

The causes and outbreak of WWI

Lesson Map: <http://esriaustralia.com.au/education/SpatialActivity63>

Engage

What were the long-term causes of WWI? (Historical context)

- Click on the URL above to open the Story Map (with built-in interactive maps). Scroll down to get started.
- Read through the first section titled *Long-term causes: Ideologies*. Take notes if required. Stop to discuss as necessary.
- Read through the next section titled *Imperialism*. Take notes if required. Stop to discuss as necessary.
- ? What two countries appear to have the largest empires in 1914? *[Great Britain appears to have the largest empire, having colonies in Canada, Africa, India, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Australia and New Zealand. France appears to be the second-largest empire, having colonies in Africa and South-East Asia.]*
- Read through the next section titled *Nationalism*. Take notes if required. Stop to discuss as necessary.
- ? What country do you think is responsible for the publication of this nationalistic poster? Explain how you reached this conclusion. *[The nation that is likely responsible for the publication of this poster is Britain. This is likely the case as the lion was frequently used as a symbol of British imperialism and nationalism. Furthermore, the poster lists 4 countries – Australia, Canada, India and New Zealand – all of which are known to be parts of the British Empire in 1914.]*
- ? Explain the significance of the 'Pride of Lions' metaphor in reinforcing the ideology of nationalism? *[The lion is considered a noble and proud animal, which reinforces the ideals of nationalism: being proud of, and having a love for, one's country.]*
- ? What evidence exists in the poster to suggest that the ideology of promoting nationalism is often also to the detriment of other nations? *[The text at the bottom of the poster reads, 'Helped by the young lions; The old lion defies his foes.' This reinforces the idea that in order to protect existing resources and obtain new*

Download student worksheet [here](#).

Time

60 minutes

Activity

Investigate the causes and outbreak of WWI.

Learning Outcome

Students will be able to:

- Identify and define key ideologies that emerged in the lead-up to WWI
- Examine the long-term and short-term causes of WWI
- Identify the key alliances of WWI
- Understand Germany's Schlieffen Plan
- Examine and analyse sources

ACARA Curriculum Link

[Year 9 History: World War I \(1914-1918\)](#)

[ACDSEH021](#) | [ACHHS164](#) | [ACHHS165](#)
| [ACHHS169](#) | [ACHHS171](#)

Teacher Feedback:

To share your feedback on this, or any Spatial Activity, please contact education@esriaustralia.com.au

interests, Britain may have to defend against, and attack, other nations.]

- Scroll down to the section titled *Militarism*. Take notes if required. Stop to discuss as necessary.

Explore

What were the short-term causes of WWI?

- Scroll down to the heading titled *Alliances and treaties*. Read the information. Take notes if required. Stop to discuss as necessary.
- Explore the map by opening the Legend to see what countries were aligned with either the Triple Entente or Triple Alliance. You can also click and drag the map to see other countries like Australia. Click on individual countries to bring up additional information on them.
- Scroll down to the heading titled *Short-term causes of WWI*. Read the information. Take notes if required. Stop to discuss as necessary.
- Scroll down to the heading titled *Declarations of War*. Read the information. Take notes if required. Stop to discuss as necessary.
- Watch the Horrible Histories video and then answer the question below.
- ? Assess the reliability of this source. *[This source can be considered only partially reliable. Horrible Histories is published as an educational resource aimed at children, teaching them about basic historical facts and events. However, it usually contains large gaps or inaccuracies due to the humorous and reimagined approach it adopts in order to keep its audience engaged.]*

Explain

How did Germany's Schlieffen Plan aim to defeat the country's enemies and why did it fail?

- Scroll down to the heading titled *Germany's Schlieffen Plan* and read the information. Take notes if required. Discuss as necessary.
- Scroll down to the heading titled *Schlieffen Plan fails* and read the information. Take notes if required. Discuss as necessary.
- Explore the map as directed in the Story Map.

Extend

After the failure of the Schlieffen Plan, what type of warfare emerged?

- ➔ Scroll to the heading titled *The Western Front emerges*. Take notes if necessary.
Discuss as required.

- ? In your own words, summarise why the Schlieffen Plan ultimately failed. *[The Schlieffen Plan failed for many reasons including, Belgium, British and French resistance, as well as Russia's quicker-than-expected mobilisation of its army. However, the main reason Germany's plan failed was because it was based largely on assumption. Its success was dependent on encountering no resistance from Belgium or Britain, and a time of at least 6 weeks for Russia's army to mobilise. These assumptions appear largely hopeful at best.]*

- ? In a paragraph response, explain how major ideologies contributed to the outbreak of WWI. *[Answers will vary but should include references to imperialism, nationalism and militarism, and the rivalries and tensions that these ideologies created between nations.]*

Next Steps:

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