Understanding Alliances

Writing Activity

How European alliances triggered the outbreak of World War I

The 1800s saw the rise of nationalism and the formation of many new nations. In the age of Imperialism and the Industrial Revolution, European nations found themselves in competition with one another for materials, markets, and colonies. In this activity students will take a look at some of the issues that began to divide Europe in the early 1900s.

Directions: Define the M.A.I.N. causes of World War I and complete the powder keg theory. Then complete the extended response questions.

CAUSES OF WORLD WAR I:

*The Powder Keg: M.A.I.N*

Militarism:____________________________________________________________________________________

Alliances:______________________________________________________________________________________

Imperialism:____________________________________________________________________________________

Nationalism:____________________________________________________________________________________

*The Spark*

The assassination of ___________________________ by ___________________________
on ______________, 1914.

*The Explosion*

The climate of unrest in Europe resulted in the largest _____________ Europe and the rest of the world had ever seen, claiming casualties in the ____________ of millions by wars end.
Extended Response

Part 1: What is an alliance?

An alliance is:

__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

An example of an alliance is:

__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

Part 2: Why do countries join alliances?

Countries join alliances for several reasons:

First

__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

For example

__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

Second,

__________________________________________________________________________________

For example

__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

Finally,

__________________________________________________________________________________

An example of this is ______________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
Part 3: How did the shifting alliances created between European countries in the early 1900s trigger the outbreak of World War I?

The first alliance of countries was called the Triple Alliance and later became the Central Powers, consisting of:

__________________________________________________________________________________

The second alliance of countries was called the Triple Entente, consisting of:

__________________________________________________________________________________

Part 4: World War I is a prime example of the many problems created when countries become allied with each other.

These problems include:

__________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________

Bonus: As World War I drug on, alliances weren’t formed on just the European continent.

What European country proposed an alliance with a country on the North American continent for war or peace against America?

__________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________
Understanding Alliances

Writing Activity – KEY

Directions: Define the M.A.I.N. causes of World War I. Then complete the extended response questions.

CAUSES OF WORLD WAR I:

The Powder Keg: M.A.I.N

Militarism: *Aggressive military preparation and glorification of the military.*

Alliances: *Complex webs of secret defense agreements between countries outlining specific stipulations and obligations that caused many nations to be pulled into war when only a few nations were aggressive.*

Imperialism: *The act of a stronger nation controlling a weaker nation.*

Nationalism: *Extreme patriotism and pride in ones country and the belief that nations should be formed based on the people who shared common heritage, language, and customs rather than by the rule of monarchs who had gained their land by winning wars, signing treaties, and arranging marriages.*

The Spark

The assassination of *the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, Francis Ferdinand* by *Serbian nationalist Gavrilo Princip* on *June 28, 1914.*

The Explosion

The climate of unrest in Europe resulted in the largest *war of attrition* Europe and the rest of the world had ever seen, claiming casualties in the *tens* of millions by wars end.
**Extended Response**

*Student responses may vary. Accept all reasonable answers and justifications.

Part 1: What is an alliance?

An alliance is:  
*When two or more countries agree to support each other if one of their allies is attacked.*

An example of an alliance is:  
*The Triple Alliance/Central Powers and the Triple Entente.*

*Student responses may vary. Accept all reasonable answers and justifications.

Part 2: Why do countries join alliances?

Countries join alliances for several reasons:

First, ________________________________________________________________.

For example ____________________________________________________________.

Second, ________________________________________________________________.

For example ____________________________________________________________.

Finally, ________________________________________________________________.

An example of this is _____________________________________________________.

UNDERSTANDING EUROPEAN ALLIANCES

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Part 3: How did the shifting alliances created between European countries in the early 1900s trigger the outbreak of World War I?

The first alliance of countries was called the Triple Alliance/Central Powers, consisting of:

*Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy.*

The second alliance of countries was called the Triple Entente, consisting of:

*Britain, France, and Russia.*

*Student responses may vary. Accept all reasonable answers and justifications.*

Part 4: World War I is a prime example of the many problems created when countries become allied with each other.

These problems include:

__________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________.

Bonus: As World War I drug on, alliances weren’t formed on just the European continent.

What European country proposed an alliance with a country on the North American continent for war or peace against America? What were the consequences of this proposed alliance?

_In 1917 Germany proposed an alliance with Mexico against America in the Zimmermann Telegram. The proposed alliance was an instigating factor in America’s involvement in World War I, the creation of the American Expeditionary Forces, changes to the American economy and society, as well as the loss of American lives on the European continent._