



World War I – Short Documentary Videos Argument-Based Reflection Questions

The debatable issue for this project is:

What was the most fundamental cause of World War I (1914 – 1918): nationalism, militarism, ethnic chauvinism, or imperialism?

In pairs or small groups of three, students should reflect on, discuss, and answer each of the following argument-based questions after each short documentary video is screened.

Made from History, “The Four M-A-I-N Causes of World War I,” 2014

1. What are the four positions that the documentary introduces and explores to answer the debatable question?

2. Which country maintained naval superiority throughout the several decades prior to WWI and which other country did its best to catch up to it? What psychological condition did this race for naval dominance leave countries in Europe in, according to this documentary?



3. What three countries formed the Triple Alliance of 1882 (also known as the Central Powers)? What three countries formed the Triple Entente of 1907 (a.k.a. the Allies)?

4. What was the cause of French – German suspicion of one another going into the 20th century? What was the cause of Russian – Austro-Hungarian suspicion of one another?

5. Why did imperialism fuel tensions between European powers in the late-19th and early-20th centuries?

6. Summarize in detail the “trigger event” for WWI and describe what “domino effect” it led to.

7. What position does this documentary support most and why?

John Ruddy, “World War I in Six Minutes” 2013

1. What were the two motivations behind European nations’ militarism of the late-19th and early-20th centuries, according to this video?



2. What were two important reasons that the United States entered the war on the side of the Allies in April, 1917?

3. What specific changes and impacts did experience in WWI have on the soldiers who returned? Why do you think young adults in 1918 were called “the Lost Generation”?

“World War I Over-Simplified” 2016

1. Describe the way that German enters World War I, and summarize its initial strategy.

2. How does the video document that European powers had a view toward war that would be revealed as wholly misaligned with modern warfare?

3. Summarize the video’s description of trench warfare.



John Green, World History Crash Course, “Who Started World War I?” 2012

1. What are the 2 – 3 of the video’s counter-arguments against the position that it was *German* militarism that was most responsible for causing World War I?

2. What is the best argument that Germany did have more blame for the start of the war than other nations, even if Germany didn’t necessarily have a uniquely “national militaristic character”?

3. Name two of the most important reasons that Russia shared significant blame for starting World War I, according to the video.

4. Why does John Green focus on diplomatic history and governmental decision-making in exploring the cause of World War I?
