

A letter home

Here is a sample letter written by an evacuee to her mother.

Dear Mom,

It was a long trip but a child next to me was sick all over. When we got to the village we all went into a big hall and people came in and chose us. I was picked by Mr and Mrs Smith, they are nice but really strict. They make me go to bed at 7 every night and do chores after school. They have a little boy called John who is really nice. The school is nice but it is very crowded with about twice as many kids as at home and I miss my friends. It is very quiet here in the country and you can hear birds singing. The neighbours have a cow and chickens so we get to eat fresh eggs and milk. Could you please send me a cardigan as it is cold here. I miss you and dad. Why do the Germans have to drop bombs all the time? I wish I could come home and see you. Please write and tell me if everyone is alright.

Love Jane

1. What are some of the good things about Jane's life as an evacuee?



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2. What are some of the bad things about Jane's life as an evacuee?



.....

3. Imagine that you are an evacuee and are writing a letter home. Describe your trip, the family you are staying with, your new life, your new village and school. Include whether or not you are happy, whether or not you miss your family and if you need anything sent from home and any questions you have for your family.

Teacher's sheet

Based on **pages 26 and 27** of *Children in the Second World War*

A letter home

Age range

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

Resources

Copies of the worksheet.

Using the worksheet

Being evacuated was a wrench for most children, who had to be away from home for the first time, and in strange circumstances. Most of the children came from industrial cities and for many this was their first taste of the countryside. The long trip on a crowded train, being chosen by strangers, being in the country for what was usually the first time – these were all experiences that could be overwhelming to children.

Once with their host families, the children had frequent contact with their families in the form of letters and (if the parents could afford it) visits from mom and dad. Children were encouraged to write home once a week.

Writing a letter home is a chance for the students to imagine what being evacuated was like for children. The letter given here is a sample based on real letters. You may like to begin by asking the students to imagine what it must have been like to be evacuated, including elements such as what they might feel like being away from home in a strange place; what it might be like to go on a long journey in a crowded train; how it would feel to have to live with a strange family and go to a new school; how it would feel to be away from home; differences between city and country, etc.

Younger students

You may wish to begin by reading the letter out in class and having the students discuss how Jane felt to be an evacuee.

Outcomes

The students can:

- Understand what it was like to be an evacuee and the things evacuees might find different from home.
- Write a letter based on imagination.

Older students

The students may like to write a diary instead of a letter, detailing one week in the life of an evacuee.

Outcomes

The students can:

- Understand what it was like to be an evacuee and the things evacuees might find different from home.
- Write a letter based on imagination.