Seasonal change

The second world war lasted for six years. Soldiers had to fight in battlefields all over the world, with only temporary shelters to protect them when they rested.

Which season do you think soldiers would have preferred and why?

Which season would have been difficult to get through?

Can we make a weather chart to show how the weather changes during each season?

Are seasons the same everywhere?

Sounds and their sources

Cities were bombed as enemy planes tried to destroy factories. The government moved children out of the cities to protect them from air raids. This was known as evacuation. About 800,000 children left their homes. Many returned after a few weeks, while others stayed in the countryside for the rest of the war.

Can we make a table to compare the sounds that we hear in a city and sounds that we hear in the countryside?

Which place do you think will have the loudest sounds?

Nutrition – eating the right foods

During the war, it was difficult to import foods such as tea, sugar, jam and meat from other countries. These foods were rationed. Everybody was allowed only a small weekly amount of each of these foods.

What would be good about a diet that was rationed? What would be not so good? Can we plan a healthy meal with no tea, sugar, jam or meat?

Distinguishing between an object and its material

Soldiers needed uniforms and parachutes, so there wasn’t much material to make everyday clothes. People were encouraged to ‘make do and mend’. Old bicycle tyres were used to repair the bottom of shoes. Old parachutes were cut and sewn into underwear. String was used to hold up socks, pants and trousers.

Can we find materials in class that we could use to make something to wear? Why would these materials be suitable? Which materials would not be suitable for making clothes? Why not?

Light Sources

During the Blitz, many people built air raid shelters called Anderson shelters in their gardens. The shelters were made of strong sheets of iron covering a hole dug in the earth. These shelters were dark and damp. Candles were used to light them.

What light sources can you identify? Which is the brightest? How could we test this?
During the war, everyone had to cover their windows and doors at night to prevent light from escaping. If light escaped then enemy aircraft were able to see towns and cities during their bombing raids.

Which materials would be good for making blackout curtains for windows?

How could we test them?

Which material is the best?

Air raid sirens were used in cities to warn of enemy air attacks. When people heard the sirens they would stop what they were doing and run for a shelter. The sirens were very loud and had a cone-shaped horn.

Does a cone-shape make sounds louder?

Let’s make some cones from cardboard and investigate.

Can we find other ways to make sounds louder?

Nutrition – eating the right foods

Food rationing began in 1940. This meant each person could buy only a fixed amount of certain foods, such as meat, cheese, sugar, tea and rice, each week.

What can we find out how rations differed for adults and children, and why?

What can we find out about how rations were different for people doing different jobs, and why?

Can we plan a victory celebration using the usual rations (plus any fruit and vegetables grown in our victory garden)?

Exercise and healthy lifestyles

Schools believed that the frequent dashes to the air raid shelters provided enough exercise for children during the war. PE lessons were basic and involved exercising children in lines in the playground.

Why is it especially important for children to exercise?

How do different activities affect our pulse rate and breathing?

Which activities affect our pulse rate and breathing the most?

Light and shadows

During the war, everyone had to cover their windows and doors at night to prevent light from escaping. If light escaped then enemy aircraft were able to see towns and cities during their bombing raids.

Which vegetables can we grow in the school grounds? Where would be the best place to grow them? Let’s have a class competition to grow the best vegetables!

Uses and properties of materials

Metal, glass and rubber were needed for the war effort so alternative materials had to be found for everyday uses. Food was covered with plastic wrap instead of aluminium foil; toys were made from paper or cardboard; glass milk bottles were replaced by cardboard containers; plywood replaced metals for the hulls of boats and aircraft wings.

Can we make a table to show which are the best materials for food wraps, toys, milk containers and boats?

Why are these materials the best?

Wartime gardeners were encouraged to create compost heaps in their gardens, with slogans such as ‘Your garden feeds you. You must feed your garden’. Compost made from organic matter – the remains of plants and animals – improves the soil.

Can we find out how soil changes when we add compost? What tests could we do?

What happens if we add different amounts of compost and soil together?

How can we investigate if compost makes a difference to how plants grow?

Uses and properties of materials

During the Blitz, bombs were dropped on cities in Britain. People made Anderson shelters by bolting together curved iron sheets to protect themselves from the blasts. These shelters were half-buried in the garden and the top was covered by a thick layer of sandbags and soil.

Why do you think iron was used for the shelters?

What else is iron used for?

Can we find other materials that have the same properties as iron?