

World War I & the Great Depression

World War I Basics

It was called “The Great War” and “The War to End All Wars.” World War I had many nicknames. It wasn’t officially known as World War I until World War II happened. It really doesn’t matter what we call the war. The impact it had on Europe and the world was immense. The war changed the way people thought about fighting, and about life, forever.

There were two major sides that fought against each other in World War I. One side was called the Allies. An **ally**¹ is someone who promises to come to your aid if something threatens you. The main Allies were Britain, Russia, France, and the United States. The Central Powers fought against the Allies. The Central Powers were Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire. They were first called the Central Powers because Germany and Austria-Hungary are located in Central Europe.

Most of World War I was fought in Europe. The opposing armies lined up face to face and fought each other all along the Western Front and the Eastern Front.

Fighting began in 1914 when Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia. The fighting quickly spread. For three years, Europe was **entrenched**² in deadly warfare. It wasn’t until 1917 that the United States entered the war on the side of Britain, France, and Russia. In 1918 the Great War finally ended. Before World War I, no one would have believed that such destruction and **devastation**³ were possible.

¹ **ally** – someone who defends you against enemies; someone who is on your team

² **entrenched** – deeply involved

³ **devastation** – widespread damage and ruin

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What were the names of the two sides fighting in World War I?
 - a. the Central Powers and the United Powers
 - b. Europe and Russia
 - c. the Allies and the Central Powers
 - d. Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire

2. The author lists countries in this passage in order to
 - a. prove that the war was fought all over the world.
 - b. inform the reader who fought on which side.
 - c. explain why each country joined the war.
 - d. show how many countries were destroyed.

3. Why does the author most likely say “it doesn’t matter what we call the war?”
 - a. It is the only world war in history, so we know which war we are talking about.
 - b. What we call the war does not change how important and devastating it was.
 - c. We can come up with nicknames for it, but Europeans call the war something else.
 - d. The war goes by too many names so we should just say what years the war was.

4. Read the following sentence: “The **opposing** armies lined up face to face and fought each other all along the Western Front and the Eastern Front.”

The word **opposing** means

- a. evil or villainous
 - b. in conflict with each other
 - c. unprepared, not ready
 - d. very similar to each other
-
5. This passage is mostly about
 - a. why the United States entered the war.
 - b. how the war was different from previous wars.
 - c. how the war was fought and why it ended.
 - d. who was involved and when the war happened.

6. When did the U.S. enter World War I and what countries were on the same side as the U.S.?

7. Based on the passage, explain why the nickname “The War to End All Wars” made sense as a nickname at the time.

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence.

_____ the war in Europe had started in 1914, the U.S. didn't enter World War I until 1917.

- a. Because
 - b. So
 - c. Then
 - d. Although
9. Read the following sentence.

During World War I, the U.S. fought in Europe to help the Allies.

Answer the questions below based on the information provided in the sentence you just read. One of the questions has already been answered for you.

1. What? the U.S.
2. What did the U.S. do? _____
3. Where? _____
4. When?

5. Why? _____

10. **Vocabulary word:** entrenched: deeply involved.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: _____

Teacher Guide and Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 770

Featured Text Structure: Descriptive

Passage Summary: The passage provides a brief overview of World War I, outlining who the major combatants were and the unprecedented scale of the carnage.

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 - who was involved and when the war happened.**

6. When did the U.S. enter World War I and what countries were on the same side as the U.S.?

Suggested answer: The United States entered the war in 1917, three years after it started, and fought on the same side as Britain, France, and Russia.

7. Based on the passage, explain why the nickname “The War to End All Wars” made sense as a nickname at the time.

Suggested answer: People were surprised by the destruction of the war and it changed the way they thought about fighting and life. People may have thought that no one would want to fight another war after one that bad, or that there could never be as big a war.

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1. What? the U.S.

2. What did the U.S. do? **fought**
 3. Where? **in Europe**
 4. When? **during World War I**
 5. Why? **to help the Allies**
-
10. **Vocabulary word:** entrenched: if something is entrenched, it is firmly established, so that it would be difficult to change it.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence. Answers may vary.