



ACTIVITY CARD 1

Our Wartime High Street
KS1 & 2

Potential Learning Outcomes

- To learn about the types of food items that were/were not available in shops during the Second World War
- To learn about the ration coupon system used during the Second World War
- To learn about Britain's currency before Decimalisation
- To increase awareness and appreciation of local heritage

Introduction

Air raids began first in London in September 1940. Other towns and cities around Britain were also bombed during the war.

Before 1939, Britain imported large amounts of food to feed her people, who lived mostly in towns and cities. From the very start of the war, British shipping was attacked by German U-boats and aircraft. Food rationing began in 1940. People had to register with local shops to use their ration books. Rationed foods included bacon, sugar, tea, butter, sweets, eggs and meat. Unrationed food items could be paid for with money, but the choice was very limited. Long queues in shops were not unusual.

Activity: Looking, Speaking & Listening, Writing, Discussion (English, Geography, History) **Wartime High Street Discovery Walk**

Devise a worksheet or trail for a walk, looking at specific buildings or features on and around your town's high street, that illustrate a theme or event from the Second World War. Children can work in small groups with adults, each group starting at a different location. Ask the group to take photographs at each location and write down questions and ideas to share back in the classroom. Discuss what was observed and compare the children's photos with wartime images of the same locations, asking what's different or the same, including details like materials or windows.

Activity: Drama (English, Art & Design, Computing, Geography, History) **I Remember When... a play about local life during the Second World War**

Find the recorded memories of someone in your town, describing the main street, what used to be there and where people went shopping etc. This snapshot of daily life at the time might include how local people may have responded to news from elsewhere. If possible, find a contemporary photo of the buildings or location concerned. Using this material for inspiration, create a simple mini-play for performance by the class (for example, in school assembly on a historic anniversary like VE Day). What props you could create to represent the building in your town at the time? If possible, show children the buildings that still exist from the time and how they look today (get them to look it up on Google Earth, if you know the street name) or, on a map, identify the area where the building once stood.

Activity: Making, Role Play, Calculations, Discussion (English, Maths, Art & Design, History)

Our Wartime Shop - buying and selling in wartime

Choose a shop selling food, clothes or any other goods that existed in your town's High Street during the Second World War for a class project (your choice of shop type could be used to support the Potato Pete Project on Activity Card 3).

Recreate the shop's wartime interior as it might have looked (for inspiration, look at photos of similar examples from your town or region online), as a painted backdrop, with tables for counters in front. Create a range of items to sell in your shop, either as drawings or 3D examples from art materials or recyclable materials.

Print off and use ration coupons from images online (or you can buy reproductions online - see Resources below)

Devise role-play scenarios using your shop, with children playing the shop staff and customers. Devise scenarios and discussions around rationing, the cost of things, reasons for the absence/

scarcity of certain items during the war years, comparisons with what you might buy in a similar shop today.

Convert the cost of an item in your shop from wartime to modern currency and compare the result with the average price of the same item today.

If the original shop that inspired you, or the building it was in, still exists today, take the class to see it and take photographs for use in this activity or one of others suggested on these cards.

Activity: Making, Discussion (English, Art & Design, Geography, History)

Our High Street Then & Now - streetscape frieze

Create two parallel streetscapes representing your town's high street for a classroom/corridor wall, one representing how it would have looked during the Second World War and one showing the same stretch of street today. Using wartime photos of buildings in your town, recreate the frontages along one side of the street, with the pavement and roadway in the foreground. Include people and vehicles to illustrate changes in design, technology and fashion.

Discuss the similarities and differences. Would the sounds of the high street be the same or different then and now?

Tip: Art roll/banqueting roll is perfect for this activity. If you have enough room on one wall, position the two streetscapes parallel to each other for ease of comparison.

Activity: Reading maps, Discussion (English, Maths, Geography, History)

Our High Street Then & Now - map study

Study local street maps of your town dating from the Second World War and compare them with recent maps of the same area. How has your town changed between the two periods? What's the same? Look out for surviving community buildings, including schools, churches, libraries etc. Consider the reasons for some of the changes. Can you work out how much bigger your town is now in km/miles?

Resources

- Printed Ordnance Survey maps can be ordered online.
- Street Life Project – archive photos and oral history: www.hlfstreetlife.org
- Imperial War Museums online collections: www.iwm.org.uk/collections
- Wartime audio clips and archive film footage: www.youtube.co.uk
- www.britishpathe.com
- Local history source material: Contact your local historical society, library, archive or museum
- WW2 People's War – personal stories archive: www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/
- Reproductions of Second World War items for schools: www.educationsupplies.co.uk/curriculum-resources/history/wwi-and-wwii

