

Causes of World War I

A multinational analysis of First World War in popular history articles

1 Questions to answer prior to examining the articles

Write down, individually, your answers and hand them in to your teacher.

- a. What started World War One?
- b. Please describe different perspectives on what caused World War One.

2 Comparison of synopsis in **Spanish & English articles**

Read the first paragraph (summary/synopsis) underneath the title.

- a. What is the article about?
- b. How does the synopsis differ in the articles?

3 Comparing articles from **Germany, Sweden and Spain: A true account?**

Students work in small groups; each group will be given a different article to read closely.

a. Close reading

Read the one article given to your group. Identify and highlight key causes of World War I.

Preferably you can use colour code to identify different types of causes (same colour for same cause e.g. nationalism=blue, alliances=pink, economic/social=green, coincidence=orange, military=yellow etc.). If you do not have highlighters you can underline and write characters or symbols in the margin (e.g. n=nationalism, a=alliance etc.)

List and rank the causes—what causes are emphasized in your article and which are most important?

b. Debate

As a group you should explain to the other groups what causes you have found in your article – explain and defend the arguments of your article. Try to convince the other groups that you have the best and most trustworthy historical account.

c. Compare

In new small groups, with members from each previous group, compare the three articles. Discuss why and how the articles differ? What is positive and negative in the way the articles present the causes of First World War? Which article do you consider most trustworthy?

4 Close reading of a single article

After the group activities read individually the English article "[The shot that sparked the First World War](#)".

- a. Colour code (or mark in the margin) causes of World War One in the article.
- b. List and Identify and rank the key causes of World War One.
- c. Is this article true or false?
- d. Does this article change your opinion about the causes of World War One? How? Why?
- e. How can you decide which article to trust? Why?
- f. How is it possible to see that the article comes from a popular history magazine?

5 General Questions: Critical Literacy

Critical literacy: weighting different accounts: determination of truth

- a. How are the articles similar?



b. How do the articles differ?

c. Which articles are most trustworthy? Why? Why not? Justify your answer (e.g. evidence, academic credentials, list of sources, pictures, layout, hard data)