## Basics: World War One ER Name:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **War Situation:** in August 1914, the military situation was clear. The Central Powers would be outnumbered 3 to 5 across all fronts. They also had less population and less overall industrial power than the Entente. So it was believed that the Central Powers would need to win the war quickly. Towards this end, Germany decided to invade neutral Belgium in order to win the war quickly. | **Why did the Central powers need to win the war quickly?** |
| **Neutral Countries Invaded:** on August 4th, Germany invaded Belgium and Luxembourg, violating the official neutrality of both countries. This allowed Germany to get around the French fortresses. | **Why did Germany invade Belgium?** |
| **Entente Attacks Fail:** meanwhile, Entente forces attacked Germany from both sides. The French charged blindly into west Germany while the Russians raced 800,000 soldiers into position in east Germany. Germany’s Schlieffen plan had planned to defend both Russia and France with a small number of men but now got scared. Germany sent part of its own attack to defend against France and Russia.  France’s soldiers charged against machine guns and artillery. 260,000 died in a week of fighting and they were forced to retreat.  Russia’s poorly equipped army was trapped and annihilated by the German reinforcements. Russia lost 300,000 of their soldiers in just two battles. | **How did the Schlieffen Plan change due to the Entente attacks?**  **What was the result of the French Attack?**  **What was the result of the Russian Attack?** |
| **Miracle on the Marne**: by September, the German army was the only one still on the move. 750,000 Germans had marched through Belgium and were now just 40km from Paris. While other parts of the German army had crushed the French on the Frontier and the Russians at Tannenberg, this main body had defeated the French and British in battle after battle. Both the French and the British were in disarray and Paris seemed about to fall.  But in the chaos, the German forces split, two armies turning to the south to fight the retreating French and a third keeping its path towards Paris. The French and British rallied their forces as best they could and attacked the Germans in the gap between Germany’s armies. The battle was fierce and when the dust settled, both sides had lost over a quarter million soldiers. But in the end, Germany’s attack was halted. Paris and France were saved—at least for the moment. | **Explain why the Germans seemed to be on the verge of victory:**  **What event made it possible for the Entente to counter-attack at the Marne?**  **What was the result?** |
| **New Technology, Old Generals:** the big problem with the war was that technology had been growing rapidly but none of the generals knew how to use it. Machine guns, barbed wire, and high angle artillery all made attacking nearly impossible. But ironically European tactics put the greatest emphasis on attacking. So for every battle, men massed in infantry formations to attack and were mowed down by enemy machine guns. So after the Frontier, after Tannenberg, after the Marne, the countries of Europe turned to defense and tried to figure out how to win. | **What were the new technologies?**  **What effect did they have?**  **Why did this lead to so much bloodshed?** |
| **Trench Warfare:** by the end of September 1914, all of the plans for winning the war had failed and all of the armies were digging in. The rest of the war would mostly be fought in trenches—muddy holes in the ground that stretched dozens or hundreds of miles. There the men would huddle, trying to avoid being killed by artillery until being ordered to go “over the top” and charge across no man’s land to be killed by machine guns. The war became very slow—tens of thousands dying for the tiniest of gains. | **How did the war change in September 1914?**  **What was Trench warfare like?** |
| **Inventions of War:** as the war dragged on, each side looked for new inventions or tactics to break the stalemate. The Germans invented the flamethrower and poison gas. Both were called crimes against humanity by the Entente, but both were soon in use by their armies as well. The Entente invented the tank, which proved one of the decisive weapons of the war. Both sides made huge leaps and strides in aerial combat—bringing the war to the skies with fighter planes and bombers. | **What were 5 inventions of the war?** |
| **Exhaustion:** 1916 was a bad year and as it came to an end, all the armies of Europe were exhausted. The stockpiles were empty and the soldiers were sick of war. Worst of all, there was still no end in sight. 1917 would end up being a somewhat calmer year as the armies nursed their wounds and tried to put themselves back together. | **Why would 1917 end up being a calmer year?** |
| **Entente in Crisis (1917):** at the start of 1917, there was optimism amongst the Entente. Germany seemed exhausted and the prevailing military thought was that Germany had come close to collapse in 1916. In fact, Germany actually retreated from its positions on the Western Front to a more defensible line, showing the Entente that Germany was indeed weak. But battle proved otherwise. The Entente launched two massive offensives this year, the Nivelle Offensive and the Battle of Passchendaele. Both were bloodbaths and both made little progress. And by the end of 1917, it was the Entente on the verge of defeat—not Germany. After the collapse of the Nivelle Offensive, there were enormous mutinies amongst French soldiers who were sick of the war. Had Germany known the extent of the mutiny, it is unlikely France would have survived 1917. But the real nightmare unfolded in Russia. | **Why was the Entente Optimistic in 1917?**  **What was the result of the two Entente Offensives?**  **How bad were the French Mutinies?** |
| **Russian Revolution (1917):** the Russian people were sick of war and sick of their oppressive government and rose up against it. They quickly toppled the monarchy and established a republic. At first it was ruled by moderates, who still wanted to honor Russia’s alliance with the Entente. However, the Russian army was now a shadow of its former self and failed utterly in its only attempted offensive. Then in October, Vladimir Lenin returned to Russia and led a second revolution. This placed the more radical socialists into power and they quickly signed a peace treaty with Germany, ending the two-front war and giving Germany a huge amount of land. But most importantly, it allowed Germany to bring all of its eastern army to bear against the Entente in the West. | **Why did Russia overthrow its government?**  **What was the result of the Second Revolution?** |
| **America Joins (1917):** relations between America and Germany were good at the start of the war but had been deteriorating all war. In 1914, Britain cut the German communication cables to America. This meant that America would only get news of the war through Britain, so British propaganda was able to sway Americans. This was made worse when Germany began to conduct “unrestricted submarine warfare” against Britain. This meant that ANY ship sailing in British waters could be targeted. Hundreds of American sailors were killed by German torpedoes. Still, America’s president Woodrow Wilson kept America out. But then Britain intercepted a German telegraph to Mexico which promised Mexico the territories of Texas and New Mexico if Mexico supported a potential future war against Germany and America. This was the last straw and America went to war in 1917. | **Why was the cutting of cables such an important move for Britain?**  **What were the two big causes of America going to war with Germany?** |
| **Hundred Days Offensive (1918):** as the Spring Offensive came to an end, America finally joined the battle. Two million fresh American troops entered the line and together the Entente launched the last offensive of the war. Germany, exhausted and demoralized, crumbled before the entente. In 100 days, the German army was pushed all the way back to Germany. The final offensive inflicted over a million casualties on both sides. A German revolution started October 29th and by November 9th, a German Republic was proclaimed, ending the monarchy. The republic quickly surrendered and on November 11th, 1918, the war came to an end. | **How did the situation change at the end of the Spring Offensive?**  **What was the result of the Hundred Days Offensive?** |