

Western Front

- World War I was fought on three principal fronts: the western front between France and Germany, the eastern front between Russia and Germany, and at sea between the British and Germany.
- The Western Front quickly developed a reputation for slaughter.
 - Known as the meat grinder, the Western Front was a 500-mile long network for trenches, bunkers, minefields, machine gun nests, and artillery that ran from Switzerland to the English Channel.
 - The Western Front epitomized both the success and failure of early 20th century industrialized warfare.
 - The mass production of weapons and ammunition made defensive positions easy to hold but weak transportation technology made offense difficult.
 - As a result, the Western Front was generally a stalemate on which opposing armies hurled metal and poison gas at each other; this resulted in massive casualties on both sides but few territorial gains.
 - Life on the Western Front for soldiers was quite horrible.
 - Soldiers were confined to trenches and underground bunkers by the constant threat of artillery, gunfire and poison gas.
 - Trenches were muddy leading to chronic foot infections known as trench foot, serious cases could lead to amputations.
 - Vermin were everywhere and disease was common.



Eastern Front

- Fighting along the Eastern Front demonstrated the superiority of highly industrialized nations over their less industrialized counterparts.
- By 1914, Germany was an industrial powerhouse, however Russia was only in the most nascent phase of industrialization.
 - As a result, Germany dominated the Eastern Front and Russia was only able to hold off German forces with superior manpower and support from their allies.
 - In the end, Germany's domination of the Eastern Front led to a revolution in Russia and Russia's subsequent withdraw from the war in 1917.



Allied Victory

- The Allied victory in World War I was largely a result of the success of the British Navy.
 - Britain utilized its vast surface fleet and underwater mines to blockade Germany.
 - This blockade cut off Germany's access to its colonies and much needed raw materials.
 - Germany responded with an attempt to utilize its submarine fleet to blockade Britain.
 - While Germany had some limited success with this blockade, it proved to be the deciding factor in bringing the United States into the war.
- A German U-boat sank the passenger liner Lusitania in 1915 which had several American civilians on board.
 - The sinking of the Lusitania was an important factor in shifting US public opinion towards war.
- The US entered the war in 1917 and with the support of American factories, the American Navy, and American soldiers the Allies were able to outlast the Central Powers leading to an Allied victory in 1919.
- Beyond the primary areas of conflict in Europe and the North Atlantic battles raged in Africa, the Middle East and Asia.
 - Soldiers from the European colonies served in these battles as well as on the Western Front.
- The deployment of troops from all over the world spread a particularly deadly strain of influenza.
 - From 1918 to 1919 soldiers spread a strain of influenza that killed one in forty of those infected to almost every person on earth, killing more than 20 million people.


