Who won the War at Sea?

L/O – To describe the events of the war at sea and to identify which side won

BLOCKADE = Cutting a place off by surrounding it with troops or ships
The War at Sea

• Although the campaigns at sea were vital for Britain and Germany, relatively little fighting took place between warships like the dreadnought.

• The key objective was to control the seas to stop supplies getting to the enemy.

• The British blockade of German ports was a crucial factor in the Allied victory over Germany.
How did the German navy threaten Britain?

• The British were dependent on ships bringing in food, raw materials and other goods from abroad.

• Britain needed to send reinforcements and fresh supplies across the Channel to the Western Front.

• Britain had a worldwide empire. Its only means of communication was by sea.
How did the British navy threaten Germany?

- The British could **blockade** the German ports and cut off its overseas trade.

- Germany had an empire in Africa and the Far East. Like Britain, its **only link with its overseas territories was by sea.**
Which country would be favourite to win the war in the North Sea? Give reasons for your answer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>British Navy</th>
<th>German Navy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The British had the largest fleet, with 29 dreadnoughts. These were anchored at Scapa Flow, a protected and sheltered bay in the Orkney islands, and at Cromarty. The battle cruisers were at Rosyth.</td>
<td>The German fleet was smaller, with only 17 dreadnoughts in 1914. The German High Seas Fleet spent most of the time at its base in Wilhelmshaven.</td>
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<td>The British also had a long naval tradition, having controlled the seas throughout the 19th century.</td>
<td>Germany had no naval tradition. The Kaiser had built up the navy in the preceding 14 years.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Britain had one more advantage. Early in the war a German cruiser, Magdeburg, was sunk by Russian ships in the Baltic Sea. The body of a German officer was found clutching the German naval code book. From then on Britain was able to decode German messages and knew when enemy ships were leaving port.</td>
<td>Germany did have several advantages: • The German ships were of superior design, especially in the quality of their steel armour protection. • The German gunners proved themselves to be superior marksmen. • Most German shells, unlike their British counterparts, exploded on hitting enemy ships.</td>
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</table>
The ‘Cautious’ War

• Both sides knew how important it was to control the sea and trade routes, and the war at sea became a cautious war.

• British Commander Admiral Jellicoe said that he ‘could lose the war in an afternoon’ if he rashly allowed his fleet to be put out of action.
Sea Battles of WW1

- Despite the need for caution, there were some battles at sea. For the exam, we need to look at:
  - Battle of Heligoland Bight 1914
  - German Raids on UK Coastline
  - Battle of Dogger Bank 1915
  - Battle of Jutland 1916
  - The U-Boat Threat
  - The Sinking of the Lusitania
  - Anti U-Boat Measures
The Battle of Heligoland Bight – Aug 1914

- On 28th August 1914, the Royal Navy scored a clever (but small) **tactical victory** in the North Sea at Heligoland.

- **Britain** = 1 ship damaged, 35 killed, 55 wounded
- **Germany** = 6 ships sunk, 6 ships damaged, 712 killed, 149 wounded, 336 captured
- **Result** = Germany navy instructed to remain in port

BRITISH VICTORY!
German Raids on English Coast

• In Nov-Dec 1914 the German High Seas Fleet **raided** the British east coast and caused damage and casualties at Hartlepool, Whitby, Scarborough and Yarmouth.

• **Britain** = 137 killed, 592 injured, 3 ships damaged
• **Germany** = 3 damaged ships
• **Result** = Public outrage towards the German navy, recruitment boost in England
The Battle of Dogger Bank – Jan 1915

• The British had **decoded** radio signals telling them that the German raiding squadron was heading for Dogger Bank and a force was sent to **intercept**.

  - **Britain** = 2 ships damaged, 15 killed, 32 wounded
  - **Germany** = 2 ships sunk, 954 killed, 80 wounded, 189 captured
  - **Result** = Raids on England were ended but German ships escaped.

BRITISH VICTORY!
The Battle of Jutland – May 1916

- The Germans sought to break the British blockade by destroying a portion of the Royal Navy. The Germans had the best exchanges but the British fleet was simply too large.

- **Britain** = 14 ships sunk, 6094 killed, 674 wounded, 177 captured
- **Germany** = 11 ships sunk, 2551 killed, 507 wounded
- **Result** = Germans claim victory but too weak to ever attempt a full naval attack and retreat to ports.
Results of the battle

Both sides claimed victory, so **who won** the battle?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The British War</th>
<th>The German War</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The Germans had <em>fled</em> the battle.</td>
<td>• The Germans had <em>inflicted the greater losses</em>, with 14 British and only 11 German ships sunk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The German fleet <em>rarely went to sea again</em>, leaving the Royal Navy in control of the North Sea.</td>
<td>• The British suffered <em>far heavier casualties</em> – 6000 British to 2500 Germans.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The British <em>continued to blockade Germany</em>. A US newspaper summarised the outcome of Jutland in this way: ‘<em>The German fleet has assaulted its jailor, but it is still in jail.</em>’</td>
<td>• German <em>gunnery was far better</em> – about half of all big shells scored hits compared with about 1/3 of those fired by the British ships.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The Germans were forced to revert to unrestricted U-boat warfare, which brought the <em>USA into the war</em> on the Allied side.</td>
<td>• The design of the German ships, especially the gun turrets, <em>was shown to be better</em>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Does Source B support the evidence of Source A in its views of the Battle of Jutland? Explain your answer (7 marks).

Source A – An official German statement, June 1916

The Kaiser addresses the crews of the High Seas Fleet. ‘The British fleet was beaten at Jutland. The first great hammer blow was struck, and the halo of British world naval supremacy has disappeared for ever.’

Source B – From a textbook about the First World War, 1998

The Kaiser insisted on regarding the battle as a victory. He was quite wrong. Jellicoe had not won a great victory but he had not suffered a defeat. The Kaiser was warned that the High Seas Fleet needed a month to make good the damage it suffered. It never emerged from port again.
# Mark Scheme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
<th>Mark</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Simple statements which identify support/differences at face value.</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 mark – summarises or paraphrases the sources.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 marks for generalised comparisons.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Developed statements identifying support OR challenge based on source contents.</td>
<td>3-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>Developed statements identifying support AND challenge based on source contents and extent of support.</td>
<td>6-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7 marks – must discuss extent of support.</td>
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