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## Purpose

Much like the Our Interconnected World yarn activity that you completed earlier in this course to demonstrate the interconnectedness of the world in 1450, 1750, and today, this activity will simulate the extent to which preexisting and newly emerging networks contributed to the global scale of World War I. You’ll use yarn to create a visual representation of direct and indirect regional involvement in the war, which will help you think about how nineteenth-century trends of industrialization, imperialism, and nationalism set the stage for global interactions in the twentieth century and even today.

## Practices

### Contextualization, causation

The narratives involved in this activity present some global context for the scale of World War I, and you’ll be using your causation skills as you consider the reasons for global involvement around the world from 1914 to 1918.

## Process

In this activity, you’ll use yarn, just as you did in the first Our Interconnected World activity to create a visual representation of the networks that existed during World War I. By using string to illustrate the connections between Allied and Central Powers, you’ll begin to see how global this war became in a relatively short time.

### Part 1

1. As you enter the classroom, your teacher will give you a region card with your assigned nations on them. Be sure to sit in your assigned region. It may help to memorize your assigned region so you know to take the yarn when your country is called out in the narrative.
2. Your teacher will either hand out or have you download the Our Interconnected World – World War I worksheet.
3. Do you remember the last time the classroom was arranged in this way? And can you remember what the big idea of that activity was? In this activity, you’ll be taking another look at the world through our “networks” lens, but this time you’ll be examining the world of 1914.
4. Think about the top three major events or trends someone would need to know about to understand how the world changed from 1750 to 1914. Record your answers in Part 1 of the worksheet. Be prepared to share the trends you identified with the class.
5. Your teacher will either nominate a “runner” to carry a ball of yarn to the different locations around the room as the narrative is read, or will have you toss the yarn from one location to the next. When the yarn comes to you, you’ll hold onto the strand until you’ve heard the entire narrative.
6. Where did World War I begin? This is where the yarn will begin.
7. Your teacher will project the narrative for the Networks of WWI on the board so you can follow along as they read aloud. Note that the blue portions of the narrative are the Allied Powers and the red portions are the Central Powers. Important locations are in green.
8. As your teacher reads the narrative, the yarn runner will pass the yarn between locations as they’re read out loud.
9. The last four paragraphs of the narrative will add another layer to the scope of the war, so pay attention to why those paragraphs were included.

### Part 2

1. Examine the web of yarn to see the alliances and networks of exchange that took place during the war.
2. Either individually or in pairs, complete Part 2 of the worksheet. Remember that you can go back through the narrative to pull out pieces of evidence to support your answers. You should be looking for evidence that supports how the trends you identified at the start of this activity were contributing factors to the global scale of the war.
3. Be prepared to share your answers with the class.
4. Think about and be prepared to share your answer to the following question: How did the complexity of these networks impact the nature, course, and pace of war in the twentieth century?
5. Your teacher might extend this activity by asking you to read an excerpt from *The Human Web* by historians J.R. and W.H. McNeill.

“Part of the appeal of the Soviet and Italian models lay in the buffer they promised to provide against the buffeting of international markets. Both made economic self-sufficiency a high priority... In World War I, international trade had fallen sharply. The combatants ceased trading with one another and energetically set about sinking one another’s merchant ships, which the invention of the submarine made much easier. So shortages affected all participants, especially those most in need of imported food. Devising substitutes for lost imports became a crucial part of the war economies, but no one found a substitute for food. The USSR and Italy, determined not to suffer such shortages again, made autarky a peacetime policy. They also restricted emigration. … So, although capital and trade flows recovered substantially in the 1920s, the fragmented political landscape and ambitions for autarky prevented the full resumption of the globalizing economy of the pre-1914 era.” (*The Human Web*, p. 291)

1. After reading the excerpt, do you think some of the connections you learned about in this activity should have been severed once the war was over?

**Directions:** Answer all questions when prompted by your teacher.

### Part 1

1. What do you think were the top three major events or trends someone would need to know about to understand how the world changed from 1750 to 1914?
**Trend 1:**

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**Trend 2:**

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**Trend 3:**

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### Part 2

1. Find evidence from the narrative to support how the three trends identified above contributed to the global scale of World War I.

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1. **Support**: How do the ideas and information presented in this activity support what you already knew about this period of history?

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1. **Extend**: What new information did you learn that extended or pushed your thinking of this period of history?

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1. **Challenge**: What information did you learn about today that challenged what you knew about this period of history?

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1. Based on today’s activity, which of the four MAIN causes of World War I contributed most to making this a global war? State your claim and list specific evidence to support it. (Remember that MAIN stands for militarism, alliances, imperialism, and nationalism.)

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1. Which course frame do you think best captures our key takeaways today? State your claim and list specific evidence to support it.

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