

Pre-WWI timeline

1854 – 56	Crimean War
1861	Italy united
1862	Otto von Bismarck Prime Minister of Germany
1867	dual monarchy of Austria & Hungary created
1869	Suez Canal opens
1870	Franco-Prussian War: Prussia gets land of Alsace & Loraine, which angers France
1871	Germany unified
1873	Three Emperors' League created: Germany, Austro-Hungary, Russia / Bismarck created this to avoid war in the Balkans, which didn't work
1875	Great Britain purchases Suez Canal shares
1877	Russo-Turkish War
1881	Tsar Alexander II of Russia assassinated
1882	Triple Alliance of Germany, Austro-Hungary, & Italy formed: Bismarck wanted more support against Russia / but Germany also signs secret treaty with Russia to avoid a Russian-French alliance Great Britain occupies Egypt
1884	Germany gains foreign colonies
1887	German-Russian Reinsurance Act
1890	Bismarck dismissed as Prime minister by Kaiser Wilhelm / Bismarck's balance collapses
1891	Franco-Russian Alliance
1898	Germany builds their navy
1899	Boer War
1900	Boxer rebellion
1902	British-Japanese Alliance
1904	Entente Cordiale between France & Great Britain
1904	Russo-Japanese War
1907	Triple Entente of Great Britain, France, & Russia: Russia & France will now create a 2-front war for Germany / GB & France join over concern for Germany's colonial expansion
1912	1 st Balkan War
1913	2 nd Balkan War
1914	Panama Canal opens
1914 – 19	WWI

Causes of WWI

- Germany & *Weltpolitik* policy (especially Great Britain's anger over the increase of the German navy)
- Balkans: everyone had an interest
- Secret alliances
- New & untested weapons of mass destruction
- Imperialist tensions

WWI timeline

Central Powers

- Germany
- Austro-Hungarian Empire
- Ottoman Empire
- Bulgaria

Allied Powers

- Russia
- France
- Great Britain
- Japan
- Italy
- United States
- Belgium
- Serbia

1914

June 28

Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to Austrian throne, assassinated:

- Black Hand, a Serbian extremist group, wanted Balkan area
- Archduke was in Sarajevo to oversee Austrian troops, placed there when Austria annexed Bosnia; this angered Serbians who, for nationalist tendencies, wanted it as part of the Balkan region
- Action condemned by all of Europe; Austria used this as an excuse to declare war on Serbia

July 5

“blank check” written to Austro-Hungary by Germany

- A-H asked for Germany financial support; A-H fears Russian support for Serbia
- A-H issues a list of ultimatums to Serbia that compromise their independence; they accepted *most* terms, but it's not acceptable for A-H
- Russia ignores Serbia's plea for help; Russia had been encouraging Slavian nationalism in the Balkans for control of the Black Sea waterway

July 28

Austro-Hungary declares war on Serbia

August 1

Germany declares war on Russia

- Russia began to mobilize forces & Germany demanded a halt

- France, an ally of Russia through Triple Entente, began to mobilize as well
 - National armies so large now that stopping mobilization is very hard
- August 3 Germany declares war on France
- August 4 Great Britain declares war on Germany
- Schlieffen Plan: Germany needed a quick victory on the Western front (France & GB) to be able to focus on Eastern front (Russia)
 - Germany invades neutral Belgium after they refuse free passage to German troops
 - Belgium asks Allies for help
- August 23 Japan declares war on Germany
- Japan does this to honor treat with GB from 1902 & to extend their influence onto the mainland
- Sept. 5-12 1st Battle of the Marne
- according to Schlieffen Plan, Germany needed to block GB support to France; attempted to take Paris
 - Marked end of German hope for quick victory in the West; stopped German advance; formed trench stalemate; 475 miles of trenches by end of 1914, would shift 11 miles during course of war
 - 234, 000 killed; 1.4 million wounded
- November Russia, Great Britain, & France declare war on Ottoman Empire after it joins the Central Powers
- this will separate Russia from the Allied countries, as well as their supply lines of war materials

1915

- 1915 European colonies get involved
- Canada, Australia, India, Africa, New Zealand, Middle East
 - now truly a “world wide war”
 - fighting occurs in the Middle East & along the Suez Canal
 - since trench lines aren’t moving, GB invades German colonies in Africa
- February Great Britain, to help Russia’s isolation, initiates naval battle in the Black Sea
- April 25 Battle of Gallipoli
- Allies forced to land here, but could not win this area
 - retreated in December, a hard blow for Russia

- May 7 *Lusitania* sunk by German U-boat:
- killed 1,200 passengers in 18 minutes, 128 Americans
 - increased German & US tensions, but US maintained neutrality
- May 23 Italy declares war on Austro-Hungary (after being promised land)
- 1915 4 million soldiers in the trenches in 1915

1916

- Feb. 21 – Dec. 18 Battle of Verdun
- Germany needed a decisive victory over France; heavy French & German losses – 700,000 lost in 10 months; French troop rotation = 70% served in trenches here
 - heaviest artillery bombardment of war; 1 million shells against 15 miles of forts
 - France had to protect their “Sacred Way,” the only open supply line
 - both Russia & GB forced Germany to divert their troops with
- May 31 Battle of Jutland
- only major sea battle of the war
 - prior, British navy blockaded Germany; this was retaliation
 - both sides claimed victory, but GB suffered heavier losses; Germany could not break the British blockade
- June 24 Battle of Somme
- from GB diversion during Verdun
 - order to go “over the top” on July 1 = 60,000 GB troops dead in 1 day; worst British loss of the war; total British losses = 420,000
 - 3 successful things: coordination of artillery & soldiers’ advance, surprise night attack, introduction of the tank
 - tank warfare ends use of cavalry on the battlefield
 - ends November 13
- 1916 Great Britain forced to introduce the draft. Despite massive protests

1917

- January Germany returns to using unrestricted submarine (U-boats) warfare
- March 15 Tsar Nicholas II of Russia abdicates the throne after workers revolt

April 3	Lenin returns to Russia
April 6	United States declares war on Germany <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zimmerman telegram: secret German message to Mexico, promising German support to help Mexico regain southwestern US territory if they declare war on the Allied Powers • chiefly provided economic & industrial resources; would become principle lender to European govts. & emerge as the post-war world power
April & May	Allies fail in 2 major offenses; hurting for supplies; losing against German U-boats
Nov. 6-7	Bolsheviks, under Lenin, overthrow Provisional govt. in Russia Balfour Declaration: Great Britain promised Jewish home in Palestine; created conflict with Muslim population

1918

March 3	German-Russian Peace of Brest-Litovsk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Russia formally withdraws from the war • Russia lost territories in Ukraine, Poland, Finland, Latvia, Estonia, & Lithuania • this treaty allowed Germany to move many troops from Eastern to Western front
March 21	Ludendorff's Offensive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • German troops almost to Paris, but US & France stopped this advance • Allies then victorious through the summer counter-offensive
July 18	2 nd Battle of the Marne
July 18-Nov. 10	Allied counter-offensive
Autumn	Bulgaria & Turkey surrender Czechoslovakia & Yugoslavia declare their independence Hungary declared independence
November 3	Austria declares armistice with Allies
November 9	Kaiser Wilhelm abdicates
November 11	armistice between Germany & Allied powers

1919

- January 18 Paris Peace Conference begins
- Russia & defeated nations not present
 - dominated by the Big Three: Pres. Wilson (US), Georges Clemenceau (France), & David Lloyd George (GB)
 - Wilson: no territorial ambitions, wanted world safe for democracy
 - Clemenceau: wanted revenge & security from future German power
 - George: wanted revenge & security for GB
 - tasks: settle Germany (hard with French & GB) and re-draw map of Europe (hard with pre-war secret alliances)
- January 25 League of Nations proposed by President Woodrow Wilson
- Wilson wanted no financial demands on loser nations & boundaries drawn according to populations (vs. spoils system)
 - proposed this outline for peace, but failed because US never joined; also pushed aside whenever convenient
- June 28 Treaty of Versailles signed
- Alsace-Lorraine returned to France
 - Saar territory (good coal fields in Germany) under international administration for 15 years
 - German land given to re-created Poland & Belgium
 - German army reduced & naval fleet limited (no U-boats)
 - Germany relinquishes colonies to GB & France, who will oversee their way to independence
 - Germany cannot occupy the Rhineland area
 - Germany accepted sole responsibility for the war & scheduled to pay reparations
 - Turkey lost all its empire in Asia & Africa (mostly to GB & France)
 - Austro-Hungary split into pieces & given to Austria, Yugoslavia, Bosnia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, & Hungary