



Vestry House Museum
WALTHAM FOREST

LEARNING AT HOME VE DAY AND WORLD WAR 2 FACT SHEET AND QUIZ

VE Day, 8th May 1945 marked the end of the Second World War (WW2) in Europe, although fighting continued in the Far East until 14 August. After 6 years of great hardship and war it was no wonder people wanted to celebrate.

Why did the war start?

World War 2 started on September 1, 1939, when Nazi Germany, led by Adolf Hitler, invaded Poland. When Hitler refused to leave Poland, Britain and France declared war on Germany in support of their ally. Germany was supported by Italy and Japan. England and France were supported by many countries including America, India and China.



Hitler watching his soldiers invade Poland



Waltham Forest evacuees

Evacuees

Many children living in cities and towns in Britain were moved to safer places in the countryside from September 1939. Children were sent off on their own with a name label on their coat to stay with people they did not know. Some had a happy time; others less so. This was called *evacuation* and the children were called *evacuees*.

The Blitz bombing

Bombing attacks by the Germans started in Britain on 7 September 1940 and lasted until June 1941 and were known as the Blitz. Air raid shelters were built to protect people from the bombing. The most common were either Anderson shelters built in the garden or Morrison shelters put in the house.



Morrison shelter



Anderson shelter

Effects of the bombing

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Children looking at bomb damage in Higham Hill, 1940



Rationing

German submarines attacked ships that brought supplies to Britain. Therefore, most things were scarce, and food, clothing, furniture and petrol were handed out in fixed amounts (rationing) from 1940. Every person was issued with a ration book to help with fairer distribution. Rationing in Britain didn't end till 1954, 9 years after the War ended. Children were only allowed 2 oz of sweets per week!

The role of women

The War changed work for women. When men went to fight, women had to do their jobs, including those previously thought of as unsuitable for women. From 1941, women were called up for war work e.g. building ships, making ammunition, nursing and driving ambulances, tanks or fire engines. By 1943, over 80 per cent of women were working in factories, on the land or in the armed forces.



Women's Land Army working on a farm



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Celebrating the end of the war

The War lasted 6 years. Germany surrendered on May 8, 1945. Winston Churchill, the British prime minister, declared May 8 to be VE (Victory in Europe) Day, which marks the end of the War in Europe. Street parties were held all over Britain to celebrate this with colourful bunting and flags lining the streets.



Street party, Marlborough Road, Walthamstow

How many of these questions about World War 2 can you get right?

1. What country did Germany invade?
2. Name two countries who supported Britain?
3. When did evacuation start?
4. When did the Blitz start?
5. Name one type of air raid shelter?
6. When did rationing start in Britain?
7. When did rationing end in Britain?
8. Name one job that women did during the War?
9. When did the War in Europe end?
10. How many years did the War last?

Answers

1. Poland
2. France, America, India, China
3. 1939
4. 1940
5. Morrison, Anderson, Underground station
6. 1940
7. 1954
8. Farmworker/land girl, munitions worker, nurse, driver, factory worker, in armed forces
9. 8 May 1945
10. 6
11. Well done!