

### The Causes of the First World War

Remember, you could be assessed on any topic you have studied this year!

The causes of the First World War can best be summed up with the acronym:

# MANIA

Militarism

Alliances

Nationalism

Imperialism

Assassination

Causes that were around a long time before war started

Causes that were around a few years before war started

'Trigger' causes that exploded into war

## Nationalism

- At the time people thought that their country was the **best**;
- Britain had the **biggest navy and empire** in the world;
- Germany was growing in power and **wanted to prove itself to the world**;
- France had the **best army**;
- And countries like Serbia and Belgium **didn't want to be bossed around by bigger ones!**

## Militarism

- As tensions grew, countries felt very worried;
- **Britain was afraid that Germany would build a navy that was bigger than theirs** – so they designed a new battleship called the **Dreadnought**. By 1914 Britain had 38 Dreadnoughts, but Germany was catching up with 24! This competition was called an '**arms race**' ('arms' means weapons).

## Assassination

- The 'trigger' cause sparked off the war;
- A Serbian nationalist, **Gavrilo Princip**, shot dead **Archduke Franz Ferdinand** on the 28<sup>th</sup> June 1914;
- The Archduke was visiting **Bosnia**, a place that Austrians thought was theirs but Serbians thought was theirs!
- Austria demanded that its police be allowed into Serbia to investigate the murder. The proud Serbians refused and as soon as Austria attacked Serbia, Russia (Serbia's friend) attacked Austria. Germany attacked Russia but also used it as an opportunity to invade (take over) France through Belgium. **Britain stuck up for Belgium.**
- The First World War had begun. All 5 causes led to a devastating 4 year conflict.

## Imperialism

- Nationalism led to the **building of empires** (called imperialism) which made people even prouder;
- The British Empire covered around a **25% of the world's surface**;
- A lot of European countries had made empires in **Africa**, but **Germany didn't** and was finding it tough to find lands to take over.

## Alliances

- Countries began to feel safer if they teamed up. **Friendships between countries is called an alliance**;
- There were 2 main alliance groups:
- The **Triple Entente** was an alliance between Britain, France and Russia;
- The **Triple Alliance** was between Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy (but don't worry about Italy!);
- Germany felt threatened by the Triple Entente because it **surrounded** them.