

# History

# A Child's War

## How Did World War II Start?

The leader of Germany, Adolf Hitler, had plans to take over other countries. In March 1938, Germany invaded and annexed Austria, which made other countries worried. On 29<sup>th</sup> September 1938, British, French, German and Italian leaders signed a treaty called the Munich Agreement. This allowed Hitler to annex the Sudetenland (an area of Czechoslovakia) if he agreed not to invade anywhere else. However, in August 1939, Hitler broke the agreement and invaded the rest of Czechoslovakia, followed by Poland on 1<sup>st</sup> September. Britain, France and Poland had made a pact to support each other, so Britain and France declared war on Germany.

## Evacuation

During World War 2, over 3.5 million children, along with some of their teacher and helpers, mothers with very young children, pregnant women and people with disabilities, were evacuated from the cities to the countryside. This was because it was safer here from air raids. All evacuees had to take their gas mask, ration book and identity card. When they reached their destination, a billeting officer would arrange a host family for them.

Evacuation happened in waves, beginning on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1939. Other waves occurred at the start of the Battle of Britain and at the start of the Blitz.



## The Battle of Britain

The Battle of Britain was an important battle in World War 2. After Germany and Hitler had conquered most of Europe, including France, the only major country left to fight them was Great Britain. Germany wanted to invade Britain, but first they needed to destroy Great Britain's Air Force. The Battle of Britain was when Germany bombed Great Britain in order to try and destroy their air force and prepare for invasion.

The Battle of Britain started on 10<sup>th</sup> July, 1940. It lasted many months as the Germans continued to bomb Britain. Although the Germans had more planes and pilots, the British were able to fight them off and win the battle. Radar allowed the British to know when and where German planes were coming to attack. This gave them time to get their own planes in the air to help defend.

## Rationing

Supply ships were targeted by German bombers and it was necessary to conserve as much food as possible. Rationing meant that each person was only allowed a fixed amount of foods. Ration books were issued, with coupons that showed people how much of each item they were allowed. Shopkeepers would remove or stamp the coupons when they were used. People were also encouraged to 'Dig for Victory' and grow as much of their own food as possible.

Petrol, soap, clothing and timber were also in short supply. Clothing ration books were issued and people were encouraged to 'make do and mend'.

## Key Events

1939	1 <sup>st</sup> September	German troops invade Poland.
	3 <sup>rd</sup> September	Britain and France declare war on Germany.
1940	10 <sup>th</sup> May	The Battle of France begins.
	26 <sup>th</sup> May	Allied forces are evacuated from Dunkirk in France.
	10 <sup>th</sup> July	The Battle of Britain begins.
1941	7 <sup>th</sup> September	The Blitz begins.
	22 <sup>nd</sup> June	Germany invades the USSR (Soviet Union).
1943	7 <sup>th</sup> December	Japan bombs Pearl Harbour in the US.
	16 <sup>th</sup> and 17 <sup>th</sup> May	The Dambusters bombing raid is carried out.
1944	6 <sup>th</sup> June	The D-Day landings.
1945	7 <sup>th</sup> May	Germany surrenders to the Allies.
	6 <sup>th</sup> and 9 <sup>th</sup> August	The US drops atomic bombs on two cities in Japan.

## The Blitz

Blitz is a shorten form of the German word 'Blitzkrieg' (lightning war).

On the 7<sup>th</sup> September, 1940, the German air force changed its strategy of bombing the British air force (Battle of Britain) and began to concentrate on bombing London. Night after night, until May 1941, German bombers attacked British cities, ports and industrial areas.

One third of London was destroyed and nearly 2,000 people died.

## The Role of Women

Before the war, most women stayed at home and didn't go out to work. Those who did work were paid less than men and were generally restricted to 'women's jobs', such as nursing or working as a shop assistant. However, when men were called up for active service, women were needed to do jobs such as making weapons, driving buses and trains or working in engineering or shipbuilding. Some joined the armed forces themselves.

After the war, many women lost their jobs. However, their experiences led them to campaign for equal working rights and pay so that they could carry on leading more independent lives.

# D&T

## Air Raid Shelters

As the night raids became so frequent, people needed to protect themselves from the bombs being dropped by German aircraft.

Some people had Anderson shelters. These shelters were half buried in the ground with earth heaped on top to protect them from the bomb blasts. Inside, they were dark and damp; however, families would often have beds and keep other rations inside them.

The Morrison shelter was first introduced in March 1941 for people without gardens. The shelter, made from heavy steel, could also be used as a table. People sheltered underneath it during a raid.



# Art

## Henry Moore

Henry Moore was an English sculptor and artist born in 1898 who lived until 1986. After originally fighting in World War 1, he became commissioned as a war artist. He produced a series of drawings of Londoners using the London Underground as an air raid shelter during the Blitz.

His work included perspective art, which involves the representation of three dimensional objects or spaces in two dimensional artwork.



# Computing

## Propaganda

Propaganda is the spreading of misleading information in order to influence the public and served the interests of the messenger.

During World War 2, the government produced posters and films as propaganda. This played a huge part in changing the public's view of the war and encouraged them to continue with the war effort. Propaganda was also used to tell people what they needed to know to understand the war.



## Key Vocabulary

**Adolf Hitler** - leader of Germany throughout World War 2.

**Air raid** - an attack in which bombs are dropped from aircraft on to a ground target.

**Allies** - the people who were fighting alongside us.

**Luftwaffe**- the German air force.

**Blackout** - when towns or cities are made dark so that they cannot be seen by enemy planes.

**Evacuated**- to remove someone from a place of danger to a safer place.

**War** - a state of armed conflict between different countries or different groups within a country.

**Atomic Bomb** - a nuclear bomb that causes an enormous, devastating explosion.

**Axis** - the people we were fighting against (the enemy).

# Music

## War Time Songs

The use of music during World War 2 changed dramatically from previous wars. This time around, it was used as an instrument of propaganda, not just entertainment. Still, in army camps, factories and hospitals, music blaring from the radio helped lift the spirits of soldiers every day.

Popular artists during World War 2 included Vera Lynn and Anne Shelton.

