

Home Front diary



Create your own Home Front diary for the Second World War

Use the documents and photographs in our [Home Front](#) website as evidence to help you write a diary about how your life was affected by the Second World War. The diary can include a number of different entries. These entries can cover the topics listed below and are based on the different parts of the website. Choose as many as you like to include in your diary. In this pack there are tips and suggestions to help you write your diary entries on any of these topics:

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1. Preparations for War

Task

Use the information you have read in this gallery to write a diary entry about how your life was affected by the preparations for war in 1939 and early 1940.

Ideas to get you started

- How does having to carry a gas mask everywhere make you feel? Are you frightened by the possibility of a gas attack?
- Is the Blackout difficult to obey? Does it stop any activities you were used to? Do you have to put up Blackout curtains in your bedroom? Do you know someone who had been in a car accident during the Blackout?
- Some friends you have at school are Italian and have lived in the community for years but they have been interned, how do you feel about this?
- Your Grandad who is 53 has joined the Home Guard and has told you about it. Do you think they will stop a German Invasion?

2. Evacuation

Task

Write a diary entry about being evacuated to an overseas country, like Canada or New Zealand, by ship from Britain in the summer of 1940.

Or

Write a diary entry about being evacuated in Britain at the time of the Second World War.

Ideas to get you started

Overseas

- Try to imagine what the journey would be like for someone of your own age.
- What happened on the journey? How did you spend your time on the ship?
- Did you sleep in a single cabin? Or did you share with other children?
- How big was the ship? What were the crew like?
- How many children were in the ship? Were you all from the same town?
- Who came with you to look after you and the others?
- What was the food like?
- Did you have any lessons while on the ship?
- Did you miss your parents or your brothers and sisters?
- Were you seasick? Were there any storms at sea?
- Do you know the route taken by the ship? From which port did it sail? And in which port did it arrive?
- Were you frightened of being torpedoed?
- Were you told what to do if the ship was sinking?
- Did you see any warships escorting your ship? Were there any other ships in the convoy?
- What happened when you arrived in the new country?

Within Britain

- Try to write about what it would feel like to be an evacuee at your age.
- Think of the people and things that you would miss when you moved. What would you miss most?
- What was the journey like? How did you travel? Did the journey take long? What did you bring with you?
- Do you have brothers or sisters? Did any of them come with you? Are they living in the same house as you?
- Imagine what it would like to live in another house with a family that you did not know.
- What would be different in your new home? Would there be some good things?
- Would there be bad things? Would there be new experiences to enjoy?
- Where do you go to school now? Are any of your teachers or friends there?

Would you write to your parents? Will they write to you? When do you think you will see them again?

Remember that, at the time of this war, there were few telephones in private houses; there were no televisions, videos, computers or CD players; and most people did not have cars. People generally travelled by bicycle, bus or train. Most families did have a radio, and listening to it was an important part of their lives. Everyone was affected by rationing, and it was often hard to get food or clothing.

Remember also that you have moved from a city or town and are living in the country.

3. Bombing of Britain

Task

Write a diary entry describing a night in an air raid shelter during the Blitz.

Ideas to get you started

Imagine you were the same age as you are now.

- Choose a particular type of shelter to write about. Were you in the garden in an 'Anderson'? Were you in your house in a 'Morrison'? Or were you in a public shelter? - if you were in a public shelter, what type was it? A basement? A railway arch? A Tube Station?
- Remember to describe the whole event - the sudden 'alert' of the air raid sirens; running for the shelter in the dark; the anti-aircraft guns starting up; the first bombs exploding in the distance; fire engines and ambulances clanging along the roads; bombs falling closer to the shelter; the earth shaking as bombs exploded; the 'ack-ack' guns firing furiously; children crying; people trying to keep calm; and the relief of hearing the 'all clear' at the end.
- Who was with you in the shelter? A parent? Grandparents? Brothers and sisters? Neighbours? Strangers? Remember, if you have chosen a big public shelter, there would be hundreds of people there.
- Was there an air raid warden in or near the shelter?
- What did you grab to take into the shelter with you?
- Was the shelter cold? or damp? Was there anywhere to sit or lie down? Were there any lights in the shelter?
- How did you sleep? Was there anything to sleep in and on?
- Was there anything to eat or drink?
- What happened if someone wanted to go to the lavatory? Was there one?
- How long did the bombing last?
- What was it like when you came out of the shelter next morning? Could you see any damage? Had anyone been killed? Was your house damaged?
- How did you feel? Were you frightened? Did you feel sick? Or did you think it was a big adventure?

4. Empire Home Front

Task

Use the information you have read in this gallery to write a diary entry about how your experience of war was different to that of children living abroad.

Ideas to get you started

- What have you heard about bombing raids in other countries? Do you think that the Blitz has been worse in Britain or abroad?
- What is rationing like for people living in other parts of the British Empire? Do you think you would have a better diet? Where would you rather live - in Britain or in Ceylon?
- Your Mum has started work in a munitions factory. Do you think the work she is doing is different to work being done by women abroad?
- Your pen friend from Hong Kong has been evacuated and has written a letter giving you all the details. Do you think it sounds as though they had fun on the trip? Do you think it would be more difficult to move to a different town or to a different country?

5. Everyday life

Task

Imagine that it is 1942. Use the information you have read in this gallery to write a diary entry for your birthday that year.

Ideas to get you started

Imagine you were the same age as you are now.

- What food would have been available to eat at the party? Remember that food rationing was in place so there would be no luxuries.
- What presents did you receive? People were being encouraged not to buy anything new, or any luxuries, but to make the most of what they had. Paper was especially scarce- how might this have affected what you got on your birthday?
- If you had a party, when was it held and where?
- What would your guests be wearing? Clothes rationing was in place and you couldn't get more than you had coupons for.
- Was your birthday different before the war? How was it different?

6. Women at War

Task

Your mother works part-time in a local factory, making parts for tanks. Your oldest sister had joined the Women's Land Army and is living and working on a farm in another part of the country. Your other sister has qualified as a pilot in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force, and is ferrying new planes up and down the country, to deliver them to airfields. Your father is serving abroad in the Army.

Ideas to get you started

Write a diary entry to describe what has happened to your family because of the war.

- How much do you think the women in your family are contributing to the war effort?
- Are you proud of them?
- Do your sisters write to you, to tell you what they are doing? Does your sister in the Land Army describe what she is doing on the farm? Does she milk cows? Or is she driving a tractor? Does she like the work?
- What about the sister who is flying new planes? Is she allowed to tell you what she is doing, or is it a wartime secret?
- How does your mother cope with working in a factory? Does she like the work? Or is it hard and exhausting? Is she tired when she is at home? How does she find time for shopping, cooking and cleaning?
- Is your mother able to get enough food for you and for her? Are there things that she cannot get, because of rationing? Does your sister in the Land Army bring you any food when she comes home on leave? Or doesn't she come home because of the distance?
- What about you? Do you miss your sisters? Is home quiet without them? Or is it exciting because of the war?
- Do you write letters to your sisters?
- Do you help your mother because she is working? Do you lend a hand with shopping? Or cooking? Or cleaning?
- Does your mother worry about your sisters? Does she share her worries with you? Or doesn't she tell you much?
- Has your father written home? What does he think about his wife and daughters working for the war effort?

7. Spies

Task

Use the information you have read in this gallery to write a diary entry about your feelings when a German spy was captured near to where you live.

Ideas to get you started

- Where was the spy found and how was he/she captured?
- Why did people think he/she was a spy?
- Do you think the Government's posters warning people about spies helped?
- What do you think the spy's mission was?
- What equipment did he/she have with him to help him/her with his/her task?
- Were you worried that other spies could be in the vicinity?
- The spy was later tried, found guilty and executed. Do you agree with the punishment.