Summaries of key events in WW1

The Battle of the Somme
One of WW1’s largest battles took place on July 1st, 1916, near the River Somme. It killed/injured 1,000,000 men and was named the bloodiest battle of WW1. It had forced the Germans to retreat but Sir Douglas Haig was criticized for tactics which lost an unnecessary amount of men.

First Use of Gas in WW1
Gas was first used by the French in August 1914. It was a tear gas grenade which irritated but didn’t kill. The development of poisonous gases throughout WW1 led to the symbolic gas mask of WW1. This gas was designed to wipe out the enemy’s front line in one go.

Conscription
During WW1, the government passed the Military Service Act (1916). This meant men aged 18 to 41 years old with no military experience could be called up to fight in the trenches and on the battlefield. The age limit was raised up to 51 eventually and conscription ended mid 1919.

The United States declared war on Germany
In January 1918, Germany invited Mexico to join them and in return they claimed they would help regain Texas and Arizona, land that Mexico lost to America. British intelligence intercepted a telegram and America saw this as a cause of war, declared war on Germany and allied with the British.

The second battle of the Marne
The second battle of Marne (AKA. The Battle of Reims) ended August 1918. It was the last German Offensive battle on the Western Front. When the Germans’ attack failed due to a tactical counter attack, French forces overwhelmed the Germans. This battle is considered the start of the end of WW1.