

World War I

Section 1



MAIN IDEAS

1. Many factors contributed to the outbreak of World War I.
2. European nations suffered massive casualties in the war's early battles.

Key Terms and People

militarism an aggressive strengthening of armed forces

Archduke Francis Ferdinand the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary who was assassinated in 1914

mobilize to prepare for military war

Central Powers an alliance of Austria-Hungary and Germany at the start of the war

Allied Powers an alliance among France, Russia, and Britain at the start of the war

trench warfare defending a position by fighting from deep ditches

stalemate a situation in which neither side can win a decisive victory

U-boats submarines used by the German navy in World War I

Academic Vocabulary

neutral unbiased; not favoring either side in a conflict

Section Summary

OUTBREAK OF WAR

Even though Europe was at peace in the early 1900s, there was a dangerous tension. One reason for this tension was nationalism. People who shared a language and culture wanted to unite. In some places, such as Germany, nationalism brought stability. In other places, such as Austria-Hungary, it caused instability.

Another source of tension in Europe was imperialism. There was competition for territory in Europe and around the world. Nations began to focus on **militarism** and sought protection by forming new alliances.

As tensions grew, it became clear that a small “spark” could cause hostilities in Europe. The spark

Circle the sentences that describe the different effects of nationalism.

Section 1, *continued*

came when **Archduke Francis Ferdinand** was assassinated by a Serbian nationalist. Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia.

Alliances caused other countries to be drawn into the conflict. The opposing sides **mobilized** their armies. The **Central Powers**, along with Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire, faced the **Allied Powers** and Italy. Soldiers from 30 nations on 6 continents would take part in the Great War, later known as World War I.

What countries fought along with the Central Powers?

EARLY BATTLES OF THE WAR

Both sides expected a short war but the German army met strong resistance in Belgium. Two fronts developed. One was the western front from the North Sea to Switzerland. The other was the eastern front from the Black Sea to the Baltic Sea.

Trench warfare extended the battles. Soldiers died of injuries and disease as the two sides fought for months without gaining ground. New technology made the war deadlier than previous wars. Machine guns, artillery guns, and poison gas killed many soldiers. Tanks and airplanes were used in warfare for the first time.

How did new technology make World War I more deadly than previous wars?

After a year the war had become a **stalemate**. Both sides launched massive attacks, and nearly one million men were killed. Still neither side advanced very far.

The battle at sea was also very important. The British navy blockaded the Central Powers' ports and laid explosive mines. The Germans used **U-boats** to launch torpedoes against Allied supply ships. The Germans also attacked ships from **neutral** countries that they believed were helping the Allies.

Why did the German navy attack ships from neutral countries?

CHALLENGE ACTIVITY

Critical Thinking: Analyzing Write a short paragraph explaining how the building of alliances in Europe could make the continent less stable.