

# First World War Causes

History, First World War

Year 9

## Content Description

The causes of the First World War and the reasons why Australians enlisted to fight in the war. (AC9HH9K08)

## VR Learning Activities

**Listening and Understanding:** Students are introduced to the long- and short-term causes of World War I through immersive narration and animated timelines. They explore the concepts of militarism, alliances, imperialism, and nationalism, then follow the chain of events from the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand to Australia's entry into the war. Vivid 3D visuals—such as maps, historical figures, and moving armies—help students understand how tensions built over time and how global conflict erupted.

**Interactive Exploration:**

In VR, students step into a series of richly detailed historical environments that bring World War I to life. They interact with authentic 3D propaganda posters, examine real-time newspaper headlines, and explore interactive models of uniforms and equipment used by Australian soldiers. Students can pick up and closely inspect full-scale weapons and gear from the era, such as rifles and helmets. In trench settings, they observe the cramped conditions soldiers endured, compare the attire of different military ranks. This immersive approach deepens their understanding of the historical context and the physical realities of war, helping students connect emotionally and intellectually with the people who lived through it.

**Questioning and Critical Thinking:** Throughout the experience, students respond to questions such as: *Why did alliances make Europe more dangerous?* or *Would you have enlisted if you were living in 1914 Australia?* These open-ended prompts guide students to reflect on multiple perspectives and the complexity of decision-making at the time. They are encouraged to evaluate historical sources and empathize with different social attitudes surrounding enlistment and national identity.

## Key Learning Areas

**Long- and Short-Term Causes of War:** Understanding how militarism, alliances, imperialism, and nationalism contributed to rising tensions in Europe and ultimately led to the outbreak of World War I.

**Australia's Involvement in World War I:** Exploring the reasons behind Australia's entry into the war, including loyalty to Britain, national pride, and the broader context of the British Empire.

**Historical Perspectives and Motivations:** Investigating the diverse motivations Australians had for enlisting—including adventure, patriotism, peer influence, and economic factors—and recognizing that not all Australians supported the war.

**Propaganda and Public Opinion:** Analyzing historical propaganda posters and newspaper headlines to understand how media influenced public sentiment and recruitment during the war.

**Life on the Front Lines:** Examining the conditions of trench warfare, including the gear, uniforms, and environment soldiers experienced, to build empathy and historical understanding.

**Historical Source Analysis:** Engaging with visual and textual primary sources in VR—such as posters, uniforms, and headlines—to develop critical thinking and interpretation skills.

**National Identity and Civic Responsibility:** Reflecting on how the war shaped Australian identity, and encouraging students to consider how national values and historical events influence civic decisions.

**Inquiry and Ethical Reflection:** Encouraging students to think critically about conflict, decision-making, and the ethical dilemmas faced by individuals and governments in times of war.



