

# A Child's War

## The Second World War

The Second World War lasted from 1939 to 1945. On one side were the Axis Powers (including Germany, Italy and Japan). On the other side were the Allied Powers (including Britain, France, the Soviet Union and the USA). After six years of fighting, the Allied Powers won. Children, as well as adults, were affected by the war.

## Second World War timeline

### Before the Second World War

- 1934 19th August** Adolf Hitler, the leader of the Nazi party, becomes the leader of Germany.
- 1936 March** German troops break the Treaty of Versailles when they occupy the Rhineland.
- 1938 12th March** Austria becomes part of the German Empire, which is known as the Third Reich.

### During the Second World War

- 1939 1st September** The Second World War begins when Germany invades Poland.
- September** In the first three days of evacuation, 1.5 million children and vulnerable adults leave British cities.
- 1940 8th January** Rationing starts.
- 10th July–31st October** The Battle of Britain takes place.
- 7th September** The Blitz begins.
- 1941 10th May** The Blitz ends.
- 7th December** Japanese planes bomb the American naval base at Pearl Harbour in Hawaii, leading to the United States entering the war.
- 1944 6th June** Allied troops land in Normandy, France to free western Europe from German control (D Day).
- 1945 January** Allied forces begin to free prisoners of war from German concentration camps.
- 30th April** Adolf Hitler commits suicide.
- 8th May** Germany surrenders. The Second World War in Europe ends (Victory in Europe Day).
- 26th July** Clement Attlee replaces Winston Churchill as Prime Minister of Great Britain.
- 15th August** Japan surrenders (Victory over Japan Day). The Second World War ends.

### After the Second World War

- 1945 24th October** The United Nations is created to make sure a world war doesn't happen again.
- 1954 4th July** Rationing ends in Britain.

## Air raid shelters

Many people built air raid shelters, called Anderson shelters, in their gardens. These were made from corrugated steel panels with soil spread over the top. Some people, who didn't have gardens, made a Morrison shelter inside their homes. This shelter looked like a steel table with wire mesh around the sides.



## Evacuation

During the war, German planes dropped bombs on British cities in an attempt to destroy factories, dockyards and airfields but homes and schools were also hit. The government decided to evacuate children from the cities, where they might be in danger, to the countryside where they would be safer. Children who were evacuated were called evacuees. They went to live with other families who looked after them until the war ended.

## The Blitz

The intense and sudden bombing of British cities was called the Blitz. Sirens were sounded in the streets to warn civilians that bombers were coming. To escape the bombs, people went into air raid shelters. Weeks of sustained bombing raids killed thousands of people and destroyed many homes and cities.

## Propaganda

Posters, radio, films and newspapers were used during the war to keep up people's spirits, celebrate Allied victories and make fun of the enemy. This was called propaganda. Propaganda was also used to persuade people to do what the government wanted, such as carry a gas mask, grow vegetables, make or mend clothes and evacuate children from the cities to the countryside.



**CHILDREN**  
are safer in the country  
leave them there

## Food and rationing

During the war, there was a shortage of some foods because ships bringing food into Britain were at risk of sinking by German submarines. Rationing was introduced in 1940, which meant that each person could only buy fixed amounts of certain foods each week. Every person was issued with a ration book, and they had to hand over coupons from their ration book, as well as money, when they went shopping. Many foods were rationed, such as butter, bacon, sugar, meat, cheese and milk, but some were not, including potatoes and fish. People were encouraged to grow their own vegetables through the 'Dig for Victory' campaign.

## Science Vocabulary

**Filter**– A device which removes something from whatever passes through it.

**Light source**- Artificial or natural object which provides its own source of light.

**Opaque**– a material which doesn't let light through

**Periscope**– an instrument to view objects which are above the line of direct sight without being seen.

**Reflect**– When light bounces off an objection

**Reflection**- When light from an object is **reflected** by a surface, it changes direction

**Shadow**– created when an object blocks the path of light

**Spectrum**– the frequency of wavelengths for which we can see light.

**Translucent**- a material which allows light to pass through but you cannot easily see through it.

**Transparent**– a material which allows light to pass through and you can see through it

## History Vocabulary

**Air raid**- An enemy attack from the air

**Blackout**– The reduction of outdoor light at eye to make it harder for enemy aircrafts to see and bomb populated areas

**Blitz**– intensive and sudden Nazi German air raid attacks.

**Civilian**– A person who is not in the police or armed forces

**Evacuation**- Children living in big cities and towns temporarily being moved from their homes to places considered safer.

**Evacuee**– A child/ vulnerable adult who has been evacuated.

**Invade**– To enter or occupy and country by force

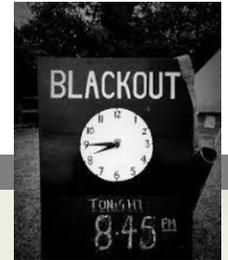
**Nazi**– A follower of Adolf Hitler.

**Propaganda**– Biased news, media and communication used to influence people's opinions

**Rationing**- The limited supply of food, clothes and other goods to prevent shortages.

## Science– Light

The Blitz, during World War II, meant a blackout throughout the country. When the air raid sirens rang, houses were plunged into darkness. Search lights filled the sky hunting for their targets.



### Light– What you need to know!

- ◇ Light travels in straight lines.
- ◇ Objects can only be seen because they give out light or reflect light into the eye.
- ◇ Darkness is the absence of light.
- ◇ Shadows occur when light is blocked. They are the same shape as the objects which casts them. Their size depends on the distance between the light source and the object.
- ◇ Our pupils change size depending on the amount of light available in order to control how much light enters the eye.
- ◇ The spectrum occurs when white light is split.
- ◇ Periscopes use mirrors to reflect light allowing us to see around objects.