

Lesson 5

Rationing

An illustration depicting the process of rationing during World War II. A person wearing a brown coat is using a black stamp to mark a ration book. On the table in front of them are various rationed items: a box of Lyons Tea, a brown paper bag (likely sugar), and a piece of meat. In the background, a rationing board is visible with numbered slots, some containing ration coupons.

LO: Explain why rationing food was necessary; say what foods were rationed during World War II and compare this to what I eat.

Homework: My Weekly Meal Plan

Let's spend a couple of minutes remembering and discussing what kinds of foods we 'typically' eat in a week.

Also think about how much you have in each portion or helping i.e. 2 sandwiches; 3 slices of bacon; a bag of sweets etc.

- *Trim and stick your meal plan into your History book*



Food, Food, Food

At the start of the war, Britain began to **ration** food. To **ration** something means to allow each person to only have a **fixed amount** of it; everyone is allowed the **same amount**.

Discuss/think about the following questions with someone or by yourself:

1. Why do you think it was necessary to ration food?
2. What foods do you think were rationed?
3. How do you think the rationing of food was organised?
4. How do you think everyday lives changed as a result of rationing?



Food, Food, Food

At the start of the war, Britain was **importing** more than two-thirds of its food from overseas.

Britain depended on vital supplies of food, equipment and raw materials from overseas, mostly from North America and the Empire.

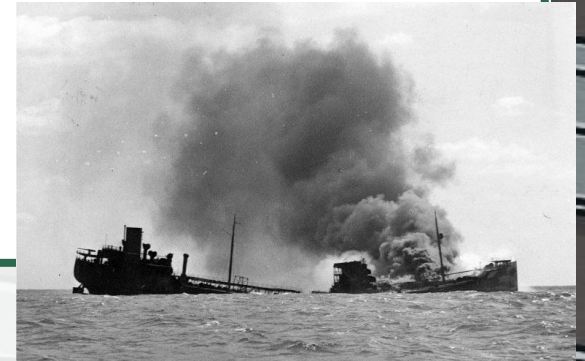
These goods were transported in thousands of **merchant** ships, which were vulnerable to attack by German submarines (U-boats). As there were not enough warships to protect thousands of individual merchant ships, they were grouped into **convoys** with naval **escorts**, making them hard to find and difficult to attack.



A convoy of merchant ships



A German U-boat



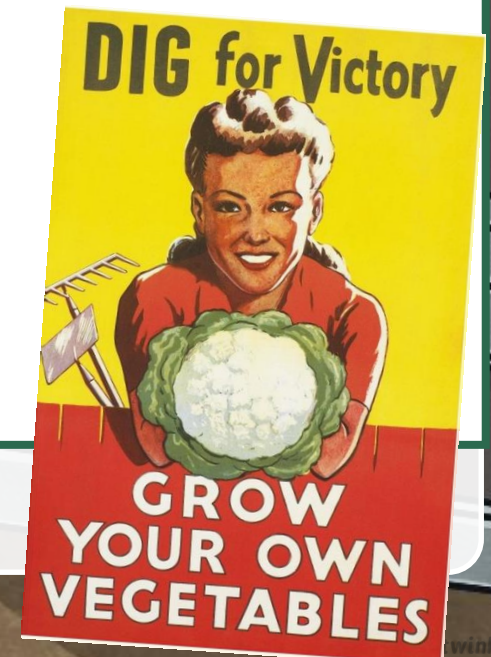
A merchant ship is hit

Food, Food, Food



When supply ships coming into the country were targeted by Germans and the possibility of invasion or isolation became a reality, it became necessary for Britain to **conserve** as much food as possible.

People needed to become more creative with the supplies they had and began to grow more of their own food – the ‘Dig for Victory’ campaign began.





What do you notice in these photographs?



Food, Food, Food

The **rationing** of food began in January 1940 and lasted until 1954, which was actually nine years after the war had ended. Every person in Britain had a **Ration Book** which shop-keepers ticked or stamped when people did their shopping to show that they had already bought their **ration** (allowance) of a particular food. Mothers were usually in charge of all the **ration books** for her family because she would have done the shopping!



Why do you think rationing continued after the war?

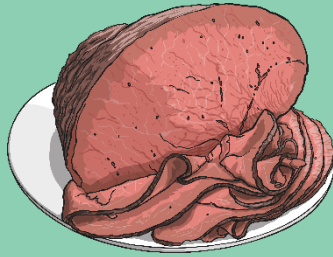
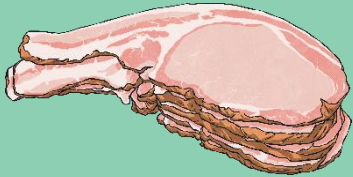
An illustration of a person's hands in a white coat, likely a shopkeeper, using a stamp to mark a ration book. The ration book is open, showing columns of numbers and some handwritten entries. On the counter, there are several items: a box of Lyons Tea, a bag of National Butter, and a packet of Special Margarine. In the background, there are shelves with more goods and a sign with the numbers 6 and 7. The entire scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent white box containing the text.

**Show the 'ration' for
one child for a week**

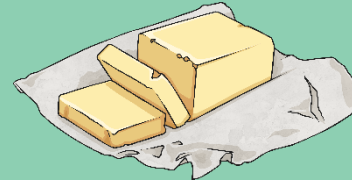
Look at the ration!

Look at the list of foods that were rationed during the war and the average allowances for a child between aged five and sixteen – this is the **ration per week**.

Bacon and ham: 115g



Jam: 115g



Margarine: 55g

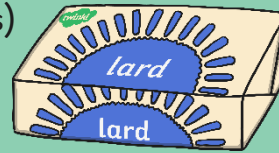
Butter: 55g



Sugar: 225g

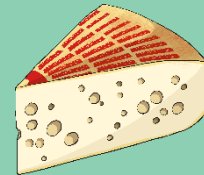


Tea: none
(adults got 50g)



Cooking Fat: 55g

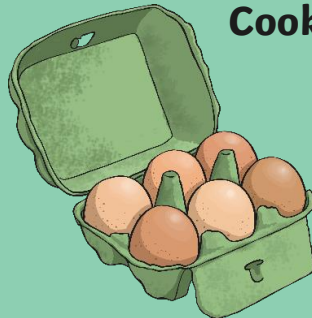
Cheese: 115g



Milk: 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ pints
plus equivalent of 1 pint of
powdered milk (and
children got milk at school)



Sweets: 75g



Eggs: 3

(adults had 1) plus equivalent of 3
powdered eggs

How does this look?

How much do you think you eat of these foods each week nowadays?

Food, Food, Food

Although many foods were not officially rationed, they were in very short supply or simply not available.

Some children grew up never seeing bananas or oranges for example, as these were imported from overseas.

Some people sold or traded goods on the 'black market', which means to illegally trade goods that were in controlled or limited supply. These people were called 'Spivs'.



What foods or other goods do you think were in short supply? Why?



Food, Food, Food

The following foods were never rationed during the war:

Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

Although they were not readily available.



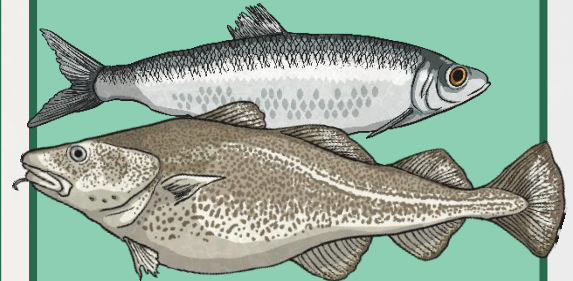
Bread

However, due to reduced importation of white flour, there was a Government recipe called the 'national loaf' made with wholegrain flour, which many people said was like grey mush.



Fish

Although it was very expensive!



Some people also ate meat they could hunt themselves like rabbit or squirrel!

A 'Lend Lease' contract with America and Canada later in the war meant that the import of powdered milk and eggs and tinned meats, like corned beef and Spam, began.

Book Tasks

- all three tasks must be completed
- you may do them in any order
- Draw and label the typical food ration for a child during the war
- Write a paragraph or two to show what you have found out about rationing – use the Qs from the start of the lesson (adapted because we now have the information) to help you structure your work:
 1. *Why was it necessary to ration food?*
 2. *What foods were rationed?*
 3. *How was the rationing of food organised?*
 4. *How were everyday lives changed as a result of rationing?*
- Return to your HW Weekly Meal Plan and put **X** next to the food you wouldn't have been able to have during the war – how does your week look now?



If you like, you could print this page and use the Ration Book picture(s) to add to your Rationing page.