



Make Your Own VE Day Street Party Lesson Pack

Teaching Ideas

Learning Objective: To plan a VE Day party using the rationed items available to people in Britain in May 1945.

Success Criteria:

- To analyse the significance of VE Day for Britain.
- To explain why there was a need for rationing in wartime Britain.
- To produce a street party using only the rationed items and home grown food that were available for people in wartime Britain.

Context: This can be used as a lesson to commemorate VE Day on 8th May, or at the end of teaching about the Second World War. Suitable for KS3 or KS4, depending on your class.

You may wish to look ahead to the rationing information in order to plan any preparations necessary for this lesson.

Starter

Emergency Party Planning

Pupils are to be given four minutes to quickly plan a party for tomorrow. They should think about all the factors that are important to them: venue, guest list, food, decorations, entertainment.

Explain that today they are going to plan a party with a difference!

Main Activities

What Was VE Day?

Opportunity for class discussion of what a 'total war' meant for Britain – rationing, evacuation of children, war work, all aspects of the country involved in fighting the war.

Pupils could define VE Day on a post it and stick onto a Second World War class display or simply write in their exercise books.

What Things Were Rationed and Why?

You may wish to have rations weighed out in front of class, e.g. 2oz cheese and 4oz bacon to show how little rations were for a week. You could also collect food containers ahead of time (similar to those found [here](#)) to reuse for this lesson, as it will be applicable every year. It is difficult for students to visualise the weights and measurements of rations until they are confronted with them physically and this can significantly aid pupils' understanding of the difficulties of rationing.

Depending on the content your class has previously explored, you may wish to have a brief discussion about the challenges of rationing, as well as how the diet of a person rationing may be different than that of your students.

Design a VE Day Party

Using the ration information and the '[Pupil Planning Sheet](#)', pupils can plan a VE Day party for their street or school. This is a good opportunity for pupils to display their understanding of rations and life on the Home Front for civilians. Opportunity for pupils to develop a list of three success criteria they think are important to judge this task. Since all students are being asked to complete this task, you could call on students at random (hands down) to develop a list.

Pupils must be imaginative in their use of the rations and whatever they have at home to celebrate VE Day.

Once the activity is complete, have a class carousel to allow students see what the others were able to create with their rations, who had rations left over for the rest of the week and who will be going hungry!

How Much Food Was There in Rations? (Optional)

Opportunity for further investigation as homework or with internet access/laptops, to search wartime recipes and tips to make rations go further. Cakes were known to be made from vegetables and people were forced to wash their hair weekly, prompting the phrase "I'm washing my hair" when avoiding romantic advances or unpleasant situations.

Plenary

Discussion or Diary: Why Was VE Day So Significant to People in 1945?

As a class/pairs to aid differentiation, class discussion/writing about why VE Day meant so much to people and why they celebrated so much. Would it have been a day of mixed emotions for people who had lost someone in the war or was still fighting in the Far East?

Students can choose to respond orally or in writing.

Opportunity to preface future extended writing to explain why VE Day was so important as a diary entry or in a letter to someone else living in wartime Britain.
