

## History: How were children affected by World War 2? [Significant event – war time Britain]

### Y6 summer term

#### National Curriculum subject content:

- ✓ Understand how our historical knowledge is created from a range of sources.
- ✓ Note connections, contrasts and trends over time.
- ✓ Combine overview and depth studies.
- ✓ Devise historically valid questions about change, cause, similarity, difference, and significance.
- ✓ Construct informed responses involving selection and organisation of historical information.

#### National Curriculum theme:

- ✓ Continue to develop chronology to secure knowledge of history.
- ✓ Note connections, contrasts and trends over time.
- ✓ Develop the appropriate use of historical terms.
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- ✓ Understand how knowledge of the past is constructed.



A photograph showing the evacuation of children from British towns and cities during the Second World War.

#### Key Vocabulary:

air raid	air attack by enemy planes dropping bombs
Anderson shelter	small air raid shelter – see below
Axis Powers	Germany, Italy and Japan – see below
Allies	UK, France, Poland, later joined by other countries – see below
Bevin Boys	See below
blackout	wartime ban on streetlights and other lights at night, to reduce the risk of bombing by enemy planes
Blitz	Prolonged period of German air raids on Britain
concentration camps	prisons where Jewish people and other prisoners were held by the Nazis
Dig for Victory	see below
evacuation	moving people from dangerous areas to safer areas during wartime
gas masks	face masks to protect people from poisonous gas attacks
Holocaust	the mass murder of around 6 million Jewish people by the Nazis
invasion	when an army or country uses force to enter or take control of another country
Nazi Party	German political party with racist and anti-Jewish ideas. Led by Adolf Hitler – see below
propaganda	information designed to promote a political idea
rationing	controlling the supply of food and clothing
refugees	people who have had to leave their country in order to escape war
Women's Land Army	see below



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#### Key sticky knowledge

**WW2, the Allies and the Axis Powers** WW2 was a battle between two groups of countries – the Allies and the Axis. The major Allied powers were Britain, France, Russia, China and the USA. The major Axis powers were Germany, Italy and Japan.

**Hitler and the Nazis** Adolf Hitler, together with his Nazi Party, wanted to rule Europe. Adolf Hitler was “The Fuhrer” – Leader of Nazi Germany. To gain more land and power, the Germans invaded Poland on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1939. Hitler wanted what he called “Lebensraum” – German land for German people. Hitler refused to stop the invasion of Poland. Britain and France declared war on Germany and promised to help Poland.

**German invasion of Europe** German forces advanced through Europe. By 1941, they had invaded France, Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, Denmark, Norway, Greece, Yugoslavia and the USSR.

**The Holocaust** Millions of Germans were imprisoned and killed because they did not fit the image of Hitler’s ideal German. He was racist and his idea of creating the strongest race meant that certain groups such as Jewish people, travellers and people with disabilities were sent to concentration camps. Around 6 million Jewish people were killed by the Nazis during WW2 in one of history’s most terrible events – the Holocaust.

**Evacuation** During WW2, German planes dropped bombs on British cities and towns in an attempt to destroy factories, dockyards and airfields. Homes and schools were also hit. The British government decided to evacuate children from cities into the countryside. These children went to live with other families until the war had ended. Mostly children were evacuated, but other evacuees included mothers with very young children, pregnant women, disabled people and teachers. On evacuation day, children would travel by train to their destination in the countryside. The children had to wear an identity label and had to take a gas mask, ration book, identity card and food for the journey. They would also have a suitcase containing clothes and personal items. When the children reached their destination, billeting officers were responsible for arranging for the children to stay with host families. Children would be selected by their host – this meant that some children would feel unwanted or rejected. Some children were evacuated overseas – sometimes as far away as Australia or Canada.

**Air raid shelters** Many people built air raid shelters called Anderson Shelters in their gardens. They were made of corrugated steel panels with soil spread on the top. People who didn’t have a garden made Morrison shelters – steel shelters with mesh around the sides. These shelters saved many lives during the Blitz.

**Black outs** Blackout regulations came into force as the war began. These meant that families had to cover up all windows at night to ensure that no light escaped that could aid enemy bombers to find their targets. Street lamps were also switched off and car headlights covered except for a narrow slit.

**Rationing** During WW2, there was a shortage of some foods because ships which would bring food to Britain from other countries were at risk of being sunk by German submarines. Rationing was introduced in 1940 – British people could only buy fixed amounts of certain foods each week.

**Dig for Victory** The Dig for Victory campaign was launched in October 1939, and people were urged to become self-sufficient by using every spare piece of land to grow vegetables. Hundreds of young people headed to Harvest Camps to volunteer for a week or more, working outside, harvesting vegetables.

**Bevin Boys** In 1943, as WW2 continued and coal supplies dwindled, Britain urgently needed more fuel. However, many miners had been drafted into the armed forces. In response, a huge group of young men was conscripted to the coal mines to meet the demand. The Bevin Boys took their name from the minister for labour (work) Ernest Bevin. The Bevin Boys were literally chosen out of a hat. The Bevin Boys were only issued with a compressed cardboard helmet and a pair of steel-toed boots, and were required to provide their own work clothes by using up their ration coupons. Some Bevin Boys remained in the mines long after WW2 ended.

**The Women’s Land Army** The Women’s Land Army (WLA) made a significant contribution to boosting Britain’s food production during the Second World War. Before the Second World War, Britain had imported much of its food. When war broke out, it was necessary to grow more food at home and increase the amount of land in cultivation. With many male agricultural workers joining the armed forces, women were needed to provide a new rural workforce. Women were initially asked to volunteer to serve in the Land Army and, from December 1941, could also be conscripted into land work. At its peak in 1944, there were more than 80,000 women – often known as ‘land girls’ – in the WLA. Land girls did a wide variety of jobs on the land. They worked in all weathers and conditions and could be directed to work anywhere in the country.

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Sequence of Learning:					
Objectives (key knowledge):					
Lesson 1: to identify the events that led up to, and were part of, WW2, and to place these on a timeline. To show an understanding of why WW2 started and the events leading up to it.	Lesson 2: to learn about the life of an evacuee child.	Lesson 3: to understand the role of women during WW2, and the role of the land army.	Lesson 4: to learn what life was like for families and children on the Home Front – rationing, evacuation, black outs, Dig for Victory, Anderson Shelters.	Lesson 5: to learn about the Bevin Boys – young men conscripted to work in coal mines during WW2 in order to increase the rate of coal production. (Link to Mansfield mining).	Lesson 6: to answer the question – how were children affected by WW2?

Key events timeline						
1933 Hitler rose to power as the political leader of Germany.	1938 British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain signed the Munich agreement with German leader Adolf Hitler. Mr Chamberlain made a speech: "I believe it is peace in our time."	1 <sup>st</sup> Sept 1939 Germany invaded Poland. Britain insisted that Germany remove troops from Poland. The Germans refused. Britain declared war with Germany on 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sept.	1939 onwards Children were evacuated to the countryside from cities and towns expected to be bombed. German planes targeted factories and major areas of dense population.	10 <sup>th</sup> May 1940 Winston Churchill was chosen to be British Prime Minister after Mr Chamberlain resigned.  May to June 1940 France surrendered to Germany.	June 1940 Evacuation of Dunkirk. 338,000 Allied troops were surrounded by German troops on the coast of France. The Allied troops were then saved by a fleet of 800 English boats.	July 1940 Germany launches air attacks on Great Britain. The Battle of Britain and the Blitz begin. Germany, Italy and Japan signed the Tripartite Pact – they agreed to join forces as the Axis Alliance.
December 7th 1941 The Japanese attacked the US Navy in Pearl Harbor. The next day, the USA entered WW2 fighting with the Allies.	6th June 1944 D Day. The D Day landings were a series of landing operations by Allied forces to claim Europe from Nazi occupation.	April 30th 1945 Adolf Hitler committed suicide.	7th May 1945 Germany surrendered. The Allies forced the surrender of the Axis troops in Europe. VE Day.	August 1945 Atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan. 226,000 people killed.	2nd Sept 1945 Japan surrendered signalling the end of WW2.	July 1954 Rationing ended in UK.