



Resource C

Great Britain



Great Britain had the largest empire and by far the strongest navy in the world however the United States of America and Germany were quickly catching up with the British in producing goods through their factories. By 1914 Great Britain was allied to France and Russia, partly because the Germans had decided to create a navy of their own which would rival the size of Britain's Royal Navy. However the British did not have to go to war if France or Russia did. Their alliance with the French and Russians was an "entente" or understanding, not a definite agreement to go to war if their allies did. Britain was a monarchy but governed by MP's which many (though not all) adult men voted for on a regular basis. Governments could change between the Conservative and Liberal parties so a government would have to persuade many people that a war was worth fighting if they were to stay in power. The British Army was small and used to fighting weaker enemies within its empire but not in Europe. The British Empire would be able to supply many extra troops.

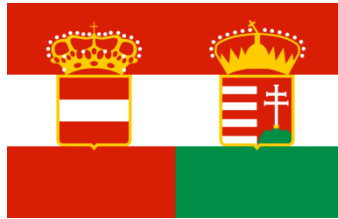
Germany



Germany had only been united in 1871. It had one of the largest armies in the world and was the best trained and best equipped. Germany had deliberately built up a large navy to rival Britain's. Its empire was small but it was producing more and more goods to export throughout the world. German industry was particularly good at producing efficient weapons. The German emperor William the Second was boastful and unpredictable. Although all German men could vote and there were a number of parties, it was the emperor who appointed the government. The army and a class of aristocrats called the Junkers held real power. The Germans were most afraid of the size and apparently growing power of the Russian army. They did not believe that the British would support the French or Russians if there was a war.

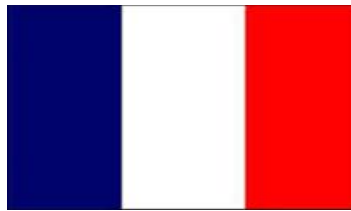


Austria-Hungary



Austria-Hungary was an old European empire made up of many peoples. Some of these wanted independence or wanted to unite with neighbouring countries where the people spoke the same language and shared the same customs. German speakers held power in Austria and Hungarians in Hungary but other peoples were kept under control. Austria-Hungary looked to Germany for support against its enemies and particularly the Russians. The Austro-Hungarian government could only rely on the support of some of its people. The empire was quite rich but much weaker than its powerful German ally.

France



France was a republic where different parties competed for the votes of adult men to vote for MP's who chose the government. Some French people longed for revenge against the Germans for a defeat in 1870-71 when the Germans had seized the territory of Alsace-Lorraine from them. The French army was large and well-trained but in the event of war the French hoped to rely on Britain's large navy for support. The large French empire could provide extra troops. French people were passionately divided about many things. Any French government would have to work hard to keep support for a war, even though Germany was very unpopular.



Russia



Power in Russia was held by the Emperor or Tsar. There was a parliament (Duma) but it did not have much power. Most of the Russian population were poor and badly educated peasants and they made up the vast Russian armies. The Tsar (Nicholas the Second) was weak, indecisive and dominated by his wife. He had nearly been overthrown by a revolution in 1905, the same year that Russia was embarrassingly defeated by Japan. However, Russia was a huge empire and the sheer size of its armies meant it could carry on fighting even if it lost territory.

Italy



Italy had only been a united country since 1861. Although it was a member of the Triple Alliance it had said that it would not fight Great Britain. Italy also wanted to take land from its ally Austria-Hungary. The Italian empire was small and the Italian army quite weak. Italian men could vote for MP's but Italian governments were weak and did not last long. Any Italian government might struggle to keep enough support among the people for a war.