How did Economic rivalry contribute to the outbreak of war?

L/O – To evaluate the economic causes of the First World War
Causes of War

• The First World War broke out in 1914 because of a series of events and disagreements in that year. But those events were just short-term reasons why war broke out when it did.

• The real causes of war were long-term and much more deep-seated. They had existed for some time and made war very likely. All that was need was the short-term reasons to trigger the start of the war.
The Battle for Economic Supremacy

• At the beginning of the 20th century, Britain had been the most powerful country in the world, with the *largest empire* and the richest trade. However, Germany had *overtaken Britain* by 1914.

• It produced more *iron*, more *steel* and more *cars.*
The Battle for Economic Supremacy

- Germany was also showing a keen interest in gaining colonies, which would give it access to cheap raw materials and markets into which to sell its goods.

- Its interest in colonies had also brought it into conflict with France.
The Battle for Economic Supremacy

- But while Britain was increasingly concerned about the expanding German navy, and France felt threatened by Germany over its colonies, what was really happening was the Germany was building a stronger economy than those of Britain and France and they were trying to stop this.
The Great Powers in 1913 – Population: Home
The Great Powers in 1913 – Population: Overseas

Population: overseas (millions)

- Russia
- Germany
- Austria
- Hungary
- Britain
- France
- Italy
The Great Powers in 1913 – Annual Trade

Value of annual trade (£ millions)

- Russia
- Germany
- Austria
- Hungary
- Britain
- France
- Italy
The Great Powers in 1913 – Steel Production

Steel production (million tons)

- Russia
- Germany
- Austria
- Hungary
- Britain
- France
- Italy
1. Which country had the most valuable trade in 1913? Why do you think this was?

2. Which country had the second highest? Why might this be a problem to the country with the highest?

3. Why did Britain have a much higher ‘overseas population’ than other countries?

4. Why do you think figures for steel production are shown? Why does it matter how much steel is produced?
5. Why does it matter how large the population is? Does that mean that Russia must have been the strongest because it had the largest population?

6. What was the combined total for a) the Triple Alliance and b) the Triple Entente for: A) Annual Trade? B) Steel Production?

7. In 1913 the USA had a home population of 91 million, annual trade of £1.8 million and steel production of 23.6 million tonnes. What does that tell you?

8. ‘None of these figures matter. All that is important is the size of a country’s armed forces.’ Explain whether you agree with that statement.