History GCSE Revision Guide
Unit 1: World War One
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOPIC 1</th>
<th>Long Term Causes of World War One</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOPIC 2</td>
<td>Short Term Causes of World War One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOPIC 3</td>
<td>War Plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOPIC 4</td>
<td>Life in the Trenches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOPIC 5</td>
<td>Weapons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOPIC 6</td>
<td>Battle of the Somme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOPIC 7</td>
<td>Other Key Battles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOPIC 8</td>
<td>War at Sea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOPIC 9</td>
<td>Role of the USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOPIC 10</td>
<td>End of World War One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOPIC 11</td>
<td>Question Tips</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Topic 1: Long Term Causes of WW1

The MAIN long term causes

**Militarism**
- Militarism means that the government invests in their countries army and military.
- The armies of both France and Germany had more than doubled between 1870 and 1914 and there was fierce competition between Britain and Germany over the size of the Navy.

**Alliances**
- An alliance is an agreement made between two or more countries. When an alliance is signed, those countries become known as Allies.
- This meant that some countries had no option but to enter the war if one of their allies was involved.
- 1879 Dual Alliance- Germany and Austria Hungary made an alliance to protect themselves from Russia.
- 1907 Triple Entente- Russia, France and Britain made an alliance to protect themselves from Germany.

**Imperialism**
- Imperialism is when a country takes over new lands or countries.
- By 1900 the British Empire extended over five continents and France had control of large areas of Africa.
- Germany was extremely jealous and started to challenge French and British dominance, particularly in Africa.

**Nationalism**
- At the turn of the Century, many countries were starting to want their own independence. They no longer wanted to be ruled by other countries.
- EG Large areas of both Austria-Hungary and Serbia were home to differing nationalist groups, all of whom wanted freedom.
The Assassination at Sarajevo
- Serbia claimed that Bosnia should be part of Serbia and no longer part of Austria.
- Certain people agreed with this view who lived in Bosnia.
- One group of people was called the **Black Hand Gang**. They planned to assassinate The Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Hapsburg Empire, when he visited Sarajevo on the 28 June 1914.
- They did so more by chance than skill, with Gavrilo Princip firing the fatal bullets.

The Ultimatum
- Austria wanted to punish Serbia but feared war with Russia.
- They asked for support from their ally Germany.
- The Germans promised full support (5th July)
- The Austrians presented Serbia with an ultimatum, a set of demands (23rd July)
- The Serbians accepted most of them but could not accept them all (25th July)
- Austria therefore declared war on Serbia (28th July)

The Steps to War
- Russia came to the support of Serbia and mobilised her army
- In response Germany mobilised to help Austria Hungary
- France therefore mobilised to help Russia
- Germany declared war on Russia and France

Britain and the War
- Britain had signed an alliance with Russia and France in 1907.
- Equally it had signed the **Treaty of London of 1839** when they had promised to respect the neutrality of Belgium. When Belgium was invaded by Germany, this convinced the British government that they would be right to go to war.
Topic 3: War Plans

All countries, scared of war, had made provisional plans should war break out. However the most famous was the German plan

Germany and the Schlieffen Plan.

- Germany faced a war on two fronts (Against France and Russia as both these countries had made an alliance together)
- A German general, von Schlieffen, produced a plan based on defeating France first
- He believed he could defeat the French army in 3 weeks.
- The Germans would then turn on Russia and defeat them.
- France would be defeated first as Russia would be slower to get their army ready (mobilise) - they estimated 6 weeks to fully mobilise

Why did the Schlieffen Plan fail?

1. The Plan looked good on paper, but Schlieffen had not taken account of the distances that the German armies had to cover in the strict timetable he laid down. The troops soon got very tired and it became very difficult to supply them with enough food and equipment.
2. The Schlieffen Plan was changed by von Moltke, the new Chief of Staff, who only sent 60% of the Germany army through Belgium. This made it harder to attack so quickly.
3. The German army met stronger opposition in Belgium than was expected. This meant it took much longer than expected to break through Belgium.
4. When Germany declared war on Belgium on 3 August 1914 the Belgian government appealed to Great Britain for help. Germany did not expect Britain to help, but in fact the British sent troops straight away and they played a key role in holding up the Germans.
5. Even worse for the Germans was the fact that the Russian army had taken them by surprise and had attacked after two weeks. Some of the German army had to be sent east as reinforcements. This made it even more difficult to attack quickly in the west.
Topic 4: Conditions in the Trenches

Why was there stalemate on the Western Front?

- In late September 1914, the Allied armies tried to force the Germans back at the battle of the Aisne, but in heavy rain they failed.
- Both sides began to 'race to the sea'. This was an attempt to gain control of the Channel ports.
- The race to the sea created a front line of trenches that stretched from the Channel to Switzerland.

Image of a trench

What was trench warfare like: THE NEGATIVES

1. Smell of decaying bodies
2. Disease: EG trenchfoot, cholera, shell shock
3. Rats / Lice
4. Poor hygiene (particularly food + water)
5. Lack of supplies
6. Muddy conditions
7. Living in the open (rain, snow)
8. Fear of death

What was trench warfare like: THE POSITIVES

- Many soldiers had signed up with friends and were in trenches /battalions (groups of soldiers) with them. A positive could be that they were experiencing the war with friends.
Topic 5: Could new Weapons break the Deadlock?

How important was Gas?

Poison gas was first used at Ypres in April 1915 and proved a deadly weapon. 9,000 Allied soldiers were killed.

Types
- Mustard Gas - choking and blistering the skin
- Phosgene Gas - choking
- Chlorine - choking and blinding

Effectiveness?
- Counter measures were developed especially efficient gas masks with a warning sounded by sentries with a rattle or gong.
- Dangerous as the wind could change and equally blow the gas over the target trenches too quickly.
- A horrible but not effective weapon.

How important were Tanks?

First used on the Somme in October 1916. Most famously used at Cambrai in 1917.

Advantages
- Armour plating to defeat the machine gun and shrapnel
- Tracks to cross mud and trenches + could easily cut through the barbed wire
- Machine guns to kill defenders

Disadvantages
- Slow, easy targets
- Broke down- many broke down before they reached the battlefield!
- Crews poisoned by exhaust fumes
- Badly used by generals - not enough in 1916

- The stalemate on the Western Front was eventually broken in 1918 and a new British weapon, the tank, did help to bring this about.
- 430 of them were used and, despite heavy losses, breakthrough was achieved.
Topic 6: The Battle of the Somme

What happened at the Battle of the Somme?

- On 1 July 1916, Haig launched his first great battle began along the banks of the Somme.
- This was an attempt to take pressure off the French at Verdun, but it ended up being the biggest disaster in British military history.
- The massive bombardment failed to destroy the enemy defences and the British suffered 60,000 casualties on the first day.
- 70% of the troops who went over the top in the first wave were either killed or wounded.
- When Haig eventually called off the attack in November, less than five miles had been gained.

Does Haig deserve to be called the ‘Butcher of the Somme’?

YES
- He allowed the army to go on attacking long after it was clear that no real progress was being made. This led to hundreds of thousands of needless deaths.
- In 1917 Haig ordered a second major attack at Passchendaele, just north of Ypres. Haig did not seem to have learned the lessons from the Somme.
- Haig appears to have been inflexible and lacking in new ideas.

NO
- Plans had to be drawn up very late to save the French at Verdun
- He was only given about half the forces that he believed he needed to win at the Somme.
- Haig was a caring man and felt deeply sorry about the loss of men
**Topic 7: Other Key Battles:**

**Gallipoli + Passchendaele**

### Gallipoli

**Why were troops sent to Gallipoli in April, 1915?**
- The deadlock on the Western front seemed like it would never end.
- It was their way of **try to break the deadlock**.
- There were two aims of the attack:
  1. **Defeat Turkey**, who were allies with Germany.
  2. Get **supplies to Russia** through the Dardanelles Straights.

**What happened?**
- The Royal Navy tried to get bomb Turkish forts in the Straits in March 1915, but all this did was **warn the Turkish forces** that the Allies were thinking of attacking there.
- The landings at **Anzac Cove** on 25 April were in the wrong place. This ruined the plans massively.
- The first beach was too small to allow forces to be landed quickly and later landings faced similar problems. At **Suvla Bay**, in August 1915, the landings were carried out in darkness and the troops became lost. There was total confusion.
- The evacuation, the most successful part of whole operation, was carried out without any loss of life in December 1915.

**Why did the Gallipoli Landings fail?**
- The British **would not send their best ships or officers** because they wanted to keep them on the Western Front.
- It was very **badly planned**. The British did not even know how many Turkish troops were in the area. They were even using some old tourist guide books for intelligence!
- The Turkish forces proved to be very **determined fighters**.
Passchendaele

Key Facts
July 31, to November 6, 1917
Britain + France + Australia + New Zealand + Canada v Germany
General Haig in charge of Allied troops (British side)

Why?
In the spring of 1917, the British decided that German U-Boats (War Ships) were stopping Britain getting crucial supplies. Britain was so worried it might not be able to fight in 1918 as they couldn’t get resources. They decided that they needed to capture key areas close to the sea, so if ships could land, they would make sure they got all the supplies.

What were conditions like?
MUDDY because:
- The drainage ditches had been destroyed because of all the shells which had been fired. Once the August rains came, the area was transformed into a field of mud and muck.

Results
1. In three months of fighting, almost a million shells and grenades were fired, and over half a million soldiers were killed or wounded.

2. The British lost 300,000 men.

3. The Germans suffered equally, taking over 250,000 casualties.

4. In spite of heavy casualties inflicted by the grimly determined enemy, allied soldiers had crossed the final 500 yards, overran the German trenches, captured the village, and took hundreds of exhausted prisoners.
The war at sea was vital because both sides needed supplies from abroad. If one side could defeat the other side at sea, then they could starve the other country and win the war.

**The Battle at Jutland**
- There was only one major sea battle during the First World War, at **Jutland** in May 1916.
- The *result was a draw*
- Although the Royal Navy (British) lost twice as many ships as the Germans and twice as many men, the leader of the German Navy ordered their fleet of ships to return home. As they never left the port again- this could be said to be a victory.

**From 1916 the Royal Navy fulfilled a key functions:**
1. It **blockaded Germany** and prevented vital supplies from getting through. In the end, this was a very important reason for the Allied victory because it meant there was a shortage of food in Germany.

**Submarine Warfare**
- The Germans began a policy of **unrestricted submarine warfare** in 1915. This meant that their submarines attacked *any* ships coming to Britain without giving warning
- This angered America so much, particularly when they sunk one of their ships the Lusitania, that America decided to enter the war on the allies (Britain, French and Russia's side)
Why did the USA declare war in April 1917?
- Until 1916 the US government did not want to get involved in a conflict so far away from their own country.

- However by 1917 the USA had lent large sums of money to Britain and France - £850,000,000 to Britain alone. This would be lost if Germany won.

- In March 1917, four US ships were sunk by German U boats. This angered the USA.

- The British government then handed the Zimmermann Telegram to the US government. This was a secret message from Germany to Mexico, encouraging Mexico to attack the USA. This angered America so much they decided to get involved.

What impact did the USA have on the war?
1. The US troops themselves did not have a massive effect on the outcome of the battles. They did not start arriving until the spring of 1918 and they were not trained for a war like the one they found - their casualty rate was very high.

2. The most important effect of the US declaration of war was that it convinced Germany they needed to try and win the war quickly. However the German forces were very tired, and couldn’t keep up with the new plans.

3. The arrival of so many fresh and enthusiastic US troops also helped break the Germans’ will to continue.
Topic 11: The defeat of Germany

How did the war end... Problems for Germany

1. The **British naval blockade** was stopping resources getting to Germany and German people were starving.
2. The **USA had joined the war** by now and 1000s of fresh American troops would soon be arriving.
3. However, by August, the German army was **exhausted** and could not reach Paris.
4. The German military could not supply their forces with enough weapons and reinforcements to keep the advance going.

The Allies response...

- It was now the turn of the Allies to push forward and they were helped by new technology. **Better tanks** tore huge holes in the German defenses. By now, it was obvious that the Germans were going to lose.
- By the beginning of November, all of Germany's allies - Austria-Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria - had surrendered.
- In the northern ports, German **sailors mutinied** (gave up and disobeyed orders), and in Berlin crowds marched through the streets calling for an end to the war.
- There were **food riots and strikes** in other German cities. The Kaiser fled to the Netherlands. A new German government was formed and it immediately asked for a ceasefire.

Why was Germany defeated in 1918?

- Germany had had to fight on **two fronts** for most of the war.
- The **British naval blockade** forced the German people into a desperate situation - Many were starving by 1917
- The arrival of the **USA** in 1917
- The **constant battles** (like the Somme) had weakened the German army and the spirit of the German people.
- Their **spirit was weakened** even more when the USA joined the war.

An armistice or ceasefire was agreed for 11/11/1918.

Terms:

- Germany to withdraw from Belgium and France.
- Germany to hand over most of its heavy weapons
- Germany to hand over its fleet.
- Allies to occupy the Rhine bridgehead
Question (a): INFERENC QUESTION

The question will ask you either:
A) What can you learn from source X about..........?
B) What can you infer from source X about..........?
THESE ARE THE SAME QUESTION JUST WORDED DIFFERENTLY!

How should I structure my answer?
- In the source I can see .....  
- From this I can learn......
Try and repeat this at least twice

Question (b): CROSS REFERENCE QUESTION

Does Source A support the evidence of Sources B and C about...?

Plan
STEP 1: Read the sources
STEP 2: Draw a quick table
In column A write points which agree, Column B points which disagree
STEP 3: Look how many ‘agree points’ you have and how many ‘disagree points’ you have
Then chose your key word: largely agree, largely disagree, agree to a certain extent
STEP 4: Remember to write you overall argument

Structure
Paragraph 1: EVIDENCE WHICH AGREES
Paragraph 2: EVIDENCE WHICH DISAGREES
Paragraph 3: OVERALL JUDGEMENT

Question (C): ESSAY QUESTION

Use the sources, and your own knowledge, to explain whether you agree with... (12 marks)
- Mention all of the sources if you can
- Have a ‘for and against’ structure - arguments for the statement and arguments against.
  You must say at least one thing for both ‘for’ and ‘against’.
- Make sure you leave plenty of time for this question- this carries 16/25 marks for this paper
- Leave plenty of time for this question!