

Ellie's Historical Enquiry: Life on the Home Front

Learning objective: To understand the challenges and responsibilities of civilians living in Britain during the Second World War.

Use your historical knowledge of the 1939-1945 period to answer the following questions. Provide detailed explanations where required to demonstrate a deeper understanding of the Home Front.

Ellie the elephant has been researching the archives to learn how life changed for children during the Second World War. She is particularly interested in how families adapted to shortages, the constant threat of air raids, and the government's efforts to keep the nation's morale high despite the ongoing conflict.

Word bank: Evacuation · Rationing · Anderson Shelter · Blackout · Dig for Victory · Home Guard · Propaganda

1. Explain why the British government introduced a system of rationing in 1940. How did this change the way a typical family purchased their weekly groceries? (3 marks)

2. Compare and contrast the experience of a child living in a busy city centre with one living in the countryside during the evacuation period. Why might the government have encouraged this displacement? (4 marks)

3. Justify why the 'Dig for Victory' campaign was essential for the survival of the British population during the war years. (2 marks)

4. What might happen if a family failed to follow the 'Blackout' regulations during the night? Why was this measure considered a critical safety precaution? (3 marks)

5. Examine the role of women on the Home Front. How did their responsibilities shift from pre-war expectations to the necessities of wartime production? (3 marks)

6. If you were a child in 1941, you would have been issued a gas mask. Based on your knowledge, why was the constant carrying of this item a significant psychological reminder of the war? (2 marks)

Draw: Draw an informative poster that might have been displayed in a 1940s classroom, encouraging people to save food or participate in the 'Dig for Victory' campaign.



Extension challenge: Imagine you are a child evacuated to a farm in the countryside. Write a formal diary entry (150 words) describing your feelings about leaving your home, the journey on the train, and your first impressions of your new surroundings. Use historically accurate vocabulary.