

World War I in Europe, 1914–1918



Interpret Maps

- 1. Location** In which country was most of the war in the West fought?
- 2. Location** What geographic disadvantage did Germany and Austria-Hungary face in fighting the war? How might this have affected their war strategy?

Reading Check

Analyze Issues

Was the system of alliances the only reason other nations entered the war?

In the late summer of 1914, millions of soldiers marched happily off to battle, convinced that the war would be short. Only a few people foresaw the horror ahead. One of them was Britain’s foreign minister, Sir Edward Grey. Staring out over London at nightfall, Grey said sadly to a friend, “The lamps are going out all over Europe. We shall not see them lit again in our lifetime.”

A Bloody Stalemate

It did not take long for Sir Edward Grey’s prediction to ring true. As the summer of 1914 turned to fall, the war turned into a long and bloody stalemate, or deadlock, along the battlefields of France. This deadlocked region in northern France became known as the **Western Front**.

The Conflict Grinds Along Facing a war on two fronts, Germany had developed a battle strategy known as the **Schlieffen Plan**, named after its designer, General Alfred Graf von Schlieffen (SHLEE-fuhn). The plan called for attacking and defeating France in the west and then rushing east to fight Russia. The Germans felt they could carry out such a plan because Russia lagged behind the rest of Europe in its railroad system and thus