

Who or what was to blame for the outbreak of World War I?

Today I will practise:

- **Explanation skills:** identifying the **reasons (causes)** of events
- **And** explaining how causes **link** to create an historical outcome.

TASK: Read the following, then complete the worksheet.

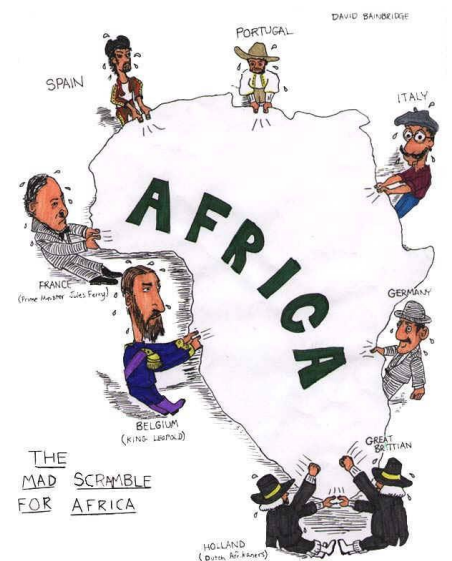
Empires and Colonial Rivalry

Introduction: The keyword **imperialism** means the desire to conquer colonies, especially in Africa. This brought the powers into conflict - Germany wanted an empire. France and Britain already had empires. Imperialism was driven by **nationalism**: the belief that your country is better than others. This made nations assertive and aggressive and increased the desire for empires in order to gain status and prestige, increase trade and gain valuable natural resources: a French politician once said 'to be a great nation you must colonise'.

In 1800, France and Britain both had large empires and these continued to grow. Until the 19th century, Britain and the other European powers confined their imperial ambitions in Africa to the odd coastal outpost from which they could exert their economic and military influence. British activity on the West African coast was centred around the lucrative slave trade. European ships took more than 11 million people into slavery from the West African coast. European traders grew rich on the profits.

Scramble for Africa: As late as the 1870s, only 10% of the continent was under direct European control, with Algeria held by France, the Cape Colony and Natal (both in modern South Africa) by Britain, and Angola by Portugal. And yet by 1900, European nations had added almost 10 million square miles of Africa - one-fifth of the land mass of the globe - to their overseas colonial possessions. Europeans ruled more than 90% of the African continent.

In the 1870s, Italy and Germany became united countries for the first time; they too wanted overseas empires – so competition between European powers grew more intense. There was a scramble for territory, especially in Africa. Therefore, colonial rivalry led to an intensification of the arms race. Battleships and soldiers were needed to invade and conquer the African countries, and then to protect them from colonial rivals.

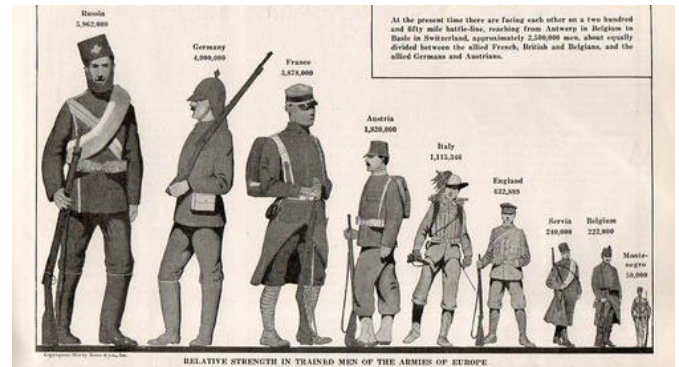


The competition for colonies caused several disputes: for example, in 1906 and 1911, Germany and France quarrelled about Morocco. They came very close to war. France and Britain nearly came to war over their rivalry in the Sudan in 1898. Colonial rivalry therefore led indirectly to the formation and strengthening of alliances. Italy turned to Germany and Austria when she lost Tunis to France in 1881. Russia, Britain and France could become firm friends after 1907 partly because of aggressive attitude of Germany in both the first and the second Moroccan crises.

Militarism and The Arms Race

The keyword **militarism** is the attempt to build up a strong army and navy gave nations the means and will to make war. Kaiser Wilhelm II, Emperor of Germany said in 1898:

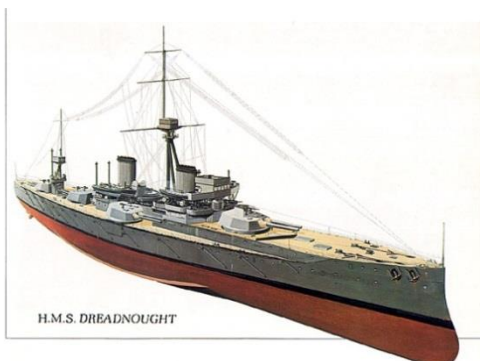
‘Our future lies upon the ocean’. Germany was very keen to become an ‘imperial power’ (a country whose power was based upon its empire). In order to do this, it was building up its navy very rapidly in order to have its ‘place in the sun’. Wilhelm passed two naval laws in 1898 and 1900 in order to increase the number of warships.



In **1900, Britain’s navy was still by far the largest in the world.** It had to be, to protect the huge British empire (that ruled about a quarter of the world). But Britain was beginning to realise that it did not have enough resources to protect its empire: they were especially worried about the growing size of the German navy.

The British were determined that their navy should remain the largest. Soon a race to build new battleships developed between Germany and Britain. In 1906, Britain launched HMS *Dreadnought*, (meaning, literally ‘fear nothing’) a new type of battleship which was stronger and faster than any ship built before. These ships made all other battleships obsolete. The ships were fast, easily manoeuvrable and equipped with massive amounts of heavy guns. They also used watertight compartments to limit damage when they were hit (the ‘Titanic’ copied the same design!)

Soon Germany began to build ‘Dreadnoughts’ as well, and the race became faster. It nearly led to Civil War in Germany (the Lords in the Houses of Parliament refused to accept taxes on the rich to pay for the ships). By 1914, Britain had completed 19 dreadnoughts to Germany’s 13.



The Scramble for Africa

