

Life on the Home Front: Ellie's History Lesson

Learning objective: To understand the experiences of children in Britain during the Second World War.

Read the passage below carefully. Then, answer the questions that follow using evidence from the text.

Ellie the elephant loves uncovering the stories of the past. During the Second World War (1939–1945), life in Britain changed dramatically for children. With the constant threat of air raids, many families were separated as part of the evacuation scheme. Thousands of children were sent from busy, dangerous cities to the relative safety of the countryside. Each child carried a small suitcase and a gas mask in a cardboard box. At home, the 'Home Front' was a busy place. To ensure there was enough food for everyone, the government introduced rationing. Families were given ration books and had to exchange coupons for items like sugar, butter, and meat. At night, a strict 'blackout' was enforced; curtains were drawn tight to ensure no light escaped, making it harder for enemy aircraft to navigate. Families often spent long nights in an Anderson shelter—a corrugated iron structure buried in the garden. Despite these hardships, children found ways to stay resilient, often playing games or helping with the 'Dig for Victory' campaign by growing their own vegetables.

Word bank: evacuation · rationing · Anderson shelter · Home Front · blackout

1. What two items were children required to carry with them when they were evacuated? (2 marks)

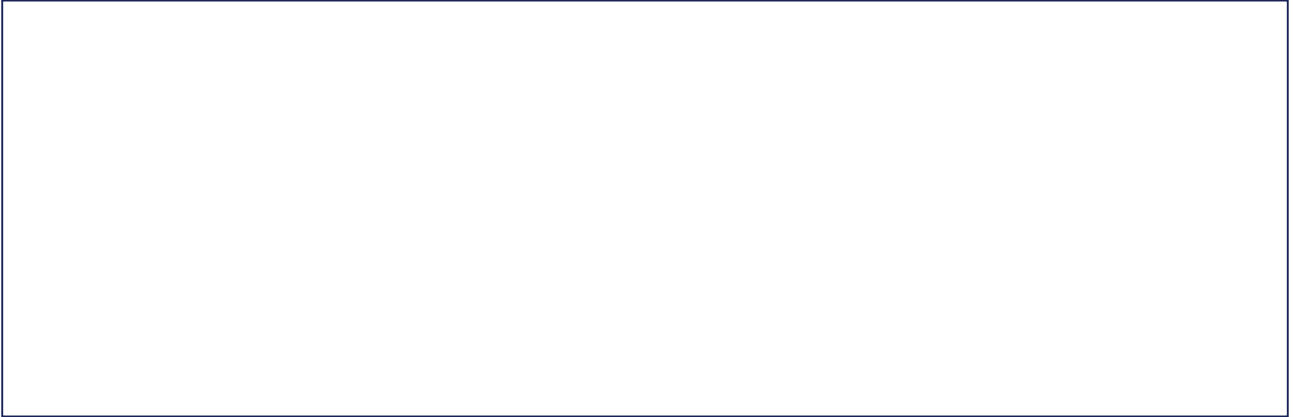
2. What was the purpose of the 'blackout' during the war? (2 marks)

3. Why do you think the government decided to introduce rationing for families? (2 marks)

4. Based on the text, what does the phrase 'relative safety' suggest about the countryside compared to the cities? (2 marks)

5. Do you think life as a child during the war would have been difficult? Explain your answer using an example from the text. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a picture of an Anderson shelter in a garden, including some vegetables growing nearby for the 'Dig for Victory' campaign.



Extension challenge: Research what a ration book looked like and list three items that were commonly rationed. Why do you think sweets were rationed too?