

Global Conflict

AP World History ■ Unit 7

AP World History



What we will cover

- 1 Shifting Power After 1900
- 2 Causes of World War I
- 3 Conducting World War I
- 4 Economy in the Interwar Period
- 5 Unresolved Tensions After World War I
- 6 Causes of World War II



Shifting Power After 1900

Unit 7 covers **global conflict from 1900**, and its organising question is not "what happened in the wars" but *why the political order that existed in 1900 collapsed, and what replaced it*.

- The older land-based **Ottoman, Russian, and Qing empires** collapsed under that combination – internal strain and pressure from outside at the same time.
- States around the world **challenged the existing political and social order**, and the CED's named case is the **Mexican Revolution**, which arose from political and economic inequality.

Shifting Power After 1900, continued

At the start of the century the West dominated the global political order. Over the following decades **both land-based and maritime empires gave way to new states**, and the CED names the mechanism as a combination of **internal and external factors** .

An answer that gives only internal weakness, or only external pressure, has given half the explanation.



Causes of World War I

The CED compresses the causes into one statement, and every element of it is worth marks:

- **Imperialist expansion** and **competition for resources** .
- **Territorial and regional conflicts** .
- A **flawed alliance system** that turned a local conflict into a general one.
- **Intense nationalism** .

Causes of World War I, continued

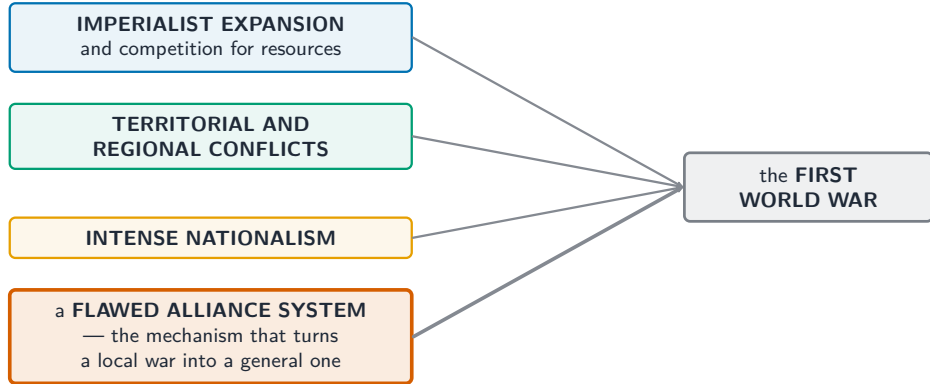
Notice the shape of the claim: the first three supply the tension, and the alliance system supplies the **escalation** .

That distinction – between what made conflict likely and what made it global – is the single most useful thing to hold from this topic.

Three explain tension; one explains escalation

- **Imperialist expansion** and **competition for resources** .
- **Territorial and regional conflicts** .
- A **flawed alliance system** that turned a local conflict into a general one.
- **Intense nationalism** .

Three explain tension; one explains escalation, in detail



A **flawed alliance system** that turned a local conflict into a general one.



What a government must control once war stops being a matter

- **Political propaganda** , art, and media to sustain public support.
- **Intensified forms of nationalism** .
- Mobilisation of **economies and populations** - conscription, war production, and the direction of labour.
- Recruitment and use of **colonial subjects** as soldiers and labourers.

What a government must control once war stops being, in detail

Total war: the state directs the whole society

Propaganda and media

sustain public support;
art, film, press

Intensified nationalism

the nation as the unit
that must be defended

Economic mobilisation

conscription, war production,
directed labour, rationing

Colonial recruitment

soldiers and labourers drawn
from imperial holdings

used in
BOTH wars

What differs in 1939-45: new technology and tactics - the atomic bomb, fire-bombing - raise casualties, and a far higher share of them are civilian.

Mobilisation of **economies and populations** - conscription, war production, and the direction of labour.

Conducting World War I

World War I was the **first total war** . The CED lists the methods governments used, and they are not only military:

- **Political propaganda** , art, and media to sustain public support.
- **Intensified forms of nationalism** .
- Mobilisation of **economies and populations** – conscription, war production, and the direction of labour.
- Recruitment and use of **colonial subjects** as soldiers and labourers.

Conducting World War I, continued

Alongside this, **new military technology led to increased levels of wartime casualties** .

The technological point and the mobilisation point are separate marks, so give both.



Economy in the Interwar Period

Following World War I and the onset of the **Great Depression**, governments began to take a **more active role in economic life**. That is the general claim; the CED then supplies contrasting cases of how far that role went.

In the **Soviet Union**, the government controlled the national economy through the **Five Year Plans**, implementing repressive policies at significant **cost to the population** while achieving rapid industrialisation.

One direction of travel, different extents

the **GREAT DEPRESSION** — a collapse no market recovered from on its own

governments take **A MORE ACTIVE ROLE** in economic life

states direct the economy outright
— the Soviet **FIVE YEAR PLANS**,
at significant cost to the population

the same direction of travel, taken to very different extents

The pattern is the answer and the countries are the evidence. A prompt here asks about **extent**, which means placing a case on this spectrum



Unresolved Tensions After World War I

Between the two world wars, Western and Japanese imperial states predominantly maintained control over colonial holdings, and in some cases gained new territory. The hopes for **self-determination** raised by the peace settlement were largely not met for colonised peoples.

Naming that link is what makes a continuity answer strong.



Causes of World War II

The CED again gives a compound cause, and each element is examinable:

- The **unsustainable peace settlement** after World War I.
- The **global economic crisis** produced by the Great Depression.
- **Continued imperialist practices** .
- The **rise of fascism and extreme nationalism** .

Causes of World War II, continued

Compare this with the World War I list and a real pattern appears: economic pressure and nationalism are common to both, while the *specific* additions in 1939 are the failed settlement and the new ideological regimes.

A comparison question wants exactly that structure – shared causes named, then the differences.



Conducting World War II

World War II was **also a total war**, and governments used the same broad categories of method: propaganda, art and media, intensified nationalism, and the mobilisation of economies and populations including colonial subjects.

New military technology and new tactics – including the **atomic bomb**, fire-bombing, and the waging of total war – led to increased levels of casualties, including a far higher proportion of **civilian** deaths than in the previous conflict.

Continuity above the rule, change below it

Set the two wars side by side and the line falls in the same place every time:

- **Above the rule – continuity.** *Mobilising a society*: economies and populations directed to the war, in 1914 and again, further, in 1939. *Who is drawn in*: **colonial subjects** fighting for empires they do not govern, on a wider front the second time.
- **Below the rule – change.** *Technology*: new weapons in the first war; new weapons *and* new tactics in the second, ending with the **atomic bomb** . *Who dies*: overwhelmingly soldiers, then **civilians** on a scale without precedent.

“Methods largely similar, scale and technology different” is the comparison. **Both were total wars** has not compared them; **the second was worse** has not explained why.

Continuity above the rule, change below it, in detail

	THE FIRST WORLD WAR	THE SECOND
MOBILISING A SOCIETY	total war: economies and populations directed to the war	the same, and further
WHO IS DRAWN IN	colonial subjects fight for empires they do not govern	again, and on a wider front
TECHNOLOGY	new weapons raise casualties sharply	new weapons and new tactics — and the atomic bomb
WHO DIES	overwhelmingly soldiers	civilians on a scale without precedent

The two total wars: above the rule **continuity**, below it **change** — the table is the sentence, proved.



Mass Atrocities After 1900

This topic asks for **causes and consequences of mass atrocities** in the period from 1900 to the present. The CED's framing is that the rise of **extremist groups in power** led to the attempted destruction of specific populations, and it names the **Holocaust** – the Nazi killing of Jewish people – as the principal case, alongside other twentieth-century genocides and mass killings.

That last point connects this topic to the technology theme running through the whole unit.



Causation in Global Conflict

The unit's reasoning skill is **causation**, and specifically the **relative significance** of causes.

That word "relative" is the whole task: you are not listing causes, you are ranking them and defending the ranking.

Worked example – a similarity evidenced on both sides

“Explain one similarity between the ways governments conducted World War I and World War II.”

- **Full marks:** *“Both wars were total wars in which governments mobilised entire economies and populations. In both, states used propaganda to sustain public support, directed industrial production toward war material, and recruited soldiers and labourers from their colonies.”*
- A similarity claim must be **evidenced on both sides**.

Evidence from one war only cannot demonstrate a similarity, however good the evidence is.

Exam tips

- For the collapse of the Ottoman, Russian, and Qing empires, always pair internal strain with external pressure. One alone is half an answer.
- Separate what made World War I likely (imperial competition, nationalism, regional conflict) from what made it global (the alliance system).
- Total war has a checklist: propaganda, nationalism, economic mobilisation, colonial recruitment. Use it for both wars and the comparison writes itself.
- The interwar economy is a spectrum of state involvement, not a single policy. Say how far a state went, not just that it intervened.
- Comparison questions need evidence on both sides. A detail about only one case cannot support a similarity or a difference.
- "Relative significance" means rank and justify. A list of causes with no argument about which mattered most does not answer the question asked.



Unit 7 – key takeaways

1

Empires

internal strain plus external pressure

2

WWI

likely vs global: alliances made it worldwide

3

Total war

propaganda, nationalism, mobilisation, colonies

4

Interwar

a spectrum of state involvement, not one policy

Check yourself

- 1 What pair explains Ottoman/Russian/Qing collapse?
- 2 What made the war global rather than likely?
- 3 Give the total-war checklist.
- 4 How should you talk about interwar intervention?

Answers: internal + external ▪ the alliance system ▪ propaganda, nationalism, mobilisation, colonies ▪ how far, not just that it happened