

# World War II on the Homefront

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## 8th Grade Social Studies

**Historical Context:** In 1939, the world entered one of the darkest periods when World War II began. In 1942, American troops officially entered the conflict. Although the war was fought abroad, it had a great impact on the American home front. Women experienced permanent changes in their lives. People across the country felt a greater sense of nationalism, as well as fear of foreigners. World War II had lasting effects on many aspects of American life.

**Task:** Using information from the documents, and your knowledge of social studies, answer the following questions that follow each document in Part A. Your answers to the questions will help you write the Part B essay, in which you will be asked to:

- Discuss at least two ways World War II affected American life at home.
- This task is intended to last for the whole week (April 20th-24th). You are encouraged to spread out the task throughout the week. You do not have to do it all in one sitting. We will discuss the documents in our Zoom sessions when we meet on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday (from 1:30-2:00) You can ask any questions at that time as well, or feel free to e-mail me throughout the week as well.
- Introduction Video Link (optional): [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9aRVVae2i\\_c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9aRVVae2i_c)

**Part A:** Analyze the documents provided. Then, answer each question that follows. The answers you complete in Part A can be used to help you write the essay in Part B.

**Document 1**



1a. What does the figure (person) in the picture represent?

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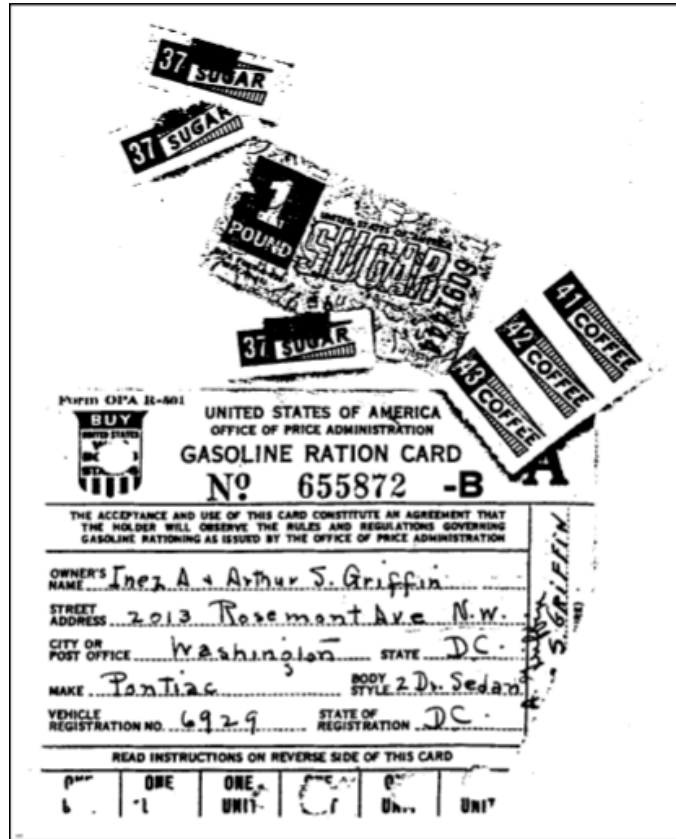
1b. What does the woman mean when she says, "We Can Do It!"

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**Document 2**



A wide variety of commodities were rationed during World War II in the United States. Rationing ended when supplies were sufficient to meet demand.

Rationed Items	Rationing Duration
Tires	January 1942 to December 1945
Cars	February 1942 to October 1945
Bicycles	July 1942 to September 1945
Gasoline	May 1942 to August 1945
Fuel Oil & Kerosene	October 1942 to August 1945
Solid Fuels	September 1943 to August 1945
Stoves	December 1942 to August 1945
Rubber Footwear	October 1942 to September 1945
Shoes	February 1943 to October 1945
Sugar	May 1942 to 1947
Coffee	November 1942 to July 1943
Processed Foods	March 1943 to August 1945
Meats, canned fish	March 1943 to November 1945
Cheese, canned milk, fats	March 1943 to November 1945
Typewriters	March 1942 to April 1944

2a. What does it mean to “ration”? \_\_\_\_\_

2b. Name one item that was rationed during World War II. Why do you think wartime rationing was necessary? \_\_\_\_\_

**Document 3**

Food is a weapon of war.—It is a weapon that is important on all fronts, including the home front.. Our fighting men and our allies cannot fight and defeat the Nazis and the Japs without the strength and endurance that comes from body-building foods.

3a. Do you agree that “food is a weapon of war”? Why or why not?

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**Document 4**



4a. What are the people in this photograph collecting? \_\_\_\_\_  
4b. Why was this event a common occurrence during World War II? \_\_\_\_\_

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## Document 5

Uncle Sam last week assumed the role of fashion designer. Sweeping restrictions aim to save 15 percent of the yardage now used on women's and girls' apparel through such measures as restricting hems and belts to two inches, eliminating cuffs on sleeves. Exempt categories include bridal gowns, maternity dresses, vestments for religious orders.

Life Magazine, April 20, 1942

5a. Why did the U.S. government (Uncle Sam) “assume the role of fashion designer”?

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## Document 6

Women had to give up purchasing their silk stockings (hosiery) and were requested to give up their girdles. However, girdles were supplied to members of the WAAC. The girdle manufacturers produced a 'Victory Girdle' but with no stays, no rubber and no silk there were few takers.

Zippers were no longer put into new clothing.

No woolen dresses could be found on store racks.

Men's trousers were made without cuffs to save on material.

Shoes were rationed. Each member of the family was given one coupon to purchase one pair of shoes per year.

Government regulations required prompt payment of retail store charge accounts. Default on account payments beyond the grace period resulted in no further credit purchases permitted.

Manufacture of carving sets, pocket knives, manicure implements and all other unessential cutlery was banned.

Highway speed limits for autos was set at 35 mph by decree on all highways and streets but did not contain enforcement or penalty provisions. Motorists were asked to voluntarily limit their non-essential driving to 60 miles a week

Gasoline, kerosene and fuel oil were rationed.

Households were requested to save all used cooking grease and lard to be turned in at collection points. (*Glycerin for the manufacture of dynamite and drugs is derived from the fat and bones of meat and fowl. One pound of fat would make one pound of dynamite.*)

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~grannyapple/INFORMATION/World%20War%20II%20Deprivations.html>

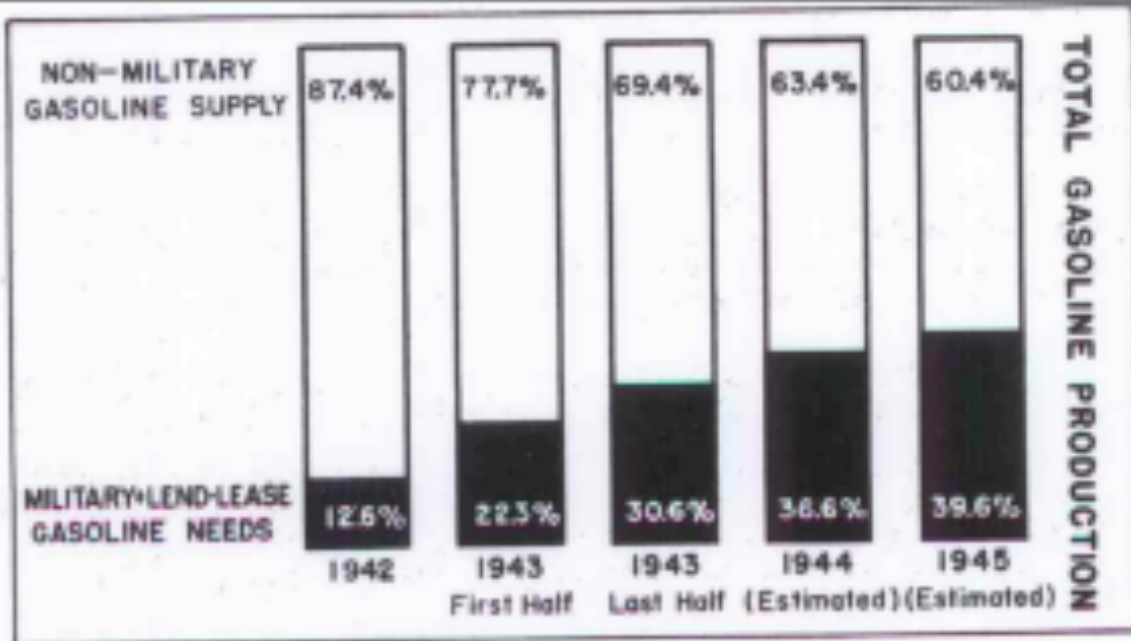
6a. Which of these restrictions might be the most challenging for people to live with?

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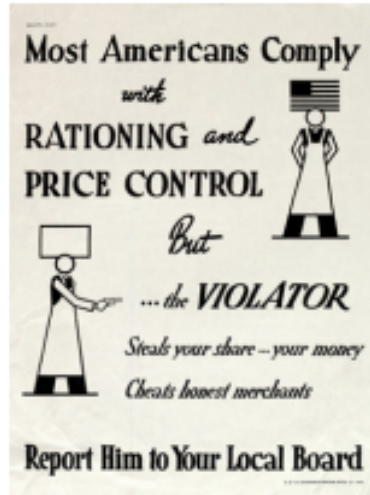
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Document 7



7a. Why do you think gasoline needs continued to increase? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Document 8



8a. Which of these images (pictured above) do you think would have been most effective at hanging people's attitudes or behaviors? Why?

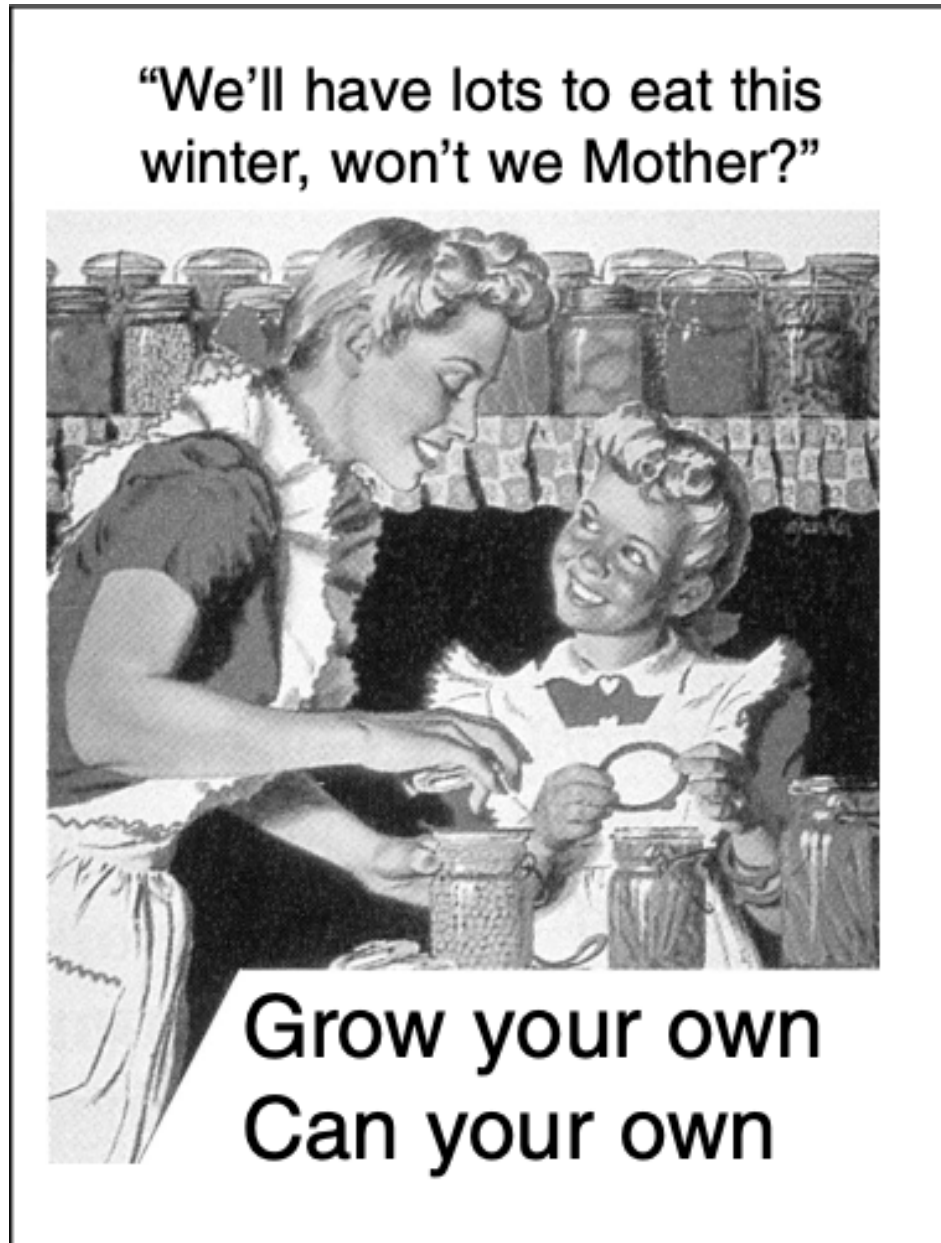
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**Document 9**



9a. What are the mother and daughter doing in this poster? \_\_\_\_\_

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9b. Why is this activity encouraged during World War II? \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_



**Document 10**

Mothers and children were frequently used as symbols of what the war was being fought to protect, yet they bore the brunt of social upheaval on the home front. Bay Area schoolchildren were enthusiastically enlisted into wartime activities, such as collecting scrap and buying Victory Stamps, but they were also identified as particularly vulnerable victims of wartime social changes. Outcry over "eight-hour orphans" accompanied the remarkable development of Federal-local partnerships to provide daycare for the first time to large numbers of working women.

Tending the Home Front

<http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/travel/wwIIbayarea/womenatwar.htm>

10a. Was the need for more daycare options a positive or negative thing? Explain.

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**Document 11**



11a. What was an internment camp? \_\_\_\_\_

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11b. Why were Japanese Americans put into this type of camp? \_\_\_\_\_

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