

Name: _____ C: _____

Date: _____

RH.6-8.2: Reading for Main Idea

Although many Americans wanted to stay out of the war, several factors made American neutrality difficult to maintain. As an industrial and imperial power, the United States felt many of the same pressures that had led the nations of Europe into devastating warfare. Historians generally cite four long-term causes of the First World War: nationalism, imperialism, militarism, and the formation of a system of alliances.

Title:

Throughout the 19th century, politics in the Western world were deeply influenced by the concept of nationalism—a devotion to the interests and culture of one’s nation. Often, nationalism led to competitive and antagonistic rivalries among nations. In this atmosphere of competition, many feared Germany’s growing power in Europe.

In addition, various ethnic groups resented domination by others and longed for their nations to become independent. Many ethnic groups looked to larger nations for protection. Russia regarded itself as the protector of Europe’s Slavic peoples, no matter which government they lived under. Among these Slavic peoples were the Serbs. Serbia, located in the Balkans, was an independent nation, but millions of ethnic Serbs lived under the rule of Austria-Hungary. As a result, Russia and Austria-Hungary were rivals for influence over Serbia.

Main Idea:

Title:

Industrialization stirred ambitions in many European nations. They wanted more resources to fuel their industrial production. They competed for new markets for their goods. Many nations looked to Africa as a source of raw materials and as a market for industrial products. As a result, colonial powers seized vast areas of Africa during the 19th and early 20th centuries. This seizure of a country or territory by a stronger country is called imperialism. As occurred throughout most of Africa and Southern Asia, stronger countries dominated the political, economic, and social life of the weaker countries.

For many centuries, European nations had been building empires, slowly extending their economic and political control over various peoples of the world. Colonies supplied the European imperial powers with raw materials and provided markets for manufactured goods. As Germany industrialized, it competed with France and Britain in the contest for colonies.

Main Idea:

--

Title:
<p>Empires were expensive to build and to defend. The growth of nationalism and imperialism led to increased military spending. Because each nation wanted stronger armed forces than those of any potential enemy, the imperial powers followed a policy of militarism—the development of armed forces and their use as a tool of diplomacy.</p> <p>By 1890 the strongest nation on the European continent was Germany, which had set up an army reserve system that drafted and trained young men. Britain was not initially alarmed by Germany’s military expansion. As an island nation, Britain had always relied on its navy for defense and protection of its shipping routes— and the British navy was the strongest in the world. However, in 1897, Wilhelm II, Germany’s kaiser, or emperor, decided that his nation should also become a major sea power in order to compete more successfully against the British. Soon British and German shipyards competed to build the largest battleships and destroyers. France, Italy, Japan, and the United States quickly joined the naval arms race.</p>
Main Idea:

Title:
<p>By 1907 there were two major defense alliances in Europe. The Triple Entente, later known as the Allies, consisted of France, Britain, and Russia. The Triple Alliance consisted of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy. Germany and Austria-Hungary, together with the Ottoman Empire—an empire of mostly Middle Eastern lands controlled by the Turks—were later known as the Central Powers. The alliances provided a measure of international security because nations were reluctant to disturb the balance of power. As it turned out, a spark set off a major conflict</p>
Main Idea: