**M.A.I.N. Causes of World War One Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

WWI was the first global war fought during the 20th century. It took place between July 28, 1914 and November 11, 1918. The war originated in Europe and involved the current world economic powers from either the Allies or the Central Powers. For many years, historians and other scholars have sought the causes and triggers of the war. The causes have been linked to complex economic and political issues culminating over several years, alliances, and quest for more political power. While the immediate trigger for the war is tied to the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, underlying factors such as nationalism, imperialism, alliances, and militarism are linked to the development of the war. WWI led to the deaths of more than 17 million people and a victory for the allies except for Russia. The central powers Germany, Austria, Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire fell consequently losing their colonies to other nations. Germany was blamed for the start of the war although some historians argue for shared responsibility between all parties. The Great Depression occurred shortly after the war and was the worst economic recession in the world.

**Militarism**

The 20th century saw a great increase in army training and equipping. Most of the countries in Europe sought to increase their military power and reserves by drafting of young men into the army and the training of more soldiers. The countries developed new and more capable weapons, each competing to outdo one another. The arms race is linked to the emergence of the First World War. By the time of the war, the countries had gathered piles of weapons and other military resources, indicating that the countries were ready for a bigger war.

**Alliances**

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, countries in Europe formed mutual defense alliances which would require the participating parties to support one of the members should they engage in war. In the case of attacks on a member, those in the alliances would rise to their defense. Alliances formed before WWI include Serbia and Russia, Germany and Austria-Hungary, France and Russia, Britain and Belgium, and Japan and Britain. The war began after Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia. Russia rose in defense of Serbia and Germany in defense of Austria-Hungary which pulled France and Britain into the war. The US, Italy, and Japan joined the war later on.

**Imperialism**

Imperialism is the expansion of a government’s power through the conquest of new territories. The European powers in the 19th century had occupied territories in Asia and Africa. The French had the largest portion followed by Britain. Germany had very few territories as it had been dealing with political problems at home and joined the scramble for colonies later. The scramble led to conflict and tensions rose among the powers. When the war began between Austria- Hungary and Serbia, colonies recruited their subjects into war, drawing the entire world into war.

**Nationalism**

Nationalism is a political ideology where individuals identify with a particular national identity. In Europe, various groups identified themselves as being part of a particular national entity, each trying to prove their dominance over the other. The concept of nationalism is explained by Social Darwinism where nations and races compete for survival and that some will rise above others (not only just races anymore, but specific nations being better than their neighbors). Nationalism increased the desire for major economic powers to establish themselves as economic and military powers within Europe. This led to rivalries between ethnic communities such as the Slavs and Germans. The Slavs identified themselves as Serbians, not Austria-Hungarians (even though they were in the Austrian empire) which led to an assassination, which later developed into a world war.

Answer the following questions **in complete sentences.** Many are opinion-based and may not be exactly stated above.

1. What is your definition of the word “Alliance”?
2. How might having many alliances help PREVENT war?
3. How might having many alliances CAUSE war to happen more quickly?
4. Why do you think Germany was annoyed by imperialism from other countries?
5. How did a war that involved only Europe become a “world” war so quickly?
6. Why was nationalism an important factor leading to war?
7. In your opinion, how might many countries building armies, even if it was for self-defense, inevitably lead to war?