Historical Background
“The M.A.I.N. causes of World War I were Militarism, secret Alliances, Imperialism and Nationalism. The driving force was nationalism. ‘Nation’ refers to a group of people who share a common language, religion, history and traditions. Not all nations had states; many were included in empires. Ethnic and ideological differences led to conflict within these empires. Nationalism also spurred economic and political rivalries among states led European nations to establish a complex system of military alliances. Russia, France and England formed an alliance and Germany, Italy and Austria-Hungary formed a competing alliance. Newly united countries, such as Germany and Italy, along with established empires, were anxious to establish colonies to gain wealth through the acquisition of natural resources and trade. The igniting incident of the “Great War” was the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, in Bosnia by a Serbian nationalist. The resulting confrontation between Austria-Hungary and Serbia quickly involved much of Europe in conflict due to the alliance system.”

South Carolina Standards
7-5.1 Explain the causes and key events of World War I, including the rise of nationalism, ethnic and ideological conflicts in different regions, political and economic rivalries, the human costs of the mechanization of war, the Russian Revolution, and the entry of the United States into the War.

GS-5.1 Summarize the causes of World War I, including political and economic rivalries, ethnic and ideological conflicts, and nationalism and propaganda.

USHC-6.4 Outline the causes and course of World War I, focusing on the involvement of the United States, including the effects of nationalism, ethnic and ideological conflicts, and Woodrow Wilson’s leadership in the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations.

Objectives
- Students will use a newspaper clipping to examine the major events of World War I
- Students will create a cause and effect chain to help connect several WWI events.

Time Required
1 class period

Recommended Grade Level
Middle/High

Lesson Materials
- Newspaper clipping, “A Brief History of World War I”, from the Delbert Claire Brandt Collection.
- Cause and Effect graphic organizer
- Brief History Presentation
- Index cards and permanent markers.
Lesson Preparation
1. Print newspaper clipping attached to this lesson.
2. Print Cause and Effect graphic organizer.
3. Create a set of 33 index cards that match each of the major events listed on the timeline. One set will have the dates only. The other set will only list the events. The third set will only list the description of each event.

Lesson Procedure
1. This lesson establishes a framework for student understanding of World War I and is intended to be an introduction to or review of your studies about World War I.
2. Begin by presenting information that briefly explains the events of World War I addressed in the timeline.
3. Pass out Cause and Effect handout. Model how students are to complete the handout by completing the first item with help from students. Allow enough time for students to complete the handout independently.
4. Review events with students by having them play the “Timeline Game”. Each student is responsible for one or two index cards (pass these out randomly). Begin by asking for the first date or event of World War I. As students volunteer the accurate information, allow them to place their card on the board. Other students should place their cards on the board as they relate to the first event, coming up to the board one at a time. No one should be left with an index card.

Assessment
• Have students complete a cause and effect chain to explain the causes and consequences of World War I.
• Review with students by playing the timeline review game described above

Lesson Extension Options
• Have students research each of the events on the timeline.
• Research to find documents that help explain each of the events listed in the timeline then have students use the documents to summarize information about each topic.
• Have groups of students create enough game cards so that groups can rehearse the events by playing the timeline game.

Digital Collections Information
This lesson plan is based on images and/or documents derived from the Delbert Claire Brandt Collection available from the University of South Carolina’s Digital Collections Library.

To see other collections that may be helpful to your search, visit the Digital Collections homepage or visit SCDL’s collections by clicking here.
WWI: Causes and Effect

Graphic Organizer
Cause and Effect Chain

Cause

Effect/Cause

Effect/Cause

Effect