

History Knowledge Organiser – WWII

Important Information

Who and Why?

Allies: Great Britain, France, Soviet Union, China and USA
Axis Powers: Germany, Italy and Japan 70 million people lost their lives (24 million from the Soviet Union).

France and England declared war on Germany after they invaded Poland and the USA joined the war effort after the Japanese bombed the American fleet in Pearl Harbour, Hawaii, on December 7, 1941.

The Jewish Community

Around six million Jewish people were killed during World War 2 in one of history's most terrible events – the Holocaust. Racist in his views, Hitler blamed Jewish people for Germany losing World War I and claimed they were dangerous to German people and society.

Home Guard

Set up in May 1940 as Britain's 'last line of defence' against German invasion, members of this 'Dad's Army' were usually men above or below the age of conscription and those unfit or ineligible for front line military service. 1.5 million enrolled and supported the war effort through bomb disposal, manning anti-aircraft artillery and readied for invasion.



Key Vocabulary

Anderson shelter	Half buried in the ground and with earth on top, they protected people from bomb blasts.
blackout	All windows and doors had to be covered at night to stop enemy aircraft seeing house lights.
Blitz	The sustained aerial bombing against Britain by Nazis. Blitz means lightning in German.
evacuee	Designed to protect people, especially children, by moving them to areas of less risk.
gas mask	Issued to all civilians at the start of the war, gas masks were used to protect from gas attacks.
Kristallnacht	On 9th-10th November 1938, Nazis torched synagogues and vandalised Jewish homes.
Nazis	Adolf Hitler and his Nazi Party controlled Germany between 1933 and 1945.
rations	Ration cards were given out and only a certain amount of food / clothes per family was allowed.
Star of David	Jews throughout Europe were forced to wear the star of David to clearly identify themselves.
swastika	An ancient symbol of a cross with arms at a right angle, used as an emblem for the Nazi Party.



Timeline

1939	1939	1940	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1945	1945
On 1 st September Germany invades Poland	On 3 rd September England declares war on Germany	10 th May Winston Churchill replaces Neville Chamberlain as Prime Minister	12 th May German forces enter France	USA declares war on Italy & Germany	British troops win back North Africa	Italy surrenders to the Allies	6 th June D-Day landings on Normandy beaches	Hitler commits suicide	Atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima on 6 th August	Japan surrenders on 2 nd September and the end of war declared

Set yourself a target! By the end of this topic, what do you want to achieve?

Did you achieve your target? Yes / No

What is history?

Why is it important to study this subject?

What history topics can you remember from previous years?

What can you remember about the Victorians and the Mayans?

L.I: To understand how WWII started.

L.I: To be able to name some of the countries involved in WWII

The Rise of Adolf Hitler

- **Occupation:** Dictator of Germany
- **Born:** April 20, 1889 in Braunau am Inn, Austria-Hungary
- **Died:** April 30 1945 in Berlin, Germany
- **Best known for:** Starting World War II and the Holocaust

Biography:

Adolf Hitler was the leader of [Germany](#) from 1933 to 1945. He was leader of the Nazi party and became a powerful dictator. Hitler started [World War II](#) by invading Poland and then invading many other European countries. He is also known for wanting to exterminate the Jewish people in the [Holocaust](#).

Once finished the questions, answer the ones below.

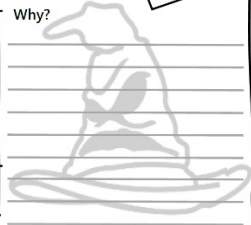
- Sort Hitler into a house, explaining why you think this.

Sort them out! **Character:** _____

They belong in: _____!

	Positives	Negatives
Gryffindor	Brave Daring Noble Courageous	Reckless Easily bored Over dramatic
Slytherin	Ambitious Resourceful Cunning	Power hungry Sneaky Ruthless
Hufflepuff	Hard working Patient Loyal Team player	Easily walked-over Afraid to take risks
Ravenclaw	Intelligent Witty Creative Independent	Can be rude Daydreamer May look down on others

Why? _____



- True or false?

The people of Germany were just as guilty as Hitler was for the crimes that he committed.

True False

- Summarise Hitler's rise to power in less than 100 words.

What do you already know about World War II?

Discuss the following questions with your partner and jot down any information you can.

- When and why did World War II start?
- What were the main countries and people involved?
- Do you know about any key events that happened?
- What was life in Britain like during World War II?
- What else do you already know about World War II?



Neville Chamberlain



Listen to the audio footage of the then British prime minister, Neville Chamberlain, announcing to Britain that they were at war with Germany on 3rd September, 1939.



Facts about WW2!

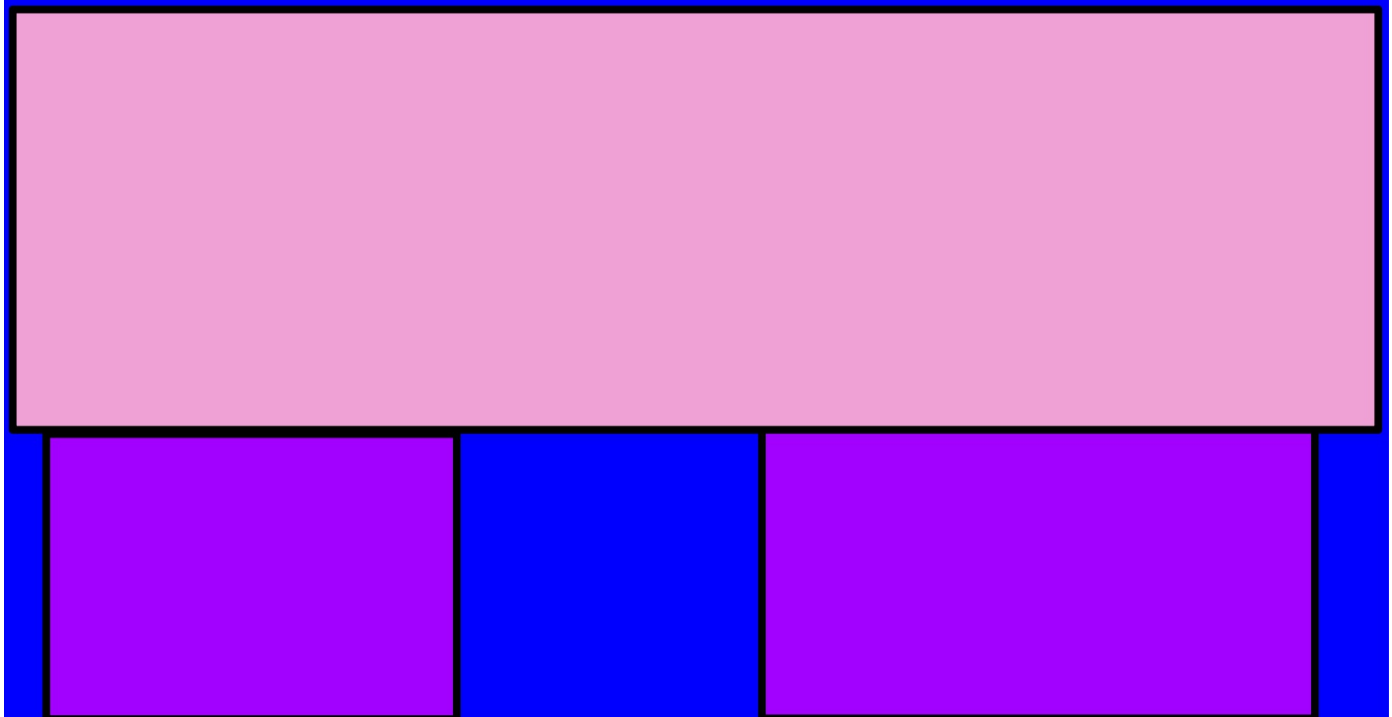
- World War Two was the biggest, most expensive and most destructive war in all of history.
- Every single person in Britain was affected by this war: men were conscripted, women took over men's job and children were evacuated.
- The war involved over 61 countries and 1.7 billion people (1,700,000,000). This was 3/4 of the world's population!
- Fifty million (50,000,000) people lost their lives.



The Treaty of Versailles

What is it?

- The Treaty of Versailles was a contract made between Germany, Britain and France after WW1.



Adolf Hitler

Adolf Hitler was the Führer (_____) of Nazi Germany. He had plans to invade and occupy as many countries as he could to gain Lebensraum (_____) for German people. In 1938-1939 Hitler's troops had already invaded and annexed (_____) Austria and Czechoslovakia.

Britain and France had promised to protect Poland if it was also invaded, so when Hitler refused to withdraw the troops that had marched into the country on 1st September 1939, Britain and France reacted. Britain and France declared war on Germany on 3rd September, 1939.



living space

claimed as German land

leader

Adolf Hitler

- Hitler didn't agree with the Treaty of Versailles, and so ordered its 'destruction'.



Invasion and the lead up to war!

- Hitler's invasion of Poland was highly successful and so he ordered the invasion of Holland, Czechoslovakia, Norway and Finland.

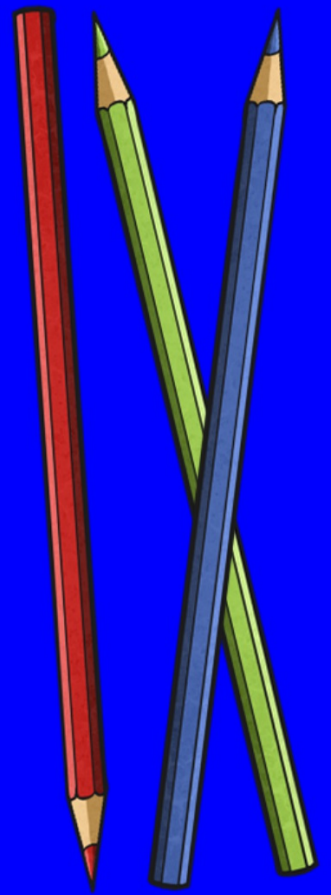


Let's have a look at a timeline of events in WW2.
Order them with your partner and we will discuss.

Answer these questions in your books. Write your answers in FULL sentences and do not start with because!

1. Who won World War 1?
2. What happened to Germany at the end of World War 1?
3. What year did Adolf Hitler become leader of the German government?
4. What group of people did Hitler hate?
5. What did he do to them?
6. Why did Hitler create his army?

At the start of World War II, the Allies were the United Kingdom, France and Poland. These nations had made a pact to stand together against Hitler and the Axis Powers.



L.I: To understand the effects of WWII on everyday life in the United Kingdom.

The Wexbridge Crier

19th October 1943

BRAVE YANK FLIES TO THE RESCUE

Pigeon Powers Through

At just after 9 am yesterday, an American soldier flew to the rescue of hundreds of British soldiers. G.I. Joe, a homing pigeon trained by the Signal Pigeon Corps in the USA, was responsible for one of the most daring, last-minute rescues ever seen.

Acting on earlier orders, the 169th Brigade had stormed the Italian village of Calvi Vecchia. Their target was the remaining German soldiers who still held it in a tentative grip. To aid their



What did we look at last lesson? Can you name three facts about World War Two?

Why is it important to study key events in history?

From your knowledge of the previous lesson, what do you think Britain would have been like to live in during this time?



It is 1939. Britain has just entered the war.

The government is worried that people might panic during air raids.

They have created posters like this and they need your help to see if they work.

Wednesday 18th March 2026

LI: I can understand the impact of propaganda on everyday life during the war.

Today you are going to be Propaganda investigators!

Can we clarify what Propaganda is?

A large empty white rectangular box, likely intended for students to write their answers or notes during the lesson.

Propaganda was used to **influence** the public in different ways. Propaganda was often used in posters displayed on the streets or leaflets.

During World War 2, the government used posters to **persuade**, **encourage** and **reassure** people and aim to keep up people's **morale**.



Propaganda is all about how words are used.

Our first mission is to be Word Detectives!

Let's read the words.

What do they mean?

influence	encourage	propaganda	determination
reassure	patriotic	persuade	morale
motivate	duty	sacrifice	bias

Think about...Talk about...
Look at the words and meanings in your envelope
and match them up.

Influence		Convince someone to do something.
Encourage		How positive and hopeful people feel.
Propaganda		Make someone feel less worried.
Determination		The power to affect how someone thinks or behaves.
Reassure		A preference on one side or idea.
Patriotic		Give someone confidence or support.
Persuade		Something you feel responsible for.
Morale		Giving up something important.
Motivate		The level of happiness and enthusiasm in a group.
Duty		Show love, support or pride for your country.
Sacrifice		A strong decision to try and not give up.
Bias		Information created to influence people's behaviour or thoughts.

During World War 2 propaganda posters were displayed in public places so the people would see them.

Look at the poster.

What do you notice first?

Why might the government choose these words? What message is it sending?

How might this poster make people feel during the war?



Discuss:



Who is in the posters?

What is the message?

Match 3 of your vocabulary words to each poster and be prepared to justify your choices!

Challenge - Can you add your own words?

Women had a significant role in the war effort and propaganda posters specifically aimed at women were displayed across the United Kingdom.





Who is in the poster?

What message is this poster putting across?

Can you use 3 of our vocabulary words?

Discuss with a partner...

Women had other jobs than just working the factories. They also took over farming, making ammunition, building tanks, and became engineers for army vehicles





Looking deeper...

What is this poster trying to persuade people to do?

How do the bright colours in this poster influence the audience?

How might the message reassure people?

Being a Propaganda expert...Putting our vocabulary into sentences.

This propaganda poster was designed to persuade the British public that it is their duty support the war effort and keep up their morale.

The bold slogan and bright colours capture the reader's attention and influence their behaviour.

The government wanted to encourage people to grow their own food so supplies could be saved for the soldiers fighting the war. This poster may also reassure people that they can help their country, even if they are not fighting in the front line. As a result, the poster would increase feelings of being patriotic and motivate people to take action and be determined to support their country.



Independent challenge

Use your vocabulary to help you to analyse each poster and think about the effect it has on people.

To investigate propaganda posters and discuss what they might represent



1. Why is this woman standing so proud and tall?



2. What does 'we can do it' mean?



3. Do with less of what? Who does it help?

With your partner, discuss the following...

Why do you think propaganda was a vital weapon during the war?

What impact did it have?



Now time to design your own propaganda poster.

What could we ask people to do to help the war?

Let's make a list together...

Think carefully about your design and words.

What do you want your poster to do? (Influence, reassure, persuade, motivate...)

Make Do
and Mend

Careless Talk
Costs Lives

Dig On
For Victory

Keep Calm
and
Carry On

L.I: To infer the causes of rationing (focus on food) and when rationing began and came to an end.

“Living with Less: Rationing in Britain During World War Two”

When the Second World War began in 1939, Britain faced a serious problem. Much of the country's food came from abroad, and enemy submarines made it dangerous for ships to cross the Atlantic. To make sure everyone had a fair share of what was available, the government introduced rationing in January 1940.

Every person received a ration book, filled with coupons that allowed them to buy limited amounts of certain foods each week. Items like butter, sugar, bacon and meat were strictly controlled. People often queued for hours outside shops, hoping the shelves wouldn't be empty by the time they reached the front.

Although rationing was challenging, many families became creative. They learned to grow vegetables in their gardens, and the government encouraged this through the “Dig for Victory” campaign. People also swapped recipes and found clever ways to make meals stretch further. Some children even helped by collecting scrap metal and old pots to be melted down for the war effort.

Write a menu plan to show what food you typically eat in a week.



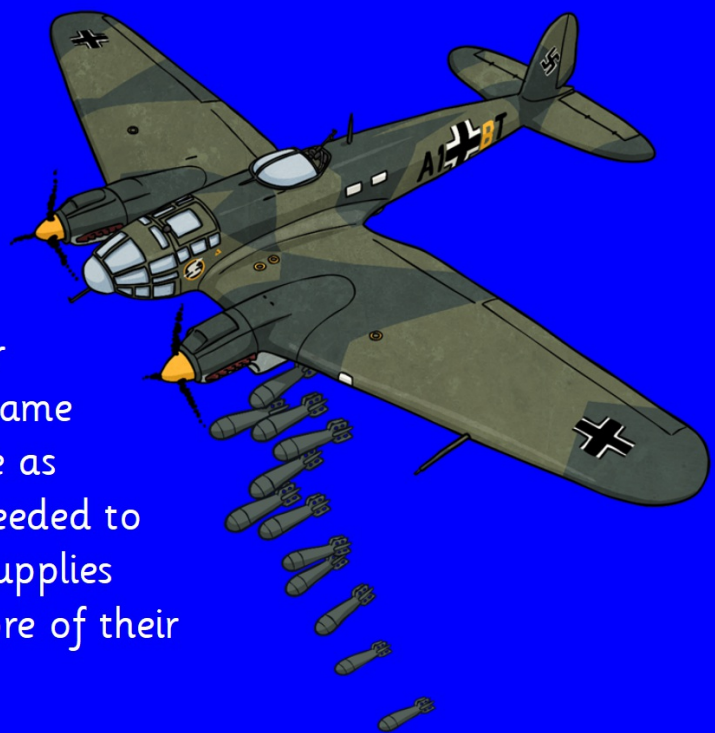
At the start of the war, Britain began to ration food. To ration something means to allow each person to only have a fixed amount of it.

Discuss these questions with your partner...

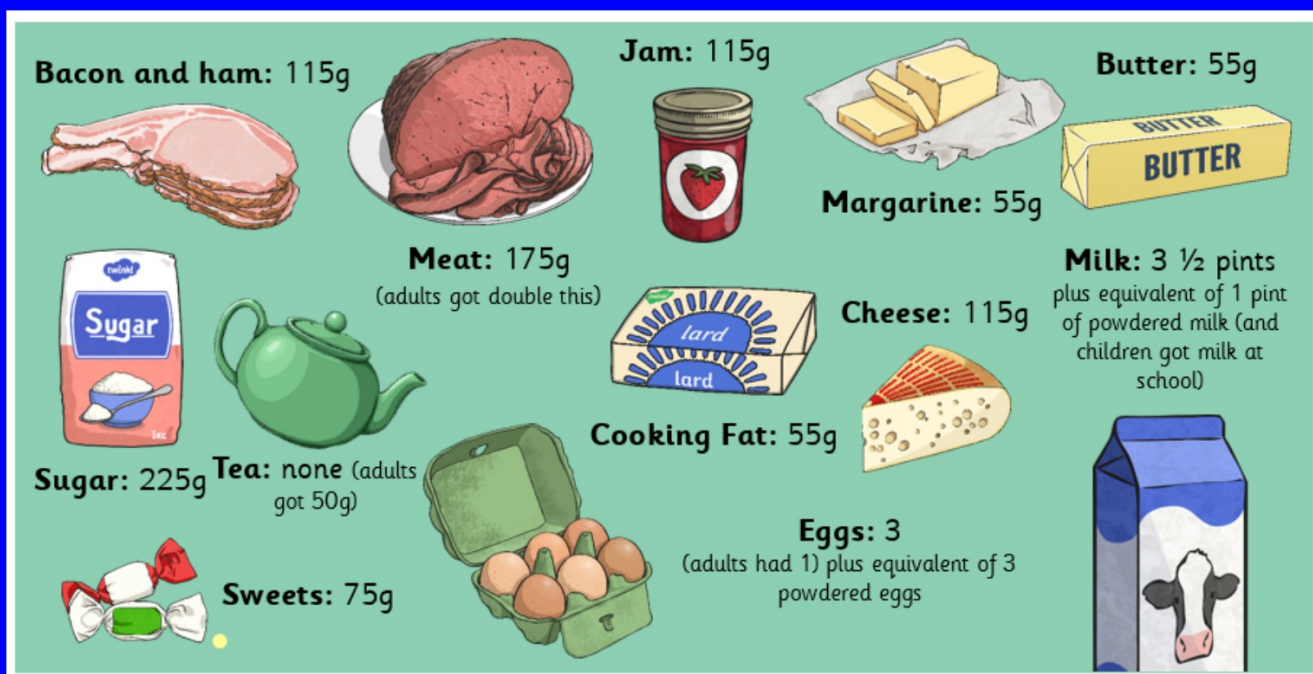


At the start of the war, Britain was importing more than two-thirds of its food from overseas. When supply ships coming into the country were targeted by German bombers and the possibility of invasion or isolation became a reality, it became necessary for Britain to conserve as much food as possible. People needed to become more creative with the supplies they had and began to grow more of their own food.

The rationing of food began in January 1940 and lasted until 1954, which was actually nine years after the war had ended.



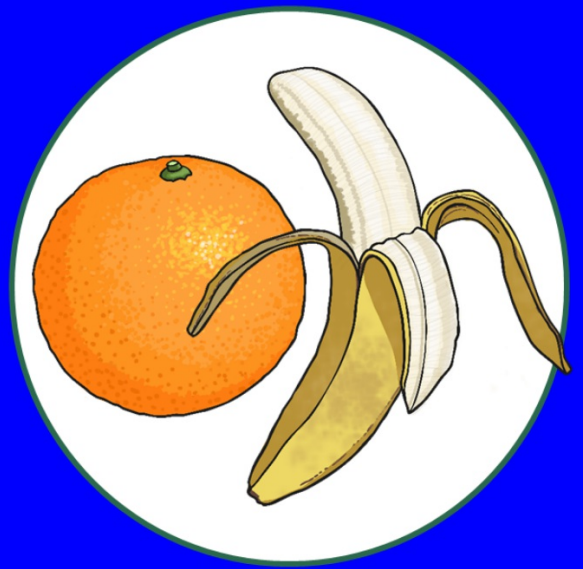
Look at the list of foods that were rationed during the war and the average allowances for a child between aged five and sixteen.



Although many foods were not officially rationed, they were in very short supply or simply not available.

Some children grew up never seeing bananas or oranges for example, as these were imported from overseas.

Some people sold or traded goods on the black market, which means to illegally trade goods that were in controlled or limited supply.



The following foods were never rationed during the war:

Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

Although they were not readily available.



Bread

However, due to reduced importation of white flour, there was a 'national loaf' made with wholegrain flour, which many people said was like grey mush.



Fish

Although it was very expensive!



Some people also ate meat they could hunt themselves like rabbit or squirrel!



Much of Britain's food came from other countries in ships. Enemy submarines sank so many ships that there was a shortage of some foods. Rationing made sure everyone got a fair share.

This is the ration for one adult per week.

Food rationing came into force in January 1940. At its worst, in 1942, a typical ration for one adult per week was:

Butter: 50g (2oz)	Bacon and Ham: 100g (4oz)	Margarine: 100g (4oz)
Sugar: 25g (8oz)	Meat: To the value of 1s.2d (One shilling and six-pence per week. That is about 6p today)	Milk: 1800ml (3 pints) Occasionally dropping to 1200ml (2 pints)
Cheese: 50g (2oz)	Eggs: 1 fresh egg a week	Tea: 50g (2oz)
Jam: 450g (1lb) Every two months	Dried Eggs: 1 packet Every four weeks	Sweets: 350g (12oz) Every four weeks

How much food would your family be able to buy each week?

Count the number of people in your family who live in your house, adults and children, and calculate how much of each food item you would get.

Write the answer in grams and kilograms. (1000 grams in 1 kilogram)

e.g. In my family there are five people, so: Butter 50g

$5 \times 50\text{g} = 250\text{g}$

250g divided by $1000 = 0.25\text{kg}$

Butter:	Bacon and Ham:	Margarine:
Sugar:	Meat:	Milk:
Cheese:	Eggs:	Tea:
Jam:	Dried Eggs:	Sweets:



Lets discuss your menu's here.

1. Do you think it was better to have a larger family or smaller family in the war? Explain why.
2. Do you think this amount of food is a little or lot for your family?
3. Which of these items is the most important and why?
4. Which of these items could you easily do without?



Look at the two menu plans you have written.

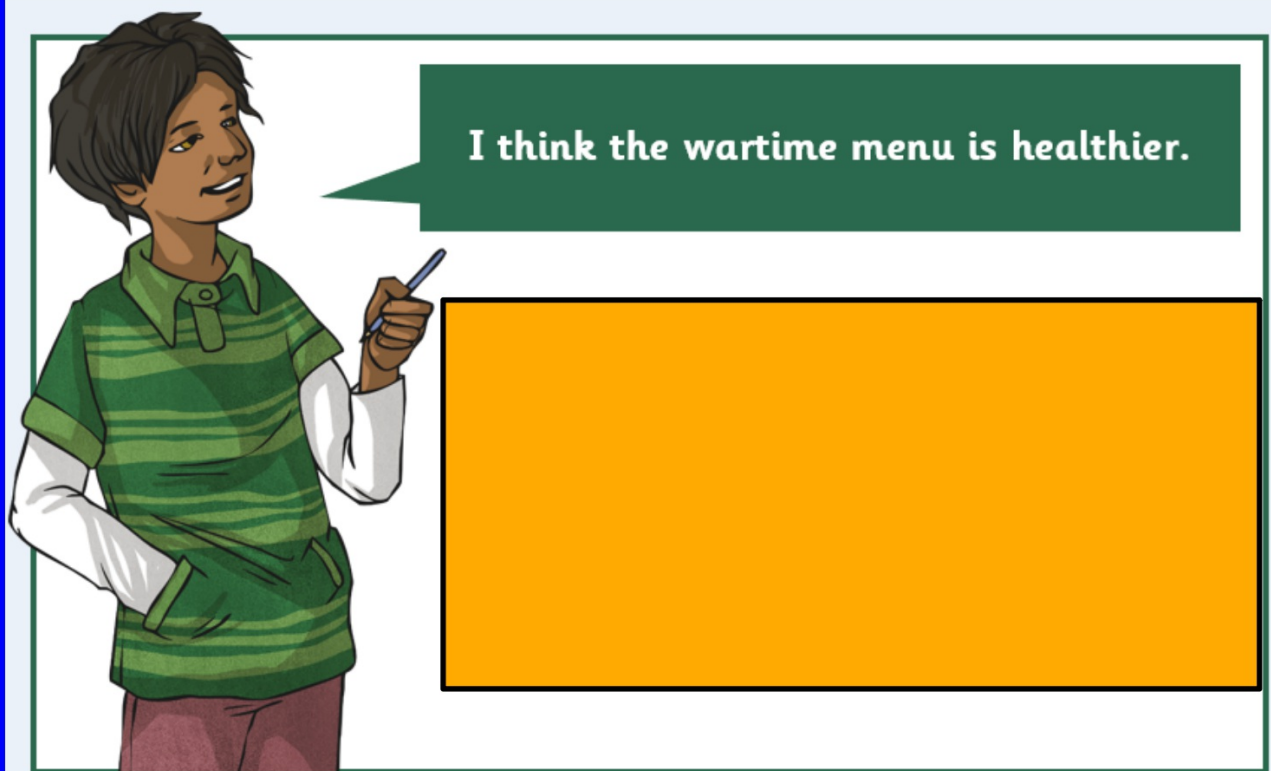
How are they similar?

How are they different?

Work with a partner to discuss the statements on the **Menu Comparison Activity Sheet**. Do you agree or disagree with each one?

Make sure you can explain your reasons.





I think wartime food was more varied.





I think food today is more flavoursome.

I think food portions today are smaller
than they were during the war.





I think people ate more snacks during the war.

I think most meals during the war were prepared from scratch.

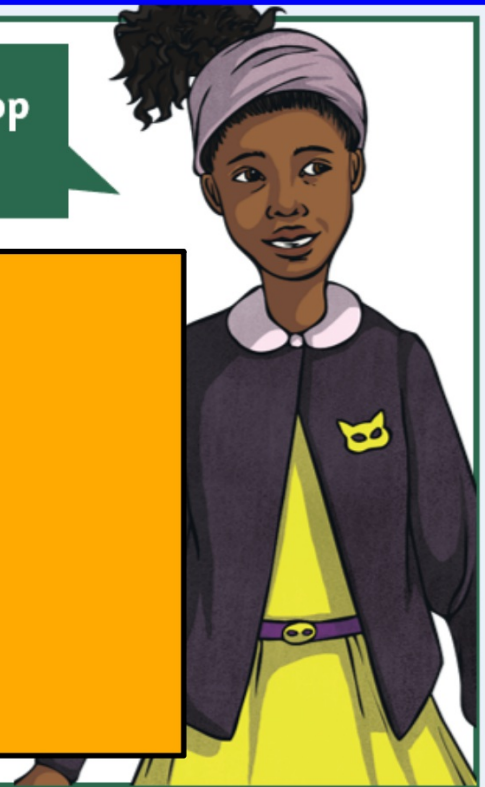




I don't think there was any fast food
during the war.



I think it was easy to do a weekly shop
during the war.



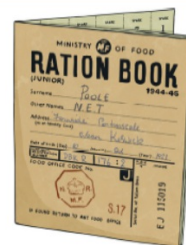
Read the information about rationing during World War II then answer the comprehension questions on the **Rationing Comprehension Activity Sheet.**

Ration Books

In order to ensure that everybody got their fair share of available foods, ration books were issued.

Everybody had to register with certain shops where they could go each week to purchase their allowance.

Coupons in the ration book showed people how much of each item they were allowed and the shopkeepers would remove or stamp the coupons when they were used.



The Ministry of Food

During the war, the government appointed a Minister of Food to help control and regulate the food supplies available. From April 1940 until November 1943, the Minister of Food was Frederick Marquis, the Lord Woolton.

Lord Woolton was responsible for organising the rationing system and encouraging people to make the most of what they had. He worked closely with the Ministry of Agriculture, who established the Dig for Victory propaganda campaign. This campaign was a great success.

To encourage people to make the most of home-grown vegetables, a meat-less pie was developed by the head chef at the Savoy Hotel in London. It was known as Woolton Pie and Lord Woolton helped to advertise it.

L.I: To describe the process of evacuation, the people involved and describe the feelings and experiences of an evacuee.

Evacuation

England in the Second World War: 1939 to 1945

War is Declared

When the Second World War was declared, people were scared, as they expected that the Germans would soon to bomb British cities.

The Government spent the early months of 1939 preparing details for the evacuation of unaccompanied children, mothers with children under school age, blind and disabled people from vulnerable areas.

Areas affected were London, Coventry, Birmingham and Portsmouth. There were also places in Scotland that were targeted too. Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee and Queensferry.



Newspaper seller

Evacuation

The order to evacuate came on 11/07 on 31st August 1939. 1.5 million children, pregnant women and other vulnerable people such as the disabled, evacuated to safer countryside locations in just two days.

Evacuation was voluntary and parents had to register if they wanted their child to be part of the scheme. Some parents had made private arrangements for their child to live with friends or family in the country.

Children gathered at their local primary school, carrying their gas mask, toothbrush, change of underwear and label. They walked to their nearest railway station, to be evacuated to secret destinations.

Children were evacuated to smaller towns and villages in the countryside. Some children were sent to stay with relatives outside in the countryside, but others were sent to live with complete strangers.

Billing officers were responsible for helping to find homes for the evacuees. Householders in the country who billeted (hosted) day children were given money by the government.



Children were given identification labels like the one this girl is wearing.

Evacuation

England in the Second World War: 1939 to 1945

New Arrivals

It was a very scary time for children, as many had never left the area where they lived.

Evacuees and their hosts were often astonished to see how each other lived. Some evacuees flourished in their new surroundings. Others endured a miserable time away from home. Many evacuees from inner-city areas had never even seen farm animals before or eaten vegetables.

When children arrived at their destination, those that had volunteered to take in an evacuee gathered to 'pick' the children they wanted.



Children being evacuated

Home Again

There were no big bombing raids on Britain in the first months of the war (known as The Phoney War) and as a result of this, by early 1940 many children had returned home.

They were evacuated again when heavy bombing raids started in the autumn of 1940 - The Blitz - and then again later, in 1944, when Germany attacked Britain with V1 Flying Bombs and V2 rockets.



Junkers Ju-87 Stuka dive bomber

Children were told to bring changes of clothes, shoes, a toothbrush, a bar of soap, bag and their ration book.

Reading and questions

1. Was it only children that were evacuated?
2. Name four cities in England that were bombed by the Germans.
3. In the first sentence, find and copy the synonym for announced.
4. Why were the children's destinations secret?
5. Why were children given identity tags?

Look at the suitcase and its contents.

Discuss the following with your partner:

How old do you think the suitcase is?

Who do you think the suitcase belongs to?

What do you think it is to be used for?

What do you know about the contents of the case?

What do the contents tell us about the owner of the case?

Why would the owner of the case need those items?

What else might the owner want to pack in the case?



The suitcase belongs to a child, who was evacuated during World War II.



During WW2, many people were evacuated from the cities to avoid the bombings. They were evacuated to the countryside, where it was thought to be safer. In total, of 3.5 million (3,500,000) children were evacuated during the war.



When children were evacuated, many of their families had no idea where they were going. Children were made to carry a gas mask with them, in case of a gas explosion. Some children thought this was going to be a big adventure, whilst some didn't want to leave home. Children when they got to the countryside would stay with 'host' families and go to school just like normal.

Dear Mum and Pop
Thank you for your
letter and parcel. I shall
like to see Dad in his
uniform.
I wonder if you will
be able to come and see
me one day. I should
like to see you when
you can. My face is

getting very brown
with love. Ken
Please give my love
to Granma and Grandad.
I will send them a card
soon. + + + + +



Mostly children were evacuated but other evacuees included mothers with very young children, pregnant women, disabled people, teachers and helpers to look after the children.

Evacuation happened in distinct waves with the first wave of evacuations beginning on the 1st September, 1939, which was two days before Britain officially declared war on Germany. Other waves occurred at the start of the Battle of Britain in June 1940 and at the start of the Blitz in September 1940.



True or False?

- Only children were evacuated during the war.
- The evacuations happened in waves throughout the war.

Challenge - Can you name some cities that were affected by the Blitz?

On evacuation day, children travelled with their teacher or helper by train to their destination.

All children had to wear an identity label and take their gas mask, ration book, identity card and food for the journey. Many children also took a suitcase containing clothes and personal items.

When they reached their destination, billeting officers were responsible for arranging for children to stay with host families. For many children this involved being selected out a line by their host. This was an upsetting experience for some children who felt unwanted or rejected.



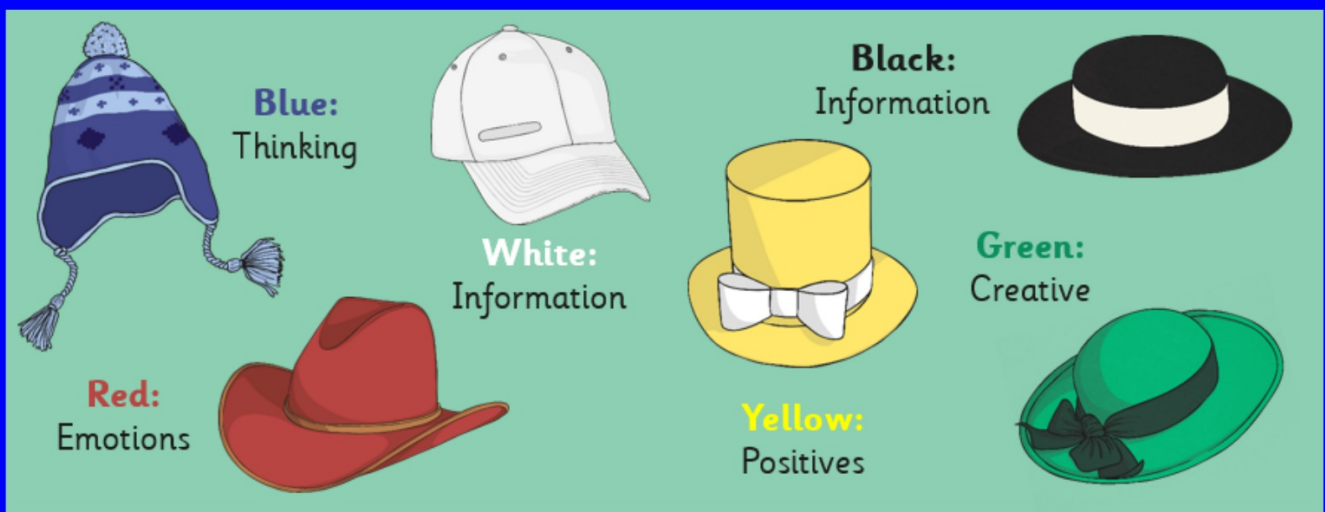
True or False?

- Children sometimes felt rejected and unwanted when been chosen by host families.
- Children travelled with their parents when evacuated.

Challenge - what do you think identity labels looked like?

In Their Shoes

Imagine you are a child who is being evacuated. You are bound to have a mixture of emotions about what you are about to experience. Work with the other children in your group. Look at the thinking hats and the type of thinking they represent. How does it apply to the experience of being evacuated? Can you add any other questions?



White: Information

What do I know already
about evacuation?

What else would I
like to know?



What key facts
Can I recall?

What else do I
need to know?

Blue: Thinking

What do I need to think about as I embark on my journey?

How can I prepare myself for this?



What will I do next?

Black: Problems

What might go wrong or not
as expected?

Is evacuation going
to work out?



Will my new family accept me?

Green: Creative

What can I do to make this experience as pleasant as possible?

How can I help others?



How can I solve the black hat evacuation problems?

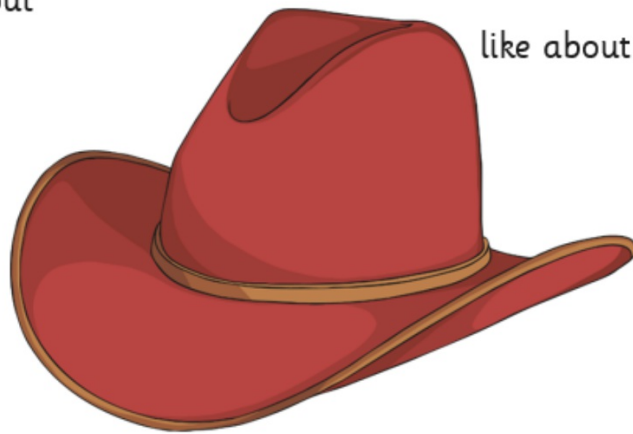
Red: Emotions

How do I feel about
being evacuated?

What do I not
like about being evacuated?

What do I like
about being
evacuated?

What am I
most nervous or
worried about?



What do I find most exciting or interesting?

Yellow: Positives

Why is evacuation happening?



What are the good points about being evacuated?

How is being evacuated going to help me?



Evacuating The
Children (1940)



Children's Hour
Broadcast

Now, in your books, using the information discussed, your task is to write a diary entry as a child who has just been removed from home and evacuated to the countryside.

You need to ensure that you are including your thoughts and emotions as well as telling me what has happened, as well as who else is there with you - teacher, billeting officer etc!

Let's make a list of words that we might use...

Dear Diary,

I couldn't sleep last night. My thoughts were going round and round in my head. Me ma told me it was time, and I was being evacuated to the countryside. I don't want to leave them - I can't bare the thought of being miles away from me ma and da when all this is going on. Who's going to keep them safe?



I heard my name being called out by Mrs Wooller who travelled with us to the countryside. Me ma and da scooped me up in the tightest hug I'd ever felt, I felt like I was suffocating but I didn't care. I'd do anything to stay in their arms forever. They pushed me across the platform and onto the train, I scrambled to find a seat next to a window so I could wave them one last goodbye.

Sat on the train, I scan the platform to find my parents. As soon as I spot them I also noticed a young boy next to them. He was clinging to his ma's skirt, crying and begging to go home. I couldn't take my eyes off the boy. He was feeling exactly how I was, only I knew I had to control myself. The boy's ma pulled him over to the train, his teacher taking him from his mother's arms and putting him on the train. I asked him if he wanted to sit next to me whilst I wiped the tears off my cheeks.



Q – Why was evacuation and rationing important during the war and why were these issues still a problem following the end of the war?

Paragraph on evacuation:

- What was it?
- When did it start?
- Why did we need it?
- How many were evacuated? Where were they evacuated to?
- When did it end? What happened after the war?

Paragraph on rationing:

- What was it?
- Why did we need it?
- What was rationed and why?
- When did it end? What happened after the war?