

Objectives

As you teach this section, keep students focused on the following objectives to help them answer the Section Focus Question and master core content.

- Understand why a stalemate developed on the Western Front.
- Describe how technology made World War I different from earlier wars.
- Outline the course of the war on the Eastern Front, in other parts of Europe, in Turkey, and in the Middle East.
- Summarize how colonies fought in the war.

Prepare to Read

Build Background Knowledge L3

Remind students that there had not been a large-scale European war since Napoleon's time. Have them predict how war might have changed since 1815.

Set a Purpose L3

- **WITNESS HISTORY** Read the selection aloud or play the audio.

 **Witness History Audio CD,**
A Soldier on the Western Front

Ask **Why did the soldier find the singing of the birds so touching?** (*The peaceful, ordinary singing of the birds was such a contrast to the death and destruction surrounding him.*)

- **Focus** Point out the Section Focus Question and write it on the board. Tell students to refer to this question as they read. (*Answer appears with Section 2 Assessment answers.*)
- **Preview** Have students preview the Section Objectives and the list of Terms, People, and Places.
- **Note Taking** As they read, have students fill in the chart identifying details about the battlefronts.

 **Reading and Note Taking Study Guide,** p. 234

Answer

- ✓ Russia mobilized quickly in the east, causing Germany to divert troops there. The British and French stopped the weakened German advance at the Marne.

2



▼ A wounded German soldier in 1915

WITNESS HISTORY AUDIO

A Soldier on the Western Front

“The blue French cloth mingled with the German grey upon the ground, and in some places the bodies were piled so high that one could take cover from shell-fire behind them. The noise was so terrific that orders had to be shouted by each man into the ear of the next. And whenever there was a momentary lull in the tumult of battle and the groans of the wounded, one heard, high up in the blue sky, the joyful song of birds! Birds singing just as they do at home in spring-time! It was enough to tear the heart out of one’s body!”

—German soldier Richard Schmierer, writing from the trenches in France

Focus Question How and where was World War I fought?

World War I artillery shell ►

A New Kind of War

Objectives

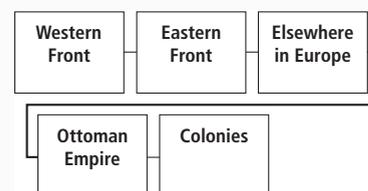
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Terms, People, and Places

stalemate	convoy
zeppelin	Dardanelles
U-boat	T. E. Lawrence

Note Taking

Reading Skill: Identify Supporting Details
Record important details about the various battlefronts of World War I in a flowchart.



The Great War was the largest conflict in history up to that time. The French mobilized almost 8.5 million men, the British nearly 9 million, the Russians 12 million, and the Germans 11 million. “One out of every four men who went out to the World War did not come back again,” recalled a survivor, “and of those who came back, many are maimed and blind and some are mad.”

Stalemate on the Western Front

As the war began, German forces fought their way through Belgium toward Paris. The Belgians resisted more than German generals had expected, but the German forces prevailed. However, Germany’s plans for a quick defeat of France soon faltered.

The Germans’ Schlieffen Plan failed for several reasons. First, Russia mobilized more quickly than expected. After a few small Russian victories, German generals hastily shifted some troops to the east, weakening their forces in the west. Then, in September 1914, British and French troops pushed back the German drive along the Marne River. The first battle of the Marne ended Germany’s hopes for a quick victory on the Western Front.

Both sides then began to dig deep trenches to protect their armies from fierce enemy fire. They did not know that the conflict would turn into a long, deadly **stalemate**, a deadlock in which neither side is able to defeat the other. Battle lines in France would remain almost unchanged for four years.

- ✓ **Checkpoint** How did the Allies stop the Germans from executing the Schlieffen Plan?

Vocabulary Builder

Use the information below and the following resources to teach the high-use words from this section.

 **Teaching Resources, Unit 6, p. 7; Teaching Resources, Skills Handbook, p. 3**

High-Use Word

utilize, p. 825

Definition and Sample Sentence

vt. to put to practical use
I **utilized** a new graphics program to make the sign.

confront, p. 825

vt. to face in opposition
He **confronted** the student who had taken his book and asked her to return it.

The Western Front and the Eastern Front, 1914–1918

Geography Interactive

For: Interactive map and timeline
Web Code: nap-2621



Map Skills World War I was fought on several fronts in Europe. Despite huge loss of life and property, the two sides came to a stalemate on the Western and Eastern fronts in 1915 and 1916.

- Locate** (a) Paris (b) Battle of the Marne (c) Verdun (d) Tannenberg
- Movement** Using the scale, describe how the battle lines moved on the Western Front from 1914 to 1918.
- Draw Inferences** Based on this map, why do you think many Russians were demoralized by the progress of the war?

The Human Cost To break the stalemate on the Western Front, both the Allies and the Central Powers launched massive offensives in 1916. German forces tried to overwhelm the French at Verdun (vur DUN). The French defenders held firm, sending up the battle cry “They shall not pass.” The 11-month struggle cost more than a half a million casualties, or soldiers killed, wounded, or missing, on both sides.

An Allied offensive at the Somme River (sum) was even more costly. In a single grisly day, nearly 60,000 British soldiers were killed or wounded. In the five-month battle, more than one million soldiers were killed, without either side winning an advantage.



▲ Wounded soldiers on stretchers in Verdun in 1916

WITNESS HISTORY VIDEO

Watch *World War I: A New Kind of War* on the *Witness History Discovery School™* video program to learn more about trench warfare.



Teach

Stalemate on the Western Front

L3

Instruct

- **Introduce: Key Terms** Ask students to find the key term *stalemate* (in blue) in the text and explain its meaning. Tell them that the Allies and Central Powers fought to a stalemate in France. Ask them to predict why a stalemate will present problems.
- **Teach** Ask **How did the Schlieffen Plan fail?** (*Germany diverted troops from France to the Eastern Front, where Germany fought Russia. French troops, strengthened by British forces, stopped German forces at the first battle of the Marne.*) **What happened when the Schlieffen Plan failed?** (*stalemate, trench warfare*)
- **Quick Activity** Show students *World War I: A New Kind of War* from the *Witness History Discovery School™* video program. Ask them to explain how new weapons affected the war. (*Answers should include the development of trench warfare and the increase in casualties of war.*)

Independent Practice

- **Web Code nap-2621** will take students to an interactive map and timeline. Have students complete the interactivity and then answer the questions in the text.
- **Viewpoints** To help students better understand the shifts in attitude toward war, have them read *Soldier-Poets View World War I* and complete the worksheet.

All in One Teaching Resources, Unit 6, p. 11

Monitor Progress

As students fill in their charts, circulate to make sure they understand how the different fronts impacted the war. For a completed version of the chart, see

Note Taking Transparencies, 170A

Answers

Map Skills

- Review locations with students.
- They moved less than 150 miles, and not at all from 1915 to 1916.
- Battle lines were pushed back far into Russian territory. The war was not going well for the Russians and it affected Russian civilians.

History Background

The Christmas Truce On December 24, 1914, on the front lines in Flanders, British troops reported an amazing sight: Christmas trees and lanterns along the German front line. They were even more amazed to see some Germans walking toward the British trenches shouting, “Hello! I want to talk to you!” So began the unofficial Christmas Truce. Ignoring orders

from headquarters, small groups of enemy soldiers put down their arms. The enemies came together in no man’s land and drank toasts and exchanged gifts such as chocolate or jam. They sang carols. One German recalled playing soccer against a Scottish regiment wearing kilts. After Christmas, the fighting began again.

Technology of Modern Warfare

Instruct

■ Introduce: Vocabulary Builder

Have students read the Vocabulary Builder term and definition. Then show **Color Transparency 158: Sopwith Camel**. Discuss with students how this aircraft was *utilized* in World War I.

 **Color Transparencies, 158**

- **Teach** Using the Numbered Heads strategy (TE, p. T23), have students discuss how new or improved weapons affected the way war was fought. Ask **How did these weapons make trench warfare necessary?** (*Opposing sides dug trenches to protect themselves from the exploding shells and waves of bullets.*) **How did these weapons make warfare much deadlier than in Napoleon's day, when rifles were still hand-loaded?** (*The weapons were able to kill more people quicker.*) **Why would tanks have been useful on the Western Front?** (*Tanks would have been able to break through the barbed wire and ride over the uneven terrain of no man's land.*) **Why did tanks fail to break the stalemate?** (*The first tanks did not work properly.*)

- **Analyzing the Visuals** Direct students' attention to the Infographic on this page. Read the captions and discuss the visuals as a class. Ask students to use the visuals to describe what life was like in the trenches.

Independent Practice

Note Taking Have students fill in the concept web describing the technological innovations of World War I.

 **Reading and Note Taking**
Study Guide, p. 234

Monitor Progress

As students fill in their concept webs, circulate to make sure they understand the innovations developed during World War I. For a completed version of the concept web, see

 **Note Taking Transparencies, 170B**

Note Taking

Reading Skill: Summarize Review the information under the heading "Technology of Modern Warfare." Summarize key points using a concept web like the one below. Add circles as needed.



Technology of Modern Warfare

The enormous casualties suffered on the Western Front proved the destructive power of modern weapons. Two significant new or improved weapons were the rapid-fire machine gun and the long-range artillery gun. Machine guns mowed down waves of soldiers. The shrapnel, or flying debris from artillery shells, killed or wounded even more soldiers than the guns. Artillery allowed troops to shell the enemy from more than 10 miles away.

Poison Gas In 1915, first Germany and then the Allies began using another new weapon—poison gas. Poison gas blinded or choked its victims or caused agonizing burns and blisters. It could be fatal. Though soldiers were eventually given gas masks, poison gas remained one of the most dreaded hazards of the war. One British soldier recalled the effects of being gassed:

Primary Source

“I suppose I resembled a kind of fish with my mouth open gasping for air. It seemed as if my lungs were gradually shutting up and my heart pounded away in my ears like the beat of a drum. . . . To get air into my lungs was real agony.”

—William Pressey, quoted in *People at War 1914–1918*

Poison gas was an uncertain weapon. Shifting winds could blow the gas back on the soldiers who launched it.

● INFOGRAPHIC

Trench Warfare

From the end of 1914 through 1918, the warring armies on the Western Front faced each other from a vast system of deep trenches. There, millions of soldiers lived out in the open, sharing their food with rats and their beds with lice. Between the opposing trench lines lay “no man’s land.” In this tract of land pocked with shell holes, every house and tree had long since been destroyed. Sooner or later, soldiers would go “over the top,” charging into this manmade desert. With luck, the attackers might overrun a few enemy trenches. In time, the enemy would launch a counterattack, with similar results. The struggle continued, back and forth, over a few hundred yards of territory.



Soldiers peered over the edges of their trenches, watching for the next attack.



Soldiers ate, slept, and fought in trenches. ▶ Tea tins (above) supplied to British soldiers in World War I, contained 200 tablets of compressed tea.

Connect to Our World

Connections to Today Modern chemical warfare was first introduced in World War I when poison gas was used as a weapon. The use of the gas did not have a significant effect on the course of the war, mainly because protective measures such as gas masks were quickly developed. Still, poison gas inspired terror.

The Geneva Protocol of 1925 banned the use of chemical weapons, but not their production. As a

result, these weapons continued to be used in warfare. The Nazis used Zyklon-B gas in World War II to kill millions in extermination camps. The United States used herbicides, such as Agent Orange, in Vietnam. In 1992, an international treaty called for the complete ban on production, stockpiling, and use of chemical weapons by 2007. The international community is still refining related treaties.

Tanks, Airplanes, and Submarines During World War I, advances in technology, such as the gasoline-powered engine, led the opposing forces to use tanks, airplanes, and submarines against each other. In 1916, Britain introduced the first armored tank. Mounted with machine guns, the tanks were designed to move across no man's land. Still, the first tanks broke down often. They failed to break the stalemate.

Both sides also used aircraft. At first, planes were utilized simply to observe enemy troop movements. In 1915, Germany used **zeppelins** (ZEP uh linz), large gas-filled balloons, to bomb the English coast. Later, both sides equipped airplanes with machine guns. Pilots known as “flying aces” confronted each other in the skies. These “dogfights” were spectacular, but had little effect on the course of the war on the ground.

Submarines proved much more important. German **U-boats**, nicknamed from the German word for submarine, *Unterseeboot*, did tremendous damage to the Allied side, sinking merchant ships carrying vital supplies to Britain. To defend against the submarines, the Allies organized **convoys**, or groups of merchant ships protected by warships.

✓ **Checkpoint** What made World War I much more deadly than previous wars?

Battle on Other European Fronts

On Europe's Eastern Front, battle lines shifted back and forth, sometimes over large areas. Even though the armies were not mired in trench warfare, casualties rose even higher than on the Western Front. The results were just as indecisive.



Trench Design

Front line trenches were dug in a zigzag pattern to prevent the enemy from firing down the line.

Communications trenches, perpendicular to the front line trenches, served as routes for mail, food, supplies, reinforcements, and the transport of wounded soldiers.

Tanks, developed during the war, rolled on sturdy tracks, which allowed them to navigate through barbed wire and over the rough terrain of no man's land.

Messenger dogs, trained to leap over barbed wire, carried vital information to the front lines. ▼



Thinking Critically

- Determine Relevance** How did technological advances in machine guns and tanks affect soldiers in the trenches?
- Make Inferences** What effect do you think that trench warfare had on soldiers' morale?

Vocabulary Builder

utilized—(YOOT il yzd) *vt.* put to practical use
confronted—(kun FRUNT id) *vt.* faced in opposition

Battle on Other European Fronts

L3

Instruct

■ **Introduce** Using the map The Western Front and the Eastern Front, 1914–1918, point out the battle lines of the Eastern, Western, and Italian fronts. Ask **How was the Eastern Front similar to the Western Front?** (*From 1915 to 1916, the battle lines did not move much.*) **How was the Italian Front similar to the Western Front?** (*Many battles were fought over the same land, with few results.*)

■ **Teach** Have students locate Romania on the same map. Remind them that Serbia had fallen to the Central Powers by the end of 1915. Ask **Given this information, why might it be surprising that Romania joined the Allies in 1916?** (*because it bordered the Central Powers and territories they controlled on the north, west, and south*)

■ **Quick Activity** Display **Color Transparency 159: The Mule Track**, by Paul Nash. Use the lesson suggested in the transparency book to guide a discussion on the mechanized nature of World War I battles.

📄 **Color Transparencies**, 159

Independent Practice

Note Taking Have students continue to fill in the chart from the beginning of the section, describing the different battle fronts of World War I.

📖 **Reading and Note Taking**
Study Guide, p. 234

Monitor Progress

Reread the title of this section, Battle on Other European Fronts. To check students' understanding, have them summarize the impact of these battles on the war. Ensure that they understand that the results were just as indecisive as the battles on the Western Front.

Answers

✓ New or improved guns and artillery caused more casualties. Poison gas terrified soldiers. Submarines sank many ships.

Thinking Critically

- They gave trench soldiers increased mobility but also increased their risk of injury and death.
- probably a negative effect; they were living in dangerous, harsh conditions and facing uncertainty of when the next attack would occur.

Differentiated Instruction

Solutions for All Learners

L1 Special Needs **L2 Less Proficient Readers** **L2 English Language Learners**

Have students look at the images in the Infographic on trench warfare and identify the new technology used in World War I. Then have students create a chart with headings for *Guns, Poison Gas, Tanks, Airplanes, and Submarines*. Have students use the chart to list each form of technology, its description, and its effects on soldiers and the war.

Use the following study guide resources to help students acquiring basic skills:

📖 **Adapted Reading and Note Taking Study Guide**

- Adapted Note Taking Study Guide, p. 234
- Adapted Section Summary, p. 235

War Around the World

L3

Instruct

- **Introduce** Have students locate the Black Sea, the Mediterranean Sea, and Gallipoli on the map on this page. Ask them to predict why access to the Black Sea might be crucial to the Allies.
- **Teach** Ask **What happened at Gallipoli?** (*Allied troops fought Turkish troops to regain access to the Dardanelles. The Turkish troops pinned the Allies on the beaches. The Allies withdrew after 10 months of fighting and many deaths.*)
- **Quick Activity** Have students access **Web Code nap-2622** to take the **Geography Interactive Audio Guided Tour** and then answer the map skills questions in the text.

Independent Practice

- Have students fill in the Outline Map *Major Battles of World War I*, labeling some of the key contests.

All in One Teaching Resources, Unit 6, p. 14

- **Traveler's Tales** To help students better understand the effects of World War I in the African colonies, have them read the selection *Isak Dinesan's Letters from Africa* and answer the questions on the worksheet.

All in One Teaching Resources, Unit 6, p. 13

Monitor Progress

- Circulate to make sure students are accurately filling in their Outline Maps, labeling the key battles of World War I. Administer the Geography Quiz.

All in One Teaching Resources, Unit 6, p. 16

- Check Reading and Note Taking Study Guide entries to ensure that students understand that as fighting drew in non-European powers and soldiers from Europe's overseas colonies, World War I became a truly global conflict.

Answers

- ✓ The Eastern Front shifted over more area than the Western Front, with less trench warfare and even more casualties.

Map Skills It was bordered on two sides by Allied countries, Russia and British Egypt, and so faced fighting on several fronts.

Russian Losses on the Eastern Front In August 1914, Russian armies pushed into eastern Germany. Then, the Russians suffered a disastrous defeat at Tannenberg, causing them to retreat back into Russia. As the least industrialized of the great powers, Russia was poorly equipped to fight a modern war. Some troops even lacked rifles. Still, Russian commanders continued to send masses of soldiers into combat.

New Combatants in the Balkans and Southern Europe The Balkans were another battleground. In 1915, Bulgaria joined the Central Powers and helped defeat its old Balkan rival Serbia. Romania, hoping to gain some land in Hungary, joined the Allies in 1916, only to be crushed by the Central Powers.

Also in 1915, Italy declared war on Austria-Hungary and later on Germany. The Allies had agreed in a secret treaty to give Italy some Austrian-ruled lands inhabited by Italians. Over the next two years, the Italians and Austrians fought eleven battles along the Isonzo river, with few major breakthroughs. In October 1917, the Austrians and Germans launched a major offensive against the Italian position at Caporetto, also on the Isonzo. The Italians retreated in disarray. British and French forces later helped stop the Central Powers' advance into Italy. Still, Caporetto proved as disastrous for Italy as Tannenberg had been for Russia.

- ✓ **Checkpoint** In what way was the Eastern Front different from the Western Front?

War Around the World

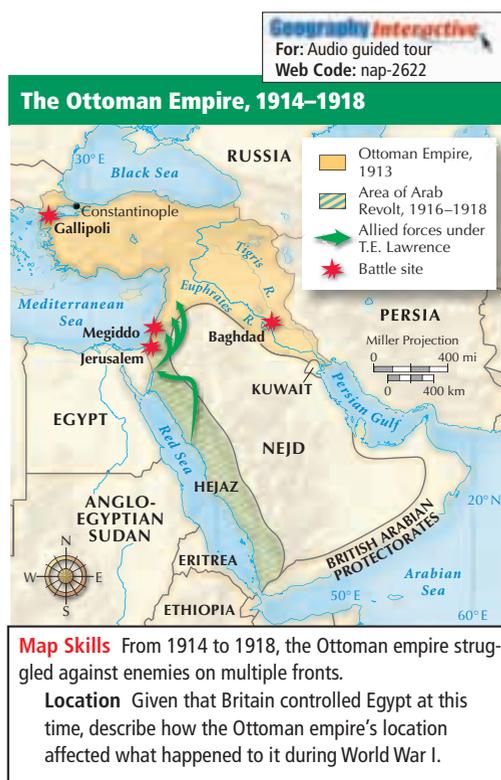
Though most of the fighting took place in Europe, World War I was a global conflict. Japan, allied with Britain, used the war as an excuse to seize German outposts in China and islands in the Pacific.

The Ottoman Empire Joins the Central Powers

Because of its strategic location, the Ottoman empire was a desirable ally. If the Ottoman Turks had joined the Allies, the Central Powers would have been almost completely encircled. However, the Turks joined the Central Powers in late October 1914. The Turks then cut off crucial Allied supply lines to Russia through the **Dardanelles**, a vital strait connecting the Black Sea and the Mediterranean.

In 1915, the Allies sent a massive force of British, Indian, Australian, and New Zealander troops to attempt to open up the strait. At the battle of Gallipoli (guh LIP uh lee), Turkish troops trapped the Allies on the beaches of the Gallipoli peninsula. In January 1916, after 10 months and more than 200,000 casualties, the Allies finally withdrew from the Dardanelles.

Meanwhile, Turkey was fighting Russia in the Caucasus mountains on Turkey's northern border. This region was home to ethnic Armenians, some of whom lived under Ottoman rule and some of whom lived under Russian rule. As Christians, the Armenians were a minority in the Ottoman empire and did not have the same rights as Muslims. As the Russians advanced in 1914, some



Link to Science

Communication During World War I

Although some trenches had a system of wires or cables to provide telephone service, both sides also used messenger dogs or carrier pigeons to communicate. Although well-trained, both dogs and pigeons could be injured while carrying messages or arrive too late to make a difference. However, in 1918, a pigeon saved the American 77th Division from almost certain

destruction. The Americans were caught behind enemy lines and under heavy bombardment from their own artillery units. They released a pigeon with their location and this frantic message: "For heaven's sake, stop it." Although missing an eye and a leg, the pigeon reached the Allied lines. It delivered the message, and the shelling was stopped. The bird was later awarded a Distinguished Service Cross.

Assess and Reteach

Assess Progress

L3

- Have students complete the Section Assessment.
- Administer the Section Quiz.

All in One Teaching Resources, Unit 6, p. 3

- To further assess student understanding, use  **Progress Monitoring Transparencies, 109**

Reteach

If students need more instruction, have them read the section summary.

 **Reading and Note Taking Study Guide, p. 235**

L3

 **Adapted Reading and Note Taking Study Guide, p. 235**

L1 L2

 **Spanish Reading and Note Taking Study Guide, p. 235**

L2

Extend

L4

Ask students to write a news article about one particular aspect of the fighting in World War I, such as trench warfare or the dogfights in the air. Have students read their articles to the class.

Answer

- ✓ The Ottoman empire joined the Central Powers but eventually lost territory due to an Arab revolt, supported by the British. British India, French West Africa, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand sent troops to support the Allies.

Turkish Armenians joined or helped the Russian army against the Turks. The Ottoman government used this cooperation as a reason to deport the entire Armenian population south to Syria and Mesopotamia. During the deportation, between 600,000 and 1.5 million Armenians died. Many were killed by planned massacres; others starved as they were forced to march with no food. Many Armenians fled to other countries, including the United States, leaving almost no Armenians in the historic Armenian homeland in Turkey.

On a third front, the Turks were hard hit in the Middle East. The Ottoman empire included vast areas of Arab land. In 1916, Arab nationalists led by Husayn ibn Ali (HOO sayn IB un AH lee) declared a revolt against Ottoman rule. The British government sent Colonel **T. E. Lawrence**—later known as Lawrence of Arabia—to support the Arab revolt. Lawrence led guerrilla raids against the Turks, dynamiting bridges and supply trains. Eventually, the Ottoman empire lost a great deal of territory to the Arabs, including the key city of Baghdad.

War and the Colonies European colonies were also drawn into the struggle. The Allies overran scattered German colonies in Africa and Asia. They also turned to their own colonies and dominions for troops, laborers, and supplies. Colonial recruits from British India and French West Africa fought on European battlefields. Canada, Australia, and New Zealand sent troops to Britain's aid.

People in the colonies had mixed feelings about serving. Some were reluctant to serve rulers who did not treat them fairly. Other colonial troops volunteered eagerly. They expected that their service would be a step toward citizenship or independence. As you will read, such hopes would be dashed after the war.

- ✓ **Checkpoint** How did World War I affect the Ottoman empire and European colonies and dominions?



Armenian Refugees

A group of Armenian refugees wait for their daily rations from Near East Relief, an American organization founded to help the surviving Turkish Armenians. Public opinion, especially in the United States, was sympathetic to the Armenians during and after World War I. However, the Allies' attempts to protect the Armenians through the treaty that ended the war with Turkey ultimately failed.

Progress Monitoring Online

For: Self-quiz with vocabulary practice
Web Code: naa-2621

Writing About History

Quick Write: Write a Thesis Statement
Suppose that you are writing an essay on the effects of Ottoman Turkey's decision to join the Central Powers during World War I. Answer the questions below. Use your answers to create a thesis statement for the essay.

- Why were the Dardanelles important to the Allies?
- Who won the Battle of Gallipoli?
- What impact do you think Gallipoli had on the Russian war effort?

Section 2 Assessment

Terms, People, and Places

1. For each term, person, or place listed at the beginning of the section, write a sentence explaining its significance.

Note Taking

2. **Reading Skill: Identify Supporting Details** Use your chart and concept web to answer the Focus Question: How and where was World War I fought?

Comprehension and Critical Thinking

3. **Draw Conclusions** Why did a stalemate develop on the Western Front?

4. **Synthesize Information** Describe three ways in which technology affected the war.

5. **Predict Consequences** Governments on both sides of World War I tried to keep full casualty figures and other bad news from reaching the public. What effect do you think news about disastrous defeats such as Tannenberg and Caporetto would have had on the attitudes of people back home?

6. **Recognize Causes** How did nationalism within the Ottoman Empire come into play during the war?

Section 2 Assessment

1. Sentences should reflect an understanding of each term, person, or place listed at the beginning of the section.
2. It was fought using new weapons, causing a large number of casualties. The war was fought on the Western Front, Eastern Front, in southern Europe, Turkey, the Middle East, and in other parts of Asia and Africa.

3. Due to deadly weapons, neither side could advance. They dug into trenches and fought over a few hundred yards of land.
4. Machine guns and long-range artillery guns made it hard for troops to advance. Poison gas disabled soldiers. German submarines disrupted Allied shipping.
5. During war, governments depend on the support of the people back home. News of defeats might have discouraged people from supporting the war effort.

6. Arab nationalists, unhappy with Turkish rule, joined the Russians against the Ottoman empire.

Writing About History

Responses should give a valid thesis statement, based on answers to the questions given.

For additional assessment, have students access **Progress Monitoring Online** at **Web Code naa-2621**.

Erich Maria Remarque: *All Quiet on the Western Front*

Objective

- Understand the point of view of a soldier on the Western Front.

Build Background Knowledge

L3

Ask students to remember what they have learned about trench warfare. Explain that, although the excerpt is quoted from a fictional novel, it is based on the real-life experiences of the author.

Instruct

L3

- Ask students to work in pairs to identify the main idea and tone of the passage. (*Main idea: Paul sees the man he has killed as an individual rather than as an enemy, and regrets what he has done. Tone: sad, regretful, somewhat desperate.*)
- Point out that Paul probably had to kill the Frenchman, or be killed by him. Ask **How did Paul's point of view change after the Frenchman died?** (*Once the Frenchman is dead, Paul can see him as a person rather than as a threat or an abstraction. He sees his face rather than his weapons, and realizes that the enemy is not very different from himself.*)

Monitor Progress

As a class, write a sentence summarizing Paul's experience. Discuss whether other soldiers on the Western Front might have felt the same way. How might soldiers today react to Paul's experience?

Thinking Critically

- Sample: He can no longer stand the silence in the foxhole.
- that enemy soldiers are fellow humans with lives and families

Erich Maria Remarque: *All Quiet on the Western Front*

Erich Maria Remarque (1898–1970) was wounded five times while serving in the German army during World War I. In 1929, he published *All Quiet on the Western Front*, which is often considered the greatest novel about World War I.

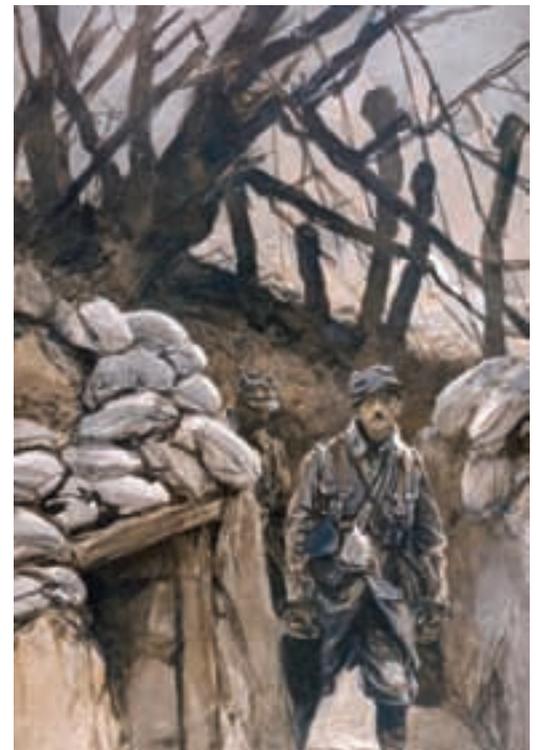
It follows the narrator, Paul Baumer, from eager recruit to disillusioned veteran. In this passage, Paul is trapped for hours in a foxhole with a French soldier he has just killed.

In the afternoon, about three, he is dead.

I breathe freely again. But only for a short time. Soon the silence is more unbearable than the groans. I wish the gurgling were there again, gasping hoarse, now whistling softly and again hoarse and loud.

It is mad, what I do. But I must do something. I prop the dead man up again so that he lies comfortably, although he feels nothing any more. I close his eyes. They are brown, his hair is black and a bit curly at the sides. . . .

The silence spreads. I talk and must talk. So I speak to him and say to him: "Comrade, I did not want to kill you. If you jumped in here again, I would not do it, if you would be sensible too. But you were only an idea to me before, an abstraction¹ that lived in my mind and called forth its appropriate response. It was that abstraction I stabbed. But now, for the first time, I see you are a man like me. I thought of your hand-grenades, of your bayonet², of your rifle; now I see your wife and your face and our fellowship. Forgive me, comrade. We always see it too late. Why do they never tell us that you are poor devils like us, that your mothers are just as anxious as ours, and that we have the same fear of death, and the same dying and the



▲ This painting is titled *Notre-Dame de Lorette—A Soldier Walks Through the Flooded Trenches*. It was painted by François Flameng, a French artist who was given access to the front lines by the French government.

same agony—Forgive me, comrade; how could you be my enemy? If we threw away these rifles and this uniform you could be my brother just like Kat and Albert. Take twenty years of my life, comrade, and stand up—take more, for I do not know what I can even attempt to do with it now."

It is quiet, the front is still except for the crackle of rifle fire. The bullets rain over, they are not fired haphazard, but shrewdly aimed from all sides. I cannot get out.

Thinking Critically

- Recognize Point of View** Why does Paul speak to the dead French soldier?
- Synthesize Information** What does Paul mean by "We always see it too late"?

History Background

Disillusionment With War *All Quiet on the Western Front*, a title that reflects the terse style of military communiqués, expresses the disillusionment with the war among participants who were shocked by the disparity between the rhetoric of patriotism and the reality of trench warfare. The book became an instant success, and in 1930 an American film was made based on it.

Nazis banned Remarque's books in 1933. Remarque, a German, left his homeland and became an American citizen. Then he settled in Switzerland after World War II, where he lived with his wife, the film star Paulette Goddard, until his death in 1970.