Hampshire primary schools resource directory for financial education

World War II rationing

Courtesy of St Alban’s Church of England (Aided) Primary School
This activity has aspects that will support schools seeking to meet the requirements of

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- *Every child matters.*

Through follow up discussions around the lists of foods compiled in *Activity 1* it has potential to support schools in the work in connection with:

- healthy eating.

This resource can also be used to support several areas of the curriculum, the clearest opportunities being:

- mathematics/computer aided design and technology
  - explore estimation with both metric and imperial weights and measures in practical activities, compare pre and decimal currency by using methods of approximation/calculation in problem solving

- history/personal, social and health education (PSHE)
  - research, and present information about national/social events and people, from a range of sources including information and communications technology (ICT), secondary documentation, databases, interviews, photographs; describe and discuss reasons for changes across the period studied

- English/drama
  - Similarity and contrast by improvised drama and response to role play, explore key issues through discussion, sharing ideas, hot seating, flashback, spotlighting and spokesperson techniques.

Teachers will find the there is a wide range of opportunities for follow up work and/or extension activities through the website links given at the end of this resource.
Introduction

This set of activities supports work that the school may be doing in connection with the study of World War II. It gives the opportunity for pupils to understand which items were rationed during World War II and to consider the impact of the restricted allowances on a family of four. This activity lends itself well to supporting discussions around needs and wants and prioritising.

Background information which teachers may find useful for their preparation is available from the following links and resources.

Some of the information in these resources is summarised in Resource 1 – Rationing factsheet.


- BBC website:
  - Ration books: www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2/A533918.


- Woodlands Junior School (Kent) pages about rationing: www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/Homework/war/rationing.htm.
Activity 1

Task A

In groups, pupils to create a family of four – mum, dad, older child, younger child. Give the family members names. Pupils to write a list of items that they are likely to eat on a day to day basis (present day), including treats such as sweets or crisps. Discussions and exchange of ideas. Consensus on one list for whole class.

Task B

The family now finds it needs to cut back. Class discussion on reasons why they may have to cut back eg trying to save for a family holiday, mum lost her job, older child at university, new baby. Pupils to prioritise the food list – separating them into essential foods and food that can be reduced/increased to save money.

Task C

Class discussion on topic of rationing, supported by Resource 1 – Rationing factsheet.

Task D

Pupils to review Resource 2 – Food rations during World War II with class discussion on how the government at the time may have decided which items should go on the list.

Task E

A mathematics activity – pupils to imagine the family that they created for tasks A and B and imagine they are in 1940. Work out the total rations of each item their family would have been allowed to buy in one week.
Activity 2

Resource 3 – Recipes gives some recipes which use food items that were rationed during World War II.

Task A

Pupils to refer to the work they carried for task E of Activity 1 and work out how much of the family’s weekly allowance would have been used in making these items.

Task B

Class discussion on comparisons with a typical weekly set of menus/amounts of food for today.

The recipes given are suggestions only. Any recipe using some of the ingredients would be appropriate if teachers felt alternatives should be offered for religious or dietary reasons.

It would be sufficient for the recipes with the illustrations to be copied and distributed to the pupils for this activity. However, ways to make this activity particularly engaging and enhance understanding would include:

- pupils to have opportunity to see the size of dishes used, eg: for the cottage pie a small casserole dish to be shown to the class
- where facilities and health and safety aspects permit, pupils to be involved in actually making the recipes
- staff/adult/volunteers/parents to make the recipes and bring in the cooked items to show the class

At the start of this activity pupils could be given the opportunity to change the names of the members of their family appropriate to the fashions in names for those times.

Children – popular names in 1940s:

www.babycenter.com/0_100-most-popular-baby-names-of-1940_1738078.bc.

Parents – popular names in 1920s:

www.babycenter.com/0_10-most-popular-baby-names-of-1920_1738082.bc.
Activity 3

Task A

_Factsheet 2_ tells us that in 1941 clothes were rationed to make sure that there were enough of essential items of clothes to go around.

Task B

Class discussion the items that may have appeared on the list.

Task C

Pupils to make a list of the items in their own wardrobe and prioritise them into _essentials_ and _desirables_. Pupils to be asked to justify their decisions.