

75th Anniversary of VE Day



Don't forget to watch the video lesson first; it provides a quick explanation of what VE Day is and provides some age-appropriate background information about key dates and events during the war. The activities below can be done with the video or separately.

There are **separate** videos for Key Stage 1 and for Key Stage 2.

What is VE Day?

This marks the day that the Second World War ended in Europe. It happened when Germany (sometimes known as the Nazis) surrendered. It was not the end of the war completely though as it continued in the Pacific against Japan. The war officially ended there in September when their surrender was signed.

It marked the end of 6 years of war. It included countries from around the world and fighting took place on nearly every continent.

When did it happen in history?

Beyond Living Memory

Living Memory

VE Day is here on
our timeline.

The end of our
timeline is today.

You can see a simple timeline above. The Second World War is near the end of people's living memory so in not too long, people won't be alive that remember VE Day happening.

Why is it significant?

This day can be seen in two key ways: first, a positive time as victory had been secured by the Allied countries in Europe. However, it was also a time to feel sad and think about the millions of people in countries across the world that lost their lives. Some of them will have come from your community.

How can we mark it?

The most important part is to remember it and think about all of the people that fought, died and contributed at home in the war effort. They made enormous sacrifices. There are some ideas of how we can do that

The Home Front



How is VE remembered by those that were there?

Remember, the Second World war impacted your community and changed people's lives at the time! If it's safe to do so, why not take a walk and look at your local memorial. Look closely at the names—they all had families that they left behind! *Try and find out if any of your relatives remember it happening.*

It may have also impacted your family as well. My Grandma and Grandad were children during the war and remember VE Day. I've written what they said on the next pages. Can you identify and similarities and differences in their accounts?

They both grew up in the same locality, Selby in Yorkshire, but saw different sides to the same event.

Similar	Different

Conclusion:

This is an accurate account of VE Day through the eyes of children at the time. It's a primary source and any words in red were added to ensure it makes as much sense as possible.



To us as a family, we had no one really involved in the war apart from a cousin in the air force who was in Britain still. From nowhere, Union Jack flags appeared and were everywhere. I remember my Dad took us around Selby with my sister to make sure we remembered what the day was like because we hadn't seen anything like it before. No one seemed to know where they all came from. We managed to buy a little one to wave and my Dad was mortified (**embarrassed or ashamed**) because it was made in Japan. We tied it on our bikes.

For the party, everyone on the street had to give up coupons (**vouchers used for rations**) and 2 shillings to help pay for it. Also everyone gave two teaspoons of tea and two teaspoons of sugar too so that everyone could have tea to drink. When the party was about to start, everyone had to take out a chair, and sheet to make a table cloth. A poor family didn't have any but neighbours brought out spares for them. They also let them join in even though they couldn't afford to pay the 2 shillings people had contributed because everyone was rallying together. There was a piano, singing, dancing and an accordion (**type of musical instrument**).

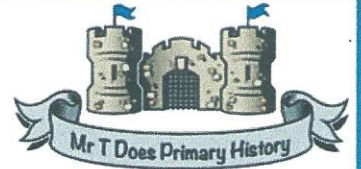
People that could bake made buns. There were sandwiches with either fish or meat paste in them as there still wasn't much food about.

It was the first real jollity (**a cheerful celebration**) we grew up with because I was a toddler when the war started – there were never any celebrations because of the blackout conditions.

Questions to think about:

- Does this present the day in an entirely positive way?
- Which aspects of the day surprise you? Why?
- What questions would you ask someone that was there?

Grandma's account



This is an accurate account of VE Day through the eyes of children at the time. It's a primary source and any words in red were added to ensure it makes as much sense as possible.

I had a couple of uncles who were killed in the war so there were sad memories because they never came back – I never saw them again. Uncle Tommy was married to Auntie Doris. When he came back on leave, he demonstrated how they fixed bayonets onto the rifle and he charge and put it through the door (the family smiled when they reminded each other of this story). The family missed him because he wasn't there. There were celebrations about the war ending tinged (a small amount of something) with a certain sadness.

I remember my mother made some bunting as she was a dressmaker and was good with a sewing machine. They were red, blue and white. Rectangles of paper sewn onto a string. She did lots of them. I think she collected material and held on to it and kept it for all sorts of reasons. We found loads when she died.

There was dancing going on in the street but I didn't understand it as I was a little lad. Some sort of music was playing but it wasn't in our street. I didn't understand fully why they were doing it (age 9). It was a radio playing on the street from one of the houses. The street was two rows of houses facing each other and people were dancing in the middle of it. I don't remember a party or food as such.

Questions to think about:

- How is the tone different for my Grandad than Grandma?
- Which aspects of the day surprise you? Why?
- Does this mean there was no food at this party?

Grandad's account