

1871

JANUARY



Prussia and the other German states are unified as a single nation. Wilhelm I of Prussia becomes Kaiser (Emperor) of Germany, with Prince Otto von Bismarck as Chancellor.

1879

OCTOBER



Dual Alliance signed between Germany and Austria-Hungary

1882

MAY



Italy joins Germany and Austria-Hungary to form the Triple Alliance

1887

JUNE



Known as 'The Reinsurance Treaty', a pact is signed between Germany and Russia agreeing not to attack one another

1888

JUNE



29-year-old Wilhelm II succeeds his father as Kaiser of Germany

1890

MARCH



Bismarck dismissed as Chancellor of Germany by Kaiser Wilhelm II

JUNE



Germany decides not to renew 'The Reinsurance Treaty' with Russia

1894

JANUARY



Alliance signed between France and Russia

NOVEMBER



Nicholas II becomes Tsar of Russia

1898

MARCH



Germany passes its first law to build large numbers of warships. This challenge to Britain's long-standing naval supremacy begins an arms race between the two countries. Other laws for the building of more ships follow in later years.

APRIL–AUGUST



Spanish-American War. USA defeats Spain, taking control of Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines, and becoming a major player on the world stage.

1899–1901

Uprising in China by the 'Boxers', a nationalist group seeking to end foreign domination of the country

1899–1902

Anglo-Boer War. After a long struggle, Britain re-establishes control over the Boers in South Africa.

1901

JANUARY



Queen Victoria dies. Edward VII becomes King of Great Britain and Ireland.

DECEMBER



Guglielmo Marconi sends the first message across the Atlantic using wireless telegraphy

1902

JANUARY



Anglo-Japanese Alliance signed, ending Britain's years of 'splendid isolation'

1903

OCTOBER



Women's Social and Political Union formed in Manchester under the leadership of Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst. Begins a militant campaign for women's right to vote.



Pre-1914

- Military events
- Naval events
- Aviation events
- Political events
- Social events

1904

APRIL



Known as the 'Entente Cordiale', a political understanding is reached between Britain and France ending years of tension and mistrust

JUNE–OCTOBER



Systematic killing of the Herero and Nama people by the German Army in German South-West Africa, the first recognised genocide of the twentieth century

1904–1905



Russo-Japanese War in Manchuria. Japan defeats Russia.

1905

JANUARY



Revolution in Russia is fiercely crushed by government troops, but leads to limited political reforms

DECEMBER



Liberal Party wins the British general election and forms a government led by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman

1906

FEBRUARY



Britain launches a revolutionary new battleship, HMS *Dreadnought*. Naval rivalry with Germany intensifies.

1907

AUGUST



Anglo-Russian Entente announced, demonstrating a new political understanding between Britain and Russia

1908

APRIL



Herbert Henry Asquith replaces Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman as British prime minister

OCTOBER



Bosnia-Herzegovina in the Balkans is formally annexed by Austria-Hungary

1909

JULY



Frenchman Louis Blériot makes the first successful cross-channel flight in an aeroplane, vindicating the *Daily Mail's* claim three years earlier, 'Britain No Longer An Island'

1910

MAY



King Edward VII dies. George V becomes King of Great Britain and Ireland.

1911

DECEMBER



George V crowned Emperor of India at the Delhi Durbar

1912

APRIL



Asquith introduces the Third Home Rule Bill into the British parliament, offering limited self-government to Ireland within the United Kingdom. Nationalist and Unionist tensions slowly grow within the country.



SS *Titanic* sinks after striking an iceberg in the northern Atlantic. Over 1500 people lose their lives.

1912–1913



First Balkan War. Turkey loses most of its remaining European territory.

1913

MARCH



Woodrow Wilson sworn in as the 28th President of the United States

JUNE



Second Balkan War begins. Further outbreak of fighting in the Balkans which lasts until August.

1914

MARCH



Asquith's Home Rule Bill threatened when British officers, serving at the Curragh camp in Ireland, threaten to resign rather than enforce home rule in Ireland