



How do military conflicts start?

01 With a classmate, discuss the questions.

What kind of situation might cause a major conflict between two countries?

02 Read the “At Daggers Drawn” and list the factors that contributed to the start of World War I.

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World War I

03 Read the text again and write a one-paragraph summary of the European situation when Franz Ferdinand was assassinated.

At Daggers Drawn

Tensions among European countries, many of them multi-continental **empires**, set the stage for World War I. Various factors caused these tensions. Factor one: This was aggressive **imperialism**, which triggered competition for colonies in Africa and Asia, with Britain, France, and Germany finding more success.

Factor two: The countries substantially increased their military strength, and an **arms race** ensued. The eighteenth century had seen many conflicts, especially involving Great Britain. Still, all the major players in World War I invested heavily in building their military power, fearing a regional conflict unless they were prepared.

Factor three: Establishing military **alliances** further complicated the already tense situation, guaranteeing that conflicts between two countries would rapidly escalate to a regional or larger war. As a landlocked nation, Germany relied heavily on **allies** to help protect its borders.

Factor four: This was the growing popularity of **nationalistic** movements in many countries, especially in Austria-Hungary, whose empire was entirely European and included Balkan states seeking independence.

Factor five: Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the Austria-Hungarian throne, was assassinated by Serbian nationalists while in Sarajevo.

Factor six: Immediately after the assassination, Austria-Hungary requested Germany’s support in a war against Serbia. Germany agreed, and war was declared. Russia, an essential ally of the Serbs, declared war on Austria-Hungary to indicate its support for its ally.

Had factor six not happened, there may not have been a war because a few weeks later, the alliance systems were triggered into effect, and Germany, France, Russia, and Great Britain began a four-year war that left 40 million dead.



04 Compare the factors that led to World War I with current global situations. What similarities and differences do you see? Then, share your ideas with another group.

05 Complete the sentences with the correct conditional connector.

1. Germany would not have supported Austria-Hungary so strongly _____ Austria had issued such a harsh ultimatum to Serbia.
2. _____ Britain remained neutral, Germany might have defeated France before turning to Russia.
3. The alliance system could have been contained, _____ that the major powers had communicated more openly.
4. France wouldn't have entered the war _____ Germany hadn't invaded Belgium.
5. Russia might not have mobilized so quickly _____ Germany had not threatened its interests in the Balkans.

06 Create a chain of cause-and-effect conditions to describe how the war could have been avoided.

07 Interview a classmate about what they would have done had they lived in Europe leading up to World War I. Write questions using different conditional linkers.

08 Present your interviews to the class. Then, discuss how you imagine you would have felt living through this situation.

