Causes of the First World War:

**Assassination of Franz Ferdinand** – on the 28th June 1914 the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne was killed by a Bosnian Serb, Princip.

**The Alliance System** – Europe’s main powers had formed two rival alliances. In 1914 following the assassination these two power blocs went to war.

**The Triple Entente** – Britain, France and Russia.

**The Triple Alliance** – Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy (Italy joined the Entente powers in 1915, Turkey joined the Alliance the same year).

**Nationalism** – there was a growing belief in nationalism across Europe, this fuelled the war and led many people to fight.

**Imperialism** – Europe’s main powers had global empires. When they went to war in 1914, so did people in their Empire. E.g. Indians, Australians and Canadians fought alongside the British forces.

**The Arms Race** – massive military spending made war more likely to start and the First World War longer when it did begin.

**German-British Rivalry** – Germany was a growing world power keen to rival Britain and its Empire. Germany and Britain were involved in a naval arms race.

Key Individuals:

- **Archduke Franz Ferdinand** – heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary
- **Gavrilo Princip** – Bosnian Serb assassin and member of the Black Hand Gang
- **Kaiser Wilhelm II** – Emperor of Germany
- **Tsar Nicholas II** – Emperor of Russia. Overthrown in Revolution of 1917 and executed in early 1918
- **David Lloyd-George** – British Prime Minister from 1916
- **Field Marshal Douglas Haig** – commander of British forces from 1915 onwards

Key Vocabulary:

- **Assassination** – politically motivated murder
- **Attrition** – battles planned to wear down the enemy
- **Trench** – network of defences (see above)
- **Stalemate** – deadlock, neither side able to breakthrough
- **Western Front** – front lines running through Belgium and France
- **Battle of the Somme** – July 1st-November 1916. British attack which saw very high casualty rates
- **Conscription** – policy of forcing men to serve in armed forces (from 1916)
- **Propaganda** – information (often biased) made to influence opinion. Often produced by government