

One day under fire

Here are some events in one day in the life of a city during the Blitz. Cut out each event and place them in the order you think they occurred.

Lime Street station is packed with confused children, holding gas masks and waving goodbye as they board trains. Many of their school friends have already been evacuated to the countryside, and the bombings of the last few nights have convinced their parents to send them away.

The sound everyone has prayed for is heard across the city – the ‘all clear’ siren. Cold and weary people stumble from shelters expecting the worst. Many will have lost their homes, friends or relatives during the raid. Around them the emergency services rush to control blazes, while volunteers and wardens try to dig survivors from the rubble. Those who can go back to sleep for a few hours.

It is teatime and families are sitting down to their evening meal. There’s not much meat but lots of vegetables. Children are told to eat everything on their plates, with any leftover and vegetable peelings going to the pig bin.

After breakfast those who can set off for work. Roads, tram and train lines have been blasted by bombs, so many people are travelling on foot. The going is rough in places, with leaking water mains and smouldering fires. The women travelling out to the munitions factories outside town have a long walk but are determined that they will maintain their war effort.

As the working day ends families meet to begin the journey to the outskirts of the city. Pushing prams, trolleys and carts these ‘trekkers’ are mostly people made homeless in the previous nights’ bombings. They will sleep in camps outside the city, where there is less danger from bombing.

The air-raid siren is sounded and people across the city drag themselves from their warm beds, out to their gardens and into their cold Anderson shelters. Some stay in their houses, either hiding in Morrison shelters, under stairs or taking their chances in their beds.

An ARP warden strides down the street, checking each house for any sign of light. One family has let their blackout curtain slip and the ARP warden is quick to march up their garden path and remind them of their duties.

Shops are just opening and already there are queues of anxious women and children at the door, each clutching a ration book. Food and other goods are severely limited so there is a rush for any little extras. People passing by see a queue and join it without knowing what is available.

Children who haven’t been evacuated are preparing for school. Mothers check school bags and make sure everyone has their gas masks. The bombings have made the city nervous, and even those who hadn’t carried masks now take their boxes everywhere. Once the children have left mothers quickly tidy the house before leaving for the shops.

All over the city people are waking up. Those who slept in shelters go home and make breakfast before starting off to work, school or shopping. For most people, breakfast is porridge or bread with dripping.

Teacher's sheet

Based on **pages 16 and 17** of *Children in the Second World War*

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Age range

- Years 3/4 (SP4/5).
- Years 5/6 (SP6/7).

Resources

Copies of the worksheet. Scissors.

Using the worksheet

You may want to use this activity as a review after you have finished studying the entire unit, or even the entire book. This is an opportunity for students to think about the difficulty of day to day life during the Blitz.

You may want to begin by telling the students that it is 6am in a port city during the Blitz. Almost every night for the past two months there has been a raid.

There are no real right or wrong answers in the activity. Students must think about which activity is likely to have come first in the day. For example, waking up and eating breakfast probably comes before going to school or work and the bombing raid comes before the all clear signal. However, the ARP warden might check for light before dinner, after dinner, during the bombing, or even after the bombing is over.

Younger students

You may want to use this as a class exercise. Or, students could do the activity in groups and then discuss why they put activities in the order they did. If you are using this as a revision you may want to ask the students to think of other activities that may have taken place on an average day during the Blitz.

Outcomes

The students can:

- Understand what everyday life was like during the Blitz.
- Compare information.
- Use information they have learned to place activities in order of time.

Older students

Older students can work alone or in groups. Students may want to use the information on the worksheet to write a 'Day in the life' story of a city during the Blitz. They may also like to add additional activities to the timeline.

Outcomes

The students can:

- Understand what everyday life was like during the Blitz.
- Compare information.
- Use information they have learned to place activities in order of time.