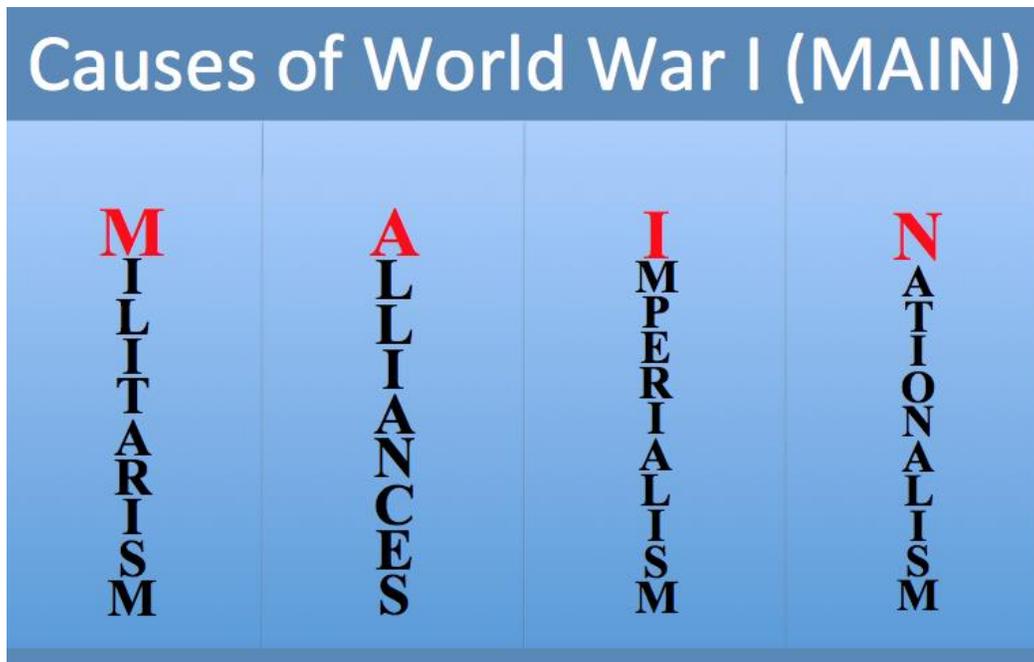


6:23 MAIN or MANIAC: Two Explanations for World War I

Instructions: Some historians argue militarism, alliances, imperialism, and nationalism, which spell out the acronym MAIN are the underlying causes of World War I. Other historians add armaments and capitalism as important underlying causes of the war spelling the acronym MANIAC. In your opinion, which acronym better explains the underlying causes of World War I? Why? Why are the distinctions important?



Source for definitions: <https://alphahistory.com/worldwar1/world-war-i-topics/>

Militarism: A philosophy or system that places great importance on military power. A German historian who served in World War I defined militarism as the “domination of the military man over the civilian, an undue preponderance of military demands, an emphasis on military considerations.”

Alliances: A formal political, military or economic agreement between two or more nations. Military alliances usually contain promises that in the event of war or aggression, one signatory nation will support the others. By 1914, the Great Powers of Europe had divided into two alliance blocs. These two opposing blocs meant that war between two nations from opposing blocs could mean war between them all.

Imperialism: Powerful nations control and exploit colonies. Prior to World War I the world’s most dominant imperial powers were Great Britain and France. Germany dominated modern-day Tanzania, Namibia and Cameroon in Africa, some Pacific islands, and an important extra-territorial concession in China.

Nationalism: Nationalism is an intense form of patriotism or loyalty to one’s country. Nationalists exaggerate the value or importance of their country, placing its interests above those of other countries.

Armaments: Virtually every major European nation engaged in some form of military expansion, technological development, and the production and stockpiling of new weaponry in the late 1800s and early 1900s. In 1870 the combined annual military spending of the six great powers (Britain, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia and Italy) totaled about \$450 million. By 1914 they were spending \$2 billion a year.

Capitalism: The dominant economic system, capitalism, the production and distribution of goods and services to maximize profit drove competition between corporations and nations, propelling imperialism and the need for alliances and armaments and justifying militarism and nationalism.

