

# 1.1 World War One (In One Take)

## What was going on in Europe before the War?

Before 1914, a rise in nationalism and imperialism caused threats to empires. Several European powers were forming alliances in response to Germany's attempts to expand: Britain, France and Russia signed an alliance as a result of Germany's military expenditure, and political instability in the Balkans led to an alliance between Germany and Austria-Hungary, who were at odds with Serbia as a result of the Balkan wars and Slavic nationalism.

## Who was Gavrilo Princip?

Gavrilo Princip was a Bosnian Revolutionary student who assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, and his wife, Sophie, in Sarajevo in 1914. This action allowed Austria-Hungary to declare war on Serbia, beginning the First World War.

Princip believed that the assassination of a member of the Habsburg family was the first step to remove Austro-Hungarian rule in the Balkans and uniting South Slav people into one nation.

## Where did the fighting take place?

The bulk of the fighting in the First World War took place on the Western Front, a 400-mile stretch of land that spread through France and Belgium from the Swiss border to the North Sea. Fighting also occurred in eastern and southeast Europe, Africa, and the Middle East.

## Why did Russia quit the war?

Russia had its own revolution in 1918 in which the Russian Tsar was overthrown by Russian Communists. Their leader, Lenin, met with the German Kaiser to negotiate peace, so that Russia could focus on developing a new communist state.

Russia signed a peace treaty with Germany at Brest-Litovsk and much of what was previously Russian territory was divided and handed over to Germany, ending Russia's involvement in the war.

## How was the USA involved?

The USA remained neutral at the beginning of WWI. However, in 1917, in an attempt to stop Britain receiving any foreign aid, German U-Boats sank several American ships, leading the

USA to declare war on Germany. A year later, 200,000 American troops were arriving in Europe per month, eventually securing victory for the Allies.

## How many people died as a result of the war?

Estimates about the number of total deaths as a result of the war total over 16 million, making the war one of the deadliest wars to its date. Two-thirds of military deaths were in battle, and one third as a result of disease. Many soldiers who survived were disabled and/or suffered with PTSD as a result of the fighting.