

# Evacuation



# Evacuation

## The purpose of this lesson is:

to familiarize children with evacuation and what it was like to be an evacuee.

## Learning objectives

### Children should learn:

- to find out about the experiences and feelings of evacuees from a wide range of information sources;
- to communicate their learning in an organized and structured way, using appropriate terminology.

### Class objective:

- to learn about evacuation.

## Learning outcomes

### Children should be able to:

- describe some likely feelings of an evacuee;
- use associated words accurately and appropriately.

## Programme of study

- 2a** characteristic features of periods and societies studied, including the ideas, beliefs, attitudes and experiences of men, women and children in the past;
- 2c** identify and describe reasons for, and results of, historical events, situations and changes;
- 2d** describe and make links between main events, situations and changes;
- 3** recognize and give reasons for different representations and interpretations of the past;
- 4a** find out about events, people and changes from an appropriate range of sources of information, including ICT-based sources;
- 4b** ask and answer questions, and select and record information relevant to the focus of the enquiry;
- 5c** communicate knowledge and understanding of history in a variety of ways.

## Prior learning

- Children can build on knowledge gained from **Lesson 4**.
- It will be helpful if children are familiarized with the terms '**host family**' and '**billeting officer**' prior to the lesson.

## Vocabulary

billeting officer, countryside, defences, evacuation, evacuee, gas mask, host family, journey, protect, sandwiches

## Introduction

Gather the children together. Share the class objective: **to learn about evacuation**. Ask the children to remind you about who was evacuated and why:

**Can you remember who was evacuated?**

**Can you remember why they were evacuated?**

Write their answers on the board.

## Resources

- **Resource sheet RS6.1**: *A child's story*
- **Activity sheet AS6.1**: *Evacuees*
- **Activity sheet AS6.2**: *Labels, suitcases and letters*
- **Flipbook page 14**: *Evacuation*
- **Cassette recorder**

## Cross-curricular links

**Literacy Framework:** Year 3/4 Non-fiction

## Differentiation

This lesson is differentiated through outcome.

## Assessment opportunities

Each child's understanding of this lesson can be assessed through inspection of his/her completed activity sheets.

## Advance preparation

- Contact your local schools loans library service for a selection of books about the period.
- Make a collection of books from the school library for research use in this lesson. You can mark the relevant pages with Post-it notes for easy reference.
- You could make a recording of an older lady reading out the story on **Resource sheet RS6.1**: *A child's story* and play this to the children during the lesson.

### Activity 1 A child's story

- Read through **Section 1** of the account on **Resource sheet RS6.1**: *A child's story*, or play your

recording of the old lady telling the story.

### Activity 2 Every picture tells a story

- Now show the children **Flipbook page 14: Evacuation**. Ask the children:  
**What do you think is happening in this picture?**  
**Where do you think the children are going?**  
**What are they carrying with them?**  
**What do you think the little girl is carrying in the parcel?**  
**Why do all the children have labels?**  
**What do you think is in the boxes that they have around their necks?**

#### **How do you think these children are feeling?**

- Explain to the class that all the children in this picture are being evacuated from London; they are waiting at the train station for a train to take them somewhere safe. Each child is carrying clothes and some sandwiches for the journey. Around their necks they are wearing their gas masks. (The children were to put the gas masks over their faces if the enemy dropped gas bombs.) Each child has a label around his/her neck, and another one attached to his/her luggage.

### Activity 3 After the journey

- Explain to the class that when the children arrived in the countryside, they were usually taken to the village hall. Here they would be met by the **billeting officer** (the person in charge of finding them homes). They had to wait until their **host family** (the people they were going to live with) collected them. Explain that if you were rich, you were often sent to live with relatives who lived in the countryside.
- Now read through **Section 2** of the account on **Resource sheet RS6.1**: *A child's story*. Then show the

children **Activity sheet AS6.1**: *Evacuees*.

- This is a photograph of Geraldine, Jimmy and Mrs Oakley. It was taken to send back to the children's parents.
- Ask the children:  
**Do you think that Geraldine and Jimmy enjoyed being evacuees?**  
**How do you think they felt?**  
**Why do you think that was?**

### Activity 4 Labels and suitcases

- Give out **Activity sheet AS6.2**: *Labels, suitcases and letters*. Ask the children to complete the label and draw two or more things inside the suitcase that they would take with them if they were WWII child evacuees. Now ask the children how they might have

felt when they arrived at their new destination and ask them to write a letter home in their books. If necessary, ask the children to complete this sheet for homework.

### Plenary

- Five minutes before the end of the lesson, select one or two children to say what things they have chosen to put in their suitcase, and why. Tell the children that many children stayed in their own homes throughout the war. It was only children who lived in places that the government thought would be bombed who were evacuated to safe areas.

### Homework

- Ask the children to find out some information about rationing.

### Notes/evaluation

Notes/evaluation

# A child's story

## Resource sheet 6.1

### Section 1

It was 1941. I was eleven and the war was beginning to affect the south of England. We lived in Brighton – my brother, Jimmy, who was nine, my sister, Margaret and, of course, my mum and dad. The German planes would cross the Channel and drop bombs on the coast defences. If they had bombs left after bombing their targets, they would drop them on the coast before they flew back to Germany. This made their planes lighter, and it meant they could get home quicker.

One day, when Jimmy and I were going to our local school, one of the planes flew over the playground. Jimmy was over the other side of the playground. The plane came over so low, I could see the pilot. He started to fire and I could see the spray as the bullets hit the ground. No one was hurt, but I was petrified. It wasn't long before the local council decided that we should be evacuated. All I can remember was Jimmy and I and the rest of the children waiting on the Brighton platform. We all had a little case with our clothes and a book and, pinned to our coats, was a luggage label with our names on.

### Section 2

We got on the train and, while I can't recall the journey, I can remember that we were all taken to Leeds Hospital, where we slept in hospital beds.

Next day, we went to South Emsall, a small mining town between Wakefield and Doncaster. From there we were sent to different families. Jimmy and I went to Mr and Mrs Oakley. Mr Oakley worked down the mine, while Mrs Oakley looked after the house. They had a son Geoffrey, aged 13. She had a strict routine for every day of the week. Jimmy and I both had to help. I was given sixpence a week for cleaning the bath, helping with the dishes, and sometimes doing the ironing. I don't remember what Jimmy had to do. On Monday she did the washing in a copper tub, which had a coal fire underneath. Tuesday, she would bake bread and would leave a round loaf on the step outside the back to cool. Sometimes she would let us have a piece when we got back from school.

It was a mile and a half to school, which we had to share with local children: we went in the morning; they went in the afternoon. I don't think we learnt very much. I really missed my mum and dad. School was very strict and you were whacked with a stick if you were late.

Thinking back, Mrs Oakley was quite kind to us, though we didn't appreciate it. I can remember one evening they were having a party, and we came downstairs and asked if the war was over. She was really cross.

After a year, my dad came and took us back to London. The family moved there because my dad had a job there.

(A first-hand account by Geraldine Peirson)

# Evacuees

## Activity sheet 6.1

Name: 

This is a photograph of Geraldine, Jimmy and Mrs. Oakley. It was taken to send back to the children's parents.



Photo by permission of the author

# Labels, suitcases and letters

## Activity sheet 6.2

### Section 1

Fill in the label with your name, and then draw two or more things inside the suitcase that you would take with you if you were a World War II child evacuee.



### Section 2

Imagine that you are a World War II evacuee and write a letter home.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_