GRADE 11 STUDY GUIDE | 2025

World War One (1914-1918)

History

1. Long-Term Causes of WWI (MAIN)

- Militarism: European powers built up massive armies and navies; military strength seen as national pride; arms race between Britain and Germany
- Alliance system: Europe divided into two armed camps -- Triple Entente (Britain, France, Russia) vs Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy)
- Imperialism: competition for colonies caused rivalry and tension between European powers (Morocco crises 1905, 1911)
- Nationalism: desire of peoples to form independent nations; Pan-Slavism in Balkans challenged Austria-Hungary; Germany felt it deserved "a place in the sun"

2. Immediate Cause: Assassination at Sarajevo (1914)

On 28 June 1914, Archduke Franz Ferdinand (heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne) was assassinated by Gavrilo Princip, a Bosnian Serb nationalist linked to the Black Hand secret society. Austria-Hungary blamed Serbia, issued an ultimatum. The alliance system triggered a chain reaction that brought all major European powers to war within weeks.

3. The War

- Western Front: trench warfare; stalemate; battles of Verdun, Somme (1 million casualties), Passchendaele
- Eastern Front: more fluid; Russia suffered catastrophic losses; revolution and withdrawal 1917
- War at sea: German U-boat blockade; sinking of Lusitania 1915; British naval blockade of Germany
- New weapons: machine guns, poison gas, tanks, aircraft, barbed wire, artillery barrages
- USA enters 1917: Zimmermann Telegram, unrestricted submarine warfare on US ships

4. End of WWI and Treaty of Versailles (1919)

- Germany signs armistice 11 November 1918 (11th hour of 11th day of 11th month)
- Treaty of Versailles: Germany loses territory (Alsace-Lorraine to France; Rhineland demilitarised)
- War guilt clause (Article 231): Germany accepts sole blame for war
- Reparations: Germany to pay 132 billion gold marks
- Military restrictions: army limited to 100 000; no air force; navy severely limited
- These terms created resentment in Germany and helped pave the way for Hitler's rise