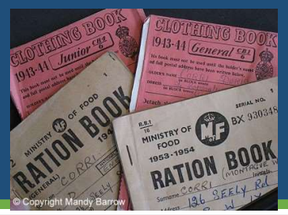
Year 6 Ideas Organiser: Through the Eyes of War (History Focus)

Historical Enquiry Questions:

Why did Britain have to go to war in 1939?	Germany represented a direct threat to British security and the security of its empire. Accepting German domination of Europe had grave implications for British status and survival. Britain went to war in 1939 to defend the balance of power in Europe and safeguard Britain's position in the world.
Why was it necessary for children to be evacuated?	Fear that German bombing would cause civilian deaths prompted the government to evacuate children and mothers with infants from British towns and cities during the Second World War.
What was VE Day really like?	The VE Day celebrations continued well into the night. The largest crowds in Britain were in the capital, but people all around the country took part in the parties, singing and dancing. Many bonfires and fireworks were lit to mark the occasion.



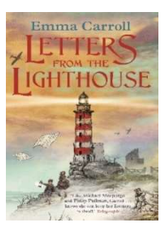
Vocabulary and Background Knowledge

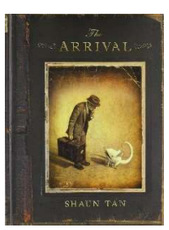
Allies	Countries which fought on the British side (including: USA, Great Britain, France, Russia (1941-1945))
Axis Powers	The Axis Powers were originally Germany, Japan and Italy. Other countries joined them later.
Rationing	The controlled distribution of scarce resources (mainly food & clothing)
Evacuees	Someone who was evacuated, moved from a danger area to a safer place (normally from the cities to rural areas)
Propaganda	Information designed to promote a political idea or opinion.
Black Out	System of ensuring no lights were visible after dark so that buildings could not be spotted by enemy planes
Air Raid Shelter	A building to protect people from bombs dropped by planes Anderson Shelter: Made of corrugated iron. Usually at the end of the garden Morrison Shelter: Metal cage used inside the house. Could double as a kitchen table
Enigma	A machine used by the Nazis to send coded messages
Trenches	A long, narrow ditch used for troops to shelter from enemy fire or attack

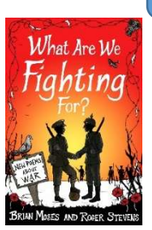
Key Timeline of Events:

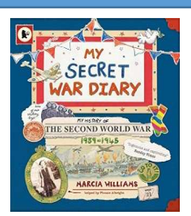
1933 - 1939	September 3rd 1939	January 1940	September 7th 1940	During 1945
Adolf Hitler is the leader of Germany. He begins to make changes to the way in which some groups of people are treated. On the 9th and 10th November, 1938 **Jewish synagogues**, businesses and homes were destroyed in an act of **persecution** known as **Kristellnacht**. **Kindertransport** brought children to safety in England.	World War Two began when the Prime Minister of Britain, **Neville Chamberlain**, declared war on Germany. This was because Hitler **invaded** Poland in an **unprovoked** attack. France and Britain agreed to work together to fight the German troops. They were **allies**.	**Rationing** was introduced to make sure that everyone got a fair share of the food available. Families were issued with an **identity card** and **ration book** which would be used to buy certain goods. Sugar, bacon, eggs, butter and meat were all rationed and the **Dig for Victory** campaign was introduced to encourage people to grown their own vegetables.	The heavy and **frequent** bombing on London and other major cities began; this was known as The Blitz. Night after night (until May 1941), German **bombers** attacked cities, ports and industrial areas. Over one third of London was destroyed during this time. **Blitz** is the shortened form of the word **Blitzkreig**, which means lightning war.	World War Two ended with the **unconditional surrender** of the **Axis powers**. On May 8th, **Winston Churchill** announced VE (**Victory in Europe**) Day and street parties were held to celebrate. It was 2nd September when **Japan** surrendered and the war was finally over - sadly **Anne Frank** had died just six months earlier.

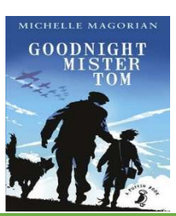
Recommended Reads:

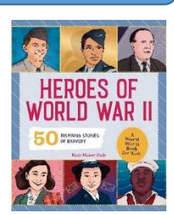


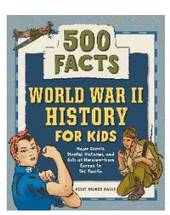


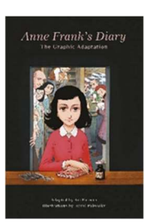


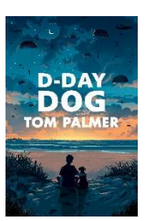


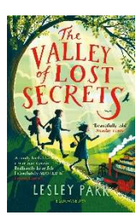




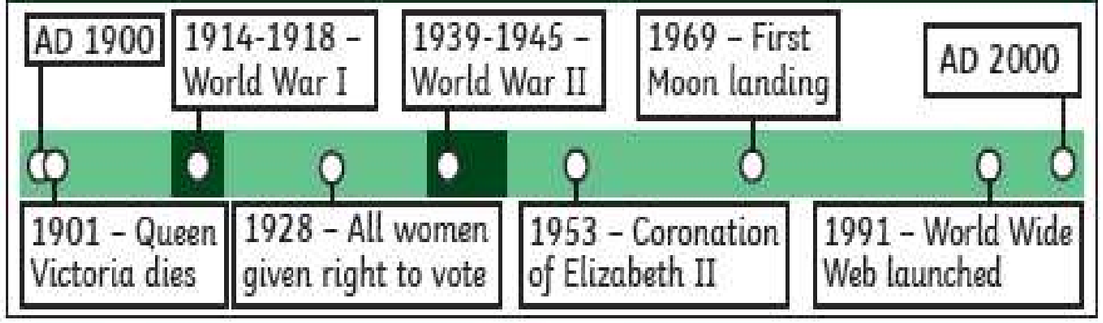








Timeline

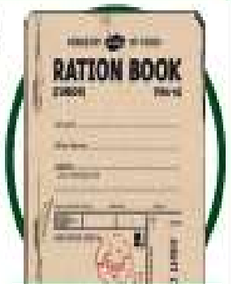


Evacuation

During World War II, over 3.5 million children, along with some of their teachers and helpers, mothers with very young children, pregnant women and people with disabilities, were evacuated from the cities to the countryside, where it was believed they would be safer from bombing. 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 1st September 1939. Other waves occurred at the start of the Battle of Britain and at the start of the Blitz.

Rationing



A ration book

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'.

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 29th 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 1st September. Britain, France and Poland had made a pact to support each other, so Britain and France declared war on Germany.

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.

The Holocaust

The Holocaust is the term for the killing of over six million Jewish people before and during World War II, organised by Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party. Even before the war, they wanted to blame the Jews for the problems in Germany and used propaganda to promote widespread public hatred of them. Jewish people were openly bullied, persecuted, abused and discriminated against.

Many Jews were sent to concentration camps where they were forced to work like slaves. Many died through infection, starvation or exhaustion. Others were sent to death camps where they were killed in gas chambers. This form of mass killing is called genocide.