

Study Guide

Unit One

The Causes and Consequences of the First World War

From *belle époque* to Wall Street Crash (1890-1929)

1. Why am I studying this topic?

Politically...

- World War One precipitated the collapse of World Empires, and the creation of several brand new countries. It turned the USA into a superpower, and gave birth to the USSR. It sowed the seeds of Nazism, which in turn led directly to the horrors of World War Two and the Holocaust. These events in turn lie behind the Cold War and the Middle East Conflict.
- Simply put, World War One was perhaps the defining historical experience of the 20th Century.

Socially...

- The human tragedy of the Great War of 1914-18 is beyond comprehension. Great Britain and her Empire lost over 1,000,000 combatants; France, 1,300,000; Russia, 1,700,000; Germany and its allies, 3,500,000. Losses in life per day of the war exceeded 5,500. 5% of all casualties were civilians.
- Yet at the same time World War One had some positive social effects. Many long-held, traditional values were overturned during this painfully intense period of activity and reflection. Sexual equality, votes for all, freedom of speech and expression and many other principles which we now take for granted emerged in their present form as a direct result of the war.

2. What will I learn about?

1. Causes: Why did the war break out?

The Assassination at Sarajevo and the "July Crisis"
Serb Nationalism
The Alliance System
Colonial and Economic Rivalry
The Arms Race

2. Course: What was it like to live through this war?

A chronology of 1914-18
Strategy and tactics in the 'unexpected' war
The experience of soldiers: Life in the Trenches

3. Consequence: What were the results of this war?

Political Impact: The peace treaties
Social Impact: The experience of civilians
International Impact: The League of Nations to 1929
Economic Impact: The Wall Street Crash: causes and consequences

3. How will my progress be assessed?

- You will produce a class presentation on a self-determined question
- There will be a factual test at the end of the first half term and occasional spot tests during the course of the Unit.
- You will write two research essays on prescribed questions (below)
- You will write two essays in exam conditions on unseen questions
- You will complete a number of 'document questions' at home and in class
- You will complete a well organised, comprehensive set of notes for inspection at the end of Unit

Research Essay Titles

1. To what extent can it be said that the First World War was caused by the alliance system?
2. Assess the social and economic effects of *one* war on *two* of the countries involved, in the ten years following the end of the war.