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World War I Outline of Important Points

- Spanned 1914 - 1918
- The MAIN causes of World War I
 1. **Militarism** - By 1914, tension had mounted between many countries in Europe as the development of new technology during the Industrial Revolution led to the creation of new and infinitely more dangerous weapons. As Germany began cultivating her navy, the British (who had the most powerful navy at the time) became fearful. The French were also suspicious of Germany as her army became more and more powerful.
 2. **Alliances** - Alliances between the nations was further cause for tension in Europe at the time. Fear of Germany's growing power led to an informal alliance (through treaties) between France and Russia, and later Britain. These three nations formed the Entente Powers (or Allied Powers). The Central Powers were Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy. (Italy later switched to join the Allied Powers.) Throughout the war, other nations became involved, heightening the tension.
 3. **Imperialism** - As Germany's strength and power expanded through the establishment of colonies in the new territories, Britain and France became more and more fearful of the economic consequences which would ensue. Britain became increasingly concerned over the competition for colonies.
 4. **Nationalism** - The French were greatly angered over the loss of Alsace-Lorraine to Germany and sought to regain that territory. Competing nationalist groups popped up in Austria-Hungary and Serbia.
- The "Spark"
 - Assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand by Gavrilo Princip of the Serbian nationalist group the Black Hand was the catalyst that ultimately led Austria-Hungary to declare war on Serbia. Russia mobilized forces in defense of Serbia; Germany declared war on Russia. France was drawn into conflict by treaties with Russia; Britain declared war on Germany due to obligations to France. Though technically allied to Germany and Austria-Hungary, Italy remained out of the conflict until joining the war in 1915 on behalf of the Allied Powers.
- The United States enters the war
 - Then president Woodrow Wilson had maintained a policy of absolute neutrality until 1917, when Germany declared a state of total submarine warfare which threatened U.S. trade and commercial shipping.
- Trench Warfare
 - Arguably the most horrific form of warfare. Soldiers would dig out trenches on either side of the battlefield where they would essentially live for the duration of the battle. The land between, called "No Man's Land," was impossible to cross - soldiers would be gunned down by machine gun fire. Sometimes poison gas was used as an attempt to

clear out the opposing trenches. Men living in the trenches suffered from disease, including lice and trench fever, and many ended up with trench foot, which caused open sores on soldiers' feet due to wet, muddied boots.

Bibliography

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