

Brief Introduction to THE GREAT WAR



Hi! I am Dr. Monk and I am going to give you a really quick explanation of World War One, so hang on. First, you should know that World War One (WWI) was called ‘The Great War’. Many people said it was going to be the “war to end all wars”, but it seems that those

ALLIES:
countries that are on the same side when working for the same cause

NEUTRAL:
Not taking sides in a conflict

people were wrong. I should back up and tell you that a ‘world war’ doesn’t mean that the whole world was fighting each other; it means that some countries from all around the world are fighting in a war. The Great War, or WWI, happened in Europe, and was a result of two groups of **allies** fighting each other. Let me give you a quick re-cap of how this whole thing became so big... first, Austria-Hungry (one country) declared war on Serbia and so Russia sent troops to help Serbia. After that, Germany declared war on Russia. Then, Germany declared war on France, and in order to get in that country quickly, Germany also declared war on Belgium (even though Belgium was **neutral**). As a result of that move, Britain declared war on Germany. Two days later, Austria-Hungry declared war on Russia. Wow! All that happened in 1914! Fighting went on for a while, but in 1915 Germany sank a ship that was filled with American citizens. Germany said it was an accident and that they wouldn’t do it again. The United States didn’t really want to get involved in the war, so they tried to remain calm. Then, in 1917, Germany wrote a letter to Mexico called the *Zimmerman Telegram*. Germany was trying to convince Mexico to go to war with America! When America learned about that, they joined The Great War by declaring war on Germany.¹ Approximately 4.8 million men left the United States to fight in The Great War². That was a huge chunk of the population and it was an even bigger chunk of the people who were working in major industries around the United States (since women weren’t really working in many different occupations back then). In November of 1918, The Great War ended and American troops began coming home in 1919. That wasn’t an *extremely* long time for the United States to be involved, but it had a huge impact on the country. They had to act quickly and make many changes.

QUESTIONS:

1. What were the various countries involved in The Great War?
2. Who was on whose side? Fill in the chart to show both groups of allies.

Side #1	
Side #2	
Neither Side	

¹ PBS. “The Great War and the Shaping of the 20th Century” <http://www.pbs.org/greatwar/timeline/>

² Jewishgen. “World War I Draft Registration Cards” <http://www.jewishgen.org/infofiles/wwidraft.htm>

Name _____ Period _____ Date _____

TIMELINE OF THE GREAT WAR
From "A Brief Introduction to The Great War"

YEAR	EVENT
1914	<i>Austria-Hungry declared war on Serbia</i>