

SECTION 1 War in Europe

Guide to Reading

Main Idea

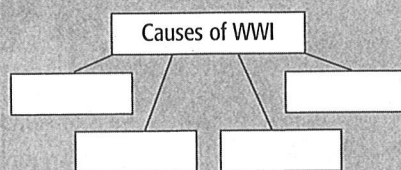
When Europe went to war in 1914, the United States tried to stay out of the conflict.

Key Terms

nationalism, ethnic groups, militarism, alliance system, entente, balance of power

Reading Strategy

Organizing Information As you read the section, re-create the diagram below, and identify four causes of World War I.



Read to Learn

- what factors led to World War I.
- how the early fighting progressed in Europe.

Section Theme

Science and Technology New weapons and other technology were used in fighting the war.

Preview of Events



AN American Story

The swift chain of events that led to war in Europe in 1914 stunned Americans. Most agreed with Jeannette Rankin—the first woman to serve in the U.S. Congress at a time when women could not even vote in most states—that “You can no more win a war than you can win an earthquake.” Most Americans wanted the country to stay out of other countries’ affairs. They saw no good reason to get involved in a conflict that they believed grew out of national pride and greed. As time went on, the United States found it more and more difficult to remain neutral.

Troubles in Europe

The people of Sarajevo crowded the streets of their city on the morning of June 28, 1914. They wanted to see **Archduke Franz Ferdinand**, the heir to the throne of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The royal couple had come on a state visit to **Bosnia**, an Austrian province. Suddenly shots rang out. The archduke and his wife were hit and died soon after. The assassination destroyed the delicate balance of European stability. Within weeks Europe was at war. The tensions that led to World War I had roots that went back many years. The conflicts grew as European nations pursued dreams of empires, built up their armies, and formed alliances.

Nationalism

Nationalism, a feeling of intense loyalty to one's country or group, caused much of the tension in Europe. On the one hand, nationalism encouraged new nations, such as Italy and Germany, to unify and to establish their power in the world. Italy had become a kingdom in the 1860s, and the German states had united in the 1870s. Their actions challenged the position of older nations such as Great Britain and France.

On the other hand, nationalism inspired certain groups of people to break away from existing nations. Some of these **ethnic groups**—people who share a common language and traditions—demanded independent nations of their own.

Imperial Expansion

Tension in Europe also grew out of the desire of nations to expand their empires. Nations competed for colonies in Africa, Asia, and other parts of the world. These colonies not only brought new markets and raw materials, they also added to a nation's prestige.

Great Britain and France already possessed large overseas empires, but they wanted to expand them even more. Germany, Italy, and Russia wanted to increase their colonial holdings as well. Because few areas were left to colonize, however, expansion by one European nation often brought it into conflict with another power.

Military Buildup

As European nations competed for colonies, they strengthened their armies and navies to protect their interests. If one nation increased its military strength, its rivals felt threatened and built up their own military in response. In this atmosphere of **militarism**, Germany, France, and Russia developed huge armies in the early 1900s.

Great Britain, an island nation, had the world's largest and strongest navy. When Germany began to challenge Britain's naval power in the early 1900s, a bitter rivalry grew between the two nations. The rivalry led to an arms race that threatened peace in Europe.

Forming Alliances

Along with militarism came a strengthening of the **alliance system**, or the defense agreements among nations. By 1914 two major alliances had been established. Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy banded together in the **Triple Alliance**, while Great Britain, France, and Russia joined in the **Triple Entente**. An **entente** is an understanding among nations.

The alliances aimed to keep peace by creating a **balance of power**—a system that prevents any one country from dominating the others. Yet the alliance system actually posed a great danger. An attack on one nation was all that was needed to trigger a war involving many countries.

Europe was like a powder keg. One American diplomat noted that it would take "only a spark to set the whole thing off." That spark was ignited in the **Balkans**.

✓ Reading Check Describing What was the purpose of the alliance system?

Crisis in the Balkans

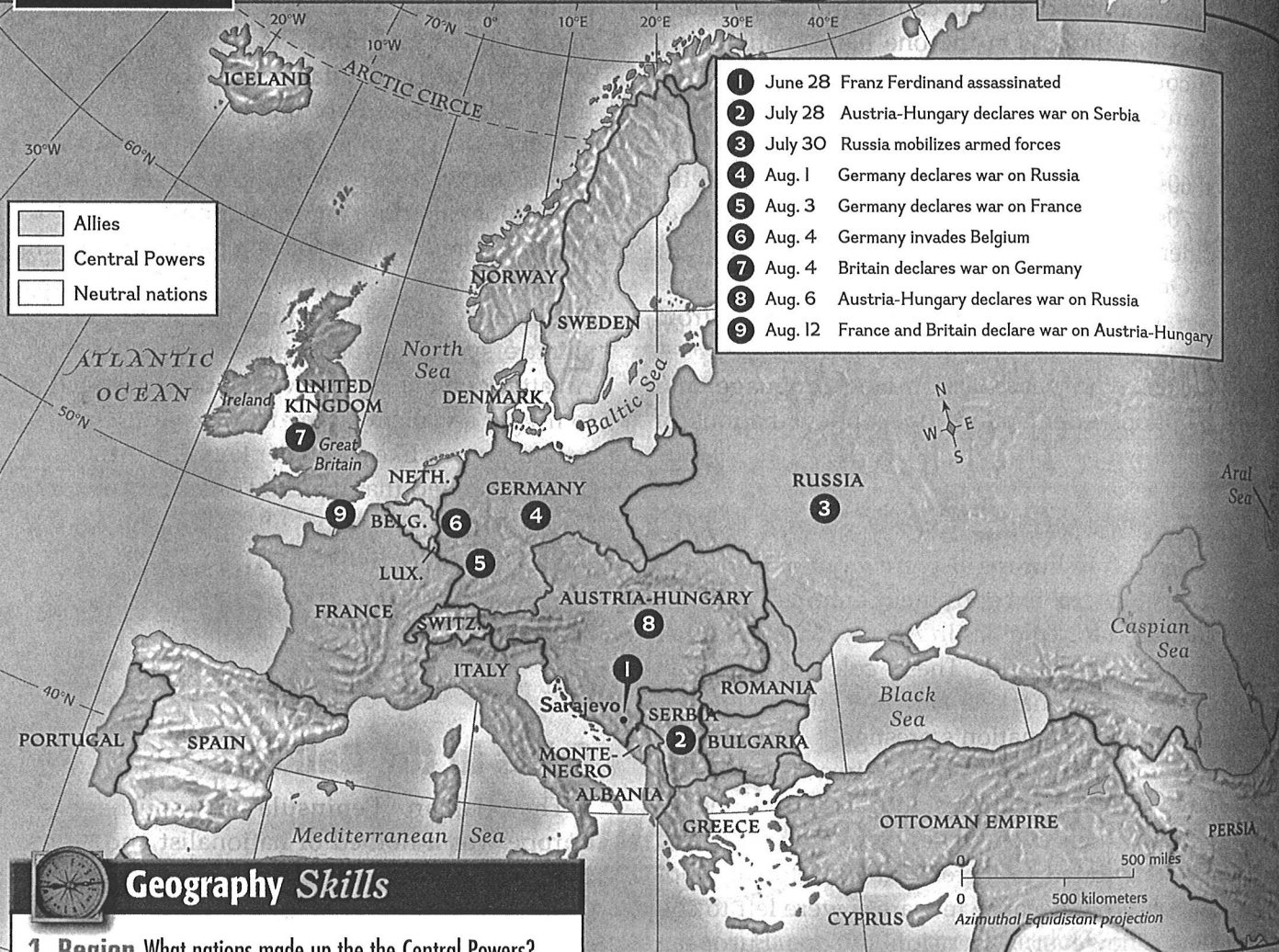
The Balkan Peninsula in southeastern Europe was a hotbed of nationalist and ethnic rivalries in the early 1900s. The nations of Greece, Albania, Romania, and Bulgaria argued over territory, while Slavic nationalists hoped to unite all the Slavic peoples in the region. Especially bitter was the dispute between Austria-Hungary, whose Slavic people desired independence, and the neighboring nation of Serbia, which supported the Slavs and opposed the empire.

An Assassination Leads to War

Franz Ferdinand's assassin, Gavrilo Princip, was a member of a Serbian nationalist group. Princip and other terrorists had plotted the murder to advance the cause of the unification of Slavic peoples.



*Archduke
Franz Ferdinand*



- 1 June 28 Franz Ferdinand assassinated
- 2 July 28 Austria-Hungary declares war on Serbia
- 3 July 30 Russia mobilizes armed forces
- 4 Aug. 1 Germany declares war on Russia
- 5 Aug. 3 Germany declares war on France
- 6 Aug. 4 Germany invades Belgium
- 7 Aug. 4 Britain declares war on Germany
- 8 Aug. 6 Austria-Hungary declares war on Russia
- 9 Aug. 12 France and Britain declare war on Austria-Hungary



Geography Skills

1. **Region** What nations made up the the Central Powers?
2. **Drawing Conclusions** What incident sparked the beginning of World War I?

The rulers of Austria-Hungary blamed the Serbian government for the assassination and moved to crush the Serbian nationalist movement. After making sure its ally, Germany, supported its decision, Austria-Hungary sent a letter to Serbia listing harsh demands. When Serbia refused the conditions, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia on July 28, 1914.

Europe's system of alliances caused the war to spread. Russia, which had agreed to protect Serbia, prepared for war. This brought Germany to the side of its ally, Austria-Hungary. Germany declared war on Russia on August 1, 1914. Knowing France was an ally of Russia, Germany declared war on France on August 3.

A day later, Germany invaded Belgium as part of a plan to sweep across eastern and northern France. In doing so, Germany violated a treaty signed in 1839 guaranteeing Belgium's neutrality. The invasion of Belgium prompted Great Britain to honor its pledge to protect Belgium, and Britain declared war on Germany.

Reading Check **Describing** What actions did Austria-Hungary take after the assassination of Franz Ferdinand?

A World War Begins

The "Great War" had begun. On one side were the **Allied Powers**, or the Allies—Great Britain, France, and Russia. On the other were the **Central**

powers—Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman (Turkish) Empire, which joined the war in October 1914. **Japan**, a rival of Germany in Asia, joined the Allies in late August 1914. Italy refused to honor its alliance with Germany and Austria-Hungary. Instead, it joined the Allies in 1915 after being promised territory in Austria after the war.

Fighting on the Western Front

In launching an offensive through Belgium, Germany hoped to defeat France quickly and destroy the French armies. This would allow Germany to move troops east against Russia.

The plan almost succeeded. The Belgians, however, held out heroically for nearly three weeks against the powerful German army. This delay gave the French and British time to mobilize their forces.

After defeating the Belgians, the Germans marched into France and advanced to within 15 miles of Paris. The British and French finally managed to stop the German advance at the Marne River just a few miles east of the city. The **Battle of the Marne**, fought between September 5 and 12, 1914, saved Paris from invasion by the Germans and boosted French morale. It also made it clear that neither side was capable of winning the war quickly or easily.

After the Battle of the Marne, the fighting in western Europe reached a stalemate. For the next three years, the opposing armies faced each other across an elaborate network of deep **trenches**. Trenches along the front lines provided some protection from flying bullets and artillery shells. Support trenches behind the lines served as headquarters, first-aid stations, and storage areas.

In 1916 both sides attempted to break the deadlock of trench warfare by launching major offensives. The German offensive, the **Battle of Verdun** in northeastern France, began in February and continued on and off until December. At first the Germans made small gains, but these were lost after the French counterattacked. Verdun

was one of the longest and bloodiest battles of the war. When it was over, more than 750,000 French and German soldiers had lost their lives.

While the Battle of Verdun raged, the British and French launched their own offensive in northern France in July—the **Battle of the Somme**. Again the number of casualties was extremely high. The Allies gained only about 7 miles (11.2 km) in the offensive.

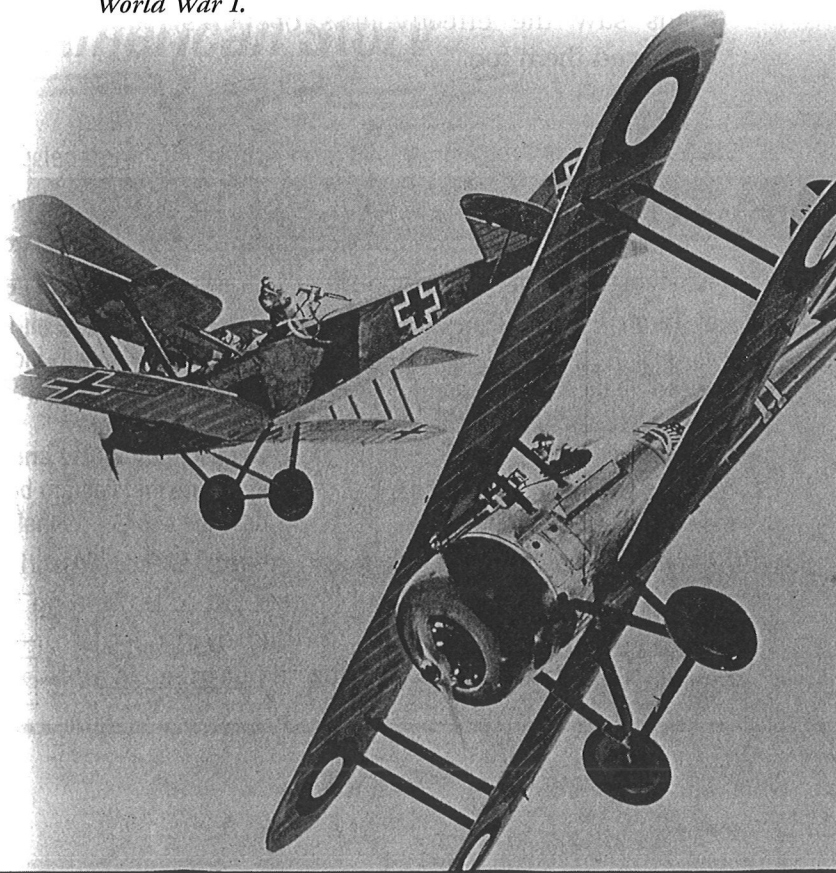
Deadly Technology

New and more deadly weapons accounted for the terrible slaughter during these battles. Improved cannons and other artillery fired larger shells greater distances than ever before. Better rifles enabled soldiers to hit targets with greater accuracy.

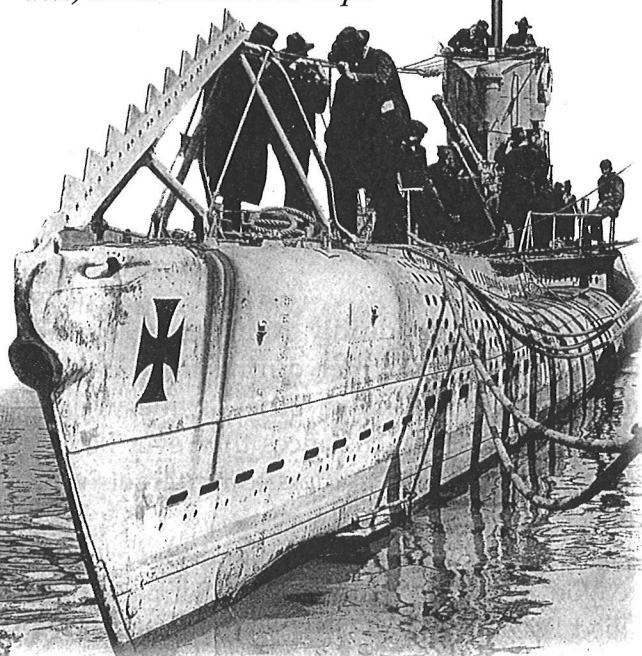
Poison gas, another new and devastating weapon, was first used by the Germans over Allied lines in April 1915. The gas could kill or seriously injure anyone who breathed it. A British officer said,

“They fought with terror, running blindly in the gas cloud, and dropping . . . in agony.”

Airplanes were first used in combat during World War I.



United States neutrality was put to a test when German U-boats (shown here) attacked American ships.



The Allies began to use poison gas also, and gas masks became necessary equipment for soldiers in the trenches.

The armored tank, first used in World War I in January 1916, proved effective for crossing battle lines to fire on the enemy at close range. Tanks also could crush barbed wire, providing an easier route for advancing troops. After the Germans saw the effectiveness of tanks, they produced them too.

The most dramatic new weapon—the airplane—added a new dimension to fighting in World War I. Both sides used airplanes for watching troop movements and bombing enemy targets. Daring pilots waged duels in the skies called “dogfights.” The first fighter planes were only equipped with machine guns, which were fastened to the top wing. The most famous pilots included Germany’s “Red Baron,” **Baron von Richthofen**, and America’s **Eddie Rickenbacker**, who served in the French air force. The Germans used the zeppelin, or blimp, to bomb Allied cities.

On the Seas

With their land armies deadlocked in western Europe, both sides looked to the sea to gain an advantage in the war. Great Britain blockaded all ports under German control, eventually causing serious shortages. Many Germans suffered from malnutrition and illness because of lack of food and other supplies.

Germany had an effective naval weapon of its own: the submarine. Known as **U-boats**—from the German word for submarine, *Unterseeboot*—submarines prevented supplies, including food, from reaching Great Britain. U-boat attacks on ships at sea eventually affected the United States and changed the course of the war.

Reading Check Explaining What did both sides realize after the Battle of the Marne?

SECTION 1 ASSESSMENT

Checking for Understanding

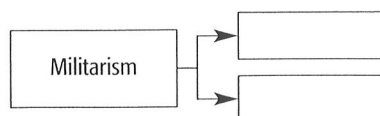
- Key Terms** Write headlines for events during the World War I era; use each of the following terms: **nationalism, militarism, alliance system, entente.**
- Reviewing Facts** What nations made up the Triple Alliance? The Triple Entente?

Reviewing Themes

- Science and Technology** Why were casualties so high in World War I?

Critical Thinking

- Determining Cause and Effect** How did forming alliances increase the likelihood of war in Europe?
- Determining Cause and Effect** Re-create the diagram below and describe two effects that militarism had on rival nations.



Analyzing Visuals

- Geography Skills** Examine the map on page 668. When did Germany declare war on France? On what side did Belgium fight?

Interdisciplinary Activity

Science Research the inventions that were developed in World War I. Make a chart in which you describe each invention and a possible peacetime use of the invention.



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SECTION 2 America's Road to War

Guide to Reading

Main Idea

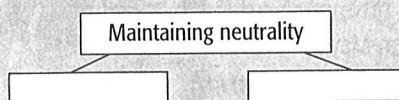
The United States entered the conflict on the side of the Allies.

Key Terms

propaganda, autocracy

Reading Strategy

Analyzing Information As you read the section, re-create the diagram below and list two reasons the United States found it difficult to maintain neutrality.



Read to Learn

- how Americans responded to the war in Europe.
- what led to American involvement in the war.

Section Theme

Government and Democracy The United States, officially neutral at first, entered the conflict.

Preview of Events

♦ 1914

August 1914

Europe goes to war

♦ 1916

May 1915

Germany torpedoes the *Lusitania*

March 1917

Zimmermann telegram angers U.S.

♦ 1918

April 1917

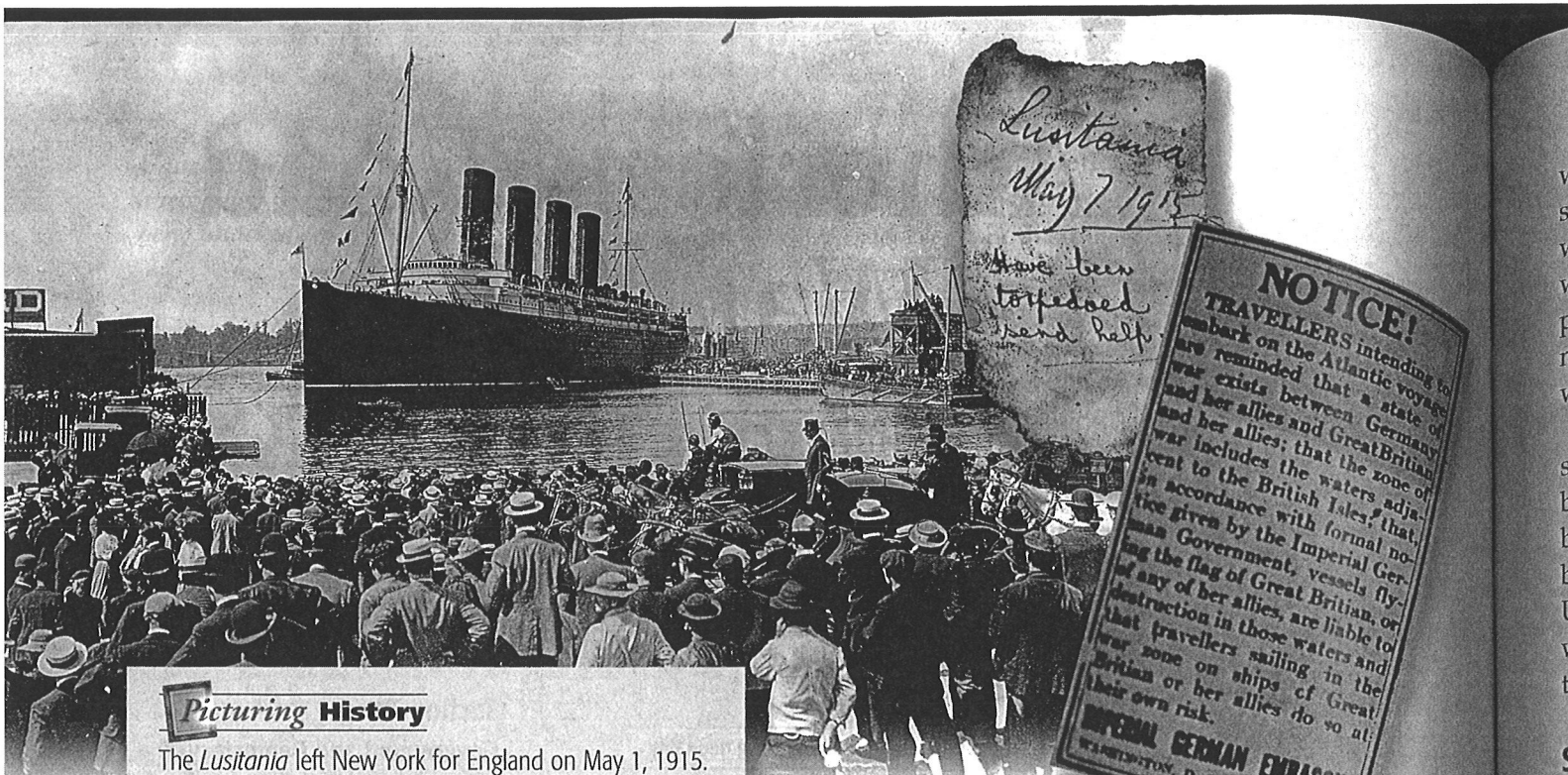
U.S. declares war on Germany

AN American Story

President Wilson struggled to remain neutral, even after Americans had been killed at the outbreak of World War I. Others felt differently. An American businessman cabled the president after the *Laconia* was sunk by Germans: "My beloved mother and sister . . . have been foully murdered on the high seas. . . . I call upon my government to preserve its citizens' self-respect and save others of my countrymen from such deep grief as I now feel. I am of military age, able to fight. If my country can use me against these brutal assassins, I am at its call." Remaining neutral grew more and more difficult.

American Neutrality

President Wilson had to make some difficult decisions. He declared that the United States would be neutral in the war and called on Americans to be "neutral in fact as well as in name, impartial in thought as well as in action." Other influential political leaders also argued strongly in favor of neutrality.



Picturing History

The *Lusitania* left New York for England on May 1, 1915. Germany had placed a warning notice in American newspapers, but few people took it seriously. **How did the United States respond to German U-boat attacks?**

When Europe went to war in August 1914, most Americans believed that the war did not concern them. Many shared the view expressed in an editorial in the *New York Sun*:

“There is nothing reasonable in such a war, and it would be [foolish] for the country to sacrifice itself to the . . . policies and the clash of ancient hatreds which is urging the Old World to destruction.”

Despite Wilson’s plea to remain neutral, Americans soon began to take sides. More than one-third of the nation’s 92 million people were either foreign-born or the children of immigrants. Many of these people naturally sympathized with their countries of origin. Some of the 8 million Americans of German or Austrian descent and the 4.5 million Irish Americans—who hated the British because they ruled Ireland—favored the Central Powers.

Even more Americans, however, including President Wilson, felt sympathetic to the Allies. Ties of language, customs, and traditions linked the United States to Great Britain, and many Americans were of British descent. President Wilson told the British ambassador: “Everything

I love most in the world is at stake.” A German victory “would be fatal to our form of government and American ideals.”

Using Propaganda

To gain the support of Americans, both sides in the war used **propaganda**—information designed to influence opinion. Allied propaganda emphasized the German invasion of neutral Belgium and included horror stories of German atrocities. It called the Germans “Huns” and pictured them as savage barbarians.

The propaganda from the Central Powers was equally horrible, but because of British sympathies, the Allied propaganda was more effective in influencing Americans.

America’s Early Involvement

Trade between the United States and the Allies helped build support for the Allied cause. As a neutral nation, America sought to trade with both sides, but Britain’s blockade of Germany made this difficult.

The British navy stopped and searched American ships headed for German ports, often seizing the ships’ goods. The United States protested that its ships should be able to pass without interference. The British responded

with the defense that they were fighting for their survival. "If the American shipper grumbles," wrote a London paper, "our reply is that this war is not being conducted for his pleasure or profit." The United States government could do nothing about the blockade. Barred from trading with Germany, it continued trading with Britain.

Indeed, American trade with the Allies soared. In addition, Great Britain and France borrowed billions of dollars from American banks to help pay for their war efforts. All this business caused an economic boom in the United States. It also upset the Germans, who watched the United States—supposedly a neutral nation—helping the Allies.

Submarine Warfare

To stop American aid to Britain, Germany announced in February 1915 that it would use its U-boats to sink any vessels that entered or left British ports. President Wilson warned that

America would hold Germany responsible for any American lives lost in submarine attacks. Determined to cut off supplies to Great Britain, the Germans ignored this threat.

On May 7, 1915, a German U-boat torpedoed the British passenger liner *Lusitania* off the coast of Ireland. W.T. Turner, the captain, reported:

“I saw the torpedo speeding towards us. Immediately I tried to change our course, but was unable to maneuver out of its way. There was a terrible impact as the torpedo struck the starboard side of the vessel. . . . It was cold-blooded murder.”

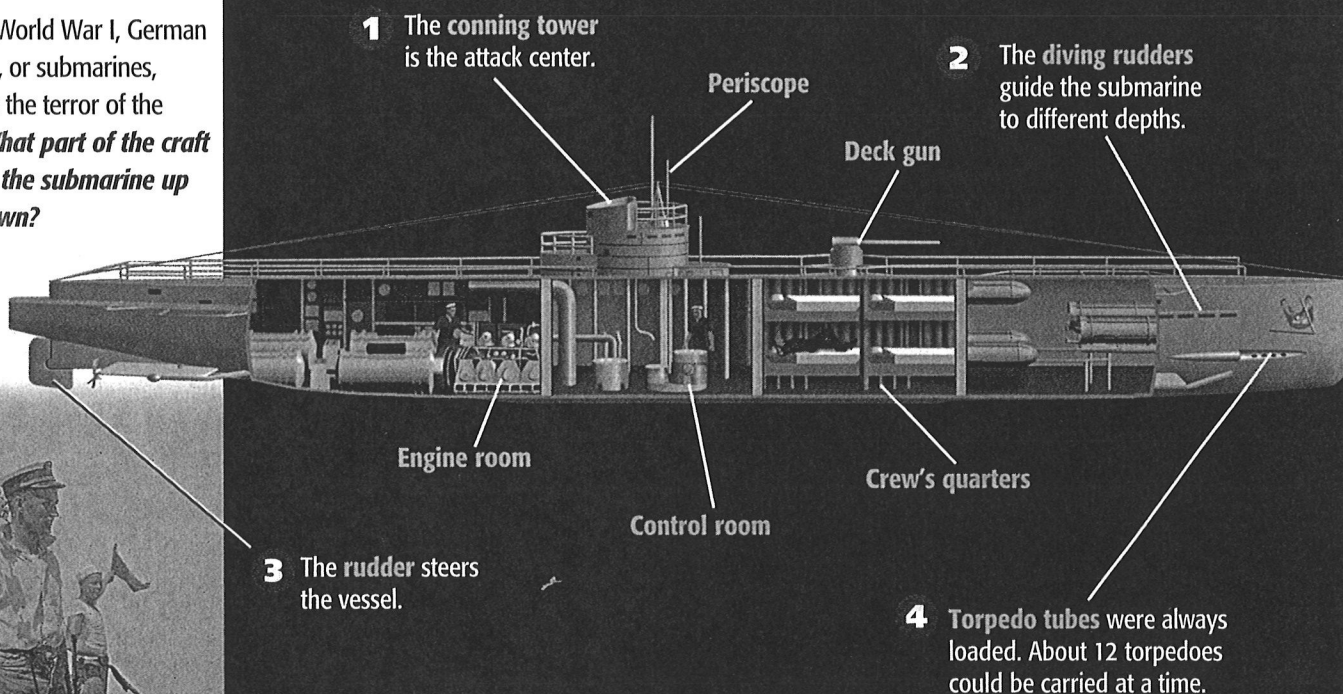
The *Lusitania* sank in about 15 minutes. More than 1,000 people died, including 128 United States citizens. Americans were outraged, and President Wilson denounced the attack. Later it was learned that the ship carried war materials.

📖 (See page 973 for a passenger's account of the sinking.)

TECHNOLOGY & History

Submarine

During World War I, German U-boats, or submarines, became the terror of the seas. **What part of the craft guided the submarine up and down?**



The United States began building its own submarine fleet during the war. The fastest American submarines reached a top surface speed of 14 knots (a little more than 16 miles per hour).

Several months later a German U-boat torpedoed the unarmed French passenger ship *Sussex*, injuring several Americans. Fearing that the Americans might enter the war, Germany offered to compensate Americans injured on the *Sussex* and promised to warn neutral ships and passenger vessels before attacking. The *Sussex* Pledge, as it was called, seemed to resolve the issue.

Reading Check Describing What is the aim of propaganda?

The End of Neutrality

The crisis over submarine warfare led the United States to take steps to strengthen its military. In the summer of 1916, Congress passed legislation that doubled the size of the army and provided funds to build new warships. President Wilson still hoped, however, to stay out of the war.

Antiwar sentiment remained very strong. Some Americans criticized the nation's military buildup, seeing it as a step toward entering the war. A popular song in 1915 expressed this opposition:

“I didn’t raise my boy to be a soldier,
I brought him up to be my pride and joy.
Who dares place a musket on his shoulder,
To shoot some other mother’s darling boy?”

Antiwar sentiment was strong at the 1916 Democratic national convention, where all references to the president’s efforts to keep the country out of war brought wild applause. After Wilson was nominated for a second term, the phrase “He Kept Us Out of War” became the Democrats’ slogan. The question of neutrality divided the Republicans, and Republican presidential candidate Charles Evans Hughes avoided discussing the issue. Wilson narrowly defeated Hughes.

What If...

The British Had Not Intercepted the Zimmermann Note?

In January 1917 German foreign minister Arthur Zimmermann cabled the German ambassador in Mexico instructing him to make an offer to the Mexican government. Zimmermann proposed that Mexico help Germany in the event that the United States entered the war. To encourage Mexico’s cooperation, Germany promised that Mexico would regain some of the region that it lost to the United States in 1848. A British official intercepted Zimmermann’s telegram. The telegram read:

“On the first of February we intend to begin submarine warfare unrestricted. In spite of this, it is our intention to endeavor to keep neutral the United States of America.

If this attempt is not successful, we propose an alliance on the following basis with Mexico: That we shall make war together and together make peace. We shall give generous financial support, and it is understood that Mexico is to reconquer the lost territory in New Mexico, Texas, and Arizona. The details are left to you for settlement....

You are instructed to inform the President of Mexico of the above in the greatest confidence as soon as it is certain that there will be an outbreak of war with the United States and suggest that the President of Mexico, on his own initiative, should communicate with Japan suggesting adherence at once to this plan; at the

same time, offer to mediate between Germany and Japan.

Please call to the attention of the President of Mexico that the employment of ruthless submarine warfare now promises to compel England to make peace in a few months.”

Widely publicized by British and in the American press, the Zimmermann telegram angered Americans and helped build popular sentiment for the war. Then, between March 12 and March 19, four American merchant ships were sunk without warning. On April 2, 1917, President Wilson asked the members of Congress to declare war on Germany.

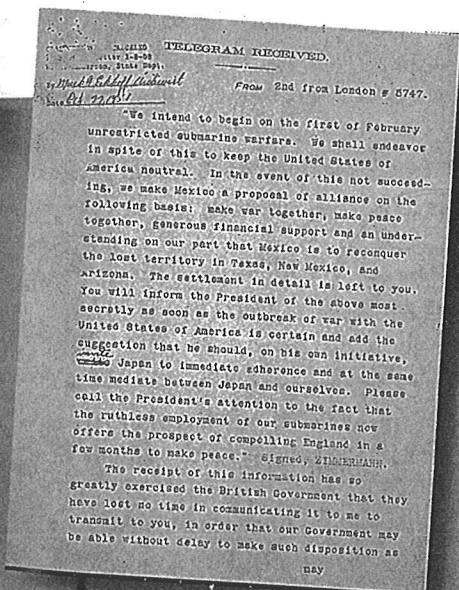
—adapted from *Almost History*,
Roger Bruns ©2000

On the Brink of War

In January 1917, Germany reversed its policy on submarine warfare. It announced that it would sink on sight all merchant vessels, armed or unarmed, sailing to Allied ports. While realizing that their policy might bring the Americans into the war, the Germans believed they could defeat the Allies before the United States became heavily involved. An angry President Wilson broke off diplomatic relations with Germany.

A few weeks later, a secret telegram—intercepted by the British government—set off a new wave of anti-German feeling. In late February the German foreign minister, Arthur Zimmermann, sent a telegram to Mexico with an offer to the Mexican government:

“We shall make war together and together make peace. . . . [A]nd it is understood that Mexico is to reconquer the lost territory in New Mexico, Texas, and Arizona.”



What might have happened?

1. Why was the British government eager to inform the United States of Germany's offer to Mexico? What did it hope to gain?
2. If there were no Zimmermann note, do you think the United States would have: a) entered the war when it did in April; b) entered the war at a later time; or c) not been drawn into the war at all?

Newspapers published the secret **Zimmermann telegram** on March 1, and Americans reacted angrily to the German action.

Revolution in Russia

In the weeks following publication of the Zimmermann telegram, dramatic events pushed the United States to the brink of war. First, a revolution took place in Russia. Following a period of rioting and strikes, the Russian people overthrew the monarchy. In its place they established a temporary government that promised free elections.

Many Americans believed that the new Russian government, which vowed to defeat Germany, would help the Allies. With Russia's change to a democratic form of government, Wilson could now claim that the Allies were fighting a war of democracy against autocracy—rule by one person with unlimited power.

Other critical events took place at sea. In March 1917, within a few days time, the Germans attacked and sank four American ships—the *Algonquin*, the *City of Memphis*, the *Illinois*, and the *Vigilancia*. Thirty-six lives were lost.

President Wilson continued to struggle with his conscience. He was convinced that war would destroy much of the optimism and sympathy to human needs that had allowed America to make the social progress it had. His cabinet, on the other hand, strongly favored war. One government official later explained:

“If we had stayed out of the war, and Germany had won, there would no longer have been a balance of power in Europe, or a British fleet to support the Monroe Doctrine and to protect America.”

President Wilson decided that the United States could no longer remain neutral.

America Enters the War

On the cold, rainy evening of April 2, 1917, President Wilson stood before a special session of Congress to ask for a declaration of war against Germany.

“The world must be made safe for democracy. . . . It is a fearful thing to lead this great peaceful people into war, into the most terrible and disastrous of all wars. . . . But the right is more precious than peace. . . .”

Congress did not agree at once to a formal resolution of war. Some members of Congress agreed with Senator George Norris of Nebraska. He held that America’s involvement in the war was the fault of American financiers and arms manufacturers who were determined to profit from the war no matter what it cost the rest of the country.

In the end, however, most members of Congress agreed that if the United States wished to remain a great world power it must defend its rights. As a result, Congress passed a declaration of war, and Wilson signed it on April 6. Fifty-six members of the House and Senate voted against war, including Representative Jeannette Rankin of Montana—the first woman to serve in Congress.

The United States had to raise an army quickly. On May 18, Congress passed the **Selective Service Act**, establishing a military draft. Unlike the draft during the Civil War that led to riots, this draft had the support of most of the American public.

Men aged 21 to 30 (later the draft age was extended from 18 to 45) registered by the millions. By the end of the war, some 24 million men had registered. Of those, about 3 million were called to serve; another 2 million joined the armed forces voluntarily.

In addition thousands of women enlisted in the armed forces—the first time they were allowed to do so. Women did noncombat work, serving as radio operators, clerks, and nurses.

Many African Americans also wanted to serve their country. More than 300,000 joined the army and navy—the marines would not accept them. African Americans faced discrimination and racism in the armed forces just as they did in civilian life. Most held low-level jobs on military bases in the United States. Among the 140,000 African American soldiers sent to Europe, 40,000 saw actual combat. Many served with distinction. An African American regiment received medals for bravery from the French government. One of its members, Henry Johnson, was the first American to receive the French Croix de Guerre [Cross of War] for bravery.

Reading Check **Describing** What was the purpose of the Selective Service Act?

HISTORY Online
Student Web Activity
 Visit taj.glencoe.com and click on **Chapter 23—Student Web Activities** for an activity on World War I.

SECTION 2 ASSESSMENT



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- 1. Key Terms** Define **propaganda** and **autocracy**.
- 2. Reviewing Facts** What did the Zimmermann telegram promise to Mexico?

Reviewing Themes

- 3. Government and Democracy** What steps did President Wilson have to take to make an official declaration of war?

Critical Thinking

- 4. Determining Cause and Effect** Explain how the war in Europe brought about an economic boom in the United States.
- 5. Sequencing Information** Re-create the diagram below and explain how these events led the United States into the war.

Event	
Sinking of <i>Lusitania</i>	
Zimmermann note	

Analyzing Visuals

- 6. Picturing History** Examine the submarine on page 673. What was the top speed of American submarines? What was the purpose of the diving rudders?

Interdisciplinary Activity

Expository Writing Create headlines announcing major events described in Section 2. Keep in mind that headlines condense much information into a few words.

SECTION 3

Americans Join the Allies

Guide to Reading

Main Idea

With the help of American troops and supplies, the Allies turned the tide against Germany.

Key Terms

convoy, front, armistice

Reading Strategy

Sequencing Information As you read the section, re-create the time line below and identify the events that took place.



Read to Learn

- what was happening in Europe when the United States entered the war.
- what role American troops played in the fighting.

Section Theme

Global Connections The entry of the United States into the war made an immediate difference, eventually leading to Germany's surrender.

Preview of Events

◆ 1917

June 1917

American troops land in France

◆ 1918

March 1918

Russia withdraws from the war

June 1918

American Expeditionary Force begins to fight

◆ 1919

November 1918

Armistice ends World War I

AN American Story

Drafted into the United States Army in 1917, Alvin York was reluctant to serve. "I was worried clean through," he said. "I didn't want to go and kill." York had grown up in the mountains of Tennessee, where he learned to shoot while hunting wild turkeys. Applying his sharpshooting skills in World War I, York killed 17 German soldiers with 17 shots. He also took 132 Germans prisoner and captured 35 enemy machine guns. For his actions and bravery in combat, Sergeant York received the Medal of Honor.

Supplying the Allies

In 1917 the Allies desperately needed the help of American soldiers. Years of trench warfare had exhausted the Allied armies, and some French troops refused to continue fighting after a failed offensive in 1917. The British had started to run out of war supplies and food; their people were starving. Furthermore, German submarines were taking a deadly toll on Allied shipping—sinking one of every four ships that left British ports.

The American entry into the war made an immediate difference. To ensure that needed supplies reached Great Britain, the United States Navy took two steps. First, it helped the British find and destroy German submarines. Then convoys—teams—of navy destroyers escorted groups of merchant ships across the Atlantic. The convoy system worked well. In one year it reduced Allied shipping losses from 900,000 to 300,000 tons a month. With the convoy system, not one American soldier bound for Europe was lost to submarine attack.

Russian Withdrawal

The Allies needed more troops because of a second revolution in Russia. In November 1917, the **Bolsheviks**, a group of communists, overthrew the democratic Russian government established in March 1917.

Led by **Vladimir Lenin**, the Bolsheviks wanted to end Russia's participation in the war so they could focus their energies and resources on setting up a new Communist state. Lenin took Russia out of the war in December. In March 1918, he signed the **Treaty of Brest-Litovsk** with

