

Chapter 4 Conflict and tension, 1894–1918

4.1 The alliance system

REVISED

By 1914 Germany had become one of the most powerful states in Europe

- Germany had only united from a collection of smaller states in 1870.
- This followed a successful war against France, which also led to Germany taking control of **Alsace-Lorraine** (an important industrial area of France).
- German industry grew rapidly. By 1914 it was outproducing Britain.
- Germany formed an alliance with Austria-Hungary (1872) and Italy (1882).
- By 1892, Germany had become worried about being 'encircled' by France and Russia, who had also become allies.

Key point

Tensions between the major powers of Europe led to the creation of two powerful rival alliances.

Austria-Hungary and Italy joined Germany to form the Triple Alliance

- This was a secret agreement that each of the countries in the alliance (also known as the **Central Powers**) would defend each other from attack.
- Austria-Hungary was a huge empire. It contained a number of different nationalities and ethnic groups.
- Some of these groups, such as Czechs and Serbs, had been seeking their independence from the Austro-Hungarian Empire.
- Serbia, which had recently become an independent country on the border with Austria-Hungary, was getting more powerful and posed a threat.
- Serbia was also supported by Russia.
- Italy was not a major military power, but had joined the alliance in the hope of building an empire of its own.

France and Russia formed a secret alliance in 1892

- Russia and France were concerned about the growing power of Germany.
- In response, France had been building up its industry and military.
- France wanted to regain Alsace-Lorraine, which it had lost to Germany.
- Russia was the largest power in Europe and was building a huge army.
- Russia was economically backward and very **agrarian** (its economy was based on farming).
- France lent money to Russia to help build up its industry.
- Russia was keen to defend the Serbs as both were part of an ethnic group called **Slavs**. This caused tension between Russia and Austria-Hungary.

By 1907, Britain, France and Russia formed the Triple Entente

- France and Russia had long been the biggest threats to Britain, but this had begun to change.
- Germany was increasingly seen as a threat as the **Kaiser** (the Emperor of Germany) wanted to build up a German navy and empire.
- Russia had been weakened by war with Japan. France and Britain had ended conflict over their colonies in North Africa.
- Britain signed an agreement with France in 1904 and with Russia in 1907.

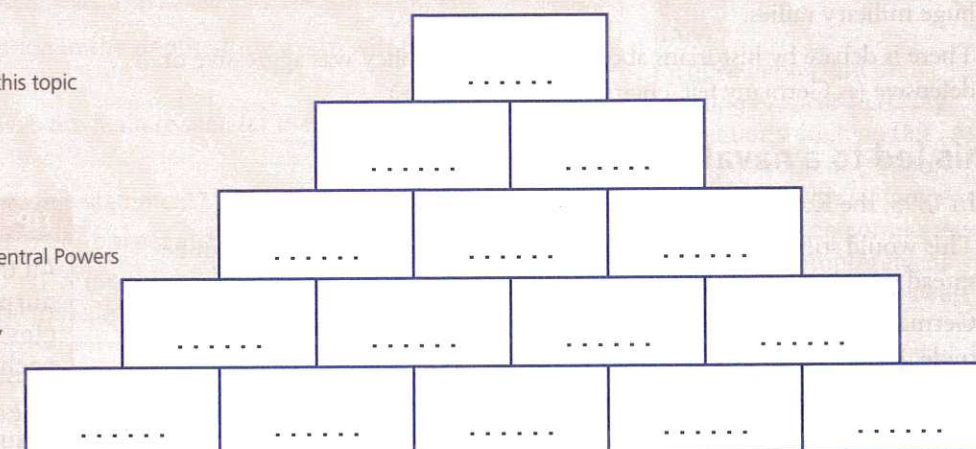
Crises in Morocco and the Balkans had already threatened war in Europe



Topic summary

Complete the pyramid below to summarise the key points:

- **One** word to summarise this topic
- **Two** alliances in Europe
- **Three** countries of the Central Powers
- **Four** reasons why France, Russia and Britain formed an alliance
- **Five** words to describe the aims of the Kaiser



Spot the opinion in a source

The first question on your depth study paper will be based on a source. You will be told what its viewpoint is and you have to explain how you know that.

Study Source A. Source A is supporting the formation of the Triple Entente. How do you know? (4 marks)

Annotate the cartoon to show how this message is conveyed.



Source A A French cartoon from 1907 showing a figure representing Kaiser Wilhelm being kicked by France, Russia and Great Britain.

Test yourself

- Why was Germany seen as a threat by France and Russia?
- Why did Germany feel threatened by the situation in Europe?
- Why did Britain form alliances with France and Russia?
- How did the Moroccan and Bosnian crises increase the tension in Europe?

4.2 Anglo-German rivalry

REVISED

Britain had followed a policy of splendid isolation

- Britain had the largest Empire and navy in the world.
- Its approach to **foreign policy** was known as 'splendid isolation'. This meant avoiding getting dragged into alliances in Europe.
- Germany was Britain's main trading partner outside the Empire.
- The monarchy in Britain and Germany was also linked by blood (i.e. they were family relatives).
- However, Britain would oppose any attempt by Germany to gain colonies or develop its navy.

Germany developed a more aggressive foreign policy

- Wilhelm II wanted Germany to have a more important role in world affairs.
- He wanted Germany to build up an Empire and have influence in Europe.
- This would be achieved through a large navy, intimidation and **diplomacy** (negotiation with other countries).
- This policy was known as **Weltpolitik** (world politics).
- Germany was also very **militaristic** (celebrated military strength) and held huge military rallies.
- There is debate by historians about whether this policy was aggressive or defensive (as Germany felt 'encircled' by its enemies).

This led to a naval arms race

- In 1898, the Kaiser announced plans for a large German navy.
- This would still be far smaller than the British Navy, but it would not be spread out across an empire like the British Navy was.
- Germany insisted that the navy was designed to protect Germany's overseas trade. However, Britain saw this as a threat.
- In 1906, the **HMS Dreadnought** was launched. This was a new class of more powerful warship.
- In 1908, Germany launched four Dreadnoughts which brought it close to Britain's total.
- By 1914, Germany had 17 Dreadnoughts and Britain had 29.

The European powers were also building up large armies and making plans for war

- As a result of the alliance system and tensions in Europe, many countries began to think that a war was unavoidable.
- All of the major powers increased the size of their armies.
- By 1910, France, Britain, Russia and Germany all had armies of nearly one million men or more.
- The powers also developed war plans in preparation for conflict.
- The German **Schlieffen Plan** prepared for a fast strike on France before turning their forces on Russia who would be slow to **mobilise** (have their army ready for battle).
- The French **Plan 17** also planned for a quick war, with the army marching rapidly into the centre of Germany.
- Britain also prepared to send a well-trained **British Expeditionary Force** of 150,000 men to France to fight Germany if they attacked.

Key point

Tensions between Britain and Germany led to a huge build up of naval power at the same time as the powers in Europe built up their armies.

TIP

All the key terms in **purple** are defined in the glossary at the end of each chapter.

Make sure that you can spell the key terms, know what they mean and aim to use them in your written work.



Test yourself

- 1 What was Weltpolitik?
- 2 Why was there a naval arms race between Britain and Germany?
- 3 How were the European powers preparing for war?



Develop the explanation

Complete the table to explain why each of the following increased the tension in Europe.

General statement	Supporting detail
The Kaiser encouraged a policy of Weltpolitik.	<i>This meant that Germany would try to build up its navy and empire.</i>
The Kaiser announced that Germany would build a large navy.	
Britain launched the first Dreadnought in 1906.	
Each power developed a war plan.	
The powers built up their armies.	



Improve the paragraph

The highest mark question in the depth study exam will be an essay writing task like this:

'German foreign policy was the main reason for the increasing tension in Europe by 1914.'

How far do you agree with this statement? (16 marks)

This needs well argued, clear paragraphs full of supporting evidence.

Below is a paragraph answering this question. It is missing one key feature. Work out what is missing and rewrite the paragraph to improve it.

German foreign policy was one of the main reasons for tension. The German ruler wanted Germany to be more powerful and made speeches about this. To become more powerful, Germany would have to build up weapons. This threatened other countries, and so other countries grouped together and built up their armies. This made a war much more likely.

TIP

There is no right or wrong answer to essay questions such as this. As long as you can support your view with evidence you can agree completely, disagree completely, or write a balanced answer.

4.3 The outbreak of war

REVISED

Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated by Serbian nationalists

- Franz Ferdinand was visiting Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia, which was under Austrian control.
- The assassination was carried out by a group called the **Black Hand Gang**. They were Serbian nationalists who wanted Bosnia to be free from Austria and join with Serbia.
- The first attempt to throw a bomb at the royal car was unsuccessful. However, this led to a change in the planned route and later in the day the Archduke's driver got lost.
- The car stopped just metres away from one of the assassins, **Gavrilo Princip**, who shot the Archduke and his wife. Both were killed.

Existing tensions in the Balkans dragged other European powers into the conflict

- Austria-Hungary decided to deal harshly with Serbia following the assassination.
- Serbia had increased in power due to a series of wars in the Balkans. It was now the most powerful country in the region.
- It also had the support of Russia, who had become increasingly aggressive after being forced to back down in 1909.
- Austria was keen to reduce the power of Serbia and strengthen their control in the Balkans. Germany was keen to show that it had a strong influence in Europe.
- Austrian nationalists also saw Serbs as inferior.

The July crisis escalated the conflict

- On 23 July, Austria sent an **ultimatum** to Serbia. This was a list of demands that Serbia had to accept or face war.
- The demands were very harsh, however, Serbia was keen to avoid war and accepted nine out of ten demands.
- However, they were unwilling to accept Austria interfering in the Serbian justice system to punish the assassins.
- Serbia offered to allow the matter to be settled at the International Court, but Austria refused.
- On 28 July, Austria declared war against Serbia. On 30 July, Russia mobilised its forces against Austria and Germany, and Germany declared war on Russia on 1 August.
- However, at this stage the conflict was only in Eastern Europe.

The Schlieffen Plan dragged Western Europe into the conflict

- Germany had to act quickly to carry out their plan to defeat France before facing Russia.
- As a result, the German Army began a planned invasion of France, hoping for victory in six weeks.
- The German plan involved attacking France through Belgium. A treaty in 1839 had promised that Belgium **neutrality** (its right to stay out of conflicts) would be respected.

Key point

The pre-existing tensions in Europe caused the assassination of Franz Ferdinand to escalate into a full European war.

Key dates: 1914

28 June: Franz Ferdinand assassinated

28 July: Austria attacks Serbia

30 July: Russia mobilises its army

1 August: Germany declares war on Russia

2 August: Britain prepares its warships

3 August: Germany declares war on France

4 August: Germany invades Belgium; Britain and Belgium declare war on Germany

6 August: Austria declares war on Russia

12 August: Britain and France declare war on Austria

- German troops invaded Belgium on 4 August. Britain sent an ultimatum to Germany ordering them to withdraw.
- This did not happen and so at midnight on the 4 August, Britain declared war on Germany. Austria then declared war on Russia on 6 August.

The war quickly became a stalemate

- Strong resistance meant the German Army took longer than expected to move through Belgium.
- Russia also managed to mobilise more quickly than expected which forced the Germans to move 100,000 troops East, and the British Expeditionary Force managed to slow the German advance.
- A combined British and French force managed to hold the Germans at the **Battle of the Marne** and even succeeded in pushing back the German Army.
- By early September, both sides were digging trenches to defend the lands they held.
- Throughout October, both sides tried to **outflank** the enemy (manoeuvre around their lines) in the 'race to the sea', but neither side succeeded.

Structure the detail

Question three in your depth study exam will ask you to write an account. For example:

Write an account of the events of June–August 1914 to show how these led to the outbreak of a European war. (8 marks)

Below are a number of key events in 1914. Put these in order and structure them into three paragraphs to answer the exam question.

- A Austria declared war on Serbia.
- B Russia mobilised to defend Serbia.
- C Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated by Serbian nationalists.
- D Germany enacted the Schlieffen Plan and began an invasion of Belgium.
- E Austria sent a harsh ultimatum to Serbia.
- F Britain declared war on Germany.
- G Britain sent Germany an ultimatum.
- H Serbia refused one of the ten demands.

Develop the explanation

Explain why each of the following led to the war becoming a stalemate by the end of 1914.

Factor	Explanation
Belgian resistance	<i>This slowed the German advance and gave more time for the British and French to prepare defences.</i>
The British Expeditionary Force	
Russian mobilisation	
The Battle of the Marne	
Trenches	

Test yourself

- 1 Why did Austria issue a harsh ultimatum to Serbia?
- 2 Why did Russia and Germany become involved in the conflict?
- 3 Why did the war spread to Western Europe?

TIP

When you write an account, you don't write everything you know about a topic. You have to select carefully and refer everything back to the focus of the question. In this case how the events led to the outbreak of war.

4.4 Tactics and technology on the Western Front

REVISED

Both sides on the Western Front dug trenches

- By the end of 1914, a network of trenches ran from the sea to the Alps.
- There were **front line trenches** for fighting troops and reserve and support trenches further back which allowed troops to rest and be resupplied.
- The trenches were an effective defensive tactic. They protected troops from snipers and artillery attacks.
- Trenches reduced the effectiveness of cavalry and so **infantry charges** (attacks led by foot soldiers) became the main form of attack.
- Major infantry charges were known as 'going over the top'. They were usually preceded by an artillery barrage. It was hoped that these would eventually wear down the enemy's defences.
- Infantry tactics improved throughout the war. The use of artillery became better coordinated and troops were protected by camouflage and steel helmets (introduced in 1916).

Key point

Fighting was characterised by trench warfare and infantry charges. However, new tactics and technologies were developed throughout the war.

Trench conditions could be very unpleasant

- Large-scale attacks were not common. Soldiers spent a lot of time digging or repairing trenches or moving equipment.
- They also performed **sentry** duty (watching for enemy attacks).
- Sappers** tried to mine under enemy trenches.
- There were also regular small attacks called **trench raids**, which would attempt to capture prisoners or gather information.
- Trench conditions could be appalling, especially in the early stages of the war. In the summer the smell in the trenches was awful.
- In winter they would become waterlogged, leading to problems such as **trench foot**.
- Rats and lice were also a serious problem.

However, many soldiers found ways to cope with these conditions

- Most soldiers believed the war was justified and were **patriotic** and proud to fight for their country.
- For some, the war gave a sense of adventure. It was often soldiers' first experience of travel.
- Soldiers were also given a lot of leisure time. Troop rotation meant that soldiers would spend about 10 days per month in the trenches and as little as three days in front line trenches.
- Comradeship** was also very important to soldiers, many signed up in 'Pals' battalions' with people they knew and many developed close friendships with their fellow soldiers.
- Soldiers' morale was also kept up by letters from home, good food (particularly in the British Army) and by luxuries like chocolate and cigarettes.
- However, troops also knew that there were serious punishments for breaking rules in the army. Soldiers could be **court-martialled** (tried in an army court) and even executed.

TIP

Remember that all sources are useful for something. It all depends on what you are using them for. Never dismiss a source as useless because it is one-sided or incomplete. It will be still be very useful for finding out about the attitudes of the person who made it.

Technology developed significantly during the war

- Although trench warfare continued on the Western Front until 1918, new tactics and technology meant that the fighting changed.
- The biggest development was artillery, which became crucial to any successful infantry charge. By 1918, barrages were carefully timed to protect the infantry and allow them to attack successfully.
- Each country produced thousands of shells per month for use on the Western Front.
- Machine guns offered a huge defensive advantage from the start of the war. By 1918 most platoons had their own machine guns.
- Poison gas was first used in 1915. Although gas masks were quickly developed to protect troops, more effective poison gas continued to be developed throughout the war.
- Planes were used for **reconnaissance** (spying on enemy troops). By 1915, planes were also fitted with machine guns and used for attack.
- Tanks were developed towards the end of the war, but were unreliable.

Test yourself

- What was trench warfare?
- What was life like for soldiers in the trenches?
- How did technology change throughout the war?

Evaluate the usefulness of sources

The second question in your exam will be about the usefulness of sources. For example:

Study Sources A and B. How useful are these sources to a historian studying life in the trenches? (12 marks)

Read through the sources and complete the table below to summarise their usefulness.

	Content (what it says)	Provenance (who made it)
Source A	<i>This is useful because it describes some of the jobs soldiers might have done, it says...</i>	
Source B		

Source A Private Stanley Terry of 15 North End, East Grinstead, wrote a letter to his family in November, 1915. The letter was not censored.

We have just come out of the trenches after being in for six days and up to our waists in water. While we were in the trenches one of the Germans came over to our trench for a cigarette and then back again, and he was not fired at. We and the Germans started walking about in the open between the two trenches, repairing them, and there was no firing at all. I think they are all getting fed up with it.

Source B Photograph of soldiers unloading shells from a train Third Battle of Ypres.



4.5 Key battles on the Western Front

REVISED

In 1916, Germany launched a huge offensive at Verdun

- Neither side was able to break the stalemate in 1915. Britain, France and Germany had all faced heavy losses in attempts to break through enemy lines.
- Falkenhayn, the German commander, developed a strategy of **attrition**. This involved repeated large-scale attacks which would eventually break down enemy resistance.
- The German plan was to launch a huge attack at Verdun, an area surrounded by strong French forts.
- The attack began in February 1916. The French managed to hold on but both sides suffered appalling casualties.
- These casualties were fairly even, so attrition was not working. However, the German Army had more resources and could hold out for longer.
- By July 1916, over 700,000 men had been killed and the French Army was close to collapse.

In July 1916, Britain launched an offensive at the Somme

- Before the attack at Verdun, Britain and France had been planning a joint offensive along the River Somme.
- The British were forced to launch the attack in July to relieve the pressure on the French Army.
- The British were led by Douglas Haig. He warned the government in advance that the offensive would result in huge casualties.
- In an attempt to minimise losses, the attack was preceded by a huge artillery bombardment lasting a week.
- However, this failed to destroy German barbed wire and deep German dug-outs meant soldiers were generally well-protected.
- When the bombardment ended, German soldiers rushed to set up machine gun positions. The British advanced against these defences, suffering 57,000 casualties on the first day.
- Fighting on the Somme lasted until November and casualties on both sides were around 1.25 million men.
- The British did manage to push back the German Army.

Huge losses continued in 1917 at Passchendaele

- The Battle of Passchendaele (or the Third Battle of Ypres) began in July 1917.
- The British detonated mines under German artillery positions at Messines and caused huge casualties.
- However, heavy rain had made the ground extremely boggy and the British infantry struggled to advance. The British again suffered heavy losses.
- Tanks were used in November in an attempt to break the deadlock, but without infantry support they were not able to hold gained ground.
- British and French losses were over a quarter of a million, and for Germany the losses were even greater.

Key point

Both sides launched major offensives across 1916 and 1917 in an attempt to break the deadlock, suffering extremely high casualties.

TIP

The examiners want you to use relevant and detailed knowledge in your answers. In your revision you should try to remember a specific piece of information associated with each general idea.



Test yourself

- What was attrition?
- Why were casualties so high in 1916?
- What were the key events of the Battles of Verdun, the Somme and Passchendaele?



Topic summary

Complete the mind map below to summarise the key battles of 1916–17.

Verdun

Aims: To wear down French Army.

Events: Huge German offensive from February to July 1917.

Impact: 700,000 casualties, French Army close to breaking.

Passchendaele

Aims:

Events:

Impact:

The key battles of 1916–17

Somme

Aims:

Events:

Impact:



Improve the paragraph

Write an account of the key battles of 1916 to show why there were such high casualties on the Western Front. (8 marks)

The paragraph below answers the exam question. However, it is missing one key feature of a good answer. Work out what is missing and rewrite the paragraph to improve it.

The attack on the Somme was another example of war by attrition. The British Army bombarded the German trenches for a week before the advance. They also set off huge mines under German positions. On the morning of 1st July 1916 British soldiers went over the top. There were 57,000 casualties on the first day. The fighting on the Somme continued until November 1916, with over 1.25 million casualties on both sides.

4.6 The war on other fronts

REVISED

The British planned to attack on a second front in the Middle East

- There were a number of other theatres of war. On the **Eastern Front**, Russia, Austria and Germany were suffering huge casualties.
- Turkey was also fighting on the side of the Central Powers and there was fighting between the British and the Turks in the Middle East.
- Winston Churchill devised a plan to break the stalemate by attacking through a stretch of water called the **Dardanelles Strait**.
- This would allow supplies to be transported to Russia.
- The British Navy launched an attack in March 1915, bombarding the forts which lined both sides of the Dardanelles.
- However, mines had been laid in the strait and this combined with shell fire from the forts made it impossible for British ships to advance.

An attempted land attack at Gallipoli was a failure for the British

- As a result of this failure, the plan was changed. A land army would instead have to capture the peninsula before another naval attack.
- British, French and **ANZAC** troops (soldiers from Australia and New Zealand) landed on Helles Beach.
- However, the beach was overlooked by hills and the Turks had dug trenches and strengthened their defences.
- The Allied troops were forced to dig their own trenches, but conditions in the heat were dreadful and disease spread quickly.
- A second attempted attack on another beach also failed and by the winter it was clear that the operation had failed.

There were very few major naval battles during the war

- Before the war, both sides had developed huge navies to prepare for a war at sea.
- Naval tactics continued to develop during the war. Radios were improved to allow ships to communicate and torpedoes were developed.
- Submarines were also developed and used particularly effectively by the Germans.
- However, the only major sea battle of the war was at **Jutland** in 1916.
- Germany lost 13 ships in this battle. The British lost 14 ships and in general these were larger, more powerful ships.
- However, it was the last time the German fleet was able to fight and so Britain controlled the sea for the rest of the war.

However, control of the sea was crucial for supplies

- The main aim of the British Navy was to prevent supplies reaching Germany by creating a **blockade**.
- This was particularly successful after Jutland. By 1918, many Germans were starving and there was a **mutiny** (rebellion against the leadership) in the German Navy.

Key point

Although there were no major battles at sea, the naval war was crucial for supplies to each power. An Allied attempt to break through in the Middle East was a failure.

- The German response was to use **U-boats** (submarines) to sink ships bringing supplies to Britain.
- This strategy eventually helped to bring the USA into the war, as American ships were also attacked by the Germans.
- The British also developed the **convoy system** to protect their ships. Large ships were supported by fast destroyers and other anti-submarine defences.

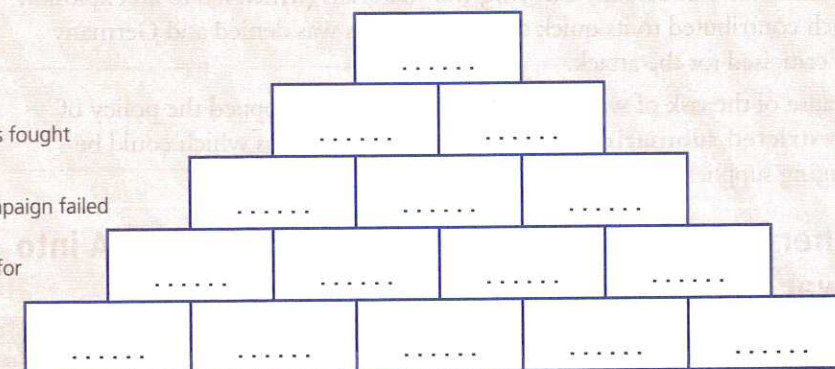
TIP

In your exam you have about a minute writing time per mark! So don't waste time on the low-tariff questions. Save time for the 12-mark questions.

Topic summary

Complete the summary pyramid below to summarise the main fighting on other fronts.

- **One** example of a key naval battle
- **Two** other fronts where the war was fought
- **Three** reasons why the Gallipoli campaign failed
- **Four** words to describe the reasons for the Gallipoli campaign
- **Five** words to describe the convoy system



Spot the opinion in a source

Source A is suggesting that the Gallipoli invasion was a disaster for the Allies. How do you know? (4 marks)

Complete the sentence starters below:

- In the source there is a figure representing the Turkish Army. His size is supposed to represent...
- He is sweeping away soldiers. This is supposed to show that...
- From my own knowledge, the Gallipoli invasion failed because...

Source A A cartoon commenting on the Gallipoli invasion. The figure with the broom represents the Turkish Army.



Test yourself

- 1 Why did the British launch an attack on the Dardanelles?
- 2 Why was the Gallipoli campaign a failure?
- 3 What was the importance of the Battle of Jutland?

4.7 Changes in 1917

The USA had supported the Allied war effort throughout the war

- The USA was neutral at the start of the war. Most people in America did not support the USA getting involved in the conflict.
- However, the USA did help the allies by giving them loans and equipment.
- In 1915, a German U-boat attack on a passenger ship called the *Lusitania* resulted in the death of over 1,000 people; 128 of these were Americans.
- The *Lusitania* was actually carrying war materials (which led to an explosion which contributed to its quick sinking) but this was denied and Germany was criticised for the attack.
- Because of the risk of war with America, Germany stopped the policy of **unrestricted submarine warfare** (attacking any ships which could be bringing supplies to Britain).

Further German attacks in 1917 brought the USA into the war

- By 1917, the situation for Germany was becoming desperate. As a result, they resumed unrestricted submarine warfare.
- This was very effective in the short term and severely limited supplies to Britain.
- In early 1917, the **Zimmerman telegram** was discovered which showed that Germany planned to form an alliance against the USA with Mexico.
- This, and attacks on American ships, led to the USA joining the war on the Allied side in April 1917.
- The US Navy was the third largest in the world and now supported British ships crossing the Atlantic. More loans were also made to Britain.
- However, it would take a long time to train US troops and produce equipment.
- By the summer of 1918 around one million US troops had landed in Europe, making a huge contribution to the Allied war effort.

Russia left the war after revolutions in 1917

- Russia had been badly affected by the war, and in March 1917 these problems contributed to a revolution.
- The Tsar (the Russian emperor) was overthrown and replaced by a temporary government.
- The government found it hard to organise the war effort and a further offensive in June was a disaster. Germany began to inflict heavy defeats on Russia.
- In November there was second revolution led by the **Bolsheviks** (a Russian Communist party). They immediately ended the war.
- Russia was forced to sign the harsh **Treaty of Brest-Litovsk** which gave Germany control of huge areas of land which could supply important raw materials to their army.
- More importantly, the Germans could now transfer hundreds of thousands of troops to the Western Front.

REVISED

Key point

Changes in 1917 led to the USA joining the war on the Allied side. However, the end of the Russian war effort had a more immediate impact on the Western Front.



Test yourself

- 1 What was unrestricted submarine warfare?
- 2 Why did the USA join the war?
- 3 What was the impact of Russian withdrawal from the war?



Develop the explanation

Complete the table to explain how each of the following affected the war in 1917.

Factor	Explanation
Unrestricted submarine warfare	Led to attacks on American ships which were one reason for US involvement in the war.
The Zimmerman telegram	
USA joining the war	
The abdication of the Tsar	
The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk	



Structure the detail

Write an account of the events of 1917 to show how they changed the situation on the Western Front. (8 marks)

Below are some key events in the development of the war through 1917. How would you structure these into paragraphs for the question above?

You will need to think about the following:

- Which order these events occurred in.
- How you could divide them into paragraphs. This could be key turning points or periods or themes (for example, 'the war at sea').
- How you could link these to the changing situation on the Western Front.

What other details you might want to include or develop.

- A The US Navy helped to protect British shipping.
- B Food and supplies were running short in Germany.
- C The Tsar was forced to abdicate.
- D Russia was ruled by a temporary government.
- E Russia withdrew from the war.
- F Germany sent hundreds of thousands of extra troops to the Western Front.
- G Germany made a secret deal with Mexico to attack the USA.
- H The USA joined the war.
- I The Bolsheviks took power in Russia.
- J The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was signed.

TIP

Remember you are not only telling a story. Your account needs to explain the issue in the question. So, to check you are doing that make sure that every paragraph has a clear link back to the issue in the question.

And remember to use words like 'because', 'therefore', 'this meant that' or 'so' to remind you to explain rather than just describe.

4.8 The war in 1918

The German Army gambled on an all-out attack in 1918

- With the surrender of Russia, the Germans had an opportunity to divert troops for a huge final attack on the Western Front.
- However, they knew they had to win a quick victory as 50,000 US troops were arriving in Europe every month. American tanks and artillery were also being shipped to France in huge numbers.
- The blockade had been very successful and the German Army lacked equipment. Worse still, food was running out for both civilians and soldiers.
- The British Royal Flying Corps was also successfully using airplanes against German submarines.
- Military tactics had developed a great deal, with a new focus on attack. This was supported by better tanks and improved artillery.
- The German Army had also developed highly trained **storm troopers** who specialised in making rapid, penetrating attacks against enemy lines.
- The plan was named the **Ludendorff Offensive** (or Spring Offensive) after the German General Ludendorff. It was launched in March 1918.

Despite initial success, the offensive ultimately failed

- The Germans launched a huge artillery bombardment, which was much more concentrated and shorter than previous attacks.
- Small groups of storm troopers then attacked along the entire line, which prevented the Allies from building up their defences in any one place.
- The German Army broke through Allied lines and made rapid progress, advancing 64 km. German artillery was now in range of Paris.
- However, casualties were huge (around 400,000 German soldiers) and supplies couldn't keep up with the advance.
- Many German soldiers stopped to loot food and discipline was poor.
- By May the advance had stopped.

The Allies launched a huge and successful counter-attack

- By August the Germans had still made no more progress and it was clear their attack was over.
- The Allies were now strengthened by US troops and supplies and their armies were well-fed, well-trained and well-equipped.
- A counter-attack was launched on 8 August which used the latest tactics to break the German lines. It was planned jointly by French commander **Foch** and British commander **Haig**.
- Artillery was used in a **creeping barrage** which slowly moved forward to provide a smokescreen for the infantry advance.
- At the same time, tanks punched holes in German lines and aircraft launched attacks behind the lines.
- This became known as the German Army's 'Black Day'.
- By October, the German Army was in full retreat.

REVISED

Key point

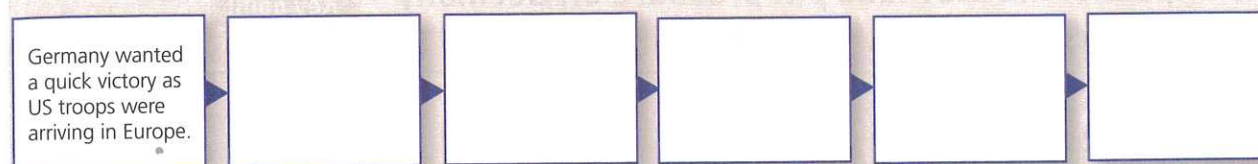
In 1918, the German Army launched an all-out attack to end the war. This ran out of steam and an Allied counter-attack forced the Germans into retreat.

Test yourself

- 1 Why did the German offensive fail?
- 2 Why was the Allied counter-attack successful?

Key events

Complete the flow chart below to summarise the key events on the Western Front in 1918.



Support or challenge?

'New tactics were the main reason why the German Army was defeated in 1918.' How far do you agree with this statement? (16 marks)

Look at the statement in the exam question. Decide if each of the points in the table supports or challenges this statement.

Points	Support	Challenge
German troops stopped to loot food.		X
There were major food shortages in Germany.		
Supplies could not keep up with the German advance.		
Allied forces used creeping barrages to protect infantry advances.		
Tanks were used to penetrate German lines.		
50,000 US troops were arriving in Europe every month.		

Essay plan

The secret of writing a good essay is good planning. Here is a plan for answering the question above. Read through the advice then map out what you say in each of the paragraphs. Then either write a full essay or just practice writing a conclusion.

Paragraph	Purpose/points to include
Introduction	You state your view on how far you agree or disagree. This sets your essay off on a positive track and gives you an argument to hold on to throughout your answer. The question asks 'how far you agree ...' so words and phrases such as 'mostly', 'partly', 'totally' will be useful.
Paragraph 1 Reasons to agree.	Explain how the issue mentioned in the statement (new tactics) helped lead to Germany's defeat. This helps ensure you stay focused on the actual statement. Make sure you support everything you say with detailed and precise knowledge.
Paragraph 2 Reasons to disagree.	Explain at least one other factor that led to Germany's defeat (for example the success of the naval blockade). It's better to explain one cause thoroughly than more than one superficially. You only have 20 minutes for this whole essay. Link these reasons if you think they linked.
Conclusion	Restate your judgement as to how far you agree or disagree and give one key argument as to why. This should be easy if you have kept your focus through the essay. SPaG: check your work and correct it if necessary.

TIP

Candidates find it hard to give time to planning in an actual exam which is why it is very important to practise it before the exam so that it becomes instinctive.

4.9 German surrender

REVISED

The impact of the blockade put pressure on Germany to surrender

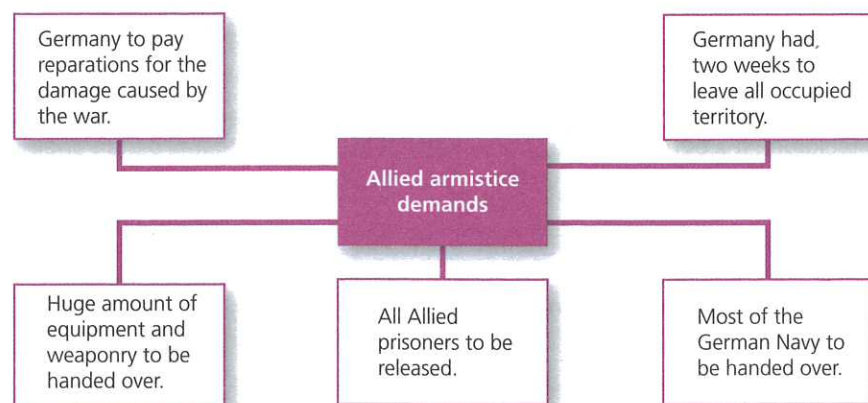
- As well as the collapse of the German military, there were huge problems on the home front.
- Over half a million German civilians died of starvation or starvation-related diseases in 1917 and 1918.
- Supplies of even basic foodstuffs had run out by early 1918.
- In Berlin there were riots and protests in response to the food shortage.
- At the German naval base of Kiel there was a mutiny.

The Kaiser abdicated in November 1918

- As riots spread through German cities and the military situation collapsed, there was increasing pressure for the Kaiser to **abdicate** (step down).
- While the Kaiser was in power, he was involved in the negotiations for German surrender.
- Many politicians felt that they would be in a better position to lead negotiations.
- The largest German political party, the **Social Democrats**, threatened to resign from the government.
- As a result, the Kaiser abdicated and Germany became a **republic** (a country without a monarchy).

Germany agreed to allied demands and signed an armistice

- There were different views about the terms of any **armistice** (peace agreement).
- The US President Woodrow Wilson drew up a list of **Fourteen Points**, which he believed were a fair settlement which would avoid a future war.
- Germany hoped to sign an agreement which was based on the Fourteen Points.
- However, Germany was presented with a list of much harsher demands. Many of these were designed to prevent Germany from resuming fighting:



- On 11 November, the armistice was signed. The war was over.
- In January 1919 full peace negotiations started. These eventually produced the **Treaty of Versailles**.

Key point

The German Army and home front collapsed and in November 1918, Germany was forced to sign an armistice.

Test yourself

- Why did the Kaiser abdicate?
- What were the Fourteen Points?
- What were the terms of the armistice?

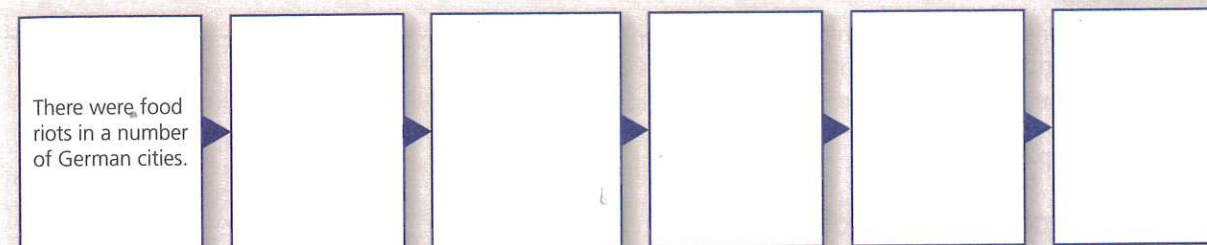
TIP

A possible writing frame for an answer to a 'usefulness of sources' question will be in four paragraphs, two for each source (one on provenance and another on content).

In your exam you won't actually be asked to compare the two sources but you can write about how they are more useful together than separately.

Key events

Complete the flow chart below to summarise the key events leading up the signing of the armistice in November 1918.



Evaluate the usefulness of sources

Study Sources A and B. How useful are these sources to a historian studying the reaction to the armistice in Britain? (12 marks)

Source A The front page of the Daily Mirror 12 November 1918.



Source B An extract from the diary of Michael McDonagh written on 11 November 1918. McDonagh was an Irish journalist living in London during the First World War.

I was stunned by the news [but] I felt no joyous exultation. There was relief that the War was over, because it could not now end, as it might have done, in the crowning tragedy of the defeat of the Allies. I sorrowed for the millions of young men who had lost their lives; and perhaps more so for the living than for the dead - for the bereaved mothers and wives whose reawakened grief must in this hour of triumph be unbearably poignant. But what gave me the greatest shock was my feeling in regard to myself. A melancholy took possession of me when I came to realize, as I did quickly and keenly, that a great and unique episode in my life was past and gone, and, as I hoped as well as believed, would never be repeated.

Complete a table like this to summarise the usefulness of the two sources. Then use your table to answer the exam question.

	Content	Provenance
Source A	This is useful because it suggests the mood of the country was...	
Source B		

Exam focus: Conflict and Tension, 1894–1918

Model answers

Here are model answers for each of the question types on this part of the exam. The annotations highlight what makes it a good answer.

Study Source A on page 87.

Question 1: Opinion of a source

Source A is suggesting that the Gallipoli invasion was a disaster for the Allies. How do you know? (4 marks)

Source A is suggesting that the Gallipoli invasion was a disaster as the Allies had no chance of defeating the Turkish army and taking control of the Strait. In the source a large figure representing the Turks is sweeping away the Allied forces, suggesting it was easy for them to defend the peninsula. This was the case as the Turkish forces had dug a complex network of trenches at Helles Beach which bogged down Allied forces in stalemate causing heavy losses and eventual withdrawal.

The answer opens by addressing the question directly. This shows the examiner that you have read and understood the question but it also helps to remind you to focus your answer on the question.

The answer refers to a detail in the source and explains what this suggests.

The answer uses a range of contextual knowledge to explain the details in the source.

Study Sources B and C on page 83.

Question 2: Usefulness of sources

Study Sources B and Source C. How useful are these two sources to a historian studying life in the trenches? (12 marks)

Source B is useful for giving a sense of conditions in the trenches. The author describes having been 'six days up to our waists in water' which suggests very poor conditions. Early in the war (this letter was written in 1915) conditions in the trenches could be very poor, and heavy rains could cause heavy waterlogging. This could also lead to conditions such as trench foot. However, later in the war trenches were built with better drainage and hygiene improved considerably. The author also mentions that he is coming out of the trenches after 6 days which shows how regular troop rotation was used to make sure troops did not spend too long at the front. Troops on average spent about 60% of their time out of the trenches. As this letter was uncensored it gives a useful soldier's view of conditions without army interference, but many troops self-censored their letters to avoid upsetting relatives and friends.

Source C is also useful as it shows us some of the jobs which troops had to do. In this image a group of soldiers are building a footbridge over a river. Much of troops' time away from the front lines would be spent building or repairing trenches (as mentioned in Source B) and other constructions. Soldiers would also spend much of their time moving supplies and equipment. The source is useful as it is a photograph which appears to have been taken spontaneously as none of the soldiers are posing. The image does not particularly glorify the war effort, and so it is unlikely to be a propaganda photograph. Instead, it is a good example of an image of the more routine aspects of trench life and therefore is particularly useful for understanding what troops spent much of their time doing.

This answer opens by directly addressing the question. This shows the examiner that you have understood, but will also help you to focus your answer as you write.

In these sections the answer references a range of details from the source content and explains what they can tell us by linking clearly to the question.

Here the answer uses contextual knowledge to test the claims made in the sources.

Here the answer refers to the provenance of the sources and uses this to judge their utility.

Question 3: Write an account

Write an account of the events of June–August 1914 to show how these led to the outbreak of a European war. (8 marks)

On 28 June 1914, Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated in Sarajevo. The assassination was carried out by the Black Hand Gang, a Serbian nationalist group who hoped to gain independence for Bosnia from the Austro-Hungarian Empire and unite Bosnia into a Greater Serbia. As Serbia had been growing in power in a series of Balkan Wars and now represented a threat to Austrian dominance in the region, Austria saw this as an opportunity to deal with Serbia. Germany promised to support Austria, and as a result Austria issued a harsh ten-point ultimatum which Serbia would have to agree to in order to avoid war.

Although Serbia agreed to 9 of the 10 demands, they were not willing to allow Austria to carry out a criminal investigation in Serbia. On 28 July, Austria declared war on Serbia, sparking a chain of events which would eventually lead to a European War. Russia soon began to mobilise its forces, and as a result Germany declared war on Russia on 1 August. However, at this stage the war was concentrated in the East.

What spread the conflict to the rest of Europe was the German Schlieffen Plan. Germany wished to avoid a war on two fronts at all costs, and so began to implement its war plan. This involved an invasion of France, hoping to knock France out of the war before Russia could fully mobilise. In order to do this, the German Army marched through Belgium which violated a treaty guaranteeing Belgian neutrality. When Germany refused to withdraw, Britain declared war on Germany on 4 August. By 6 August, all of the alliance powers had joined the conflict and the war had spread throughout Europe.

Here the answer is giving precise knowledge. It is crucial that you use as much relevant detailed knowledge as possible to show your grasp of the topic.

This is an example of linking together developments. This is necessary to make your answer more analytical. Wherever you can you should show your understanding of the causes or consequences of developments.

Here the answer explicitly links to the issue raised in the question.

Question 4: How far do you agree? (Essay)

'New tactics were the main reason why the German Army was defeated in 1918.' How far do you agree with this statement?

(16 marks + 4 SPaG)

New tactics were one reason why the Allies were able to defeat Germany in 1918.

During the Hundred Days, the Allied counter attack combined new tactics and technologies to devastating effect. One of the key developments was the use of artillery and the creeping barrage to create a smokescreen to cover the infantry advance. In 1918, the infantry advance was also supported by aircraft who bombed enemy positions, and by cavalry and tanks who could support the infantry in punching through enemy lines. Waves of infantry were also used to relieve troops who had advanced. With these tactics, the Allied counter attack routed the German Army on the 8th August, causing a collapse on many parts of the line which became known as the German Army's 'Black Day'.

However, one of the reasons this attack was so successful was the fact that the German Army had become overstretched. The German Ludendorff Offensive, which had begun in March 1918, had made very quick initial progress, with the Germans in some places advancing 64 km. However, by 1918 the German Army was poorly supplied and many troops were underfed. The rapid advance put extra pressure on supplies and so many troops stopped to loot food from French villages or Allied trenches. This ended the German advance and created the opportunity for a counter attack, as the Germans had abandoned their defensive positions for the advance.

The pressure on supplies, and the growing pressure on German politicians to consider surrender was also caused by the Allied blockade. Particularly following the Battle of Jutland, the Royal Navy had control over the English Channel and North Sea, and German ports were blockaded by British ships. This had prevented supplies from reaching Germany, which led to shortages. By 1918, many people in Germany were starving and there were even mutinies in the German Navy. This made it harder for the German Army to continue fighting and encouraged Germany to consider a ceasefire.

The blockade was the key reason for the success of the Allied offensive in 1918. The German Army came very close to breaking through and capturing key objectives which might have won the war before the huge impact of the USA joining the war was fully felt. Although new tactics helped the Allies, Germany had also used tactics like storm troopers very effectively during the Ludendorff Offensive. It was the blockade which weakened the German Army and halted the advance, allowing the counter offensive to be so successful.

The answer opens by directly addressing the statement in the question.

Each paragraph opens with a clear argument which is focused on the question.

The argument in the paragraph is then supported by a range of detailed, specific knowledge.

Here the paragraph links the evidence to the question.

Here the answer fulfills the requirement to form a complex explanation by linking reasons together before coming to an overall judgement.

Glossary: Conflict and tension, 1894–1918

Abdication A king or emperor stepping down from their role.

Agrarian Based on farming.

Alsace-Lorraine An area of France which had been captured by Germany in the Franco-Prussian War.

Armistice A peace agreement.

Attrition A strategy which focuses on wearing down the enemy with repeated attacks.

Balkans An area of high tension in the southeast of Europe.

Black Hand Gang A group of Serbian nationalists who assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand.

Blockade Preventing supplies from reaching an enemy by blocking ports.

Bolsheviks A Russian Communist Party.

British Expeditionary Force A small, well-trained force of British soldiers who were prepared to support France against German attack.

Comradeship A feeling of loyalty and friendship with fellow soldiers.

Court-martialled Being put on trial in a military court.

Creeping barrage An artillery tactic which slowly moves the fire forward to provide a smokescreen for the infantry.

Diplomacy Negotiation between countries.

Eastern Front The area of fighting between Russia, Austria and Germany.

Foreign policy One country's aims and dealing with other countries.

Fourteen Points US President Wilson's plan for a peace agreement to end WW1.

Front line trenches The trenches closest to the enemy.

Infantry Soldiers who fight on foot.

Jutland The main naval battle of World War One.

Kaiser The Emperor of Germany.

Ludendorff Offensive A major German offensive in 1918.

Mobilisation Preparing an army for war.

Mutiny A rebellion by soldiers or sailors against their leaders.

Outflank To move an army around the enemy to gain an advantageous position to fight.

Patriotic Proud of one's country.

Reconnaissance Spying on enemy troops.

Republic A country without a monarchy.

Sappers Soldiers who were specially trained to mine under enemy trenches.

Sentry duty Watching for enemy attacks.

Slavs An ethnic group which united some Russians with people living in the Balkans.

Stalemate A conflict in which neither side can win or make significant progress.

Storm troopers Highly trained troops who specialised in breaking through enemy lines.

Treaty of Brest-Litovsk A treaty signed by Russia to end the war with Germany.

Treaty of Versailles The final peace agreement which ended war with Germany.

Trench raids Small attack on enemy trenches to try to gain information.

Triple Alliance/Central Powers A military alliance made up of Germany, Italy and Austro-Hungary.

Triple Entente A military alliance made up of Britain, France and Russia.

U-boats German submarines.

Ultimatum A list of demands with consequences for not agreeing.

Unrestricted submarine warfare The German policy of attacking all shipping across the Atlantic.