

World War II

Year 6

Key end points of 'World War II' unit are:

- To know that WW2 was a war fought around the world by many countries from 1939-1945
- The war was fought between two sides: The Allied Powers (including the UK, the Soviet Union, France, USA) and Axis Powers (including Germany, Italy, Japan)
- The Battle of Britain was fought in the skies and won by the British RAF
- Britain was heavily bombed in the war- known as the Blitz
- The Code-breakers at Bletchley Park played a significant role in helping the allies win the war
- The Holocaust is the name given to the genocide that took place at this time, where the Nazis killed millions of people, predominately Jewish people.
- The Home Front also played a significant role and the government used propaganda to encourage the people to support the war

This unit builds on chronologically from the 'Rise of Hitler' unit. Children begin by recalling the causes and outbreak of World War II, previously covered. If children have not completed the 'Rise of Hitler' unit, teachers may wish to spend some lesson time looking at what happened at the start of World War II. Throughout this unit, children will be encouraged to make connections between what they learned about World War I and other wars in the past.

The unit begins by securing essential background knowledge about the war before looking in more depth- including when and where it took place, and who was involved. Throughout this lesson, teachers must emphasise that this was a 'world war'. Maps can be provided to locate where battles took place, and children can be encouraged to use their geographical knowledge to locate battles that took place on a map of the world. The concept, '**conquer**' will be built upon, looking at the countries conquered by Germany. The children will need to use their knowledge of the British Empire (Y5- The Early British Empire, the Victorians) to understand the significant role that people from across the empire played in supporting the allied forces.

The children will look in some depth at the Battle of Britain- a battle fought entirely in the skies- and the Blitz- a strategy used by the German air force to try and force Britain to surrender. The role of the empire, and other overseas pilots, can be explored and primary sources should be used and interpreted by the children. The unit focuses on the Battle of Britain and the Blitz from a **military** context. The **social** context is explored in more detail at the end of the unit when the children look at life on the Home Front. Teachers may wish to spend more time on this, and consider the local context, such as local landmarks that may have been destroyed during the Blitz.

In previous units, including 'World War I' the children have learned about the lives of soldiers, including life in the trenches, and have discussed how battles took place on land, in the air and at sea. In this unit, the children will look in more depth at the role that intelligence and code-breaking played in winning the war. They will learn about the code-breakers at Bletchley Park (75% of them were women), including some significant people who played a vital role in supporting the war effort- Alan Turing and Mavis Batey.

While a significant emphasis of this unit is on Britain and the war, time will also be dedicated to learning about a related event of global significance that took place at this time- the Holocaust. The children will build upon their knowledge of Nazi Germany, and look at what happened following the rise of Hitler and the Nazi party. Throughout the curriculum, the children have looked in some detail at groups of people from the past who were ostracized, ill-treated and even killed as a result of their beliefs, ethnicity or race. This unit will introduce a new concept: **genocide**. They will look at the atrocities committed, interpreting sources with a focus on learning about what life was like for Jewish people at this time. Teachers must teach this lesson respectfully and consider the sensitivity of the children in their class before using any sources, particularly images that children could find disturbing. If teachers decide to exclude this lesson, it is recommended that they focus instead on the social context of the war, perhaps looking in more detail at the lives of local people at this time.

Key vocabulary and concepts taught previously will be recalled in this unit, including: Home Front, Propaganda and Rationing. The children will look at the actions of the war-time government and the impact on the lives of people at the time (teachers may focus on the lives of local people). Some of the knowledge and concepts explored in this unit will be built upon when the children learn about the 'Cold War' and when children look at the 'History of Human Rights and Equality'.

Lesson Sequencing:

The sequence of lessons in this unit has been designed to provide children with both an overview of World War II, as well as going into some depth around some significant events and people at this time. Lesson 1 begins by retrieving prior knowledge on World War II, including the events leading up to it, the countries and the people involved. Lesson 2 focuses on the Battle of Britain and the Blitz- an aspect of WWII that is historically significant in British history. During this lesson, children will use primary sources to understand more about what was happening at the time, including extracts from Winston Churchill's speech to the House of Commons in 1940. Lesson 3 looks at the Codebreakers at Bletchley Park. Prior to this unit, the children have learned about how wars have been fought and won by soldiers fighting with weapons; this introduces the children to another 'powerful weapon'- using intelligence. This lesson also introduces two historically significant people: Mavis Batey and Alan Turing. Lesson 4 focuses on an aspect of the war that is significant globally- the Holocaust. If teachers do not wish to cover this content due to its sensitive nature, it is suggested that they focus instead on more locally relevant aspects of the war. Finally, lesson 5 explains the important role that the Home Front played in helping the allies to win the war.

Key substantive concepts covered in this unit are **empire, conflict, invasion, warfare, nationalism, propaganda** and **genocide**.

Key disciplinary concepts covered in this unit are **historical significance** (e.g. why is it important to learn about the holocaust, why are these events/people studied by historians today- what makes them historically significant?), **similarity and difference** (between what lives were like for different people at this time) and **causation** (e.g. what factors may have led to the holocaust?)