The Great War Begins

*Human Legacy,*
Chapter 26.1, Pages 779-782
Europe on the Brink of War

• “In 1914, rising tensions in Europe had the continent on the brink of war. These tensions were the result of four factors: militarism, alliances, imperialism, and nationalism.”

• "Human Legacy, page 780"
Militarism

- Massive military build-up during Age of Imperialism
- Desire to protect overseas colonies
- Newly formed Germany had upset the Balance of Power
- All sides were nervous
  - Minor conflicts could easily escalate into a large war
Alliances

• Triple Alliance
  – Germany
  – Italy
  – Austria-Hungary

• Triple Entente
  – France
  – Russia
  – Great Britain
Imperialism

• Rivalry Among great imperial nations
  – Britain
  – France,
  – Russia
  – Germany

• Balance of Power
  – Could not afford to let other imperial powers gain too much power
Nationalism

- Balkan Conflicts
  - Ottoman Empire breaking up
  - Ethnic groups seeking independence
  - Nation of Serbia wanted to unite all Serbs
  - Many ethnic Serbs lived with Austria-Hungary
War Breaks Out

• “In the midst of the tensions and resentment the Serbs felt toward Austria-Hungary, the archduke of Austria-Hungary, Franz Ferdinand, decided to visit the Bosnian city of Sarajevo. On June 28, 1914, as Franz Ferdinand’s car drove through the Sarajevo streets, a young Serbian man, Gavrilo Princip, opened fire with his pistol, killing the archduke and the archduke’s wife, Sophie.”

• ~Human Legacy, Pages 780-781
The Impact

• Austria-Hungary Declares war on Serbia (July 28, 1914)

• Russia prepares to aid Serbia
  – Pan-Slavism
  – Previous agreement between Russia & Serbia

• Germany Declares war on Russia & France
Fighting Begins

• **Schlieffen Plan**
  - German Plan for fighting a two front war
  - Defeat France quickly
  - Turn on Russia after France falls

• **Belgium**
  - Germans overrun Belgium in order to Flank France
  - Britain declares war on Britain in response to violation of Belgian neutrality
Fighting Begins

• “Germany’s plans for a swift victory in France soon failed. By the end of 1914, the Great War had become a bloody stalemate.”

• ~Human Legacy, page 782
Early Battles

• **Western Front**
  – Battle of Frontiers
    • Germans win early victories over French & British forces
    • Both sides suffer heavy losses

• **Eastern Front**
  – Russians advance
  – Germans decisively defeat Russians at Tannenberg
    • Germans distracted from Western Front
    • French Regroup
Trench Warfare Begins

- Battle of the Marne
  - September 1914
  - Allies drive Germans back
  - Germans dig a series of trenches

- Trench Warfare
  - Both sides dig trenches
  - Very little advance
  - Battles very bloody
  - Soldiers suffer from disease, shellshock and lack of ability to stay dry