The Schlieffen Plan 1914 – The Easy Version

- This represented Germany’s plan of attack, part of their hidden agenda
- The plan was created by General Schlieffen ten years before the war (thus the plan was already outdated)
- The plan was to prevent Germany from fighting a war on two fronts at the same time
- The plan involved the quick capture of Belgium and France in the west
- Then Germany would turn to face Russia in the east and conquer them. This plan assumed that backward Russia would take too much time to mobilize its weak army and Germany would not have to worry about them for at least six weeks
- The plan involved a swift sweep through Belgium, sticking close to the coastline of the English channel then encircling Paris, the capital of France
- The plan failed for several reasons:
  - 1. Belgium resisted the German army instead of remaining neutral – this slowed down the German advance
  - 2. Britain did honour its alliance with France and Russia and sent troops and supplies to France and Belgium
  - 3. Russia mobilized its army much faster than Germany thought they could and were thus forced to leave ¼ million troops to defend Berlin and fight the Russians
  - 4. Two young German Generals (Kluck and Moltke) changed the original plan which reduced its effectiveness, their army was bogged down ten miles outside of Paris
  - 5. The French soldiers fought bravely to defend their country, surprising the Germans. British soldiers were also helping to hold the German advance
  - 6. Austria did not defeat Serbia quickly and asked Germany for help. The Germans had to offer soldiers and supplies to Austria reducing their force on the Western front
- Germany found itself sandwiched between the British and French on the western front and the Russians on the eastern front. The war that was supposed to be over by Christmas was prolonged for four years.