Reading script:

How did WWI begin?

World War 1 started when Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria was **assassinated** on June 28, 1914. This was the **immediate** cause but there were a series of events which **triggered** the war.

Over 17 million people were killed in the First World War and the impact it had on the old empires and the politics of the world was enormous, but what were the causes of WW1 and how did it start?

The **immediate** cause for World War 1 was the **assassination** of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria and his pregnant wife Sophie. Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria was the nephew of Emperor Franz Josef and **heir** to the throne of Austria and Hungary. The **assassination** was planned by a Serbian terrorist group, called *The Black Hand*, and the man who shot Franz Ferdinand and his wife was a Bosnian revolutionary named Gavrilo Princip.

However, there were many other causes for the start of World War 1.

Before WW1 was **triggered**, a number of defence **alliances** existed between the major European countries. What this meant was that if one country **declared** war on another, the other countries would also have to enter the **conflict** because it was in the **treaty** they agreed.

Britain, France, and Russia were part of an **alliance** called the Triple Entente, while Germany aligned itself with Austria-Hungary – known as the Central Powers.

After the **assassination**, Austria-Hungary threatened war on Serbia. They set out some very **harsh** demands that Serbia must meet. Germany sided with Austria-Hungary, while Russia sided with the Serbians. At this point, Europe was at the brink of going to war.

One month after the Archduke's **assassination** – on July 28 1914 – Austria-Hungary **declared** war on Serbia with the **backing** of Germany. Germany then **declared** war on Russia on August 1, and on France on August 3.

On August 4 1914, the German troops marched on France and the route they took went through Belgium. Since Britain had agreed to **maintain** the **neutrality** of Belgium, they **immediately declared** war on Germany.

British and German forces first fought at the Battle of Mons in Belgium. This was the first of many battles between Britain and Germany on the Western Front and is when World War 1 started for Britain.