Where is Gallipoli?

Most of you will know something about the main focus of this unit — Gallipoli.

When we say ‘Gallipoli’ we mean the part of the Gallipoli peninsula of Turkey, where fighting took place. This was known at the time as the Dardanelles campaign.

The place where the fighting took place was actually not at the town of Gallipoli (Gelibolu).

By the term ‘Gallipoli’ we also mean the campaign that saw the Australian and New Zealand troops in their first action of the First World War fighting as a separate group or ‘corps’.

### OVERVIEW

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By early 1915 the main fighting in the war was taking place along the Western Front — along a line of trenches running from the North Sea to Switzerland.

The fighting was bloody but inconclusive, with troops from Britain, France, Belgium and their colonial possessions facing the German forces. Both sides were entrenched, and each was trying to gain ground against the other, but without lasting success.

At the same time Russian forces were fighting German and Austro-Hungarian troops near their border in eastern Europe. The Russians had huge numbers of troops, but they were poorly equipped. In November 1914, Turkey joined the war on the side of the Germans. They attacked Russia in January 1915, and the Russians appealed to Britain and France for help in relieving the pressure this put on their men and supplies.

The appeal for help led to a plan — and it is this plan that you are about to consider.

In 1915 the only possible way to get supplies to Russia was by ship from the Mediterranean to the Aegean Sea, and then to the Russian Black Sea ports. Grain could then be exported from those ports to the Allied nations.

1.1 On the map below mark the route a British and French fleet would take to get to the Black Sea.

The Allied leaders proposed to send a naval fleet in to capture the Turkish capital, Constantinople (present day Istanbul). They believed that this would lead to Turkey’s quick surrender. This would then open the route from the Mediterranean to the Black Sea for supply ships to Russia. They also argued that it might encourage Italy, Greece, Romania and Bulgaria to enter the war on the Allied side, and thereby threaten Austria-Hungary.

Why was there to be an attack at Gallipoli?

Unit 2
Focus question
What was the naval plan to take the Dardanelles?

The Allied plan was for a naval force to sail from the Aegean Sea through the Dardanelles Strait and into the Sea of Marmara. Look at this map and answer the questions that follow.

2.1 List the problems that the naval force would meet with the Turkish defences, and suggest how they might be overcome. Summarise them in a table like this. One example has been done to help you.

<table>
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<th>Difficulties</th>
<th>How they might be overcome</th>
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<td>Mobile howitzers (artillery)</td>
<td>Have the ships shell them</td>
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The final naval attempt to take the Dardanelles, 18 March 1915

What actually happened?

Following a series of naval actions, a major naval attack took place on 18 March 1915. British and French battleships with cruisers, destroyers and minesweepers sailed into the Dardanelles Strait to open the way to the Sea of Marmara, and then to the Black Sea. The battleships pounded the forts, and the return fire from them slackened. It seemed that the Turkish defenders were in trouble. The second line of ships was ordered to move forward to engage the forts at closer range. The minesweeper ships edged forward to clear the mines. A French battleship hit a mine and quickly sank, with the loss of 600 crew. Hidden artillery now started to fire on the minesweepers, which retreated. Two more battleships hit mines, and three others were badly damaged by artillery. The naval force withdrew. The attempts to force a way through the Dardanelles Strait had failed.

Another plan now had to be devised to achieve the defeat of Turkey, and it was one that would involve the Australians.
With the failure of the final naval attack on 18 March 1915 to clear the Dardanelles the plan was changed. The idea now was to land troops who would quickly move to attack the Turkish forts and mobile artillery defences along the Strait from the rear, destroying the artillery, and allowing the warships to sail unopposed to Constantinople.

Consider this plan, and see how you would try to make it work. You have 75,000 soldiers, and a number of warships and troop transports available.

You have to land your soldiers, possibly in the face of enemy fire, and then have them move to attack the Turkish guns.

3.1 Brainstorm what you would need to carry out a successful invasion. Consider where you would land, how you would get your troops ashore, the food, ammunition, transport, equipment and medical support required.

After your brainstorm, organise your ideas into a table like this. Then look at the information on pages 27-29 and add ideas and information to the table.

### Planning table for the invasion of the Dardanelles

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<td><strong>THE DAY OF THE LANDING</strong></td>
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<td><strong>AFTER THE LANDING</strong></td>
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The landing will be on the Gallipoli peninsula

3.2 Look at the drawing of the Gallipoli peninsula. Describe the terrain. Decide where you think you would land troops to enable them to attack the Turkish gun emplacements in the Dardanelles Strait.
3.3 Here is a modern climate graph for the area. You need to mount your attack as soon as possible. What are likely advantages and disadvantages of a March/April attack?

Climate graph Cannakale, Turkey

Canakkale Turkey
Latitude: 40°08’N    Longitude: 026°24’E    Elevation: 3m    Station: TU17112

TEMPERATURE:
- Daily High
- Daily Low

PRECIPITATION
Humidity: No data

TIME
- NOON
- Daylight
- NOON

Canakkale Turkey
Latituden: 40°08’N    Longitude: 026°24’E    Elevation: 3m    Station: TU17112
Weather report: Cannakale, Turkey
3.4 The map below shows the likely location of enemy defenders on the day of the attack. The 9th and 19th Turkish Divisions defending the peninsula had a total of about 15,000 men in position, with 10,000 available to be rushed forward as reinforcements wherever needed. How does this influence your planning?

3.5 Here are some other factors that you need to consider. Look at each, and discuss what influence each might have on your plan. The enemy:

- holds the high ground;
- has machine-guns in well-fortified trenches;
- is fighting in defence of their own land;
- has artillery available to use against the invasion force; and
- has to defend a large area.

3.6 Here are some further decisions for you to make.

- Do you land your invasion force by night or by day?
- Do you ‘sneak’ up on the enemy or do you try to bombard them before the invasion?
- Do you concentrate your forces in one place or several?

Having considered all these you will probably need to go back to your planning table and make some changes.

Now decide on your final invasion plan. You will see in the next unit what was actually done, and what the results were.

The location of Turkish defenders

Revealing Gallipoli

Watch this film from 12:50-23:00 (Part 1 Chapter 3) and discuss these questions in class:

1. What were the roles of Churchill and Fisher in creating the Dardanelles plan?
2. What was the plan designed to achieve, and how would it achieve it?
3. Why did the plan fail?
4. What were the immediate consequences of the failure of the plan?
5. Why were Australian troops to be included in the new plan to invade the Gallipoli peninsula?

Gallipoli and the Anzacs website

www.anzacsites.gov.au

On this site click Landing and then Why did the Anzacs land at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915? To see an explanation of the Dardanelles naval plan and a map of the Turkish defences of the Strait.

Gallipoli: who, where and why?

See where the events at Gallipoli took place, which nations were involved, and what they were trying to achieve.