

Forces Before War

Trace how four long-term forces made a crisis become a war.

8.4a "European militarism, the alliance system, imperialism, and nationalism were all factors that contributed to the start of World War I."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one phrase or sentence that shows each cause of World War I. In the margin, label each mark M for militarism, A for alliances, I for imperialism, or N for nationalism.

A Crisis Grows

- ① In the years before 1914, European governments built up armies and navies. This militarism made military strength a major measure of national power. Germany and Britain competed to build powerful battleships, while other nations expanded their forces and made detailed war plans. Leaders believed a quick mobilization could protect their countries. Instead, preparations made crises more dangerous, because leaders feared that waiting would leave their nations weaker than rivals. Each government watched its neighbors with suspicion.
- ② Europe also had alliances and diplomatic partnerships. Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy belonged to the Triple Alliance, although Italy did not fight with them in 1914. France, Russia, and Britain formed the Triple Entente. These ties offered security and linked decisions, although they did not automatically require every country to fight. Competition for colonies and influence overseas added another conflict. Imperialism created rivalries when European powers sought control of land, trade routes, and resources in Africa and Asia. Tensions often followed these competitions.
- ③ Nationalism, a strong loyalty to one's nation or ethnic group, increased tension. Many people believed their nation was superior or deserved independence. In the Balkans, Serbian nationalists wanted South Slavs to unite outside Austria-Hungary. On June 28, 1914, Gavrilo Princip, a Bosnian Serb nationalist, assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary. Austria-Hungary moved against Serbia. Alliances drew in other powers, and military plans encouraged rapid action. The crisis became a European war because these long-term forces worked together.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How did militarism make a crisis more dangerous?

2 What was the purpose of alliances, and how could they make a conflict spread?

3 According to the passage, how did imperialism add to tensions in Europe?

4 What happened on June 28, 1914, and why did that crisis become a European war?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

In four sentences, explain why the assassination alone does not explain World War I. Connect at least three factors: militarism, alliances, imperialism, and nationalism.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline one phrase or sentence that shows each cause of World War I. In the margin, label each mark M for militarism, A for alliances, I for imperialism, or N for nationalism. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did militarism make a crisis more dangerous?	Nations had large armies and war plans, and leaders feared that waiting to mobilize would make their country weaker than rivals.
2	What was the purpose of alliances, and how could they make a conflict spread?	Alliances were meant to provide security. They linked national decisions, so a conflict involving one country could draw in other powers.
3	According to the passage, how did imperialism add to tensions in Europe?	European powers competed for colonies, influence, land, trade routes, and resources in Africa and Asia, creating rivalries.
4	What happened on June 28, 1914, and why did that crisis become a European war?	Gavrilo Princip assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand. Austria-Hungary moved against Serbia, while alliances drew in other powers and military plans encouraged rapid action.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The assassination of Franz Ferdinand began a crisis, but it did not by itself cause a European war. Militarism made leaders ready to use armies quickly, while alliances connected one country's decision to other countries. Imperial rivalries had already created distrust among powers. Nationalism intensified loyalty and conflict, so these forces turned a regional crisis into war.

Accept equivalent explanations that accurately connect each factor to rising tension or the spread of war. For the open response, look for four sentences, at least three factors, and a clear explanation that the factors worked together.