

## You are going to represent **Great Britain.**

It is 1914 and Europe is in turmoil. Most countries have been building up their armies and naval fleets in readiness for a war they believe is coming sooner or later, following a series of 'minor' conflicts over land, border disputes, assassinations and conquests of smaller neighbours.

Britain's empire is the largest in the world, covering around a quarter of the globe. Your power and prestige are tied to maintaining this empire and to do this you also have huge naval fleet. You have viewed Germany's attempt to build up its own navy with huge suspicion!

You know that any day now there is going to be an almighty fight. In order not to lose out when this conflict occurs, you need to make strong alliances with countries that can protect you from your enemies.

### Today's task:

- You will receive a message from your teacher. You must discuss the message in your group and decide who you would like to be your ally. The more allies you have, the safer you will be.
- You should communicate to other countries by passing them notes. You can inform other countries whatever you like to get them on your side or to stop them being allied with countries which you might not like. You can even lie!
- You must write all notes in a sensible, professional and diplomatic style.
- Any note passed to you by your *teacher* has to be accepted as the truth and it overrides any messages given to you by another country. If the teacher's note informs you to do something then you must do it.
- You will now receive your first note from your teacher. You will have about 25 minutes before war breaks out. Do all you can to ensure your safety. Good luck!

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## You are going to represent **Serbia.**

It is 1914 and Europe is in turmoil. Most countries have been building up their armies and naval fleets in readiness for a war they believe is coming sooner or later, following a series of 'minor' conflicts over land, border disputes, assassinations and conquests of smaller neighbours.

The Balkans (where Serbia is) has been an area of particular instability. The decline of the Ottoman Empire and the increasing power of Austria-Hungary have led to battle to control the region. In 1908-09 your neighbouring Slavic country, Bosnia, was taken over by Austria-Hungary. You fear and hate Austria-Hungary as a threat to your national identity.

You know that any day now there is going to be an almighty fight. In order not to lose out when this conflict occurs, you need to make strong alliances with countries who can protect you from your enemies.. As you are small and weak country it would be best if you could gain the support more powerful countries.

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You are going to represent **Germany**.

It is 1914 and Europe is in turmoil. Most countries have been building up their armies and naval fleets in readiness for a war they believe is coming sooner or later, following a series of 'minor' conflicts over land, border disputes, assassinations and conquests of smaller neighbours.

Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, many countries have been expanding their empires, in order to increase their wealth. Because you didn't exist as a unified country until 1871 (after the German state of Prussia had defeated France in the Franco-Prussian War), you 'missed out' on developing your own empire and now hate to feel inferior. You have a huge army and have also built a formidable navy.

You know that any day now there is going to be an almighty fight. In order not to lose out when this conflict occurs, you need to make strong alliances with countries who can protect you from your enemies.

### Today's task:

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You are going to represent **Belgium**.

It is 1914 and Europe is in turmoil. Most countries have been building up their armies and naval fleets in readiness for a war they believe is coming sooner or later, following a series of 'minor' conflicts over land, border disputes, assassinations and conquests of smaller neighbours.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, many countries were expanding their empires, in order to increase their wealth. A notable exception was your neighbour Germany. Germany only became one united country in 1871 after defeating France and taking the border region of Alsace-Lorraine. Germany since 1871 has been increasing its army and its navy and is now a very powerful country.

You know that any day now there is going to be an almighty fight. In order to avoid losing you need to make as many allies as possible to help you in the big fight against anyone who might be your enemy. As you are small and weak country it would be best if you could gain the support more powerful countries.

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You are going to represent **Italy**.

It is 1914 and Europe is in turmoil. Most countries have been building up their armies and naval fleets in readiness for a war they believe is coming sooner or later, following a series of 'minor' conflicts over land, border disputes, assassinations and conquests of smaller neighbours.

You are a relatively 'young' country only becoming unified in 1871 (before that you were a group of separate states). You are quite weak and your government is not respected. Your position at the heart of the Mediterranean means that most countries want you to side with them.

You know that any day now there is going to be an almighty fight. In order not to lose out when this conflict occurs, you need to make strong alliances with countries who can protect you from your enemies.

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You are going to represent **Russia**.

It is 1914 and Europe is in turmoil. Most countries have been building up their armies and naval fleets in readiness for a war they believe is coming sooner or later, following a series of 'minor' conflicts over land, border disputes, assassinations and conquests of smaller neighbours.

Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, many countries have been expanding their empires, in order to increase their wealth. The newly formed Germany, and their central European neighbour, Austria-Hungary, appear to be growing close and this could potentially threaten your western borders.

You know that any day now there is going to be an almighty fight. In order not to lose out when this conflict occurs, you need to make strong alliances with countries who can protect you from your enemies..

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You are going to represent **Austria-Hungary**.

It is 1914 and Europe is in turmoil. Most countries have been building up their armies and navies in readiness for a war they believe is coming sooner or later, following a series of 'minor' conflicts over land, border disputes, assassinations and conquests of smaller neighbours.

Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, many countries have been expanding their empires, in order to increase their wealth. Your own empire expanded when you took over Bosnia in 1908-09. Now other countries in the Balkans are wary of your intentions.

You know that any day now there is going to be an almighty fight. In order not to lose out when this conflict occurs, you need to make strong alliances with countries who can protect you from your enemies.

**Today's task:**

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You are going to represent **France**.

It is 1914 and Europe is in turmoil. Most countries have been building up their armies and navies in readiness for a war they believe is coming sooner or later, following a series of 'minor' conflicts over land, border disputes, assassinations and conquests of smaller neighbours.

Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, many countries have been expanding their empires, in order to increase their wealth. You have a large empire in Africa but feel threatened by the growing power of your neighbour Germany. You lost the territory Alsace-Lorraine to them in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71 and still resent this.

You know that any day now there is going to be an almighty fight. In order not to lose out when this conflict occurs, you need to make strong alliances with countries who can protect you from your enemies..

**Today's task:**

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- You should communicate to other countries by passing them notes. You can inform other countries whatever you like to get them on your side or to stop them being allied with countries which you might not like. You can even lie!
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1.	<b>Great Britain</b>	Italian spies inform you that there is a Russian plot to invade your empire .
2.	<b>Great Britain</b>	Italian spies are not trustworthy.
3.	<b>Great Britain</b>	Austria are lying to you – do not trust them.
4.	<b>Great Britain</b>	<p>Inform France that you have protected one of their colonies, Morocco, from German aggression. If Germany have told France otherwise, they are telling lies! Remind France that Germany beat them in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71 and took Alsace-Lorraine from them. You will help France get this territory back.</p> <p>Previous information about a Russian plot was a lie sent by Germany. You are worried about Germany building a bigger military navy than you. You don't like this!</p>

1.	<b>Serbia</b>	Your spies learn of an Italian plot to take land from Austria.
2.	<b>Serbia</b>	<p>You learn of an Austrian plan to block British trade in the Mediterranean. Go and inform Britain that you have good ports in the Mediterranean and that you will help them.</p> <p>You hate Austria as you think they want to expand their empire and take you over. They have already done this to your fellow Slavs in Bosnia. You believe all Slavs should be part of a Greater Serbia.</p>
3.	<b>Serbia</b>	<p>Inform Russia that if they help you against Austria you will help them with their trade. You have also been close friends for hundreds of years.</p> <p>Britain would be a useful ally.</p>

## Alliances and the build up to the First World War: diplomatic simulation role play

1. **Germany** Russia would be a useful ally: your leaders are cousins (Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany and Tsar Nicholas II of Russia). Russian spies have already told you about British naval build-up.

2. **Germany** The Italians have helped you by spying on Russia and informing you about the size of their army.

3. **Germany** You can't trust France. Austria would be a much better ally.

4. **Germany** Your Kaiser, Wilhelm II, is determined to show his British cousin, George V, that Germany is better than Britain.

1. **Belgium** You learn that the French want to take over British trade – inform the British.

2. **Belgium** The French inform you of a German plot to invade your country. Inform the British as they make a lot of money using your ports for trade.

3. **Belgium** You learn that Italy wants to be allies with Britain, and that Britain wants to be allies with Italy. Go and inform both countries.  
France would be a useful ally to have so attempt to make an alliance with them.

## Alliances and the build up to the First World War: diplomatic simulation role play

1.	Italy	France secretly wants to take over your colony of Sardinia. The British could help you defend this.
2.	Italy	Pledge your support to Britain but don't inform anyone else (you might change your mind). You learn of a Russian desire to take over part of Britain's empire.
3.	Italy	You learn of a French plan to take over some of your land and some of Germany's. You need German help. Inform them of your news. You will support Germany. However, you will only do this if you don't have to fight the British; if you do you will change sides (but don't tell Germany this!).
4.	Italy	You support Germany. However, if Britain goes to war you will swap sides. You can tell Britain this but not Germany.

1.	Russia	You hate Austria. You learn of an Austrian plot to take over German territory.
2.	Russia	Inform Britain that your spies have discovered a German plan to sink their best battleships (Britain's greatest strength!).
3.	Russia	You need French support against Austria. Inform Britain you will help them against Germany.
4.	Russia	You have been friends with Serbia for centuries. They help guard the entrance to the Black Sea which you rely on for trade. Austria wants to gain control of the entrance to the Black Sea which would mean they controlled your trade and therefore your ability to make money. You cannot stand for that!

1.	<b>Austria-Hungary</b>	You hate France. Inform Germany that France intends a revenge attack on Germany, due to the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71.
2.	<b>Austria-Hungary</b>	Try to turn Britain against Russia. Inform Serbia that you are going to hammer them. Persuade Germany that if they help you they will make lots of money from increased trade.
3.	<b>Austria-Hungary</b>	You hate Russia and learn of a Russian plan to take over some German territory. Go and inform Germany. Italy would also be a useful ally in the Mediterranean.

1.	<b>France</b>	Show this note to Germany. Austrian diplomats have been misleading Germany.
2.	<b>France</b>	Germany diplomats are not to be trusted. You need help from a country with a big army: Russia could be useful! Inform Russia that Austria intends to take land from you both and block Russian trade! If Russia agrees to help you then you will help Russia.
3.	<b>France</b>	You learn of a German plot to invade Italy. Inform the Italians that, if war breaks out, Britain will defend them if they change sides.
4.	<b>France</b>	Inform Belgium that Austria and Germany plan to take land from them. Inform Austria and Germany that Belgium intends to take land from them.



## Teaching notes

This simulation is designed to introduce students to the alliances that were in place by 1914.

You may wish to start the lesson with a pair & share discussion about reasons to go to war in order to establish students' prior knowledge of the major causes.

## How it works:

Split your students into eight groups, each representing a country in 1914:

1. Great Britain
2. Serbia
3. Germany
4. Belgium
5. Italy
6. Austria
7. France
8. Russia

It is a good idea to project a map of Europe in 1914 so students have a firm grasp of their geography! A good one to use is

<https://www.mtholyoke.edu/courses/rschwartz/hist151/maps/QuizI2009/slides/Europe%201900.html> as it does not have the alliances marked on it.

The role play activity is designed to take around 30 minutes. There is an **information sheet** for each country which sets the scene and explains the activity. Each country will then need to receive a **note** from you at regular intervals (roughly every 5 minutes).

Some countries receive three notes and others four. These are provided in numbered order in the country specific tables for you to cut out. Students then need to respond to the other countries before the next note is delivered. It is helpful to circulate during this time to encourage appropriate responses (this can include lies, distortions and bids for alliances!). Students will need **blank paper** to write their own diplomatic notes.

When the simulation has finished you can discuss who has made alliances with who, and what they feel about the state of Europe in 1914. This could be consolidated with map work on the Triple Alliance and Triple Entente.