

Ellie's History Lesson: Life on the Home Front

Learning objective: To understand the impact of World War II on civilians in Britain, specifically focusing on rationing and the role of the Home Front.

Read the text carefully, then answer the questions below. Use the word bank to help you understand key historical terms.

During the Second World War, life in Britain changed dramatically for civilians. While soldiers fought abroad, those at home faced the daily reality of the 'Home Front'. To ensure fair distribution of food and materials, the government introduced rationing in 1940. Every household was issued a ration book, and citizens had to exchange coupons for items like sugar, butter, and meat. Ellie the elephant, who loves history, notes that many families turned their gardens into 'Victory Gardens', growing their own vegetables to supplement their meagre rations. Children were often sent away from cities to the countryside for safety during the Blitz, a process known as evacuation. Life was challenging, with blackouts enforced at night to hide cities from aircraft. Despite these hardships, the spirit of resilience was remarkable. People recycled scrap metal, saved paper, and volunteered in their communities. It was a time of immense collective effort, where every individual played a part in supporting the nation through a period of great uncertainty and global upheaval.

Word bank: Rationing · Home Front · Evacuation · Civilians · Victory Garden

1. What were three specific food items mentioned that required coupons during rationing? (2 marks)

2. Why were blackouts enforced in British cities during the war? (2 marks)

3. Explain why the government felt it was necessary to introduce ration books for every household. (3 marks)

4. Based on the text, what can you infer about the importance of 'Victory Gardens' to the British people? (3 marks)

5. Do you think the experience of evacuation was more difficult for the children or the families they left behind? Justify your answer. (4 marks)

Draw: Draw a scene from the Home Front, showing a family working in a Victory Garden or a child packing a small suitcase for evacuation.



Extension challenge: Compare and contrast the lifestyle of a Year 5 student in 1940 to your life today. Consider access to food, technology, and daily responsibilities. What might happen if modern society had to suddenly live under rationing? Write a diary entry from the perspective of a child living through the Blitz.