

## Causes of World War One

Worksheet to accompany the game at [www.activehistory.co.uk](http://www.activehistory.co.uk)

**Instructions: Fill the gaps in this worksheet as you progress through the game.**

- In 1890, there were 6 main countries in Europe: Germany, Austria, Russia, France, Britain and Italy. France hated Germany, because in 1871 Germany seized \_\_\_\_\_ from France after winning the Franco-Prussian War. To protect herself, Germany formed an alliance with Austria and Russia (the "Dreikaiserbund" or "Three Emperors' League"). Germany and Austria also had an alliance with Italy (the "\_\_\_\_\_"). Britain, as an island nation, refused to take sides at all.

### Germany sides with Austria; Russia sides with France

- In 1890, when Wilhelm II became Kaiser of Germany, Austria and Russia were arguing over who should control the \_\_\_\_\_. This is the area of Europe bordering Turkey. Turkey ruled this area for centuries, but was becoming too weak to hold on to them (she was known as the "Sick Man of Europe").
- The argument between Austria and Russia meant that the Dreikaiserbund was falling apart. Germany had to choose whether to continue her friendship with Austria, or with Russia.
- The Kaiser rejected the Russians and instead strengthened his ties with Austria and Italy (the "Triple Alliance"). So, Russia formed an alliance with \_\_\_\_\_ in 1894. This worried Germany, because it meant she had enemies both in the West (France) and in the East (Russia). The prospect of a "war on \_\_\_\_\_ fronts" is very scary.

### Britain sides with France

- Germany thought the best thing was to form an alliance with \_\_\_\_\_. In this way, France and Russia were more likely to leave Germany alone.
- To put pressure on Britain, Germany passed two laws (1897 & 1900) authorising a massive expansion of the \_\_\_\_\_. Britain saw this as a direct threat to her Empire, whose defence depended on British control of the seas ("Britannia rules the waves!").
- As far as the Kaiser was concerned, Britain was the only major country in Europe without an alliance, so he demanded a high price for his friendship. So, he refused to stop building up his navy, announcing that Germany planned to build up an Empire of her own ("A Place in the \_\_\_\_\_" as he described it in a 1901 speech). He also said that if Britain signed an alliance with Germany, she would also have to sign an alliance with Italy and Austria too.
- Britain rejected these terms and instead reached the "\_\_\_\_\_ " (friendly understanding) with France in 1904. This alarmed Germany. France was now an ally with both Britain and with Russia!

### The Schlieffen Plan

- In 1905, \_\_\_\_\_ had alliances with Britain and Russia.
- \_\_\_\_\_ had alliances with Austria and Italy, but was starting to feel "encircled". So, Germany drew up the "\_\_\_\_\_ Plan". This argued that because Russia and France were allies, war with either one of them would mean war with both. So, if Germany found herself at war with either one of them, she should move like lightning: first, defeat the French by sending her army through \_\_\_\_\_, then unleash the whole German army on Russia. In this way, the Germans could avoid the nightmare of a "war on two fronts".
- The danger of this plan was that it relied on "striking the first blow". In other words, the Kaiser would be under pressure to declare war as soon as possible when a crisis developed rather than waste time trying to find a peaceful solution.

### Morocco, 1905: The Tangiers Speech

- Part of the "Entente Cordiale" between France and Britain was that France would allow Britain to take control of \_\_\_\_\_, whilst in return Britain would allow France to take control of \_\_\_\_\_ (the last independent country in Africa).
- So, in 1905 France demanded that the Sultan (King) of Morocco hand over control of his army and the police to the French.
- The Kaiser went to Tangiers in Morocco and delivered a speech promising German support for the Sultan of Morocco if his country's independence was threatened. He felt that Russia, France's ally, had just lost a war against \_\_\_\_\_ and was too weak to get involved. King Edward VII of Britain (the Kaiser's uncle) described his nephew's Moroccan visit as "mischievous and uncalled for".
- Britain persuaded France not to declare war on Germany, and instead organised the \_\_\_\_\_ Conference (1906) to discuss the issue. At this conference, Germany was humiliated. Britain and France voted that Germany's protests should be ignored. Far from destroying the Entente Cordiale, Germany's actions had the reverse effect of bringing France and Britain closer than ever before.

### Growing Tension between Germany and Britain

- In 1906, Britain launched a brand new style of battleship – the \_\_\_\_\_ – and spent millions of pounds staying ahead in the "naval race" with Germany. The British people resented paying heavy taxes to pay for these ships, and anti-German feeling grew.
- In 1907, Britain signed an alliance with Russia, creating a "Triple \_\_\_\_\_" of Russia, France and Britain to match the "Triple \_\_\_\_\_" of Germany, Austria and Italy.

- In 1908, a British newspaper called the \_\_\_\_\_ interviewed the Kaiser. He saw this as a great way of getting his points across to the British public. He was keen to present himself as a "friend of England" but he lost his temper when he remembered the times that Britain had refused his offer of an alliance. Describing the British as "Mad as \_\_\_\_\_" did not go down well in Britain – German shops had their windows broken!
- Even the German Parliament was angry. The Chancellor was forced to resign (he had failed to read the interview before clearing it for publication) and the Kaiser was openly criticised for being so stupid.

### Growing Tension between Germany and Russia

- The Daily Telegraph interview of 1908 pretty much destroyed any hope of an alliance between Germany and Britain. So Germany relied more and more upon \_\_\_\_\_, her most loyal ally. The problem with this was that Austria was arguing with mighty Russia about who should control the Balkans. In 1908 Austria seized control of \_\_\_\_\_, a key state in the Balkans. Russia was appalled by this and there was a danger that the Triple Entente (Russia, France and Britain) could soon find herself at war with the Triple Alliance (Austria, Germany and Italy).
- The Kaiser decided to give a "blank \_\_\_\_\_" to Austria, promising them his full support whatever happened. As a result, the French and the British refused to get involved. Russia, still weak from her defeat in the \_\_\_\_\_ War, was forced to back down. This was a victory for Germany and Austria, but Russia was determined to get revenge as soon as she was strong enough.

### Events 1908-1914

- Between 1908-1912 tension between the Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria, \_\_\_\_\_) and the Triple Entente (Britain, Russia, \_\_\_\_\_) continued to grow.
- In 1911, Germany and France clashed again over Morocco. France started extending her control in the region; Germany sent a gunboat – the " \_\_\_\_\_ " over there; Britain again sided with France, and Germany was forced to back down.
- In 1912, Russia and Austria again clashed over the Balkans. The Balkan Wars saw \_\_\_\_\_ – a Balkan nation strongly allied to Russia – double her size and emerge as the most powerful country in the region. Austria became determined to crush Serbia. \_\_\_\_\_ said to Austria that 'You can be certain I stand behind you and am ready to draw the sword whenever your action makes it necessary.' Russia was equally determined that Serbia should be defended against such an attack. The Tsar declared in February 1914, "For Serbia, we shall do everything."

### Assassination at Sarajevo

- On 28th June 1914, a Serbian terrorist group called the “Black Hand” assassinated the Austrian Archduke, Franz \_\_\_\_\_, in Bosnia. Austria snatched control of \_\_\_\_\_ from under the nose of Serbia in 1908. Since then, relations between Austria and Serbia have been particularly bad.

### The “July Crisis”, 1914

- **On 6th July** 1914, the Kaiser decided to give Austria a “Blank Cheque”: in other words, Germany promised to stand by Austria whatever happened. On 23rd July, Austria gave Serbia an \_\_\_\_\_ – a list of demands. Serbia accepted almost all of these demands, but Austria declared war anyway.
- **On 29th July**, Austria started bombing Serbia. \_\_\_\_\_ was an ally of Austria, and \_\_\_\_\_ was an ally of Serbia, so there was a real danger of the war spreading across Europe.
- **On 30th July**, Russia started \_\_\_\_\_ her army. Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany and Tsar Nicholas of Russia exchange messages (the “\_\_\_\_\_ Telegrams”) trying to sort things out.
- **On 31st July**, Germany asked Russia to demobilise. Russia replied that only Austria was being threatened, not Germany. Germany then asks France to promise not to get involved, but France does not reply. Germany and France then both asked \_\_\_\_\_ whose side she is on, but she refused to get involved.
- **On 1<sup>st</sup> August**, Germany declared war on Russia. He did not want to declare war on France as well, but his generals persuaded him that he had no choice: France was an ally of Germany and would attack Germany from the West, creating the nightmare of a “War on \_\_\_\_\_ Fronts”.
- **On 3rd August**, Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany declared war on France. At this point, Britain promised to defend Belgian neutrality. Despite this, Germany marched into Belgium as part of the \_\_\_\_\_ Plan. The following day, Britain declared war on Germany. World War One had begun.