

Germany-A New Nation

KS3 History-Lesson 3 of 6

Enquiry: Did the Assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand lead to the outbreak of WWI?

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How did German Unification make conflict more likely?

Germany was **unified** in 1871 following the **Franco-Prussian War**. **The Kaiser** was chosen from the **Prussian** royal family and **Prussia** became the most influential of the German states. Under **Prussia** the new nation of Germany became increasingly **militaristic**.

Image courtesy of Wikipedia Commons



Who was Kaiser Wilhelm II?

Kaiser Wilhelm II came to the throne in 1888. He was a grandson of Queen Victoria. Despite being a relative of both the English King and Russian Tsar he felt as though both he and Germany were not taken seriously in European politics. **The Kaiser** was particularly interested in and proud of the German military.



Did Wilhelm II's character make conflict more likely?

The Kaiser's arm had been damaged during birth and **Wilhelm** had struggled with this disability as well as his sense of rejection by other European royals and powers. Historians who have studied **The Kaiser's** character have suggested that he found a sense of security and pride, in both his and Germany's identity, through an obsessive focus on military ritual and the army. **Wilhelm II** therefore contributed to a culture of **militarism** in Germany leading up to 1914.



How did Germany's desire for empire make conflict more likely?

Germany wanted to join other European powers in expanding its **territory** overseas. **Kaiser Wilhelm** thought it was important to Germany's status as a new European nation, that they held 'their place in the sun'. **The Kaiser** was frustrated that the French and British had worked together to block Germany from increasing its influence over African nations such as Morocco. Germany's land army was powerful but its **navy** was weak when compared to **Britain's**. For this reason a conflict in Europe, was the only way in which Germany would be likely to expand their territory.



Glossary

Unification: When smaller states come together to form one nation.

Franco-Prussian War: A conflict between France and the German States between 1870 and 1871.

Kaiser Wilhelm II: The leader of Germany from 1888 onward.

Prussia: The largest and most powerful of the German states.

Militarism: A culture which focuses on the importance of a nation's army.

Navy: Armed forces who fight at sea, for example battleships.



Comprehension Questions

1. Who was the leader of Germany in 1914?
2. Who had the larger navy in 1914 Britain or Germany?
3. What was the size of the Russian army in 1914?
4. What did von Bulow claim that Germany 'demanded' in 1897?
5. What role did Prussia play in the new German empire of 1871?

Sentence starter: One role which Prussia played in the new German Empire was...



Return to the Enquiry

What role might the Kaiser's personal character have played in developing tensions in Europe?

| Sentence starters: | Key words |
|---|--|
| <p><i>The Kaiser was related to other European royals, however...</i></p> <p><i>The Kaiser had a keen interest in the military...</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Royal-Militaristic-Status |

