

Example of argumentative essay on who is to blame for the war

[Countries](#), [Germany](#)



In the annals of history concerning World War I, Germany is typically one of the only countries that was not only punished, but also given a bad reputation after the end of the conflict. Though the term “ World War” suggests that they were not the only ones involved, it appears that they were the only enemies worthy of justified persecution. There are many reasons why other countries, such as Austria-Hungary, as it was known then, as well as Russia and Serbia, should have received negative recognition and discipline just as Germany did after the war ended. Though Germany had its hand in evil during World War I, there were other countries adding to the devastation of the war effort, and the rest of the world did not respond to their actions correctly.

Austria-Hungary, according to Herwig H. Holger, may not have been on the world’s center stage after the end of the war because they entered it so quietly . While Germany is largely credited with being one of the primary facilitators of the war, it was actually Austria that condemned the world to this upset. In June of 1914, Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated in Sarajevo, which at the time was wrought with Serbs residing in Austria-Hungary. While staying there, Serb militants assassinated Ferdinand in an attempt to gain independence in their territory . The Austrians were outraged, blaming the Serbian government for the assassination despite the lack of evidence. The assassination fueled a tension between Austria-Hungary and Serbia that had been growing for many years.

Because of Serbia’s close relationship with Russia, Austria-Hungary though the best decision would be to turn to their partner, Germany, as a wartime benefactor. Austria-Hungary believed Russia to be a viable enemy that would

help Serbia win the war, should war break out, and they wanted to be prepared. Quietly, and rather sneakily, before any mention of war was made, Austria-Hungary's government constructed a plan for success. According to John Riddell, Austria-Hungary sought Germany's Wilhelm II's help with funding the war. Wilhelm refused at first, deciding that Russia was unlikely to help Serbia militarize because they were both countries unprepared to do so. However, he agreed that if Russia did invade, that Germany would help fund the war effort, an agreement that is often referred to as Germany's "blank check" and credited as the reason that Germany takes the blame for World War I.

After speaking with Wilhelm II, Austria-Hungary gave Serbia an ultimatum, demanding they be a part of the investigation of Ferdinand's assassination, among other things. The Austrian-Hungarian government also insisted on being a part of any prosecution of the named assailants, demanding this would be the only way the assassins would receive due justice. The orders given by Hungary-Austria were, as stated in, "The First World War: Germany and Austria-Hungary," written specifically to be rejected by the Serbian government in order to further facilitate the advances of war for either side. To Austria-Hungary's surprise, Serbia accepted their demands almost entirely with a few small adjustments. Austria-Hungary took the small adjustments as an opportunity to claim a rejection of the demands they had placed before Serbia, declaring war in July of 1914. Austria-Hungary was able to collect on Germany's "blank check" and launch an invasion across the border by the end of July after they had declared war.

While Germany had its own motives for being involved in the war, as well as

granting a “ blank check” to Austria-Hungary, they were hardly the sole implementers of World War I. However, they are largely blamed because it is often believed that if Austria-Hungary did not think it had sufficient financial backing and military influence from a larger, stronger country, the government would not have attempted the war at all. They are also blamed because the world learned as the war continued that, though Wilhelm II claimed he wanted to resolve the issue diplomatically, Russia had been a growing issue for Russia in the previous years and Austria-Hungary’s proposition of war was a chance for another country to do Germany’s manual labor for a fraction of the cost . Despite this, the world seems to forget that the initial instigators were, though without little evidence to prove it, the Serbians for assassinating Ferdinand, and Austria-Hungary for approaching the Germans for support, but also for insisting the Serbians denied many of their demands in an effort to appear legitimate in their declaration of war. It could be argued that, because the Serbians gave in to most of the demands made by Austria-Hungary almost immediately with so few adjustments that Serbian militants were not responsible for the assassination of Franz Ferdinand at all. If this were the case, the only blame they would have placed on them during the war would be the blame of defending themselves against the swift, merciless attack of Austria-Hungary.

In sum, though Germany holds some of the blame for World War I, it does not hold all of the blame. A portion of the blame must go to Serbia, Russia, and Austria-Hungary. Serbian militants had been fueling tensions in the region in which Franz Ferdinand was assassinated and, when the threat of war approached, flaunted their relations with Russia in order to halt

aggressions. Austria-Hungary secured financial support from Germany before manipulating Serbia into war by making demands that were sure to be rejected. When they were not, Austria-Hungary declared war anyway, asserting they were likely to go to war with Serbia regardless of what happened next. Many were to blame for World War I, not just Germany.

References

Holger, Herwig H. *The First World War: Germany and Austria-Hungary 1914-1918*. H&C Black: London, 2014. Book.

The book explains the relationship between Germany and Austria-Hungary. It also explains the meaning behind the "blank check," how it is used to villainize Germany, and what its intended use was for Austria-Hungary. The book shows the historical intentions of Austria-Hungary after the assassination of Franz-Ferdinand when entering the war.

Riddel, John. "Socialist response still resonates 100 years after capitalism's first world war." *Green Left Weekly* (2014): 20-24. Article.

The article explains the economic repercussions of WWI, but also how the use of power and money was used to influence the war effort from different sides. Germany saw a chance to use Austria-Hungary to get rid of Russia, while Austria-Hungary was trying to use Germany's economic status to get rid of Serbia.