

The First World War KO

Key people

Central Powers

Kaiser Wilhelm II (1859-1941)

Grandson of Queen Victoria, Kaiser Wilhelm was emperor of Germany. His foreign policy of *Weltpolitik* brought him into conflict with other European powers. He abdicated at the end of the war, fleeing to the Netherlands.

Archduke Franz Ferdinand (1863-1914)

Ferdinand was heir to Austro-Hungarian throne. He was assassinated by Gavrillo Princip in 1914. His death sparked a chain of events that led to World War One.

Allied Powers

David Lloyd George (1863-1945)

British politician responsible for Britain's ammunition during the war. Became Prime Minister of Great Britain in 1916 and saw Britain to victory.

Lord Kitchener (1850-1916)

British war hero who served in the Boer War. His image was used in recruitment campaigns across Britain to encourage men to join the war.

Alliances

Triple Entente – Britain, France and Russia (with Serbia).

Triple Alliance – Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy.

Key terms

Imperialism

Extending a country's influence by building a large overseas empire – usually using military force.

Nationalism

A feeling of being superior to other countries and pride in your country.

Militarism

The belief that a country should keep a strong military and be prepared to use it to defend the country's interests.

Weltpolitik

'World politics' – an aggressive empire building policy.

Alliance

a group of countries that are formally united or working together for a similar aim or common purpose.

Stalemate

A standstill where neither army can advance.

Attrition warfare

Wearing an enemy down through prolonged and continued attack

Conscription

Every man of fighting age is required to fight in the army.

Armistice

An agreement to stop fighting; a ceasefire. This was signed on Nov 11th 1918.

Key events

Causes of World War One

Militarism;

- Spending on armies rose by 300% in Europe between 1890-1914
- Naval Arms Race – Germany aimed to have more dreadnoughts than Britain.

Alliances:

- By 1914, Europe had formed two opposing alliances. The need for allies increased tension.

Imperialism;

- The Kaiser's *Weltpolitik* led to conflict in Morocco in 1905 & 1911.
- Austro-Hungarian expansion in the Balkans led to tension with Russia in 1908.

Nationalism;

- All countries were seeking to exert their dominance over others.

Stalemate

- The failure of the Schlieffen Plan meant the German army were locked in a stalemate with French, British and Belgian forces.
- As each army tried to outmaneuver one another, they dug trenches to protect soldiers. This series of trenches stretch across northern France, creating the Western Front.

The Western Front

- The British Expeditionary Force (BEF) of 100,000 men was quickly wiped out during the Battle of the Marne. Hundreds of thousands of British men enlisted to join the army. Many were not aware of the dangers and horrors that awaited them.
- Life on the Western Front was difficult for soldiers, with poor hygiene, cold and damp living arrangements and boredom being prominent aspects of soldiers lives.
- World War One was an industrialised war, with weapons like no other war. Heavy artillery, machine guns, tanks and poison gas all played a part in the fighting, causing death on a large scale for both armies.
- Battle of Verdun: 143,000 French deaths, 162,000 German
- Battle of the Somme: 146,000 Allied deaths, 164,000 German deaths. A shocking battle for the people back home in Britain.

Ending the war

- The fighting during the war went on for 4 years (1914-18).
- In 1916, David Lloyd George became Prime Minister and announced a 'total war' effort, which included mass production of weapons in Britain.
- In 1917, America joined the war for the Allies. They brought new weapons and soldiers.
- By 1918, Germany was close to running out of resources and its soldiers began mutinies.
- On 11th November 1918 Germany surrendered, signing the Armistice.

Timeline

