

History Detective: Life on the Home Front

Learning objective: To understand the impact of the Second World War on civilian life in Britain and evaluate the challenges faced by children during this period.

Read each question carefully. Use your historical knowledge to provide detailed explanations. For questions requiring calculations, ensure you show your working out.

Ellie the elephant has been exploring the history archives! She has discovered that during the Second World War, life for children in Britain changed dramatically. Families had to adapt to strict food rationing, the constant threat of air raids, and the mass movement of children from cities to the countryside. Every person was issued a ration book, and windows had to be covered with heavy curtains every night to ensure no light escaped during the Blackout.

Word bank: Evacuation · Rationing · Anderson shelter · Home Front · Coupon · Utility · Blackout

1. Explain why the government introduced the system of rationing during the Second World War. How did this change a family's weekly shopping habits? (3 marks)

2. Max the monkey is looking at a wartime shop price list. A loaf of bread costs 1½d (old pence) and a small block of butter costs 3d. If a family has 1 shilling (12d) to spend, how many loaves of bread could they buy if they also bought one block of butter? Show your calculation. (3 marks)

3. Compare and contrast the life of a child living in a large city like London with a child who was evacuated to a rural village. What might have been the biggest challenge for each child? (4 marks)

4. Justify why the 'Blackout' was considered a vital safety measure for communities across Britain. (2 marks)

5. What might happen if a family lost their ration book? Explain the potential consequences for their ability to feed themselves. (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a scene inside an Anderson shelter as it might have looked in 1940. Include items that a child might have taken with them to keep themselves entertained during an air raid.



Extension challenge: Imagine you are a child being evacuated. Write a short diary entry (150 words) describing your feelings as you leave your home, what you are packing in your suitcase, and your hopes for your new life in the countryside.