

# The Great War Begins



**IB Twentieth Century  
World Topics**



# F r a n z F e r d i n a n d

- Austria had taken control of Bosnia, a Slavic nation.
- The Archduke of the Austrian empire, Franz Ferdinand, decided to do an inspection of the Bosnian capital city of Sarajevo.
- Serbia was a small nation to the east of Bosnia, also Slavic, that did not especially like Austria.
- Many people in Serbia wanted to free their Slavic neighbors and decided that killing the archduke would be the best way to do it.
- On June 28, 1914, members of a Serbian terrorist group called the black hand plotted to kill Franz Ferdinand.
- Gavrilo Princip, killed the archduke and his wife Sophie.
- The assassination started a chain of events that, within weeks, would pull Europe into the largest war the world had ever seen.





# Militarism

- Throughout the 1800s and early 1900s, European countries had undertaken a massive military buildup.
- This is called militarism.
- It was caused by a desire to protect overseas colonies from other nations.
- The size of the armed forces and navy's of Europe increased dramatically, especially in Germany.
- In this nervous environment, even a minor disagreement had the potential to turn into armed conflict.





# Alliances

- Seeking to protect themselves against opposing armed forces, the nations of Europe formed a series of alliances.
- The Triple Alliance united Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy.
- France, Russia, and later Great Britain feared the growing power of Germany, so they too formed an alliance called the Triple Entente.
- Leaders hoped that these alliances would help prevent war.

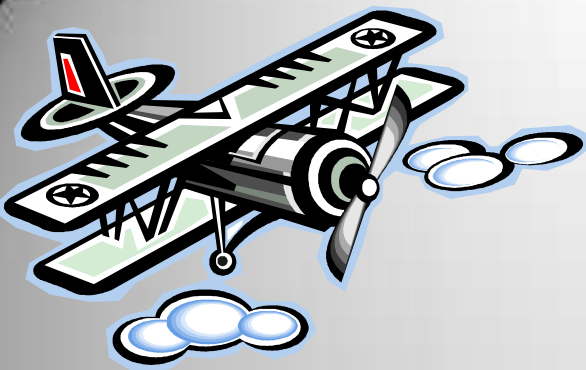




# Imperialism

- The quest to build empires in the late 1800s had created a lot of resentment among the different nations of Europe.
- Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia, France, and Great Britain all viewed themselves as great imperial powers.
- They could not stand the thought of standing by and letting another nation gain more power and territory.

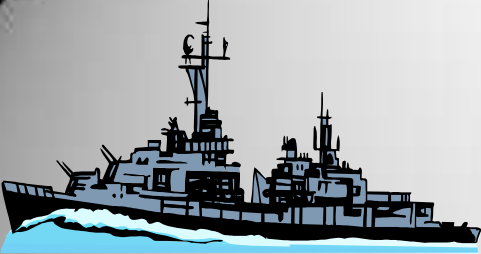




# Nationalism

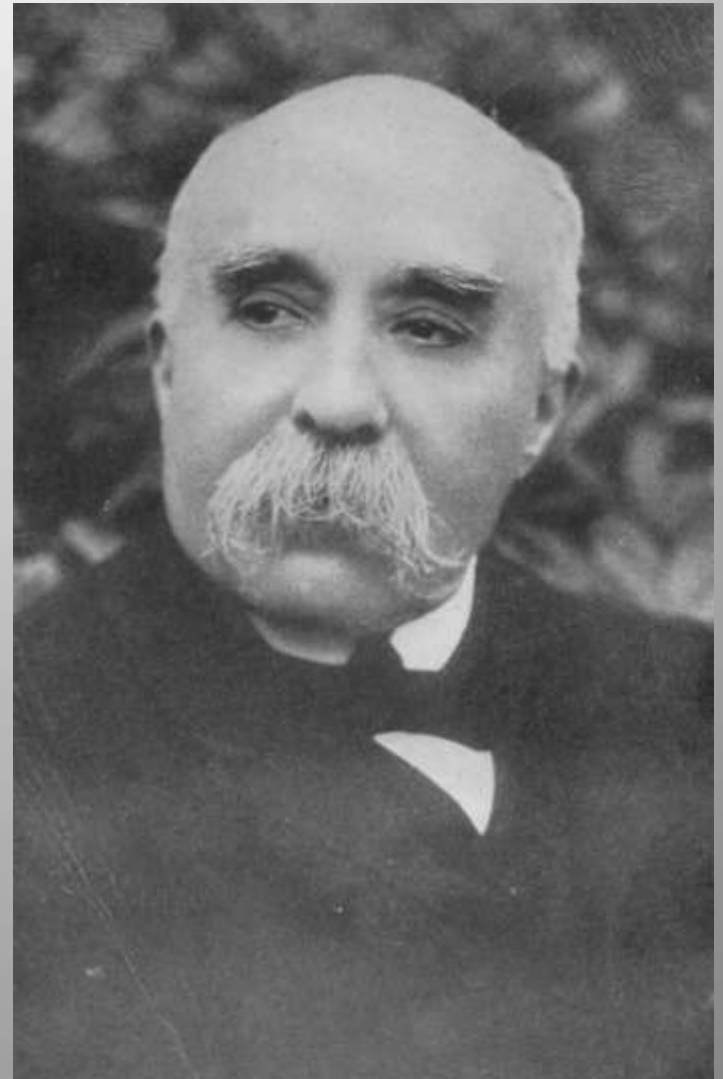
- Nationalism is a strong devotion to ones nation or group.
- In the Balkan nations of southeast Europe was the home of many ethnic groups.
- In the early 1900s some of these ethnic groups were trying to break free of the Ottoman Empire, which had ruled the Balkan nations for hundreds of years.
- Serbia was one of these nations that was successful in breaking free.
- Balkan Serbian leaders wanted to expand their borders and unite their people into a “greater Serbia”.
- This comes to head when the black hand assassinated the heir to the throne of the Austria-Hungary empire.





# War Breaks Out

- After Ferdinand was killed, Princip was arrested.
- When it was discovered Princip was a Serb, Austria decided it was good excuse to punish Serbia.
- They leveled a series of humiliating demands on Serbia, and when they refused, they declared war on July 28, 1914.
- Russia had promised to support their Slavic brothers the Serbs.
- Germany, Austria's ally, declared war on Russia, and then France because they were allied with Russia.





# Fighting Begins



- Germany faced a two front war. Russia in the east, and France in the West.
- German military planners developed the Schlieffen Plan, which called for German troops to quickly defeat the French, and then turn and fight the Russians.
- Germany began with a quick strike into Belgium, who was neutral at the time.
- Great Britain had a long term alliance with Belgium to help protect British shores, so when Germany invaded, Great Britain declared war.
- Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire made up the Central Powers.
- Great Britain, France, Russian, and Serbia were known as the Allied Powers.





# Fighting in 1914



- Germany's plan for a swift victory failed, and soon the war became a bloody stalemate.
- During the Battle of the Frontiers, both sides took heavy losses, but they were German victories.
- Russia tried to attack Germany from the east, but the results were disastrous.
- The Battle of Tannenberg the Germans crushed the Russian invasion.
- Although a failure, Tannenburg did distract the Germans and allowed the French and the British to collect themselves and ready a counter attack.





# Trench Warfare Begins

- In the Battle of the Marne, the allied troops forced the Germans back.
- After retreating, German soldiers dug a series of deep ditches along the Aisne River.
- From the strongly defended trenches on the Aisne, the Germans were able to fight back.
- The Allied forces soon dug their own trenches.
- As a result, German and allied positions would change very little in the coming months.
- The deadlocked region in northern France became known as the Western Front.

