

The Battle of Britain

How did this battle help?

Did the fact that the Germans lost the Battle of Britain make them more determined to use the Blitz tactics on British cities?

The Blitz

When was the worst period of Blitz bombing and which cities suffered the most?

How did people cope with bombing of the main cities night after night?

Rationing

Every man, woman and child was given a ration book with coupons. These were required before rationed goods could be purchased.

Basic foodstuffs such as sugar, meat, fats, bacon and cheese were directly rationed by an allowance of coupons. Housewives had to register with particular shopkeepers

A number of other items, such as tinned goods, dried fruit, cereals and biscuits, were rationed using a points system. The number of points allocated changed according to availability and consumer demand. Priority allowances of milk and eggs were given to those most in need, including children and expectant mothers.

As shortages increased, long queues became commonplace. It was common for someone to reach the front of a long queue, only to find out that the item they had been waiting for had just run out.

Rationing 2

Not all foods were rationed. Fruit and vegetables were never rationed but were often in short supply, especially tomatoes, onions and fruit shipped from overseas. The government encouraged people to grow vegetables in their own gardens and allotments. Many public parks were also used for this purpose. The scheme became better known as 'Dig For Victory'.

Certain key commodities were also rationed – petrol in 1939, clothes in June 1941 and soap in February 1942. The end of the war saw additional cuts. Bread, which was never rationed during wartime, was put on the ration in July 1946.

One way to get rationed items without coupons, usually at greatly inflated prices, was on the black market. Shopkeepers sometimes kept special supplies 'behind the counter', and 'spivs' - petty criminals - traded in goods often obtained by dubious means. By March 1941, 2,300 people had been prosecuted and severely penalised for fraud and dishonesty.

Air raid shelters

Cover: Morrison shelter, Anderson shelter

The use of the Underground

How effective were they in protecting people from the bombing?

Women working in factories

How did their work help to defeat the German attack?

Fire fighting

How well did the firemen cope with the effects of bombing?
What sorts of jobs did they need to do?

Gas masks

Who had to wear these?
Did they need them at all times?
Did everyone carry them and use them as they were told?

The Home Guard

Were these men really useful?