Chapter Summary

World War I and the Russian Revolution

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS
Why do politics often lead to war?
How can technology impact war?

World War I, which lasted from 1914 and 1918, was one of the most destructive periods in modern history. It was characterized by governments’ increased centralization of power in many European countries, and a complete overthrow of the government in Russia. Nationalism, militarism, imperialism, a crisis in the Balkans, and the rise of major alliances like the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente led to World War I. Trench warfare caused a stalemate on the Western Front and led to a widening of the war. The fall of Russia’s czarist regime and the Russian Revolution put the Communists in power in Russia. After the defeat of the Germans, peace settlements brought political and territorial changes to Europe and created resentment in some nations.

World War I Begins
- Nationalism, militarism, and imperialism contributed to the start of World War I as rivals competed for colonies and trade.
- European armies grew in size and industrialization allowed nations to amass weapons, heightening existing tensions.
- By 1914, two major alliances emerged: the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy, and the Triple Entente of France, Great Britain, and Russia.
- Serbia’s desire for an independent state led to the assassination of Francis Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary.
- The conflict between Serbia and Austria-Hungary broadened to include Germany, Russia, France, and Great Britain.
- Both the Allied and the Central Powers looked for new allies to gain an advantage during the stalemate.
- During World War I, governments took control of their economies and a complete mobilization of resources and people occurred.
- Total war meant women were asked to perform jobs once held by men.

The Russian Revolution
- Worker unrest and the czar’s military and economic failures in World War I led to revolution in March 1917.
- With German support, Lenin and the Bolsheviks gained control of Russia and quickly overthrew the provisional government.
- Though Lenin promised peace, civil war erupted in Russia; the Bolsheviks triumphed due to a well-organized Red Army and lack of unity of the anti-Communists forces.

World War I
- Trench warfare on the Western Front resulted in a stalemate since offensive attacks failed because they exposed soldiers to enemy gunfire; Germany and Austria-Hungary defeated Russia on the Eastern Front.
- New weapons, such as airplanes with machine guns mounted on them, and trench warfare made World War I far more devastating than previous wars.

World War I Ends
- Allied troops stopped one last German offensive toward Paris on the Western Front; the new German republic and the Allies signed an armistice, ending the war on November 11, 1918.
• France and Britain demanded reparations at the Paris Peace Conference.

• The Treaty of Versailles punished Germany, established new nations, and created a League of Nations to solve international problems.

• The map of Eastern Europe was redrawn, new nations were formed, and the once great empires of Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Russia had all but disappeared.