



Britain's involvement in The First World War began in August 1914. It all started with the assassination of Austria's Archduke, Franz Ferdinand (who was to be Austria's next Emperor), a month earlier which set off a chain of events that actually led to war being declared between Britain and Germany.

On 28th June 1914 Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie were travelling from the hospital in Sarajevo, where they had been visiting injured people, to their Palace. Tragically their driver took them down the wrong street and when turning around, Gavrilo Princip a member of a Serbian group of assassins, the Black Hand, found them and shot them; Sophie was shot in the abdomen and Franz Ferdinand in the jugular vein. His aides tried to save him, but they couldn't undo his coat without scissors, and by the time they realised this, he had died. His last words to his wife were "Don't die darling, live for our children". Sophie was also mortally wounded and died on the way to the hospital.



After the assassination a whole chain of events followed. Austria immediately declared war on Serbia because it was a Serbian gang who planned to and did actually kill Archduke Ferdinand. Germany was Austria's ally, so they joined Austria in the war against Serbia. Russia then joined in to support Serbia, and next France joined in to help Russia. Germany then marched through Belgium to get to France and finally Britain joined in to help Belgium. These complicated agreements resulted in two substantial sides which were at war with each other:

Central Powers
Austria
Germany

Allies
Serbia
Russia
France
Britain

Warfare had changed by the time this war started, and for the first time, aeroplanes were used, both for spying on the enemies to see their positions, and sometimes for bombing them. Aeroplanes were new inventions and there were not many of them, so the majority of the fighting was still carried out on the ground, in narrow, muddy trenches, mainly in France. It was thought the First World War would last just a couple of months, but it took four long years for it finally to end, in 1918.