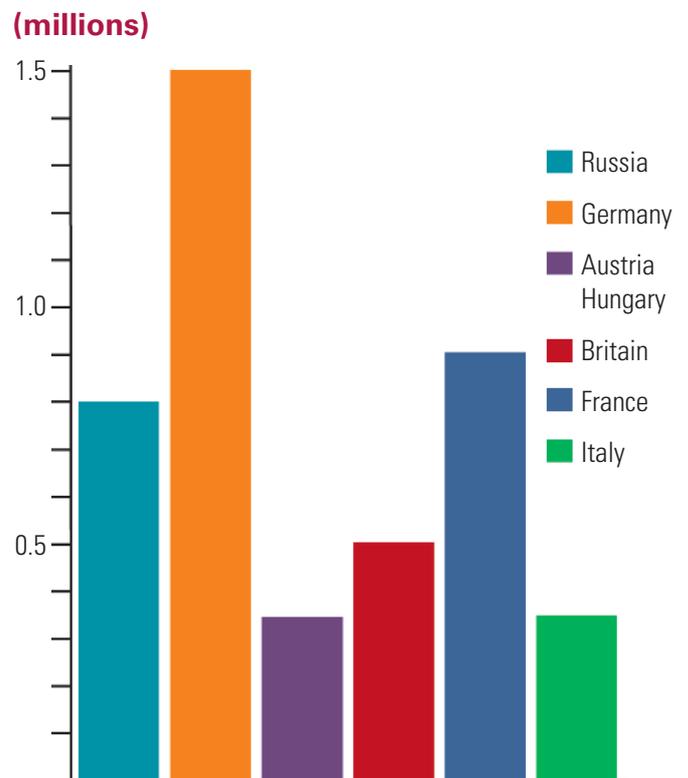
From 1906, an 'arms race' broke out between Britain and Germany as both countries tried to build the most dreadnoughts. Between 1906 and 1907, Britain built five dreadnoughts, and it was not until 1908 that Germany launched its first. Then, in 1908, Germany built four new ships and Britain just two! Britain considered building either two or four new ships in the years 1910–11, but the British public began demanding eight. There were even times in music halls when the audience burst into a chorus of 'We want eight and we won't wait.' So, eight ships were built between 1910 and 1911. Between 1906 and 1914, Britain built 29 dreadnoughts compared to Germany's 17.

The build-up of armies

In the same way that Britain believed that security came from having a strong navy, so the other Great Powers believed that military strength came from having an army powerful enough to prevent an attack from another country. In the years up to 1914, the Great Powers concentrated on building up their armed forces and ensuring their soldiers were well trained. All the Great Powers except Britain introduced **conscription** (compulsory military service). In France, soldiers had to serve for three years and in Russia for three and a half years. As the graph shows, by 1914 the armies of the Great Powers numbered more than 4 million men, with another 2 million reservists waiting to be called up.

The 'balance of power'

The Great Powers had become involved in an **arms race** to make sure that each of them had armed forces which could win a victory in war. But this did not mean that they intended to fight. Each country knew that it was important to make sure that its forces balanced those of any potential enemy, so that the enemy would be less likely to attack. In this sense, building up armed forces was actually a way of preventing war.



Size of the armies of the Great Powers in 1914.

Activities

- 1 You are preparing for a debate but don't know which side you will be speaking for! The debate is 'Did the Kaiser build a great navy just to threaten Britain?' As you don't know which side you will be speaking for, make some notes for each side of the argument. Which side would you prefer to speak for? Why?
- 2 'We want eight and we won't wait' is a great slogan. Can you think of any other good slogans for the events described on these pages?
- 3 Consider the statement 'building up armed forces was actually a way of preventing war'. That sounds like nonsense. Explain how making your armed forces stronger could stop war.

Great power rivalry: how powerful?

Learning objectives

In this chapter you will learn about:

- the economic background to the First World War
- the importance of industrialisation.

14

The First World War broke out in 1914 because of a series of events and disagreements in that year. But those events were just short-term reasons why war broke out when it did. The real causes of war were long-term and much more deep-seated. They had existed for some time and made war very likely. All that was needed was the short-term reasons to trigger the start of the war.

The battle for economic supremacy

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Britain had been the most powerful country in the world, with the largest empire and the richest trade. However, Germany had overtaken Britain by 1914. It produced more iron, more steel and more cars.

Germany was also showing a keen interest in gaining colonies, which would give it access to cheap raw materials and markets into which to sell its goods. Its interest in colonies had also brought it into conflict with France.

But while Britain was increasingly concerned about the expanding German navy, and France felt threatened by Germany over its colonies, what was really happening was that Germany was building a stronger economy than those of Britain and France and they were trying to stop this. So, to what extent was the First World War really just about money?

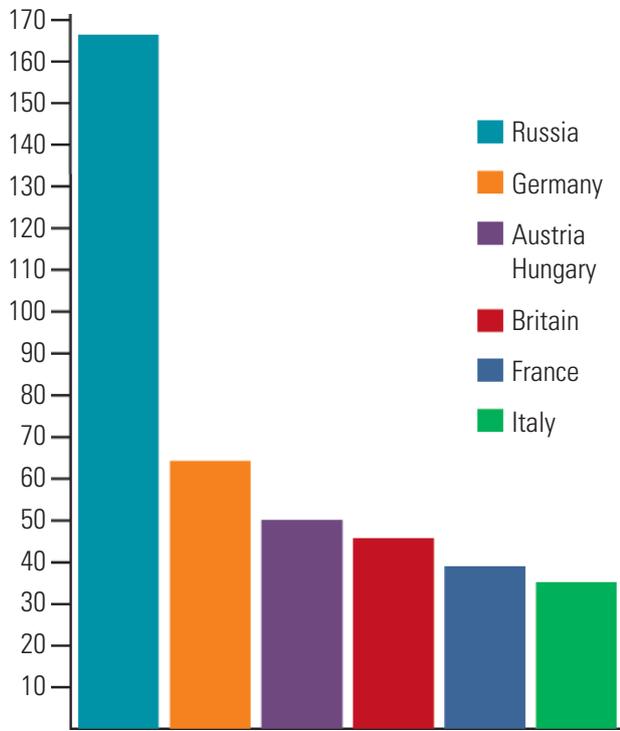
Activities

Let's do some statistics. Look at the graphs and answer the following questions.

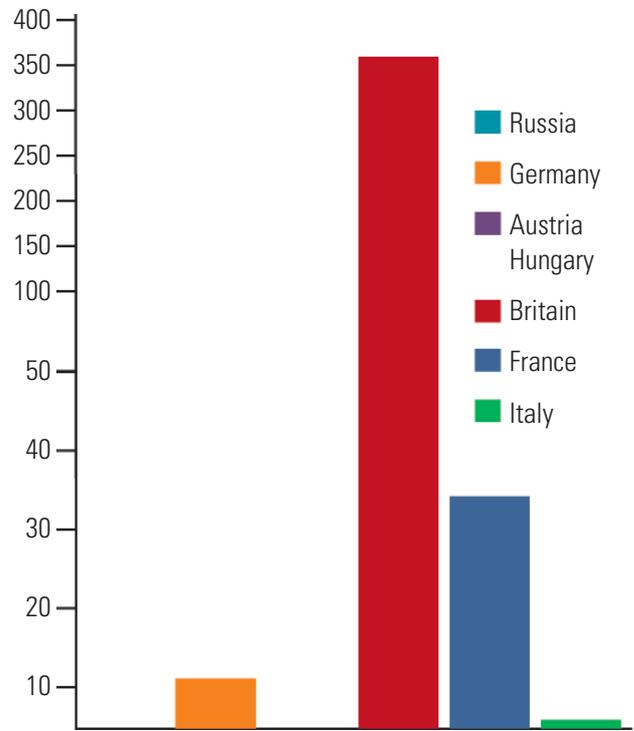
- 1 Which country had the most valuable trade in 1913? Why do you think this was?
- 2 Which country had the second highest? Why might this be a problem to the country with the highest?
- 3 Why did Britain have a much higher 'overseas population' than other countries?
- 4 Why do you think figures for steel production are shown? Why does it matter how much steel is produced?
- 5 Why does it matter how large the population is? Does that mean that Russia must have been the strongest because it had the largest population?
- 6 What was the combined total for a) the Triple Alliance and b) the Triple Entente for:
 - annual trade
 - steel production?
- 7 In 1913 the USA had a home population of 91 million, annual trade of £1.8 million and steel production of 23.6 million tonnes. What does that tell you?
- 8 'None of these figures matter. All that is important is the size of a country's armed forces.' Explain whether you agree with that statement.

The Great Powers in 1913

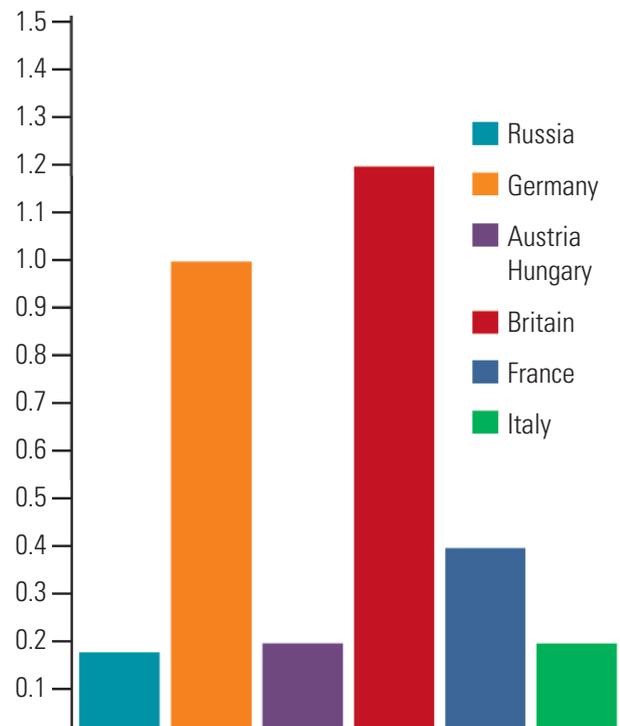
Population: home (millions)



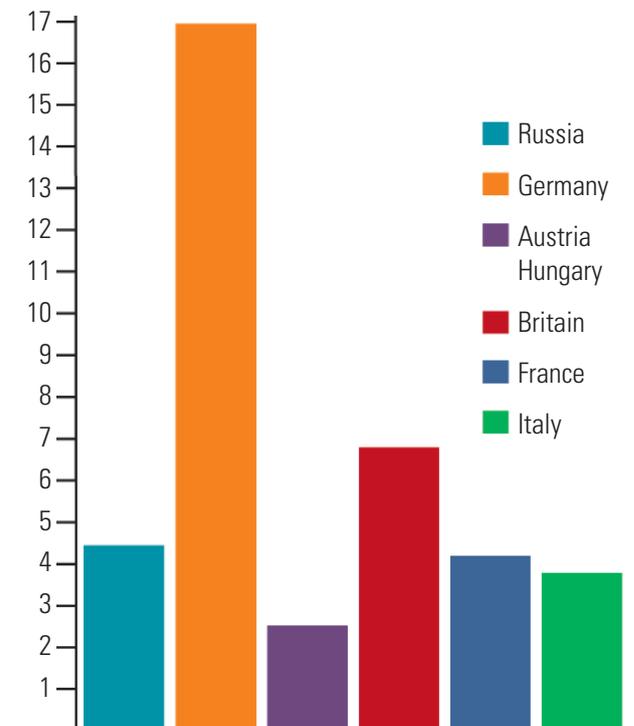
Population: overseas (millions)



Value of annual trade (£ millions)



Steel production (million tons)



The Balkans: problem area

Learning objectives

In this chapter you will learn about:

- the importance of the decline of Ottoman power
- the importance of the Balkans to different countries.

16

The Kaiser's plans to expand Germany led to increased rivalry with Britain and France. Two of the other Great Powers, Russia and Austria, had their own dispute to deal with.

The Ottomans

Since the seventeenth century, much of south-east Europe (the Balkans) had been part of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottomans were the Muslim rulers of what is now called Turkey, with their capital in Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul). However, by the nineteenth century Ottoman military power was in decline. In 1832 Greece won its independence from the Ottoman Empire. This marked a gradual weakening of power as other countries within the empire, such as Serbia and Bulgaria, also achieved independence.

What made the Balkans such a controversial area was the fact that the Great Powers all had their own reasons for intervening. Britain, France and Italy had important trade in the eastern Mediterranean and wanted to ensure that this trade was not disrupted. For Austria-Hungary and Russia, however, the 'Balkan Question' was about much more than trade.

Austria-Hungary

Austria-Hungary was a large and scattered empire in central Europe, with its capital in Vienna. It was ruled by the **Habsburg** family and so is often referred to as the 'Habsburg Empire'. The empire had 11 different nationalities in it. The Austrians were Germans and the Hungarians were Magyars, but the Habsburgs also ruled over millions of 'Slav' subjects, such as Czechs, Serbs, Bosnians and Croats. The major aim of the Habsburg emperor, Franz Joseph, was to stop the growth of **nationalism**. This was a belief that different nationalities should rule themselves and it threatened to break up the empire.



The Balkans in 1900.

Ever since it had gained its independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1878, Serbia had been a problem for Austria-Hungary. There were six million Serbs in southern Austria and they were keen to unite with Serbia. Franz Joseph was very worried by this, and some of his ministers thought it might be better to conquer Serbia to stop the threat. The Czechs in the north and the Croats in the south-west also wanted independence. If the Serbs broke free to join Serbia, the demands of the Czechs and Croats would grow.

Russia

To complicate matters, Russia also had a strong interest in what happened in the Balkans. Russia's only southern port was Sebastopol in the Crimea. To reach the Mediterranean, Russian ships had to sail through a narrow strait called the Dardanelles. This area was controlled by Turkey and could easily be cut off. So Russia was determined to help establish pro-Russian governments in the Balkans, which would allow their ports to be used to transport Russian goods in the Mediterranean.

When Bulgarians rose up against the Ottoman Empire in 1876, Russia saw an opportunity to gain influence in the Balkans and sent troops to fight on the side of the rebels, helping to liberate Bulgaria in 1878. Although Russia's policy in the Balkans involved a 'drive to the Mediterranean', they were able to disguise this ambition by claiming much more noble aims. The Ottomans were Muslims, but many of the people in the region were Christians, and a lot of them belonged to the Russian Orthodox Church. So the Russians were able to portray themselves as protectors of the Christian religion against oppressive Muslim rulers.

The Russians were also Slavs, so were keen to promote Slav nationalism and thus help the Slav people in the region win their freedom from the Ottomans. Of course, if this freedom caused problems for the Habsburgs and threatened the break-up of Austria-Hungary, that would be even better.

So the Balkans were a region where there was enormous potential for the Great Powers to fall out.

- The Ottomans were trying to keep their empire in Europe.
- The Slav people were trying to set up independent countries.
- Austria-Hungary was trying to stop these Slav countries being set up.
- Russia was trying to encourage the Slavs to ensure it had a secure access to the Mediterranean.
- Britain and France wanted to keep Russia out of the Mediterranean to protect their own trade.



Tsar Nicholas II of Russia. He was keen to see his country's influence grow in the Balkans.

Did you know?

After the 1917 revolutions in Russia, Tsar Nicholas, his wife Alexandra and his family were shot by the communists. Their bodies were thrown down a mineshaft and not discovered until the fall of communism in 1991. The bodies were identified by taking DNA samples from Prince Philip of Britain, who is a cousin of Alexandra.

Activity

From what you have read here, explain whether you think the following is likely to happen in the next pages you read on the Balkans. Give reasons to support your answer – and no cheating by looking it up!

- a Austria-Hungary and Britain will fall out.
- b Serbia and Austria-Hungary will fall out.
- c Turkey will take control of Austria-Hungary's eastern territories.
- d Russia and Austria-Hungary will fall out.

The Balkans 1900–13: turning up the heat

18

Learning objectives

In this chapter you will learn about:

- the impact of the Bosnian Crisis
- how the Balkan Wars increased tension.

The Bosnian Crisis 1908

Austria-Hungary did not want to see more independent countries in the Balkans, nor did it want to see the expansion of Russian influence. So it supported the continuation of Ottoman control in the region. However, there were some problems with this policy. At a conference in 1878 it was agreed that Austria-Hungary should 'administer' Bosnia-Herzegovina. This area had been controlled by the Ottomans, but they no longer had the military power to keep control. Austria-Hungary did not want to see the Serbian people in Bosnia-Herzegovina join with Serbia, so it was happy to provide 'peaceful protection' for the country.

Then in 1908 there was an uprising in the Ottoman army and a group of 'Young Turks' overthrew the sultan and put his brother, Mohammad V, on the throne. The Young Turks then began to reform Turkey and turn it into a modern state. This caused alarm in Austria-Hungary – if the Ottomans became strong once more, they might try to recover Bosnia-Herzegovina, which was technically still Ottoman. So to stop this, in September 1908, the Austrian foreign minister announced that Austria-Hungary had formally annexed (taken possession of) Bosnia-Herzegovina; from now on it would be officially part of the Habsburg Empire.

This action immediately increased tension in the Balkans because:

- the Ottomans considered that their territory had been seized
- the Serbians were angry because they hoped to bring the Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina into Serbia
- the Russians objected to the increase in Habsburg power.

Austria-Hungary paid the Turks compensation and, seemingly, that was the end of the matter. Russia considered war, but Germany made it clear that it would stand by its ally (remember that Germany and Austria were both members of the Triple Alliance), so Russia decided against fighting. Serbia, too, wanted to go to war, but without Russia's support had to accept the Austrian takeover.

Austria-Hungary's success came at a price. Both Serbia and Russia were determined to make sure they won the next dispute. Another consequence was the formation of a Serbian terrorist organisation, called the 'Black Hand', to fight Austria-Hungary. This organisation would turn out to play a significant role in the outbreak of war in 1914.

The Balkan Wars, 1912–13

Despite the reforms carried out by the Young Turks, the Ottoman Empire continued to break up. In 1911 the Young Turks fell from power in Turkey. The Balkan states saw this as an opportunity to attack the Ottomans. Serbia, Greece, Bulgaria and Montenegro came together in an organisation known as the Balkan League, and in 1912, declared war.

In just three weeks the Balkan League pushed the Ottomans back as far as Adrianople – almost out of Europe altogether. The dramatic decline of the Ottomans worried Austria-Hungary, who feared nationalism would rise once more and unsettle its people. It managed to persuade the Great Powers to hold a conference in London to draw up a peace treaty, which ended the First Balkan War. But within a month, fighting started again. In the first war the Balkan countries were united in opposition to the Ottomans. But now they argued about what they had won in that war. Bulgaria attacked its former allies because it was unhappy with its gains in the first war. Romania also joined in to try to win land from Bulgaria. Even the Ottomans joined in and took back some of the land which had been lost in the first war!

The Balkans after the wars of 1912–13.



Results of the Balkan Wars

The wars had been fought over possession of land in south-east Europe, but their importance was much more widespread.

- The Ottoman Empire was now confirmed as ending at Adrianople. In effect, its European possessions were gone.
- Greece, Romania and Serbia received new territories won from Bulgaria.
- Serbia emerged from these wars as the most powerful Balkan country but it was also the most dissatisfied. During the wars it had captured part of the Adriatic coastline and ceased to be a landlocked country. But at Austria-Hungary's insistence, this territory was taken from Serbia. Austria-Hungary did not want Serbia to grow in power and be an even greater threat. Some Serbs became even more convinced that one day they would have to go to war with the mighty Habsburgs.



ResultsPlus

Build Better Answers

Exam question: Briefly explain the key features of the Bosnian Crisis in 1908. (6 marks)

The examiner wants you to identify important points, not simply write all you know. Here, for example, you could choose briefly to explain a cause of the crisis, an event within it and an effect of it.

- **A basic answer (level 1)** gives simple statements that are accurate, but contain no supporting detail.
- **A good answer (level 2)** gives a statement that is accurate and is developed with specific information.
- ▲ **An excellent answer (full marks)** gives at least three statements. Each statement picks a relevant key feature and is backed up with specific information.

For this question these would be good features to develop:

- Austrian rivalry with Russia
- Turkish recovery
- German support for Austria.

Activity

How satisfied do you think the following countries were by what had happened in the Balkans in the period 1908–13? Explain your answer.

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| a Austria-Hungary | c Russia |
| b Serbia | d The Ottoman Empire |

Sarajevo

Learning objectives

In this chapter you will learn about:

- the events of the Sarajevo assassination
- the role of chance in history.

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By 1914, the rivalry between the Great Powers was becoming so strong that some politicians began to speak openly of their fears that a major war would soon break out. It seemed that all the rivalries and mistrust needed to start a war existed; it was just a reason to begin fighting that was missing. That reason was provided on a sunny summer's morning in Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina, although people didn't realise it immediately.

Unpopular marriage

Archduke Franz Ferdinand was heir to the throne of Austria. In 1890 he had married Countess Sophie Chotek. Franz Ferdinand's father, Emperor Franz Joseph, had forbidden the marriage because Sophie was not of royal blood. Kaiser Wilhelm II, Tsar Nicholas II of Russia and even Pope Leo XIII wrote to Franz Joseph asking him to allow the marriage. Eventually he relented, but he did not attend the ceremony nor did government officials or most of Franz Ferdinand's family. Sophie was made Princess of Hohenberg, but the couple had to agree that their children would not inherit the throne and they would limit their public appearances, as it was not considered 'appropriate' for the heir to the throne to be seen with non-royalty.



Archduke Franz Ferdinand and Princess Sophie arrive in Sarajevo on 28 June 1914.

Reviewing the troops

Ferdinand was head of the army, so he was able to attend military reviews with his wife. On 28 June 1914, he and Sophie boarded a train to Sarajevo to inspect the local troops. Early in the morning of a warm, sunny day they inspected a military camp near the railway station. Then they climbed aboard an open-top limousine waiting to take them to their next appointment. Crowds cheered the royal couple as their motorcade made its way through the streets. Franz Ferdinand wore full military uniform including a hat decorated with ostrich feathers. Sophie wore a white dress with a large white hat. They smiled and waved to the crowd.

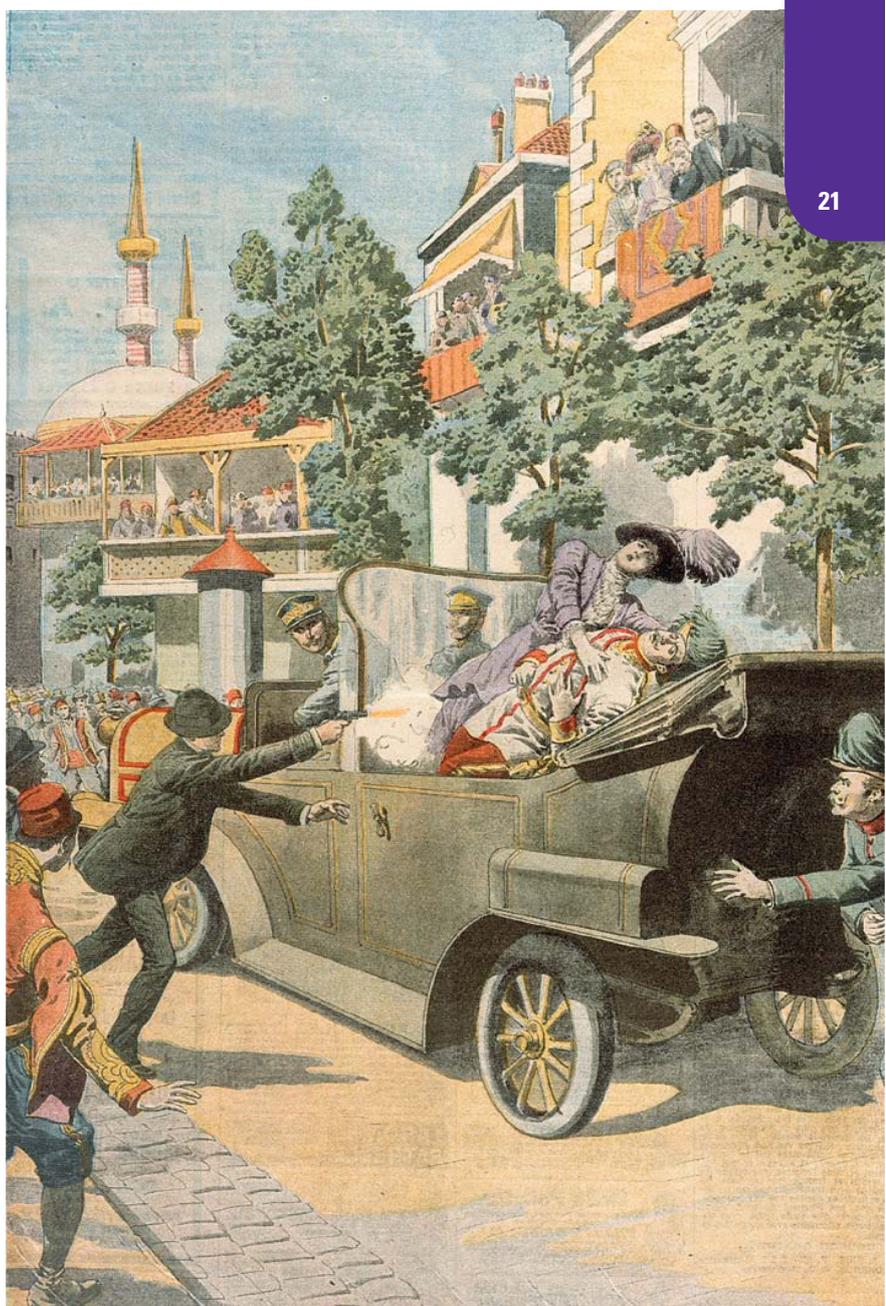
Conspirators

But not all the crowd was there to cheer the couple. Among the well-wishers were six young Bosnian Serbs who had been given guns and bombs to kill Franz Ferdinand. They were stationed along the route and waited nervously to carry out their assassination.

As the procession continued, it passed two of the conspirators. However, they were too terrified to act. One later claimed that a policeman had approached him just as he was to throw the bomb; the other said that he felt sorry for Sophie. A third conspirator, Nedeljko Cabrinovic, did act. As the car passed, he knocked the cap off a hand grenade and threw it at the Archduke. The grenade bounced off the car and blew up the car behind, killing two officers and injuring about 20 people. Cabrinovic swallowed poison but it failed to work and he was arrested. Franz Ferdinand's car sped to the town hall. On the way it passed three more conspirators. Two had lost their nerve and the other, Gavrilo Princip, could not shoot as the car was going too fast.

Second chance

At the town hall, Franz Ferdinand told officials that he wanted to visit the injured bomb victims in hospital. To prevent further attacks, the Archduke would not take the direct route via Franz Joseph Street. Unfortunately, the driver was confused by his instructions and took a wrong turn. That was no real problem – all he had to do was reverse. So he stopped and began to turn the car round. The car reversed right in front of Gavrilo Princip, who had stayed in town after the failed bomb attack. Now was his chance. He stepped forward and fired two shots. There followed a moment's silence before Sophie slumped forward. She had been hit in the abdomen. Franz Ferdinand cried out 'Sophie, Sophie! Don't die. Keep alive for our children!' but she died a few minutes later. Princip's other bullet had pierced the Archduke's jugular vein and he too was dead within minutes.



An artist's impression of the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, painted in 1914.

Did you know?

28 June was the royal couple's wedding anniversary. It was also Serbia's 'National Day', a public holiday to celebrate the day in 1839 when a Serbian hero had assassinated the Ottoman sultans.

Sarejevo: the consequences

Learning objectives

In this chapter you will learn about:

- the impact of the Sarajevo assassination
- how Austria-Hungary intended to take revenge on Serbia.

Despite the horror of the assassination, the days following it were quiet. In 1914 there was no 24-hour news coverage, nor were there radio or television reporters to keep the public informed. Foreign newspapers reported the assassination but few people could have realised that within six weeks Europe would be at war.

Austria-Hungary takes action

In Sarajevo, five of the conspirators were arrested (the sixth had escaped). The organiser of the conspiracy, Danilo Ilic, was also arrested. Although it is not clear exactly who masterminded the assassination, Ilic was in contact with the chief of Serbian military intelligence, Colonel Apis. The conspirators were members of the Black Hand, which also received help from Serbia. So it seems likely that Serbia was involved in the assassination, although at their trial the conspirators claimed to be acting on their own.

The conspirators were found guilty at a trial in October 1914 (by which time Europe was at war). At the trial, the court stated that ‘it is *proved by the evidence that military circles in the Kingdom of Serbia in charge of the espionage service, collaborated in the outrage*’.

Although Ilic was hanged, both Cabrinovic and Princip were under 20 years old at the time of the assassination and could not receive the death penalty. They received the maximum prison sentence of 20 years. Both died in prison of tuberculosis; neither lived to see the end of the war that their actions had triggered.

Germany offers support

Although it appeared nothing was happening in the days immediately after the assassination, behind the scenes important steps were being taken. The Habsburgs decided that action had to be taken against Serbia. As Russia was likely to give support to Serbia, it was important that Austria-Hungary made sure that its allies would stand by it. On 5 July, Kaiser Wilhelm was informed that Austria-Hungary was about to take action against Serbia. He promised that Germany would stand by its ally – even if that meant war with Russia.

The Kaiser has authorised me to inform our majesty that we may rely upon Germany's full support. This action must not be delayed. Russia is in no way prepared for war and may think twice before it declares war. If we really feel it necessary to go to war with Serbia, the Kaiser believes we should take advantage of present circumstances.

Part of the report of the Austrian ambassador in July 1914.

The ultimatum

On 23 July, the Habsburg government sent an **ultimatum** to Serbia.

The Royal Serbian Government must agree:

- to stop every publication which shall incite hatred of Austria-Hungary
- to shut down all organisations in Serbia which occupy themselves with **propaganda** against Austria-Hungary
- to remove from educational instruction in Serbia everything that serves or may serve to nourish the propaganda against Austria-Hungary
- to remove from the military and administrative service all officers and officials who have been guilty of carrying on the propaganda against Austria-Hungary, whose names the government of Austria-Hungary will provide
- to carry out a judicial inquiry against every participant in the conspiracy of the 28th June (the Habsburg government will be part of the inquiry team)
- to prevent the participation of Serbian authorities in the smuggling of weapons and explosives across the frontier into Austria-Hungary.

The Imperial and Royal Government awaits the reply of the Royal Government by Saturday, the 25th at 6 p.m., at the latest.

Part of the ultimatum sent by the Habsburg government to Serbia on 23 July 1914.

Appendix:

The crime investigation undertaken at court in Sarajevo against Gavrilo Princip and his comrades on account of the assassination committed on the 28th June this year, along with the guilt of accomplices, has until now led to the following conclusions.

1. The plan of murdering Archduke Franz Ferdinand during his stay in Sarajevo was planned in the capital of Serbia, Belgrade.
2. The six bombs and four Browning pistols along with ammunition – used as tools by the criminals – were given to the conspirators by Serbian officials.
3. The bombs were hand grenades originating from the weapons depot of the Serbian army.
4. To guarantee the success of the assassination, Serbian army members instructed the conspirators in the use of the grenades and gave lessons on shooting Browning pistols.
5. To make possible the conspirators' passage across the Bosnia-Herzegovina border and the smuggling of their weapons, an entire secretive transportation system was organised by Serbian army and customs officials.

The appendix to the ultimatum. It sets out the results of an inquiry held by the Habsburg government.

Activities

When students revise, they sometimes like to summarise large pieces of information into much smaller documents. Read the ultimatum and the appendix sent by Austria-Hungary to Serbia and summarise what it is saying in just a few sentences. Which of the points made do you think the Serbians would have found hardest to agree to? Explain why you made this choice.

The lights are going out all over Europe

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Learning objectives

In this chapter you will learn about:

- why war broke out in August 1914
- how the alliances and ententes contributed to the outbreak of war.

The ultimatum which Austria-Hungary sent to Serbia caused dismay in Belgrade.

The Serbian government has been pained and surprised at the statements, according to which members of the Kingdom of Serbia are supposed to have participated in the preparations of the crime. Serbia cannot be held responsible for the actions of private individuals, such as articles in the press and the peaceable work of societies. It is, however, prepared to hand over for trial any Serbian subject whose part in the crime of Sarajevo can be proved.

The Serbian reply to the ultimatum sent by Austria-Hungary. It was sent on 25 July, just before the deadline for a reply set by Austria-Hungary ran out.

The response was not unreasonable and the Serbian government agreed to co-operate as much as it could. What it absolutely refused to do, however, was allow representatives of the government of Austria-Hungary to enter Serbia to take part in an inquiry.

The road to war

As tension increased, the British foreign secretary, Sir Edward Grey, tried to organise a conference of the Great Powers, but both Austria-Hungary and Germany rejected his suggestion. Austria-Hungary had expected its ultimatum to Serbia to be unacceptable, and after it received the Serbian response, it declared war on 28 July.

The Russians had been expecting this news, and on 30 July Tsar Nicholas agreed to prepare his forces for war.

Germany had promised to support Austria and so told Russia that it must stand its troops down and not help Serbia. When it did not do so, on 1 August Germany declared war on Russia.

Germany had been preparing for war for several years and had drawn up its plan to fight as early as 1905. This 'Schlieffen Plan' was based on the following beliefs.

- When war came, Germany would have to fight Russia and France.
- At the outbreak of war, Austria-Hungary would invade Russia and so Germany need concern itself only with France.
- A full-scale attack on France could result in a quick victory. Then the Germans could help the Austrians fight the huge Russian army (which would take some months to get ready for war).

- Britain may well not enter the war to defend France. If it did, the defeats of both France and Russia would make it reluctant to fight on its own.

So when France **mobilised** its forces for war on 2 August, Germany responded by invading France. The Schlieffen Plan involved an attack on France through Belgium. Until this attack on Belgium there was a chance that Britain might stay out of the war. However, Britain now announced that it intended to honour its agreement of 1839 to guarantee Belgium's independence. The agreement had been made in another century and Germany complained that Britain was going to war over a 'scrap of paper'. Whatever the reason, Britain declared war on Germany on 4 August.

Europe was now at war. Grey had told the House of Commons the day before: 'We are going to suffer, I am afraid, terribly in this war, whether we are in it or whether we stand aside.' He was right.



A cheering crowd in Berlin on 3 August 1914, the day Germany declared war on France.



ResultsPlus

Build Better Answers

Exam question: Explain why the Sarajevo assassination led to war in August 1914.
(12 marks)

The examiner is looking for relevant points, supported by specific examples, with a clear focus on how each factor led to the situation described.

In each level, the number of statements you make will affect your mark. For example, in level 2, a single developed statement is unlikely to get more than 5 marks, whereas three developed statements will achieve 8 or 9 marks.

■ **A basic answer (level 1)** is correct, but would not have details to support it (for example, *One reason is because Austria blamed Serbia.*)

● **A good answer (level 2)** provides the details as well (for example, *One reason is because Austria blamed Serbia. The conspirators were members of the Black Hand which was helped by Serbia. So they went to war to put Serbia in its place. The other powers then joined in.*)

▲ **A better answer (level 3)** explains how the reasons are inter-linked, or prioritises the reasons (for example, *Austria-Hungary disliked the way that Serbia was becoming more important and thought that the Serbs were trying to break up the Habsburg Empire. So they went to war to put Serbia in its place.*)

▲ **An excellent answer (full marks)** links and prioritises the causes (for example, *The other powers then joined in. But, of course, none of this would have happened if the Great Powers were not so distrustful of each other. That was the main cause because...*).

Activity

It seems very strange that people should cheer when war has just been declared. How do you explain the behaviour of the crowd in the photograph taken in Berlin on 3 August 1914?

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In the Unit 1 exam, you will be required to answer questions from three sections. In each of those sections you will have to answer three questions: Part (a), Part (b) – where you have to do one of the two questions set – and Part (c).

The examiners think that you need only 25 minutes to answer three questions on each section. So they are not expecting you to write huge amounts. The number of marks helps you judge how much to write.

Here we are going to look at questions in Parts (a) and (b).


ResultsPlus

Maximise your marks

Question (a)

Examiner tip: Part (a) questions will ask you to identify an action, decision, cause, way or factor and then give some supporting detail to get the second mark.

Let's look at an example.

Describe one way in which Germany threatened France's control of Morocco. (2 marks)

Student answer

Germany threatened France's attempt to take control of Morocco by saying Morocco should stay independent.

Examiner comment

The answer is certainly brief and it does give a way, but we need to do a little more to persuade the examiners to give us the second mark. We need to provide a bit more support for our statement.

Let's rewrite the answer with supporting detail.

Germany threatened France's control of Morocco by saying Morocco should stay independent. This happened in 1905 when the Kaiser visited Morocco and made a speech.

A way identified and supported with knowledge. That's all you have to do for 2 marks.



Question (b)

Examiner tip: Part (b) questions will ask you to take a major event or policy and briefly explain it by writing about its 'key features' or explain 'in what ways' a policy, treaty or action caused something to happen. This type of question requires you to write at greater length than in Question (a) and is worth 6 marks. The examiners don't want you just to tell the story. They want you to think about the information and organise it as if you were putting it under headings. Let's look at an example.

Briefly explain the key features of the Balkan Wars in 1912–13. (6 marks)

Student answer

In the Balkan Wars, Bulgaria attacked its former allies because it was unhappy with its gains in the first war. Romania, which had not entered the first war, also joined in to try to win land from Bulgaria. Then the Ottomans joined in and repossessed some of the land which had been lost in the first war.

Examiner comment

This tells us some of the facts in the war, although only about the second one. But it doesn't really give the 'features', so would only be rewarded with less than half marks for providing simple statements. There are no 'pegs to hang the facts on', which would help you give a developed explanation of key features.

Let's rewrite the answer with features added. So that you can spot them easily we will put them in bold. We will also tell the whole story.

One of the features of the Balkan Wars was that **the individual countries in the region wanted to throw off Ottoman rule and gain land**. So they joined together and defeated the Ottomans. Turkey was driven almost completely out of Europe. **Another feature was that the Balkan countries did not get on**. You could see this when Bulgaria attacked its former allies because it was unhappy with its gains in the first war.

As you can see, this answer has two developed explanations of key features and would receive 5 marks. For full marks another feature should be added.