

Name: _____

Date: _____

A POWDER KEG IN EUROPE

Europe dissolved into many cultures at the end of the Roman Empire. Several smaller empires emerged, but none matched the power and glory of Rome. By the turn of the twentieth-century, most of the smaller states of Europe combined or were conquered into larger nation-states. Germany and Italy became unified nations in the latter part of the nineteenth century. They joined Great Britain, France, Austria-Hungary, and Russia as European world powers. These nations were filled with nationalism, or great national pride. These European nations expanded their borders by building imperial colonies in Africa and Asia. Most Europeans believed their nation to be superior to every other nation, and many Europeans were willing to go to war to demonstrate their will.

Europe had been at peace for many years by the spring of 1914. There had not been a multinational war since Napoleon's defeat 99 years earlier. Germany, France, and Russia fought minor wars, but they were of little consequence. Ethnic minorities chafed in Austria-Hungary, the final remnant of the Holy Roman Empire, but in 1914, it was reasonable to assume that Europe would remain at peace for many years. That assumption would turn out to be false.

Europe in 1914 has often been compared to a powder keg: safe and secure until a fuse is lit. That summer, a missed turn by an unfamiliar driver led to "the Great War," the most destructive conflict then known to humankind.

The city of Sarajevo is at the foot of the Balkan Mountains. Sarajevo was a city of great unrest in because Austria-Hungary had seized the city and the surrounding region in five years earlier. On June 28, Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife visited the city. Ferdinand was the heir, or next in line to be emperor of Austria-Hungary. There were rumors of an assassination attempt by ethnic Serbians in Sarajevo, but the Archduke and his wife wandered through the city believing they were safe. A group called the Black Hand proved otherwise.

The Black Hand was an ethnic Serbian terrorist organization composed mainly of teenagers.



Francis Ferdinand



Europe in 1914

Several Black Hand members were in Sarajevo with orders to kill the Archduke. That morning, the Archduke and his wife narrowly missed death when a terrorist attempted to throw a bomb into the their car. The driver sped up, causing the bomb to bounce off the Archduke's arm land behind the car. The next car in the procession was destroyed and several people were injured.

After the Archduke gave a speech, he decided to go to the hospital to visit the people wounded in the attack. The Archduke's driver was unfamiliar with the route and took a wrong turn. The car slowed to a halt in front of a café, where Gavrilo Princip sat sipping coffee only five feet away. Princip was a Black Hand terrorist who thought the opportunity to kill the Archduke had passed. Suddenly and by coincidence, Princip was presented with another chance. The young Serbian shot three times, killing the Archduke and the Archduke's wife.

Gavrilo Princip set events in motion that would lead to worldwide conflict. Princip died in prison, but he was a hero to many Serbian people. The store in front of the site where the Archduke was killed became a museum that honored Princip.

The museum closed in 1992 because ethnic violence made it a target of snipers. The cultural tensions that led to World War I was still a factor in the Balkan region almost eighty years later.



Gavrilo Princip

*This is a higher order learning question. Any reasonable answer will be accepted.

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Fill in the Blanks

By 1914, E_____ had not seen a multinational w_____ in almost a *c__n__u__y. Many Europeans were filled with *n__t__o__a__i__t__c pride and hoped to show the *s__p__r__o__i__y of their nations. The killing of the A_____ of A_____ in S_____, fueled by n__t__o__a__i__m and diplomatic a_____, led to the first of two *g__o__a__ wars.

Answer in Complete Sentences

4. How did the many nations of Europe expand their borders in the nineteenth century?

6. What event "lit the fuse" that resulted in the Great War?

*7. Who is your heir? Explain your answer.

*9. Write a paragraph that explains why global war was likely in 1914 even if the Archduke had not been assassinated. Your paragraph must have a topic sentence, at least two supporting sentences, and a conclusion.

*10. George Washington gave a Farewell Address when he left the presidency in 1796. Washington urged Americans to avoid alliances with foreign nations. Do you think this is good advice more than two hundred years later? Defend your answer.
