

caUSES OF WORLD War one

Character List

Narrator 1	Serbia	France
Narrator 2	England	Russia
Narrator 3	Germany	United States
	Austria-Hungary	

Introduction:

Narrator 1: Wars don't just begin overnight or for no reason. There can be a lot of history between the countries involved or their beliefs that are sometimes just too complicated to truly understand.

Narrator 2: World War One is no different. There had been tension growing for quite some time in Europe and it felt as if they were always just on the brink of war. We won't get into all the history behind the war, but you should know that there are four M.A.I.N. reasons historians point to as the causes of the war.

Narrator 3: M.A.I.N is an acronym standing for Militarism, Alliances, Imperialism and Nationalism and can help us better understand the causes of the war.

Narrator 1: *Militarism* is when a country glorifies its military and believes in building the strongest armed forces possible. You see, Europe has many countries in very close proximity to each other, so it's only natural that a country would feel threatened if a neighboring country was more powerful than them.

Narrator 2: Yeah, I can see why countries would want a strong military because it also helps them be imperialistic, right?

Narrator 3: Exactly! *Imperialism* is when a country wants to extend its authority and power to more land or countries. In order to do this, you may need a strong military to defeat others and take over their land!

Narrator 1: Man, that is so awful! Why would countries do that to one another?

Narrator 2: Well, in the case of World War One, countries suffered from strong nationalism. *Nationalism* is when a country has a lot of pride and believe they are superior to other countries. Having patriotism is a good thing, but this type of loyalty or way of thinking can be very dangerous!

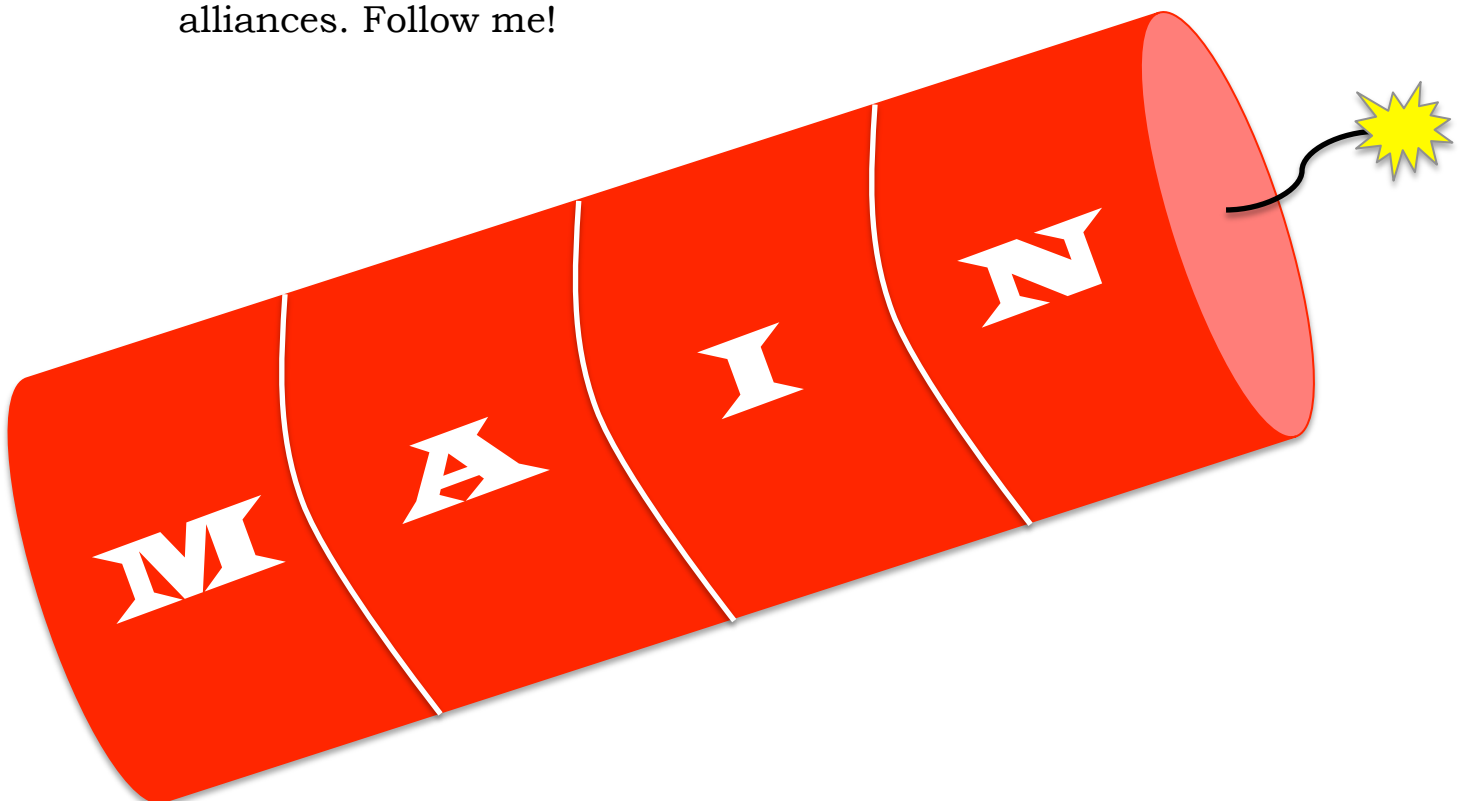
Narrator 1: So what about the A? What are alliances?

Narrator 3: I like to think of *allies* as friends – it's when two or more countries agree to have each other's back and help each other out.

Narrator 2: Wait! How can friendships help cause a war?

Narrator 1: Yeah, that doesn't make any sense! Being friendly does not lead to war!

Narrator 3: Well, this one is kind of confusing...but I have an idea! Let's go more in depth and try and understand a little bit more about alliances. Follow me!



Scene One: An Assassination

Narrator 3: Welcome to 1914! We're going back in time to witness the aftermath of the spark that ignited the war: the *assassination* of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife on June 28th.

Narrator 2: Wait! What is an *assassination*? Who was Franz Ferdinand? Why does he matter?

Narrator 1: Whoa, a lot of questions! An *assassination* is the murder of a prominent or important person and it's usually for political reasons. And Franz Ferdinand was royalty who was to someday be the king of the country Austria-Hungary. He was assassinated and his death set everything in motion to break out into war!

Narrator 2: So one guys death lead to a world war? I don't get it – important people have died before!

Narrator 3: You're right. One guys death doesn't seem like all that big of a deal. Let's try and understand how his death and alliances started it all by watching unfold right in front of our eyes...



Austria-Hungary: Oh no! Our Franz Ferdinand is dead! Murdered! I can't believe it!

Serbia: Bru-hahahahah!

Austria-Hungary: He was the *heir* to our throne! He was to someday be our King! How could you do this?!

Serbia: Oh please, stop your crying. He wasn't even that great of a guy. Get over it.

Austria-Hungary: You are absolutely awful! You're a monster! My people are completely devastated and furious about this!

Serbia: So? What do I care?! What are you going to do about it?

Austria-Hungary: Um...I...I...I am declaring war on you! I seek revenge!

Serbia: Oh, yeah? You'll probably want to rethink that decision. I've got some friends in high places who won't like your threats.

Austria-Hungary: Tell me, what so-called "friends" are you referring to, Serbia?

Serbia: Oh, just wait and watch this...Hey, Russia! You got my back?

Russia: Duh! I'll be there to defend you – we're allies, man! We look out for one another!

Serbia: So, what's up now, Austria-Hungary? Want to reconsider that silly declaration of war?

Austria-Hungary: I...I...I'm not afraid of you two!

Russia: You should be. Trust me. You really, really don't want to challenge us.

Austria-Hungary: I won't let you get away with this, Serbia! No way! You think you're the only one with allies?

Serbia: Oh, this should be good...

Austria- Hungary: Hey, Germany! Where are you, friend?

Germany: Right here, bud! What do you need?

Austria-Hungary: I need your help, badly. We're going to war, is that okay with you?

Germany: I wouldn't leave you hanging! So if you go to war, I go to war, too.

Austria-Hungary: You're a true friend, Germany!

Russia: Oh, please...[yawns] and we're supposed to be frightened of this? Ha! This is a joke!

Germany: Hey, Russia! You think you're all big and bad?! Well get this...I'm declaring war on YOU for being hostile to my friend, Austria-Hungary!

Austria-Hungary: Ha ha, beat THAT Serbia and Russia!

Russia: Ohhhhhh, I'm scared....NOT! I've got another friend to help us over here. Hey France, where you at?

France: [shaky, nervous voice] Who, me?!

Russia: Yeah, you heard me! Don't think I forgot about our alliance treaty. You're not backing out of our alliance, are you France?!

France: No...umm...I...I always stay true to my word. I'm in...[voice trails off].

Germany: Well, France, you are one day going to regret getting involved in this. I am now officially declaring war on YOU as well!

France: I don't like your attitude, Germany! I'm ready for war. Bring it on!

Austria-Hungary: Oh, it's on!

Russia: We'll see you out on the battlefield. Let's go guys! [countries cheer as they part ways]

Narrator 2: Wow, this really got out of hand quickly.

Narrator 1: You're telling me. By August 1914, less than two months after the *assassination* of Franz Ferdinand, the war had begun.

Narrator 2: Now I totally understand how alliances can start a war! It sort of started with Serbia and Austria-Hungary, then more countries were brought into this because they had alliances with each other!

Narrator 3: Yeah, the number of countries involved escalated quickly simply because of alliances. But remember, war seemed inevitable in Europe for many years, the *assassination* was just the final spark needed.

Narrator 1: Guys, we're not done yet! There seems to still be a little bit more to this alliance story. Come on!

Scene Two: Friends of friends of friends

Narrator 2: On August 4th, 1914 Germany took the first steps of war and invaded *neutral* Belgium.

Narrator 1: What does *neutral* mean?

Narrator 2: It means to not take sides. For example, let's pretend you're watching a basketball game. Your friends may be arguing about who is the better team, but you don't get into it or take a side. You remain *neutral*. Get it?

Narrator 1: Yeah, sort of. So Germany invaded a country that didn't even take sides on the war?!?! That seems so unfair.

Narrator 2: It sort of is. But all is fair love and war, I guess. Let's see how other countries handle this invasion...



Russia: Ok, guys, just because we outnumber them right now does not mean this is going to be easy. I hear you have some more friends, France. Is that true?

France: I sure do! England and I go way back.

Serbia: Well, what are you waiting for? Get them here now!

France: Okay, okay. Hold on....
England, oh, England! We need your help!!!

England: Whoa, whoa, whoa, no way! Please don't drag me into this. This is just not a good time for me to go to war right now.

France: Not the right time?! It's always times to defend ourselves and our country! And we made an agreement that said you needed to defend me if I ever needed your help. Well, I need it now. I'm at war!

England: Well, I didn't think you would actually need me. I mean, I thought those things were really just nice gestures.

France: And you call yourself the "Great" Britain. What a joke!

England: Okay, okay, okay. You don't have to be so harsh. That was mean.

France: So, you're in?!

England: Well...I have had a pact with Belgium for 75 years to defend her if she ever needed it and it looks like Germany has invaded Belgium, so I must stay true to my word. I'm in this whether I like or not.

Serbia: Wahoo, England is in!

France: About time. Welcome to the Allied powers, England!

England: [turns to Germany] Germany, I declare war on you! You messed with my friends and I don't let anyone mess with my friends but me!

Germany: Ok. Whatever. Am I supposed to be worried or something?

Serbia: [to the allied powers] You would think Germany would be a little more worried. Why aren't they more scared of us?!

Narrator 3: Everyone ignores Serbia. Though they were in large part the cause of the war, they were incredibly weak compared to the Big Three, Russia, France, and England and were not a big help to the war effort.

France: Thanks, England. This probably won't even last that long or be very bad, so don't worry. You'll be back to your kingdom by the year's end!

Narrator 1: France was very, very wrong about that.

England: With me entering the war you also get all my colonies to help. So for the first time, I actually agree with you, France. This will be over before Christmas.

Serbia: So what colonies do you have, England?

England: Hmmmm, let me think about it. I can make sure that we get military and financial assistance from Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand, and...oh yeah, South Africa. It won't be much, but it will be a little help goes a long way.

Serbia: Whoa, NOW we're talking! Someone is a little imperialistic, huh?

Russia: Be quiet, Serbia. We *all* have colonies except for you.

France: Duh, Serbia. England's not the only one with colonies. That's partially why this all happened. Don't you know anything?

Serbia: Sorry, I was just trying to make a joke.

Narrator 2: Looks like the Big Three are all a little sensitive about being called imperialists...

France: Serbia is right – you are a good ally to have, England!

England: Thank you!

France: Well, let's see if we can get anyone else. Any ideas?

Russia: Hmmmm...any of you think you can get the United States?

England: They are far away from all of this, but it's worth asking.

France: [calls the United States] Oh, United States of America, you are looking very beautiful today! Remember that time I sent you a really nice statue? Our friendship goes way back! Won't you come and help? What do you say, friend?

United States: No way. Not me. Nope. Not a chance. We are completely out of this. We wish you the best of luck though. I'm rooting for your side to win!

France: How selfish, America! We need you.

United States: I'm not about to get myself in this mess. Sorry, guys, I'm *neutral* on this one.

England: Come on, America. It won't last that long, and it will be even quicker if you're in it.

United States: Listen, I'm going to hang out here on the other side of the Atlantic, far, far away from this war. Gotta go! See ya, wouldn't want to be ya...

Narrator 2: Wait! American didn't fight in World War One? I'm confused, all this time I thought that America participated in the war!

Narrator 1: The year is only 1914! The war will last for another four years, so trust me, there will be plenty of time and opportunities for the United States to join.

Russia: Fine, let's forget about America. We don't need them anyways. Any other ideas? What about Italy?

England: Oh, Italy! I love their pizza!

France: That's because your food is just awful! My food is the best in the world.

England: You are such a snob sometimes, France!

France: You're just jealous!

Serbia: Guys! Calm down! Come on, let's call Italy and see if they'll join us, okay?

Narrator 3: Germany overhears the countries talking.

Germany: No way, Italy is ours! Stay away! Tell them, Italy, tell them how close we are.

Russia: Give it up, Germany. Italy wants to be on the side of the winners so clearly they'll be on our side!

Germany: Ha, go ahead. Go and try to get Italy. I dare you.

Russia, England, France, Germany [same time]: ITALY!!!!!!!!!!

Narrator 1: But Italy doesn't respond.

France: Italy! We have had a secret pact for years!

Serbia: Well, it's not so secret now.

Germany: Italy, stop playing with them. You know what side you're going to join. Just tell them you're with us and they'll leave you alone.

Austria-Hungary: Italy? Where are you?

Italy: Oh won't you all just be quiet! I don't know what to do. I mean, I know I'm friends with both sides, but I just don't know.

Austria-Hungary: Come on, they killed the heir to my throne! We can't let them go unpunished!

Germany: And you, me, and Austria-Hungary have had an alliance pact for years. You cannot just walk away from that.

Italy: Right now, you guys are the ones invading other countries, so I'm going to stay *neutral* in this.

Austria-Hungary: What?!

Italy: Wait, I'm not done. I will defend you if you need to fight on the "*defensive*" and are attacked. Only when you're defending yourselves will I step in on your side. Until then, I will remain *neutral*.

Germany: Ugh, fine, we'll take it. You're not a very good friend, Italy.

France: Italy! I thought we were friends!

Italy: Sorry, France. I really am trying to stay *neutral* in all of this, I swear.

Russia: Come on, France. Let's go. I bet we can get Italy to change their minds eventually. We just need more time.

England: Alright, everyone, let's go home and get our troops and forces together. War is officially on!

[Cheers from all countries as they separate]

Narrator 2: Oh my! So much just happened!

Narrator 3: Now do you see how allies made this worse?

Narrator 2: I sure do. But it's hard for me to keep this all straight.

Narrator 1: No problem. We can break the two sides into teams. Team One is the Central Powers, which is made up of Germany and Austria-Hungary.

Narrator 3: Team two we call the Allied Powers, and that is made up of Serbia and the big three Russia, France, and England.

Narrator 2: Ok, that is helpful! I think I got it!

Narrator 1: But you must remember, this is still just 1914 at the beginning stages of the war. Things change a bit over the course of the war.

Narrator 3: Absolutely. We see involvement from the United States, the Ottoman Empire, and some changes with Italy. Not to mention all the battles and new technology!

Narrator 2: Oh my. I still have a lot to learn, don't I?

Narrator 1: Ha, yes. You ready to continue on with our journey?

Narrator 2: Ready as I'll ever be, I guess.

Narrator 3: Hold on tight, because things are *just* getting started!

[THE END]