

Introduction to the Western Front

History

Lesson 1 of an enquiry of 6 lessons

Enquiry: What do the stories of the 'often forgotten armies' reveal about the Western Front?

Miss Cusworth



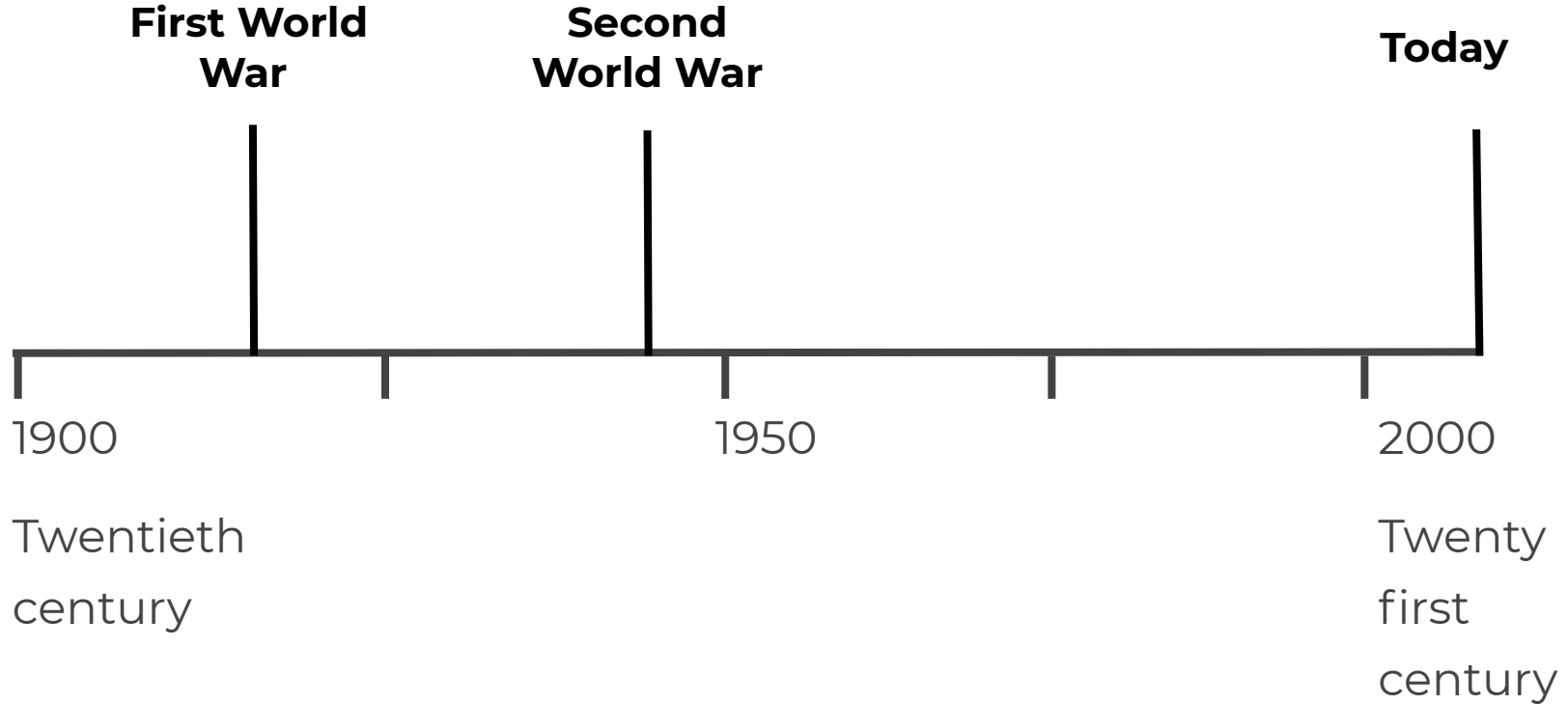
The Western Front was a major **theatre of war** during the First World War.

It was in northern France and southern Belgium.

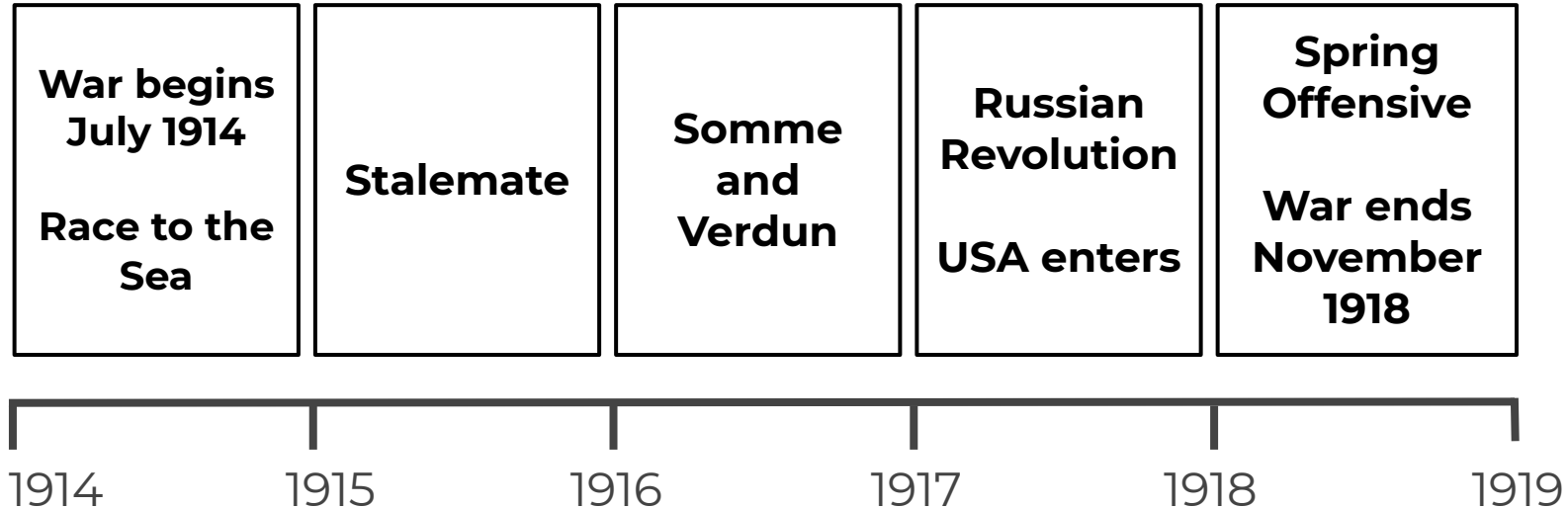
Some of the key battles were fought around Verdun, The Somme and Vimy Ridge



Timeline of the twentieth century



Timeline of the First World War



Typical representation of the First World War and the Western Front

Try typing in First World War or Western Front to an internet image search.

You will get lots of images of men in **trenches** on the Western Front.

Our image of the First World War often comes from poems by Wilfred Owen or films such as 1917.

We think of barbed wire, British men suffering in trenches and big guns.

All of those things happened during the First World War.

But recently there has been more of a focus on 'often forgotten armies'.



Looking again at the First World War

While most of the fighting took place in Europe, battles happened across the world.

Most of the 70 million men who took part in the war were white Europeans, but 4 million weren't.

This enquiry looks at their stories and asks what can we learn about the Western Front by looking at their experiences?



‘Seventy million men were **mobilised** during the First World War... 4 million non-white, non-European soldiers... fought for Britain, France and their allies. [Seeing] the First World War as the *World’s War* is, at one level, about recovering those stories and those **perspectives.**’

David Olusoga, *The World’s War*



Questions

1. Where was the First World War mostly fought?
2. What is the Western Front?
3. In which continents did fighting take place during the First World War?
4. Why did soldiers on the Western Front come from across the world?
5. Why are we looking at 'often forgotten armies'?



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‘The historical war has been overwhelmed by what the historian David Reynolds has called the ‘literary war’ a popular memory of the conflict formed from the collected fragments of prose and war poetry.’

David Olusoga, *The World’s War*



Why do you think the armies we are going to study have often been left out of books and films about the Western Front?

Use the quotations from Olusoga's book *The World's War* and the sentence starters below to write a paragraph answering this question.

Sentence starters

The traditional presentation of the Western Front is...

A reason Olusoga gives for this is...

The armies we are going to study might have been left out because...



Glossary

Mobilised - where a government gets troops ready for war

Perspectives- viewpoints

11 **Theatre of war** - an area that is involved directly in fighting

trench - a deep, narrow hole in the ground used for defence

