**Comparison chart**

|  | **World War I** | **World War II** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Period and duration** | 1914 to1918; 4 years | 1939 to 1945; 6 Years |
| **Triggers and causes** | Assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand of Austria in June 1914. Militarism, Imperialism, nationalism and alliance system. | Political and economic instability in Germany. The harsh conditions of the Treaty of Versailles Rise of power of [Adolf Hitler](http://www.diffen.com/difference/Special:Information/Adolf_Hitler) and his alliance with Italy and Japan to oppose the Soviet Union |
| **Conflict between** | The Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey) and the Allied Powers (France, Britain, Russia, Italy, Japan, and (from 1917) the U.S.) | The Axis Powers (Germany, Italy, and Japan) and the Allied Powers (France, Britain, the U.S., the Soviet Union, and China) |
| **Casualties** | Estimated to be 10 million military dead, 7 million civilian deaths, 21 million wounded, and 7.7 million missing or imprisoned. | Over 60 million people died in World War II. Estimated deaths range from 50-80 million. 38 to 55 million civilians were killed, including 13 to 20 million from war-related disease and famine. |
| **Genocide** | The Ottoman Empire (Turkey) carried out genocide of Armenians | German Nazis committed genocide against [Jews](http://www.diffen.com/difference/Special:Information/Judaism) and gypsies |
| **Methods of warfare** | Fought from lines of trenches and supported by artillery and machine[guns](http://www.diffen.com/difference/Category:Guns), infantry assault, tanks, early airplanes and poisonous gas. Mostly static in nature, mobility was minimal. | Nuclear power and missiles were used, modern concepts of covert and special operations. Submarines and tanks were also more heavily used. Encryption codes for secret communication became more complex. Germany used the Blitzkrieg fighting method. |
| **Outcomes** | The German, Russian, Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires were defeated. Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires ceased to exist. The League of Nations was formed in the hope of preventing another such conflict. | The war ended with the total victory of the Allies over Germany and Japan in 1945. The Soviet Union and the United States emerged as rival superpowers. The United Nations was established to foster international cooperation and prevent conflicts. |
| **Post-war politics** | Resentment with the onerous terms of the Treaty of Versailles fueled the rise of Adolf Hitler's party in Germany. So some historians believe that in a way, World War I led to World War II. | There was a Cold War between the United States and Russia after the end of the Second World War until the collapse of the USSR (1947-1991). The wars in Afghanistan, Vietnam and Korea were, in a sense, proxy wars between the two nations. |
| **Nature of war** | War between [countries](http://www.diffen.com/difference/Special:Compare/Countries) for acquiring colonies or territory or resources. | War of ideologies, such as [Fascism and Communism](http://www.diffen.com/difference/Communism_vs_Fascism). |
| **Abbreviation** | WWI or WW1 | WWII or WW2 |
| **Also known as** | The Great War, The World War, The Kaiser's War, The War of the Nations, The War in Europe, or The European War, World War one, First World War, The war to end all wars | Second World War, World War Two, The Great Patriotic War |
| **American president during the war** | Woodrow Wilson | [FDR](http://www.diffen.com/difference/Special:Information/Franklin_D._Roosevelt), Harry Truman |