

KNOWLEDGE AND PERCEPTIONS OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

BRITISH COUNCIL/ YOUNGOV GLOBAL INVOLVEMENT AND GLOBAL LEGACY SURVEY

GERMANY

- 25% overall rate the First World War as one of their **top three most important international events** of the past 100 years.
 - The younger age groups have higher percentages of respondents who attribute top three significance to the First World War: 28% in the 18-24 group and 34% in the 25-34 group compared to 22% in the 35+ section of the population.
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- 38% overall have a positive **opinion of the UK**; 10% state that Britain's role in the First World War has a positive effect on their opinion of the UK.
 - 51% overall have a neutral opinion of the UK; 52% state that Britain's role in the First World War has neither a positive nor a negative effect on their opinion of the UK.
 - 10% overall have a negative opinion of the UK; 13% state that Britain's role in the First World War has a negative effect on their opinion of the UK.
 - Regarding attitudes with reference to Britain's role in the First World War, there is a gender difference observable in that the percentage of female respondents selecting the 'don't know' option is more than double that of male respondents.
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- 69% overall know that the location of the **assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand**, which sparked the First World War, took place in Sarajevo.
 - The younger age groups are less well-informed about this than the older ones (18-34 section: 56% versus 35-54 section: 66% versus 55+ section: 79%).
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- Overall, knowledge about the **involvement of regions of the world** is as follows: Western Europe: 87% - Eastern Europe: 74% - Middle East & North Africa: 26% - Africa: 20% - North America: 25% - Australia & New Zealand: 9% - Asia: 15% - Latin America: 4%
 - There is a considerable gender gap in knowledge regarding all regions other than the European ones, with male respondents' percentages consistently higher than female respondents': peaking at 13 percentage points difference regarding knowledge of MENA and North American involvement, and 12 percentage points regarding African involvement.

- While the figures are fairly mixed across age groups regarding most regions' involvement; though at an average of 21% the younger age groups (18-34) have higher percentages of knowledge of Asian involvement, and the youngest (18-24) about North American involvement: 37%

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- Knowledge about **which sides countries fought on** varies. Correct answers were indicated as follows: re Hungary: 50% - Turkey: 30% - Russia: 7% - Japan: 19% - UK: 75%.
 - The highest percentage of knowledge that Britain had fought against Germany was found among those aged 45+ at 77%.
 - There is a striking gender gap in knowledge about Britain having fought against Germany: 82% of male respondents knew this and 68% of female respondents.
 - There is also a striking gender gap in knowledge about India having fought against Germany: 32% of male respondents knew this while only half this percentage of female respondents did. A similar gender gap can be observed regarding Turkey fighting on the same side as Germany: 40% of male respondents identified this compared to 21% of female ones.

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- 30% overall know that what happened in Belgium at **Christmas 1914** was an unofficial truce between German and British soldiers, which involved a football match.

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- 65% overall feel that **Germany is still affected by the consequences of the First World War**.
 - There is a gender difference of 17 percentage points in overall levels of how much people feel that Germany is still affected by the consequences of the First World War; with more male respondents on proportion agreeing to this (73% compared with 58% of female respondents).

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- Support for the statement '**The First World War contributes strongly to my country's identity**' averages at 9%, with the youngest respondents supporting it the most: 15% in the 18-24 age group selected this statement as valid.
 - This average figure is low compared to other countries surveyed, such as the UK.
 - Support for the statement '**The First World War and its outcomes continue to contribute to internal political problems in my country**' is at 7% overall.
 - 25% overall feel that '**The First World War and its outcomes have a lasting impact on my country's international relations and how it is viewed by other countries today**', with the youngest age group coming out as the top percentage (35%), followed by the oldest group with 27%.
 - 33% overall feel that '**The First World War and its outcomes were only the beginning of further conflict, which still has consequences for my country today**'. Figures are fairly even across the age groups.
 - 9% overall agree to the statement '**My country's role in the First World War and the subsequent peace negotiation are – to this day – often**

misrepresented and misinterpreted in global history'. The younger to middle age groups (18-44) feel this more strongly (average 13%) than the older groups (average 6%).

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- Knowledge about the **links between the First World War and other important international developments and events** varies. The following events are seen to be linked to the First World War by the respective percentages:
Formation of the UN: 13% - Rise of Communism in Russia: 38% - Formation of the EU: 8% - End of Turkish control in the Middle East and fall of the Ottoman Empire: 29% - Rise of Hitler and the Nazis: 52% - Conflict between Israel and the Palestinians: 7% - Rise of Communism in China: 9% - Civil Rights Movement in the US: 4% - Apartheid in South Africa: 5% - Genocide in Rwanda: 3% - Wars in Yugoslavia in 1990s: 9%.
 - There is a (in some cases considerable) gender gap observable regarding knowledge of any of these links, most clearly so at 23 percentage points difference (with male respondents having more knowledge) in the case of the end of Turkish control in the Middle East/ fall of the Ottoman Empire, and at 17 percentage points (again male respondents having more knowledge) in the case of the rise of Hitler and the Nazis being linked to the First World War.

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- 27% overall are aware that a **family/ community member had fought in the First World War**.
 - Spanning a percentage range from 16% to 39%, knowledge increased with age group.
 - Knowledge that a family/ community member was involved in an auxiliary role or on the home front was mixed across the age groups at averages at 5%.

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- 81% overall feel that the **First World War should be commemorated**.
 - 49% think human suffering and loss of life should be remembered. The percentages of the youngest group (18-24) is somewhat smaller than that of the older ones: average of 38% versus average of 50% across the other groups.
 - 31% think its lasting implications and legacy should be remembered. Here the youngest group has almost the highest figure (36%).
 - 34% think the reasons why the war broke out should be remembered.
 - 15% think the contributions made by different countries should be remembered.

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- 80% overall think that **culture and sports have the potential to reduce international tensions** or conflict, but less than 20% believe they have this potential to a great extent.

Ten most frequent associations:

Death / Gas / Battle of Verdun / Assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand / Treaty of Versailles / Abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm II / Hitler / Destruction / Poverty / 1914-1918