Your notes

KS3 History: revision notes

The First World War

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Causes

- The long-term causes are often remembered as MAIN: **militarism** (building up armies and navies), **alliances**, imperialism (competition for empires) and **nationalism**.
- Two **alliances** faced each other: the Triple Entente (Britain, France and Russia) and the Triple **Alliance** (Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy).
- The trigger was the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary in Sarajevo on 28 June 1914.
- Britain declared war on 4 August 1914, after Germany invaded Belgium as part of the Schlieffen Plan.

The Western Front

- Soldiers dug **trenches** from the Channel coast to Switzerland, and the war became a **stalemate**. **No man's land** lay between the enemy trenches.
- Conditions: mud, rats, lice, **trench** foot and **shell shock**. New weapons included machine guns, heavy artillery, poison gas (first used by Germany in 1915) and tanks (first used by Britain at the Somme in 1916).
- On the first day of the Battle of the Somme, 1 July 1916, the British army had about 57,000 casualties.
- The Royal Guernsey Light Infantry suffered heavy losses at Cambrai in 1917 and in the battles of 1918.

The home front and the end of the war

- Volunteers joined up at first; **conscription** began in 1916. Food rationing started in 1918. The Defence of the Realm Act (DORA) gave the government new powers.
- Women took on jobs men had left, including dangerous work in munitions factories.

- The fighting ended at 11 am on 11 November 1918 (the **Armistice**). The Treaty of Versailles (1919) punished Germany. About 9 to 10 million soldiers died.

Key terms

Alliance	An agreement between countries to support each other.
Militarism	Building up armed forces and being ready for war.
Nationalism	Strong pride in, and loyalty to, your country.
Western Front	The line of trenches in Belgium and France.
Trench	A long ditch dug to protect soldiers.
No man's land	The ground between the enemy trenches.
Stalemate	A situation where neither side can win.
Conscription	Making people join the armed forces by law.
Armistice	An agreement to stop fighting.
Shell shock	A mental illness caused by the stress of war.

Quick questions

Cover the answers and test yourself: remembering is what makes it stick.

1. Whose assassination in June 1914 triggered the First World War?
2. Why did Britain declare war on Germany in August 1914?
3. Which countries made up the Triple Entente?
4. What was no man's land?
5. What was trench foot?
6. Which new weapon did Britain first use at the Somme in 1916?
7. About how many British casualties were there on the first day of the Somme?
8. What was conscription?

Answers

1. Archduke Franz Ferdinand
2. Germany invaded Belgium
3. Britain, France and Russia
4. The ground between the enemy trenches
5. A painful condition caused by standing in cold, wet trenches
6. The tank
7. About 57,000
8. Making men join the armed forces by law

What to do next

Practise 13 questions on this topic

Try 4 exam questions, with mark schemes

Read the lesson, one step at a time

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