



Rationing Comprehension Answers

1. When did food rationing begin and why?

Food rationing began in 1940. Over two-thirds of British food was imported before the war and Nazi bombers targeted supply ships to try and 'starve out' the enemy. Britain had to conserve and produce as much of the own food as possible and manage on limited supplies.

2. What was a ration book?

A ration book was a small book containing coupons, which had to be cancelled out to show when a person had bought their allocation of food. Everybody was issued with a ration book during the war.

3. What was the Minister of Food's job?

The Minister of Food (Lord Woolton) was responsible for controlling and regulating food supplies. He educated people about food and encouraged them to use rations wisely. The Minister for Food also organised the ration system and ensured that it was fair for everyone.

4. What do you think was likely to be in Woolton Pie?

Woolton Pie contained a mixture of home-grown vegetables. It almost always contained carrots and potatoes. Other vegetables might include cauliflower, onion, swede, or whatever was available at the time!

5. How were people encouraged to help during food shortages?

People were encouraged to help with the food shortage by growing their own fruit and vegetables. Some people also reared chickens and pigs in their gardens too. They were also encouraged to be creative and frugal with the supplies they had in order to make rations go further.

6. Where might people eat out during the war?

During the war people could eat out at a restaurant – thousands of 'British Restaurants' were opened, workers could eat at the staff canteen and children could get a free lunch and milk at school.

7. What other items were rationed during the war?

Petrol, soap, clothing, paper, timber and clothes were also rationed.

8. Explain what you think might be meant by the term 'make-do and mend'.

The term 'make do and mend' was used to encourage people to repair rather than throw away damaged or perishing clothes. It also encouraged people to wear clothes for as long as they could, to pass down clothes to younger siblings and to adapt clothes for different purposes, e.g. turn an old dress into a blouse or scarf.



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2. How and why did ration books vary?

Different people were issued ration books of different colours: adults received a buff coloured book, children aged five to sixteen got a blue one and children under five and pregnant or nursing mothers got a green one. Children received fewer meat coupons than adults but got extra milk and eggs. Pregnant and nursing mothers and the under-fives got extra eggs and milk and the first pick of fruit.

3. Who was Lord Woolton and did people like him? Why/why not?

Lord Woolton was the Minister of Food and he was generally very well-liked because he managed the control and distribution of food very efficiently and ensured the ration system benefitted everybody fairly. Lord Woolton also led by example (advertising and eating Woolton Pie) and he educated people about food. He encouraged people to use rations wisely and ensured children got free food and milk at school.

4. What do you think was likely to be in Woolton Pie?

Woolton Pie contained a mix of home-grown vegetables. It almost always contained carrots and potatoes. Other vegetables might include cauliflower, onion, swede or whatever was available at the time.

5. Why do you think people were healthier during the war?

People were generally healthier during the war because portions were smaller and packaged foods could no longer be imported freely. This meant they tended to eat a lot more fresh food, which often included home-grown fruit and vegetables. The 'national loaf' contained wholegrain flour and was a healthier alternative to the white most people were used to too.

6. How were people encouraged to help during food shortages?

People were encouraged to help with the food shortage by growing their own fruit and vegetables. Some people also reared chickens and pigs in their gardens too. They were also encouraged to be creative and frugal with the supplies they had in order to make rations go further.

7. Explain what other items were rationed during the war and why you think this was the case.

Petrol, soap, clothing, paper, timber and clothes were also rationed. Rationing was introduced to preserve stocks of essential commodities that Britain had limited access to during the war. Everything needed to last as long as possible. Supplies of raw materials for making items were in short supply as most were imported from overseas before the war and the production of military goods took priority over the domestic.

8. Explain what you think is meant by the term 'make do and mend'.

The term 'make do and mend' was used to encourage people to repair rather than throw away damaged or perishing clothes. It also encouraged people to wear clothes as long as they could; to pass down clothes to younger siblings and to adapt clothes for different purposes, e.g. turn an old dress into a blouse or scarf.

9. Why do you think children got extra clothing coupons?

Children got extra clothing coupons to allow for the fact that they were growing, which meant that they needed to buy new clothes more frequently.

10. Why did rationing continue after the war?

Rationing continued after the war because resources were still limited and Britain also had to help feed people in countries it controlled. It took quite a while for food production and imports to build back up again.