2.3 Paper 2: causes and effects of the First World War

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ **Total: 30 marks**

KEY WORDS long-term cause • short-term cause • trigger • alliance • historiography

Objective

Build the Paper 2 skills for **causes and effects of 20th-century wars** with the First World War: long-term causes, short-term causes and the trigger, the July Crisis, historians' views on responsibility, and the political, economic and social effects of the war.

You must be able to:

- distinguish long-term causes, short-term causes and the trigger
- explain the July Crisis and why the war spread so quickly
- compare historians' views on responsibility for the war
- explain the political, economic and social effects of the war
- write an essay on responsibility for the outbreak of war

1 Key knowledge and worked examples

Causes

kind	meaning	First World War example
long-term causes	conditions over many years	alliances (Triple Alliance 1882, Triple Entente 1907); the naval race (HMS *Dreadnought*, 1906); nationalism in the Balkans; imperial rivalry
short-term causes	events in the months before	the July Crisis: Austria-Hungary's ultimatum to Serbia; Russian mobilization; German war plans
trigger	the event that starts the war	the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo, 28 June 1914

Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia on 28 July; Germany on Russia on 1 August and on France on 3 August; Britain on Germany on 4 August, after German troops entered Belgium (the Schlieffen Plan attacked France through Belgium).

Responsibility: historians' views

- Fritz Fischer (1961): Germany planned and wanted a war to become a world power.
- Christopher Clark (2012), *The Sleepwalkers*: the leaders of all the great powers stumbled into war; responsibility was shared.
- Others stress the alliance system, Russian mobilization or Austria-Hungary's choices.

Effects

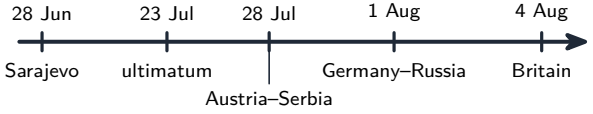
About 10 million soldiers died. Four empires collapsed (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia, the Ottoman Empire). New states appeared in Eastern Europe. The 1917 revolutions brought the Bolsheviks to power in Russia. In Britain most women over 30 got the vote in 1918, partly because of their war work. The Treaty of Versailles created anger in Germany that the Nazis later used: the effects of one war became causes of the next.

Worked counter-argument. "Fischer argues that Germany wanted war; however, Clark shows that Russia's mobilization and Austria-Hungary's ultimatum also turned a Balkan crisis into a European war."

2 Practice

2.1 Distinguish between a **long-term cause** and a **trigger** of a war, with an example of each from the First World War. [2]

2.2 Franz Ferdinand was killed on 28 June 1914 and Britain declared war on 4 August 1914. Calculate the number of days between the two events, and explain **two** reasons why a local crisis became a European war so quickly. [3]



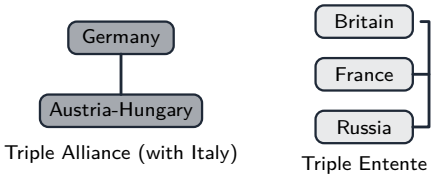
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2.3 Explain **two** political effects of the First World War. [4]

2.4 Outline the views of **Fritz Fischer** and **Christopher Clark** on responsibility for the First World War, and explain **one** strength of each view. [6]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 *(Paper 2 style.)* To what extent was Germany responsible for the outbreak of the First World War? [15]



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Solutions

Marking: **M1** a correct method, **A1** the correct answer, **B1** an independent mark.

Each answer shows the steps, then the **result**.

2.1

long-term cause: a condition that built up over many years, e.g. the alliance system or the naval race; trigger: the event that started the war, e.g. the assassination of Franz Ferdinand on 28 June 1914

2.2

2 days left in June +31 in July +4 in August = **37** days; the alliances drew in the great powers one after another; military plans, such as Germany's Schlieffen Plan, needed fast mobilization and an attack through Belgium, which brought Britain in

2.3

any two, explained: four empires collapsed: Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia and the Ottoman Empire, so new states such as Poland and Czechoslovakia appeared; revolution in Russia: the Bolsheviks took power in 1917, creating the first communist state; the Treaty of Versailles took land and imposed reparations, creating anger in Germany that later helped the Nazis; more women got the vote, e.g. in Britain in 1918, partly because of their war work; the League of Nations was created to prevent another war

2.4

Fischer (1961): Germany wanted and planned a war to become a world power; strength: he used German government documents showing war aims, e.g. the September Programme (1914); Clark (2012): the leaders of all the great powers "sleepwalked" into war, so responsibility was shared; strength: he studies the decisions of every capital, including Vienna, St Petersburg and Belgrade, not only Berlin

3.1

Mark with the markbands: [13-15] clearly focused on the question, accurate and relevant knowledge used as evidence, well-developed critical analysis, different perspectives evaluated, a reasoned conclusion; [10-12] focused, mostly accurate knowledge, analysis with some evaluation; [7-9] some focus, relevant knowledge, mostly narrative or description with limited analysis; [4-6] little focus, limited knowledge, mostly narrative; [1-3] little understanding of the question. Points that may be included: for: Germany gave Austria-Hungary a "blank cheque" of support in early July 1914; the Schlieffen Plan meant war with Russia became war with France and an invasion of Belgium, bringing Britain in; the naval race and Weltpolitik had raised tension with Britain; Fischer's view: Germany wanted war to become a world power; against: Austria-Hungary's harsh ultimatum to Serbia and declaration of war (28 July); Russia's general mobilization (30–31 July) made a wider war likely; Serbian nationalism and the Black Hand group behind the assassination; Britain and France were also tied by the alliance system; Clark's view: responsibility was shared; conclusion: a clear judgement, e.g. Germany bears the largest share because it turned a Balkan crisis into a European war, but not the only share

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