
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?

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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 _____.

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.