**World History**

**Measurement Topic 3: Causes and Effects of World War I**

**Learning Target #1: Reasons Nations entered The Great War (WWI)**

There are four main reasons World War I occurred. **M**ilitarism, **A**lliances, **I**mperial Expansion and **N**ationalism coupled together with an assassination were the leading causes for the war.

In 1914 Western European nation-states were the most technologically advanced, wealthiest societies on earth. As a result of the Industrial Revolution, Western European nation-states built enormous industrial sectors, which dominated the world economy. All aspects of daily life were affected by modernization. Transportation, medicine, food production, education, housing and heating were all areas in which European societies experienced rapid growth and sophisticated improvement. Modernization created a feeling of superiority in Europe, and many Europeans considered their industrialized way of life to be the peak of world civilization. There was a reasons why any coming war would be destructive, the industrial revolution had given nations much more destructive guns and weapons than ever before.

**Militarism** is when a nation aggressively builds up large armies and navies. It led to the rise of large, sophisticated armies and navies as various European countries attempted to maintain militaristic parity with their rivals. European nations adopted a militaristic stance in the late 1800’s in order to acquire and protect colonies, as well as to prevent aggression by rivals. Britain’s enormous colonial empire (14 times the size of Britain itself) was maintained and protected by a huge navy that was as big as the next two biggest navies in the continent of Europe. **When Germany decided to increase the size of its navy considerably in the in the 1890’s, Britain considered it a threat and began an arms race intended to insure its naval superiority.** In 1906, Britain introduced the first *Dreadnought*, a battleship fitted with huge cannons and protected by thick armor. Germany answered by creating their own dreadnoughts. Germany also doubled the size of its army as Russia began to increase its military numbers. This further led to other nations increasing their armies, navies and weapons available. Before long, nations began to form alliances with other nations for protection and assistance should a conflict arise.

**Alliances** also began to be formed in the late 1800’s and early 1900’s. Alliances are formed when nations create an agreement to support each other (especially for protection). The alliance would provide money or supplies and support in times of war. Two main alliances were established between the main nations. The Triple Entente was the first alliance created between Britain, France and Russia. The second main alliance, the Triple Alliance, was between Germany, Austria-Hungry and Italy. As each country practice militarism and joined alliances, it gave each nation false hope that each side was stronger than the other, therefore they were itching to go to war to prove this point.

In 1888, Bismarck was fired by the new Emperor Wilhelm II of Germany who took a more aggressive stance. This caused Russia to sign a treaty with France, one of Germany’s rivals, to support one another in case Germany attacked either one. Wilhelm II also reversed policies against Britain by expanding its navy. Britain had no choice but to sign a treaty with France (1904) and Russia (1907), known as the **Triple Entente.** This left Europe in an unstable position in 1914. As each country practice militarism and joined alliances, it gave each nation a false hope that each side was stronger than the other and inclined to support the idea of a war for national glory were each nation was tied to one another in a series of binding military treaties.

**Imperialism** is when a country takes over new lands or countries and makes the part of their rule. By 1900 the British Empire extended over five continents and France had control of large areas of Africa. With the rise of industrialism countries needed new markets. The amount of lands 'owned' by Britain and France increased the rivalry with Germany who had entered the scramble to acquire colonies late and only had small areas of Africa.

**Nationalism** was one of the biggest factors that allowed countries to build up their armies and ultimately lead to war. European populations wholeheartedly supported their nations’ militarism largely because of the popularity of nationalism. Nationalism in this context is the devotion to the interest of one’s nation. National pride existed with both Germany and Italy as they recently had become united independent countries. The competition of colonialism also inspired nationalistic feeling as many Europeans kept maps of the world in their houses that showed their nation’s colonies colored with the national colors. Nationalism also had a romantic connection with militarism and imperialism as cavalry officers were considered the finest examples of German culture.

**Nationalism can also be defined as “aspirations for independence in a country under foreign domination”** and in this context nationalism also contributed to tensions in prewar Europe.

The event that **sparked the beginning of WWI** took place on June 28, 1914 when **Archduke Francis Ferdinand** (heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary) and his wife were **assassinated** by a Serbian terrorist. Austria-Hungary wanted to declare war on Serbia but Austria-Hungary was scared of Russia, Serbia’s ally would interfere, so Austria-Hungary asked Germany if Russia jumped in, if Germany would support Austria-Hungary. Germany agreed to support Austria-Hungary, so on July 28, 1914 Austria- Hungry declared war on Serbia.

At this point there were only two countries at war, Austria-Hungry and Serbia, however when Russia began mobilizing its army, **Germany took action and on August 1, 1914 it declared war on Russia**. Since France was also in an alliance with Russia and Germany’s war plan was to attack on both sides of its border (France and Russia at the same time), Germany also declared war on France on August 3, 1914. Since England was an ally to Russia and France in the Triple Entente Alliance, England declared war on Germany on August 4, 1914.

By August 4, 1914, England, France and Russia (the Triple Entente alliance) were at war with Austria-Hungary, Germany and Italy, (the Triple Alliance).

MT3-LT1 Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Bk:\_\_\_\_\_\_Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Answer the following questions with complete sentences.

1. List the reason WWI started.
2. How did militarism help start WWI?
3. What were the names of the alliances and who was part of the alliances?
4. How did the alliances draw the nations into war after the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand?
5. How did nationalism help cause WWI?
6. What event ignited/sparked WWI?
7. Who declared war on whom?