

World War I

Sample pages

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HTTV

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COVER IMAGE: James Francis Hurley, Western Front (Belgium), Australian War Memorial Photograph, E00833. Supporting troops of the 1st Australian Division walking on a duckboard track near Hooge, in the Ypres Sector. They form a silhouette against the sky as they pass towards the front line to relieve their comrades, whose attack the day before won Broodseinde Ridge and deepened the Australian advance.



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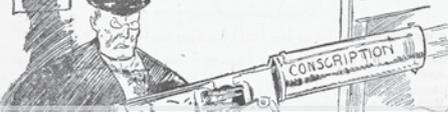
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Key Statistics

On the eve of war, Australia had a population of four million.

331 000 Australians served overseas.

More than 400 Indigenous Australians served in World War I.

416 809 Australian soldiers enlisted in WWI.

58 961 Australian servicemen died.

The Australian casualty rate was almost sixty-five per cent.

More than sixty-five million men and women were mobilised by participating nations throughout the war.

Estimated global deaths due to the war range from 8.5 million to seventeen million.



Causes of WWI

The causes of World War I's outbreak in 1914 are many and complicated. In this resource, we focus on the effects of war upon Australia, so an in-depth analysis of the causes has not been attempted here. However, it is worth understanding some of the significant factors that contributed to the launch of war.

The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary by Serbian nationalists in Sarajevo sparked World War I. Serbian nationalists in Sarajevo desired independence from Austria-Hungary and union with Serbia. Serbian nationalists desiring independence were just one of the nationalist groups in Austria-Hungary. The German ruling class attempted to unify the nation against an outside threat – a solution to the perceived problem of ethnic diversity of Austria-Hungary. The Archduke's assassination provided an opportunity to create this unity.

This localised cause was symptomatic of the broader interest in nationalism: Austria-Hungary was not the only nation facing challenges stemming from nationalist sentiment. Nationalism had been a dominant political idea in Europe since the 1850s. The nationalistic desire for a place of significance among the world powers and preserving the nation's reputation was a driving force in the

war. Both France and Germany held strong nationalistic sentiments which influenced their conduct. German forces defeated France in 1871. France lost both territory and prestige. French nationalists called for vengeance and reclamation of territory from Germany.

A growing power at the start of the twentieth century, Germany sought to improve its prestige in the world through taking to the seas as a sign of military power. This was the traditional domain of the British Royal Navy, and thus Germany's actions were a challenge to the Empire. Consequently, a naval arms race emerged between Great Britain, Japan and the US. Control of the ocean was not only crucial for military purposes but also aided international trade. Germany was seeking to rule a global colonial empire.

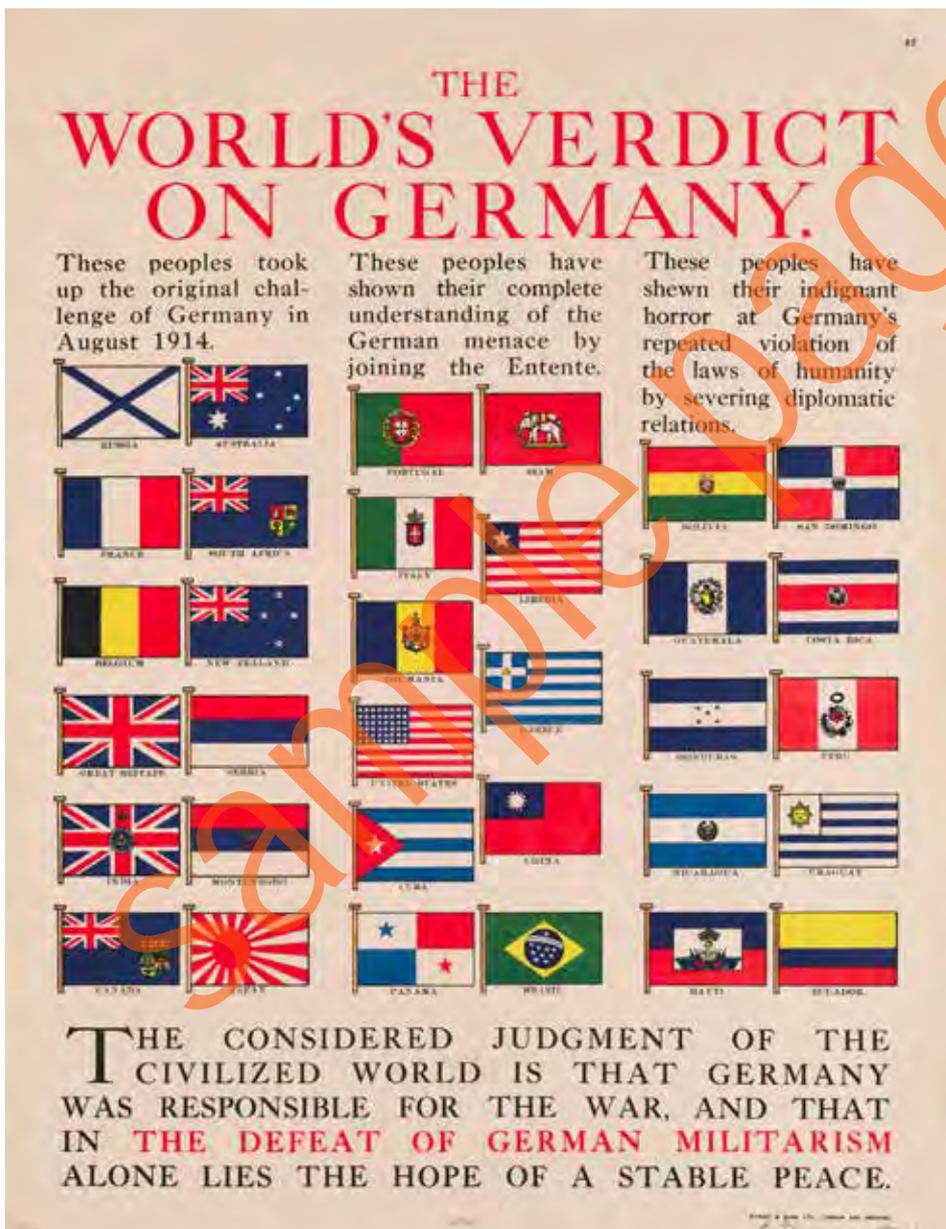
International diplomacy and the web of alliances are also blamed for the outbreak of the war. Nations formed alliances and treaties with each other – both openly and covertly – to counteract perceived threats from their neighbours. This effectively resulted in a Europe divided into two camps: the Triple Alliance and Triple Entente. While these alliances were created as a way of preventing war, their actual effect was to pull Europe into the conflict.



Activity 1

Nations of the War

SOURCE 1



Left: *The World's Verdict on Germany*, c. 1916-1918, chromolithograph, 57.3 x 44.6cm, Australian War Memorial Art, ARTV00530.

TASKS

1. Examine Source 1. Identify the nations in the three lists. Which ones are missing? What is this other power bloc called?
2. Note down the persuasive techniques and intended purpose of this source.



Activity 2

Role Play

1. Act out the alliance system between the powers. Each student should be designated a nation to represent.
2. Go through the years from 1879 (the Dual Alliance between Austria-Hungary and Germany) through to the start of the war, or even to the end of the war if you wish.
3. Represent alliances by getting into groups.
4. You will need someone to represent Britain, France, Serbia, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia and Italy at the least. If you have extra students, you can include more nations.
5. Have a student stand on the other side of the room from other participants and call him or herself Australia. Discuss why Australia played no direct part.
6. Then discuss whether Britain will come to the aid of France or not.

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Solutions

Activity 2: Role Play

ENTENTE POWERS AND ALLIES	CENTRAL POWERS
Britain	Austria-Hungary
Australia	Germany
Canada	Ottoman Empire
India	Bulgaria
Russia	
France	
Serbia	
Montenegro	
Brazil	
China	
Italy	
United States of America	
Romania	
Japan	
Serbia	
Greece	
Belgium	
Portugal	



Concluding Evaluative Tasks

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Activity 16

Research Report and Essay

PART 1: REPORT

Conduct a research report on the topic of cohesion/disunity during World War I.

1. Examine at least FOUR issues upon which there was disunity over the course of the war (e.g. gender roles; class contribution to the war; inequality of sacrifice; attitudes to the enemy; conscription; political rivalries and divisions; strikes; interventions into private lives under the War Precautions Act; degree of sacrifice of loved ones at war; or censorship).
2. Examine at least FOUR aspects of life on which there was cohesion and unity (e.g. initial support for the war; pride in the achievements at Gallipoli; respect and support for returning soldiers; co-operation within groups such as pro- and anti-conscriptionists, political parties, women supporting each other and soldiers/nurses).
3. Consider different phases of the war, such as the initial widespread unity leading to division and disunity as the reality of war became obvious. (Note that, even in 1918, most wanted to stay in the war until it was won.)
4. Provide supporting evidence (quotes, anecdotes, statistics, posters, cartoons, contemporary accounts, accounts from historians) to back up claims about cohesion or disunity.
5. Comment on the value of sources used – consider possible contradictions, reasons why sources may be helpful or unreliable and so on. For example, Bill Gammage in *The Broken Years* examined the diaries of hundreds of soldiers from WWI but he also interviewed several hundred returned WWI soldiers during the 1960s and 1970s. These reminiscences, although very valuable, may have been affected by limited memory and must be used with some caution.

PART 2: IN-CLASS ESSAY

Use the research completed above to address the following essay question in thirty minutes under test conditions. Include an introduction, paragraphs supported by evidence and a conclusion.

Topic: ‘Divisions in Australian society virtually disappeared during the crisis of World War I. All were united in a common cause.’ To what extent do you agree?

50 marks (see assessment criteria)