

World War I

GUIDE TO READING

The BIG Idea

Devastation of War The stalemate at the Western Front led to a widening of World War I, and governments expanded their powers to accommodate the war.

Content Vocabulary

- propaganda (p. 762)
- trench warfare (p. 763)
- war of attrition (p. 765)
- total war (p. 767)
- planned economies (p. 767)

Academic Vocabulary

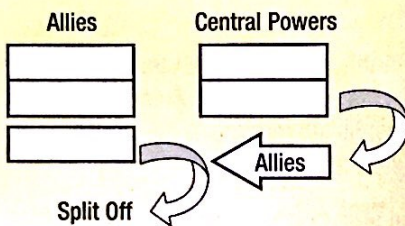
- target (p. 765)
- unrestricted (p. 767)

People, Places, and Events

- Marne (p. 762)
- Gallipoli (p. 766)
- Lawrence of Arabia (p. 766)
- Admiral Holtzendorf (p. 767)
- Woodrow Wilson (p. 768)

Reading Strategy

Organizing Information As you read, identify which countries belong to the Allies and the Central Powers. What country changed allegiance? What country withdrew from the war?



The war that many thought would be over in a few weeks lasted far longer, resulting in many casualties for both sides. The war widened, and the United States entered the fray in 1917. As World War I escalated, governments took control of their economies, rationing food and supplies and calling on civilians to work and make sacrifices for the war effort.

1914 to 1915: Illusions and Stalemate

MAIN IDEA Trench warfare brought the war on the Western Front to a stalemate while Germany and Austria-Hungary defeated Russia on the Eastern Front.

HISTORY & YOU How do political campaigns influence voters? Read to learn how governments tried to influence public opinion before World War I.

Before 1914, many political leaders believed war to be impractical because it involved so many political and economic risks. Others believed that diplomats could easily prevent war. At the beginning of August 1914, both ideas were shattered. However, the new illusions that replaced them soon proved to be equally foolish.

Government **propaganda**—ideas spread to influence public opinion for or against a cause—had stirred national hatreds before the war. Now, in August 1914, the urgent pleas of European governments for defense against aggressors fell on receptive ears in every nation at war. Most people seemed genuinely convinced that their nation's cause was just.

A new set of illusions also fed the enthusiasm for war. In August 1914, almost everyone believed that the war would be over in a few weeks. After all, almost all European wars since 1815 had, in fact, ended in a matter of weeks. Both the soldiers who boarded the trains for the war front in August 1914 and the jubilant citizens who saw them off believed that the warriors would be home by Christmas.

The Western Front

German hopes for a quick end to the war rested on a military gamble. The Schlieffen Plan had called for the German army to make a vast encircling movement through Belgium into northern France. According to the plan, the German forces would sweep around Paris. This would enable them to surround most of the French army.

The German advance was halted a short distance from Paris at the First Battle of the **Marne** (September 6–10). To stop the Germans, French military leaders loaded 2,000 Parisian taxicabs with fresh troops and sent them to the front line.

WORLD WAR I IN EUROPE, 1914-1918



Geography SKILLS

- 1. Movement** In which direction did the Central Powers advance the farthest?
- 2. Human-Environment Interaction** Why were German submarines concentrated around the United Kingdom?

Maps in Motion See StudentWorks™ Plus or glencoe.com.

The war quickly turned into a stalemate as neither the Germans nor the French could dislodge each other from the trenches they had dug for shelter. These trenches were ditches protected by barbed wire.

Two lines of trenches soon reached from the English Channel to the frontiers of Switzerland. The Western Front had become bogged down in **trench warfare**. Both sides were kept in virtually the same positions for four years.

The Eastern Front

Unlike the Western Front, the war on the Eastern Front was marked by mobility. The

cost in lives, however, was equally enormous. At the beginning of the war, the Russian army moved into eastern Germany but was decisively defeated at the Battle of Tannenberg on August 30 and the Battle of Masurian Lakes on September 15. After these defeats, the Russians were no longer a threat to Germany.

Austria-Hungary, Germany's ally, fared less well at first. The Austrians had been defeated by the Russians in Galicia and thrown out of Serbia as well. To make matters worse, the Italians betrayed their German and Austrian allies in the Triple Alliance by attacking Austria in May 1915.

Italy thus joined France, Great Britain, and Russia, who had previously been known as the Triple Entente, but now were called the Allied Powers, or Allies.

By this time, the Germans had come to the aid of the Austrians. A German-Austrian army defeated the Russian army in Galicia and pushed the Russians far back into their own territory. Russian casualties stood at 2.5 million killed, captured, or wounded. The Russians had almost been knocked out of the war.

Encouraged by their success against Russia, Germany and Austria-Hungary, joined by Bulgaria in September 1915, attacked and eliminated Serbia from the war. Their successes in the east would enable the German troops to move back to the offensive in the west.

✓ Reading Check **Contrasting** How did the war on the Eastern Front differ from the war on the Western Front?

The Great Slaughter

MAIN IDEA New weapons and trench warfare made World War I far more devastating than any previous wars.

HISTORY & YOU How do new inventions and strategies affect warfare today? Read on to learn about the new inventions and trench warfare that characterized the fighting in World War I.

On the Western Front, the trenches dug in 1914 had by 1916 become elaborate systems of defense. The Germans and the French each had hundreds of miles of trenches, which were protected by barbed-wire entanglements up to 5 feet (about 1.5 m) high and 30 yards (about 27 m) wide. Concrete machine-gun nests and other gun batteries, supported further back by heavy artillery, protected the trenches. Troops lived in holes in the ground, separated from each other by a strip of territory known as no-man's-land.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, & SOCIETY

The New Technology of World War I

Warfare in the trenches produced unimaginable horrors. Battlefields were hellish landscapes of barbed wire, shell holes, mud, and injured and dying men.

Trench warfare left World War I in stalemate, with neither side able to gain more than a few miles of ground. Both the Allied Powers and the Central Powers attempted to gain an advantage with new weapons and war machines. Machine guns, poison gas, fighter airplanes, and tanks were all introduced or vastly improved during World War I.

In the end, new technology did not break the stalemate. It did, however, cause the deadliest war the world had yet seen. Nearly 10 million people perished during World War I, which became known as "the war to end all wars."

Writer H. G. Wells described the impact of the new war technology:

"Now, there does not appear the slightest hope of any invention that will make war more conclusive or less destructive; there is, however, the clearest prospect in many directions that it may be more destructive and less conclusive. It will be dreadfuller and bitterer: its horrors will be less and less forgivable."

—H. G. Wells, "Civilization at the Breaking Point," *New York Times*, May 27, 1915

Machine guns could fire faster than other types of guns. Here, machine gunners wear masks to protect themselves from poison gas.



Tactics of Trench Warfare

Trench warfare baffled military leaders who had been trained to fight wars of movement and maneuver. At times, the high command on either side would order an offensive that would begin with an artillery barrage to flatten the enemy's barbed wire and leave the enemy in a state of shock. After "softening up" the enemy in this fashion, a mass of soldiers would climb out of their trenches with fixed bayonets and hope to work their way toward the enemy trenches.

The attacks rarely worked because men advancing unprotected across open fields could be fired at by the enemy's machine guns. In 1916 and 1917, millions of young men died in the search for the elusive breakthrough.

In just ten months at Verdun, France, 700,000 men lost their lives over a few miles of land in 1916. World War I had turned into a **war of attrition**, a war based on wearing the other side down by constant attacks and heavy losses.

German fighter pilot Manfred von Richthofen, better known as the Red Baron, stands in front of a Fokker DV-II biplane. Airplanes could drop small bombs on the enemy's trenches and fire machine guns at the troops.



War in the Air

By the end of 1915, airplanes had appeared on the battlefield for the first time in history. Planes were first used to spot the enemy's position. Soon, planes also began to attack ground **targets**, especially enemy communications.

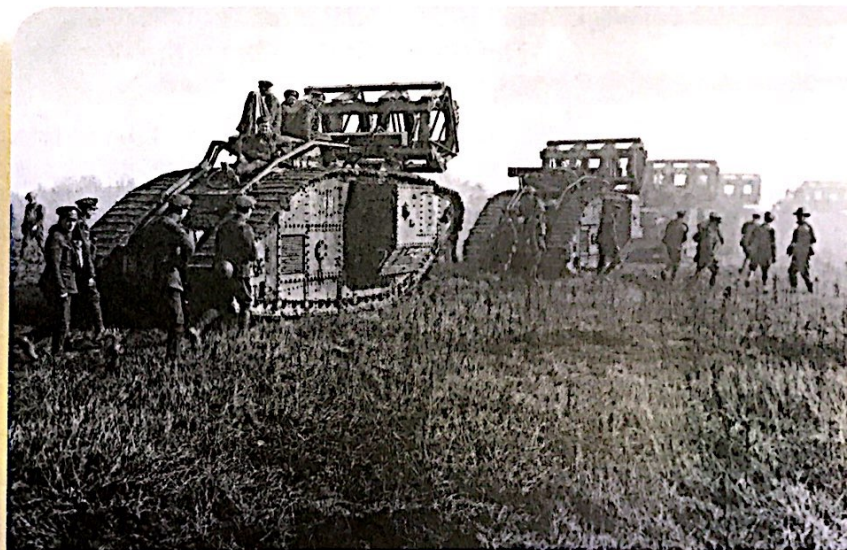
Fights for control of the air occurred and increased over time. At first, pilots fired at each other with handheld pistols. Later, machine guns were mounted on the noses of planes, which made the skies considerably more dangerous.

The Germans also used their giant airships—the zeppelins—to bomb London and eastern England. This caused little damage but frightened many people. Germany's enemies, however, soon found that zeppelins, which were filled with hydrogen gas, quickly became raging infernos when hit by anti-aircraft guns.

✓ Reading Check Explaining Why were military leaders baffled by trench warfare?



See page R50 to read an excerpt from Arthur Guy Empey's *An American Soldier Remembers World War I* in the Primary Sources and Literature Library.



In 1916 the British became the first to use armored tanks in war. Armor protected the tanks from machine-gun fire. Caterpillar tracks allowed tanks to cross barbed-wire entanglements.

DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTIONS

- 1. Explaining** How did each of the inventions shown here provide an advantage on the battlefield?
- 2. Analyzing** What did H. G. Wells believe was the overall impact of the new war technology? Do you agree? Explain.

A World War

MAIN IDEA With the war at a stalemate, both the Allied Powers and the Central Powers looked for new allies to gain an advantage.

HISTORY & YOU In the American Revolution, what country provided aid to the colonists? Read to learn how nations looked for allies in World War I.

Because of the stalemate on the Western Front, both sides sought to gain new allies. Each side hoped new allies would provide a winning advantage, as well as a new source of money and war goods.

Widening of the War

Bulgaria entered the war on the side of the Central Powers, as Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire were called. Russia, Great Britain, and France—the Allied Powers—declared war on the Ottoman Empire.

The Allies tried to open a Balkan front by landing forces at **Gallipoli** (guh•LIH•puh•lee), southwest of Constantinople, in April 1915. However, the campaign proved disastrous, forcing the Allies to withdraw.

In return for Italy entering the war on the Allied side, France and Great Britain promised to let Italy have some Austrian territory. Italy on the side of the Allies opened up a front against Austria-Hungary.

By 1917, the war had truly become a world conflict. That year, while stationed in the Middle East, a British officer known as **Lawrence of Arabia** urged Arab princes to revolt against their Ottoman overlords. In 1918 British forces from Egypt mobilized troops from India, Australia, and New Zealand and destroyed the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East.

The Allies also took advantage of Germany's preoccupations in Europe and lack of naval strength to seize German colonies in the rest of the world. Japan, a British ally beginning in 1902, seized a number of

INFOGRAPHICS

PRIMARY SOURCE

The United States Enters the War

Several events ended the neutrality of the United States and led to its entry into the war. One such event was the sinking of the British passenger ship, *Lusitania*, by a German submarine in May 1915. Both Americans and Europeans called on President Woodrow Wilson to declare war against Germany. Germany claimed the *Lusitania* was a fair target because it carried 173 tons of ammunition as cargo.

Germany suspended unrestricted submarine warfare and the United States remained neutral. In January 1917, however, British intelligence intercepted the Zimmerman telegram (or Zimmerman Note). In the telegram, a German official asked the German ambassador in Mexico to make a deal with the Mexican government. If it sided with Germany against the United States in a war, it could reclaim territory in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona.

Wilson saw these two events, along with Germany resuming unrestricted submarine warfare, as German violations of American neutrality. Thus, the United States entered the war in April 1917.

DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTIONS

- Identifying Points of View** What was Toudouze's point of view on the sinking of the *Lusitania*? Would the German embassy have agreed with that point of view?
- Determining Cause and Effect** What was an important political effect of the Zimmerman telegram?



This early book by French historian and novelist Georges Toudouze calls the sinking of the *Lusitania* a "crime."

German-held islands in the Pacific. Australia seized German New Guinea.

Entry of the United States

At first, the United States tried to remain neutral. As World War I dragged on, however, it became more difficult to do so. The immediate cause of the United States's involvement grew out of the naval war between Germany and Great Britain.

Britain had used its superior naval power to set up a blockade of Germany. The blockade kept war materials and other goods from reaching Germany by sea. Germany had retaliated by setting up a blockade of Britain. Germany enforced its blockade with the use of **unrestricted** submarine warfare, which included the sinking of passenger liners.

On May 7, 1915, German forces sank the British ship *Lusitania*. About 1,100 civilians, including over 100 Americans, died. After strong protests from the United States, the German government suspended unrestricted submarine warfare in September 1915 to avoid antagonizing the United States further. Only once did the Germans and British engage in direct naval battle—at the Battle of Jutland on May 31, 1916, when neither side won a conclusive victory.

By January 1917, however, the Germans were eager to break the deadlock in the war. German naval officers convinced Emperor William II that resuming the use of unrestricted submarine warfare could starve the British into submission within six months. When the emperor expressed concern about the United States, **Admiral Holtzendorf** assured him, "I give your Majesty my word as an officer that not one American will land on the continent."

The German naval officers were quite wrong. The British were not forced to surrender, and the return to unrestricted submarine warfare brought the United States into the war in April 1917. U.S. troops did not arrive in large numbers in Europe until 1918. However, the entry of the United States into the war gave the Allied Powers a psychological boost and a major new source of money and war goods.

✓ Reading Check Evaluating Why did the Germans resort to unrestricted submarine warfare?

The Impact of Total War

MAIN IDEA World War I became a total war, with governments taking control of their economies and rationing civilian goods.

HISTORY & YOU Do you think the government should ever be allowed to censor what newspapers publish? Read to learn why many governments resorted to censorship and similar practices during World War I.

As World War I dragged on, it became a **total war** involving a complete mobilization of resources and people. It affected the lives of all citizens in the warring countries, however remote they might be from the battlefields.

Masses of men had to be organized, and supplies were manufactured and purchased for years of combat. (Germany alone had 5.5 million men in uniform in 1916.) This led to an increase in government powers and the manipulation of public opinion to keep the war effort going. The home front was rapidly becoming a cause for as much effort as the war front.

Increased Government Powers

Most people had expected the war to be short. Little thought had been given to long-term wartime needs. Governments had to respond quickly, however, when the new war machines failed to achieve their goals. Many more men and supplies were needed to continue the war effort. To meet these needs, governments expanded their powers. Countries drafted tens of millions of young men, hoping for that elusive breakthrough to victory.

Wartime governments throughout Europe also expanded their power over their economies. Free-market capitalistic systems were temporarily put aside. Governments set up price, wage, and rent controls. They also rationed food supplies and materials; regulated imports and exports; and took over transportation systems and industries. In effect, in order to mobilize all the resources of their nations for the war effort, European nations set up **planned economies**—systems directed by government agencies.

Under conditions of total war mobilization, the differences between soldiers at war and civilians at home were narrowed. In the view of political leaders, all citizens were part of a national army dedicated to victory. **Woodrow Wilson**, president of the United States, said that the men and women "who remain to till the soil and man the factories are no less a part of the army than the men beneath the battle flags."

Manipulation of Public Opinion

As the war continued and casualties grew worse, the patriotic enthusiasm that had marked the early stages of World War I waned. By 1916, there were signs that civilian morale was beginning to crack. War governments, however, fought back against growing opposition to the war.

Authoritarian regimes, such as those of Germany, Russia, and Austria-Hungary, relied on force to subdue their populations. Under the pressures of the war, however,

even democratic states expanded their police powers to stop internal dissent. The British Parliament, for example, passed the Defence of the Realm Act (DORA). It allowed the government to arrest protesters as traitors. Newspapers were censored, and sometimes publication was suspended.

Wartime governments made active use of propaganda to increase enthusiasm for the war. At the beginning, public officials needed to do little to achieve this goal. The British and French, for example, exaggerated German atrocities in Belgium and found that their citizens were only too willing to believe these accounts.

As the war progressed and morale sagged, governments were forced to devise new techniques for motivating the people. In one British recruiting poster, for example, a small daughter asked her father, "Daddy, what did YOU do in the Great War?" while her younger brother played with toy soldiers.

CONNECTING TO THE UNITED STATES

THE INFLUENZA EPIDEMIC OF 1918

In the fall of 1918, just as World War I was winding down in Europe, a deadly influenza epidemic struck. Probably spread by soldiers returning from the front, it became the deadliest epidemic in history:

- An estimated 675,000 Americans died, ten times as many as had died in the war.
- An estimated 50 million people died worldwide.

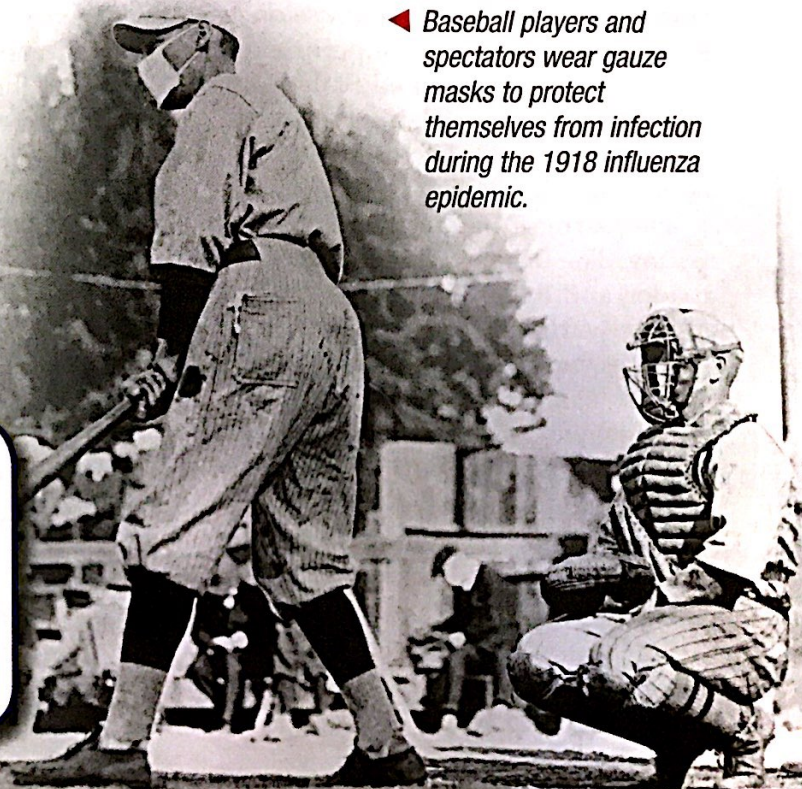
Things could have been even worse. Because of the war, people were used to government restrictions. Public health departments were able to step in with measures to restrict contact. The war had also brought new innovations such as germ theory and antiseptics. These had saved lives in the battlefield and eventually would help save the world from this deadly epidemic.

Given the deadly spread of the 1918 influenza, scientists are keeping a close watch on today's flu viruses. With today's ease of air travel, a new virus could take only days to spread around the world.

◀ *Baseball players and spectators wear gauze masks to protect themselves from infection during the 1918 influenza epidemic.*

CONNECTING TO TODAY

1. **Hypothesizing** In the face of a deadly epidemic, do you think that people today would continue with normal activities such as spectator sports? Why or why not?
2. **Making Generalizations** How would an epidemic similar to the one in 1918 affect your life?



Total War and Women

World War I created new roles for women. Because so many men left to fight at the front, women were asked to take over jobs that had not been available to them before. Women were employed in jobs that had once been considered beyond their capacity.

These jobs included civilian occupations such as chimney sweeps, truck drivers, farm laborers, and factory workers in heavy industry. For example, 38 percent of the workers in the Krupp Armaments works in Germany in 1918 were women. Also, between 1914 and 1918 in Britain, the number of women working in public transport rose 14 times, doubled in commerce, and rose by nearly a third in industry.

The place of women in the workforce was far from secure, however. Both men and women seemed to expect that many of the new jobs for women were only temporary. This was evident in the British poem "War Girls," written in 1916:

PRIMARY SOURCE

"There's the girl who clips your ticket for the train,
And the girl who speeds the lift from floor to floor,
There's the girl who does a milk-round in the rain,
And the girl who calls for orders at your door.
Strong, sensible, and fit,
They're out to show their grit,
And tackle jobs with energy and knack.
No longer caged and penned up,
They're going to keep their end up
Till the khaki soldier boys come marching back."

At the end of the war, governments would quickly remove women from the jobs they had encouraged them to take earlier. The work benefits for women from World War I were short-lived as men returned to the job market. By 1919, there would be 650,000 unemployed women in Great Britain. Wages for the women who were still employed would be lowered.

Nevertheless, in some countries the role women played in wartime economies had a positive impact on the women's movement for social and political emancipation. The most obvious gain was the right to vote, which was given to women in Germany, Austria, and the United States immediately after the war. British women over 30 gained the vote, together with the right to stand for Parliament, in 1918.

Many upper- and middle-class women had also gained new freedoms. In ever-increasing numbers, young women from these groups took jobs, had their own apartments, and showed their new independence.

✓ Reading Check Summarizing What was the effect of total war on ordinary citizens?

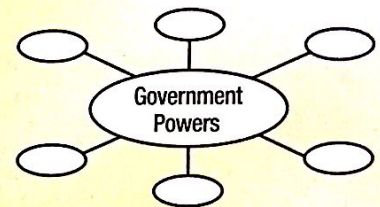
SECTION 2 REVIEW

Vocabulary

1. Explain the significance of: propaganda, Marne, trench warfare, war of attrition, target, Gallipoli, Lawrence of Arabia, unrestricted, Admiral Holtzendorf, total war, planned economies, Woodrow Wilson.

Main Ideas

2. Explain why governments often use propaganda during wartime.
3. Describe the trenches that both the Western Front and Eastern Front used in World War I.
4. Illustrate, by using a diagram similar to the one below, the ways in which government powers increased during the war.



Critical Thinking

5. **The BIG Idea** Assessing What methods did governments use to counter the loss of enthusiasm and opposition to the war at home?
6. **Analyzing Primary Sources** How did Admiral Holtzendorf's assurance to the German emperor ("I give your Majesty my word as an officer that not one American will land on the continent") prove to be wrong?
7. **Analyzing Visuals** Explain why the war technology shown in the photographs on pages 764 and 765 did not help break the World War I stalemate.

Writing About History

8. **Expository Writing** What lasting results occurred in women's rights due to World War I? What were the temporary results? Write an essay discussing the effect of the war on women's rights.

History ONLINE

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