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MAIN Causes of the Great War**A Modern Thirty Years' War**

Overview: In this lesson, students use primary sources to identify militarism, alliance, imperialism, and nationalism as causes for the outbreak of the Great War. They will read several sources, choose the most significant cause, and defend their position using evidence from the primary sources.

Document Analysis: After you read each document, circle which one of the MAIN causes it represents. Underline or highlight the language that supports your decision(s). One document *may* have multiple answers. Be sure you have support from the text to support whatever you choose. Also, identify which county produced the document in the box labelled, "Source."

Doc 1	Source:	M A I N
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The Dual Alliance Between Austria-Hungary and Germany - October 7, 1879

ARTICLE 1.

Should, contrary to their hope, and against the loyal desire of the two High Contracting Parties, one of the two Empires be attacked by Russia the High Contracting Parties are bound to come to the assistance one of the other with the whole war strength of their Empires, and accordingly only to conclude peace together and upon mutual agreement.

ARTICLE 2.

Should one of the High Contracting Parties be attacked by another Power, the other High Contracting Party binds itself hereby, not only not to support the aggressor against its high Ally, but to observe at least a benevolent neutral attitude towards its fellow Contracting Party...

...Should, however, the attacking party in such a case be supported by Russia, either by an active cooperation or by military measures which constitute a menace to the Party attacked, then the obligation stipulated in Article 1 of this Treaty, for reciprocal assistance with the whole fighting force, becomes equally operative, and the conduct of the war by the two High Contracting Parties shall in this case also be in common until the conclusion of a common peace.

Doc 2	Source:	M A I N
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Colonel E.M. House, chief advisor to President Woodrow Wilson, was sent by the President in the Spring of 1914 to evaluate the situation in Europe. A portion of his report is below.

The situation is extraordinary. It is militarism run stark mad. Unless someone acting for you can bring about a different understanding, there is some day to be an awful cataclysm. No one in Europe can do it. There is too much hatred, too many jealousies. Whenever England consents, France and Russia will close in on Germany and Austria. England does not want Germany wholly crushed, for she would then have to reckon alone with her ancient enemy, Russia; but if Germany insists upon an ever increasing navy, then England will have no choice. The best chance for peace is an understanding between England and Germany in regard to naval armaments and yet there is some disadvantage to us by these two getting too close.

Doc 3	Source:	M A I N
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British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898-1914. Vol. XI: The Outbreak of War: Foreign Office Documents June 28th-August 4th, 1914. Printed and Published by His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1926

Towards the end of June there was a considerable cessation of political activity... We do not mean by this that there was any real modification in the profound anxiety with which every responsible person regarded the future of Europe; the danger of the clash between the two rival systems was obviously increasing with every addition to the armaments on both sides; but there seemed no indication that a crisis was approaching, and nothing to suggest that, whatever their ultimate designs might be, any of the Great Powers proposed to force the issue during the summer of 1914.

Doc 4	Source:	M A I N
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Clemenceau Calls France to Arms, speech given in Paris, France. 5 August 1914

And now to arms, all of us! I have seen weeping among those who cannot go first. Everyone's turn will come. There will not be a child of our land who will not have a part in the enormous struggle. To die is nothing. We must win. And for that we need all men's power. The weakest will have his share of glory. There come times, in the live of peoples, when there passes over them a tempest of heroic action.

Doc 5	Source:	M A I N
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Telegram from the Imperial Chancellor, von Bethmann-Hollweg, to the German Ambassador at Vienna. Tschirschky, July 6, 1914

Berlin, July 6, 1914
Confidential. For Your Excellency's personal information and guidance

Finally, as far as concerns Serbia, His Majesty, of course, cannot interfere in the dispute now going on between Austria-Hungary and that country, as it is a matter not within his competence. The Emperor Francis Joseph may, however, rest assured that His Majesty will faithfully stand by Austria-Hungary, as is required by the obligations of his alliance and of his ancient friendship.

Doc 6	Source:	M A I N
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Germany's Reasons for War with Russia (From the German White Book)

FOREIGN OFFICE,
Berlin, August 1914.

On June 28th the Austro-Hungarian successor to the throne, Arch-Duke Franz Ferdinand, and his wife, the Duchess of Hohenberg, were assassinated by a member of a band of Servian conspirators. The investigation of the crime through the Austro-Hungarian authorities has yielded the fact that the conspiracy against the life of the Arch-Duke and successor to the throne was prepared and abetted in Belgrade with the co-operation of Servian officials, and executed with arms from the Servian State arsenal. This crime must have opened the eyes of the entire civilized world, not only in regard to the aims of the Servian policies directed against the conservation and integrity of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, but also concerning the criminal means which the pan-Serb propaganda in Servia had no hesitation in employing for the achievement of these aims.

The goal of these policies was the gradual revolutionizing and final separation of the south-easterly districts from the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and their union with Servia... In this manner for the third time in the course of the last 6 years Servia has led Europe to the brink of a world-war... Under these circumstances it was clear to Austria that it was not compatible with the dignity and the spirit of self-preservation of the monarchy to view idly any longer this agitation across the border.

Doc 7	Source:	M A I N
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Photograph of the crowd outside Buckingham Palace, London after the declaration of war against Germany, August 1914.

When news of Germany's ultimatum demanding free passage through Belgium reached London on 3 August, the Asquith government acted decisively. It sent its own ultimatum to Berlin on 4 August, ordering Germany to stop its military campaign against Belgium and France. When the deadline for this ultimatum expired at 11 pm GMT, Britain declared war on Germany. Judging from the number of hats raised in the air in this photograph, many of the crowd gathered outside Buckingham Palace greeted this news with patriotic enthusiasm.



Doc 8	Source:	M A I N
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German political cartoon, 1911. Source unknown.

In 1911, Kaiser Wilhelm II sends a German warship to Agadir, Morocco to project German power and intimidate the French.

