

Entertainment in Wartime Britain



Aim

- I can describe what people did for entertainment during wartime Britain.

Success Criteria

- I can devise my own wartime radio show.
- I can write a synopsis and make an advertising poster for a wartime film.
- I can research and present information about some popular wartime songs.
- I can devise my own dance based on the Lindy Hop.
- I can create a collage of wartime toys and games.
- I can say what activities people did for entertainment that also helped with the war effort.

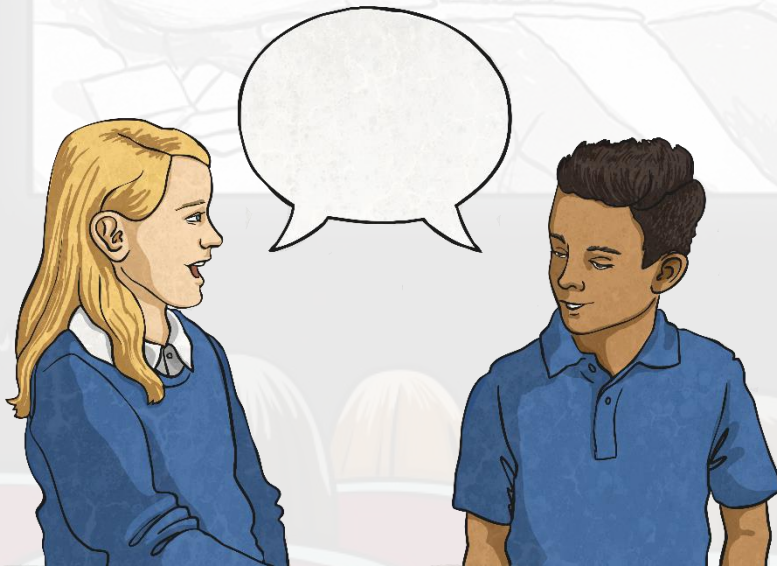
Entertainment



What does it mean to be entertained?

What do you do for entertainment?

Think about things you can do inside and outside of the house.



Now consider whether you think you could have done each of your activities during World War II.

Why or why not?

Entertainment




What do you think people did for entertainment before the war?

How did entertainment change when war broke out?

Would people be able to entertain themselves as they had done before the war?

Who do you agree with?



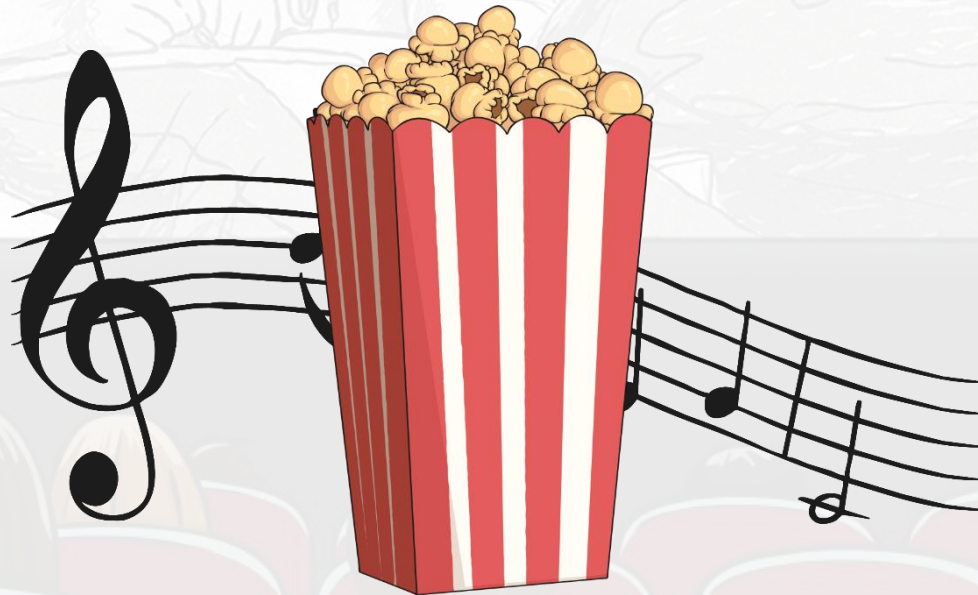
I think that there probably wasn't a lot to keep people entertained during the war.

I bet there was plenty going on to keep people entertained during the war.

Entertainment

Although some things could not continue the same as they had done before, for example, all national sporting events and teams were suspended, there was actually plenty for people to do to stay entertained during the war.

Let's explore some of the most popular forms of entertainment.



Wartime Entertainment: Radio

Radio was very popular during World War II. Families would gather around the wireless to listen to special wartime programmes, with news reports and songs.

There were two stations during the war: the Home Service, which informed people about the progress of the war and the Light Programme, which provided entertainment to help boost peoples' spirits.

There were different programmes on the radio, such as 'Children's Hour' with Uncle Mac, which was created specially for children ages between five and fifteen and 'Music While you Work', which played lively music to keep up the spirits of people working in the factories.



Wartime Entertainment: Children's Hour



Children's hour featured quizzes, stories, talks and music.

Larry the Lamb was a popular radio story character and children loved to hear about his adventures in Toytown.

In 1940, Queen Elizabeth II (who was fourteen year old Princess Elizabeth at the time) spoke on Children's Hour. You can listen to her [here](#).

- Why do you think children were pleased to here Princess Elizabeth speaking on the radio?
- What was she talking about?
- What important messages did she deliver?

Activity: Complete the Children's Hour Show Activity Sheet to make up your own imaginary show for Children's Hour.

Children's Hour Show

Planning Ideas

Name of show:	
Type of show: (story, information, quiz/ game, music, cookery etc):	
Why I think children will like my show:	
Key message or information: (remember to link to the war)	

Description:

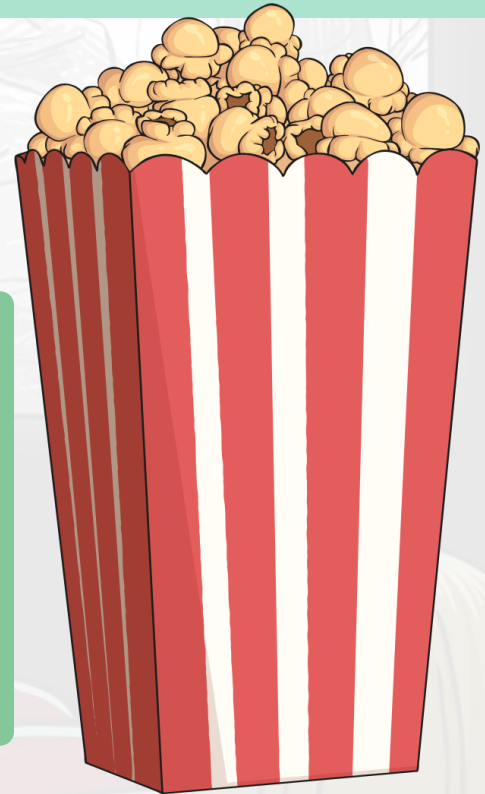
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Wartime Entertainment: Cinema

During the war, the vast majority of people did not have televisions in their homes. To see moving pictures, people would go to the cinema.

Many iconic films were produced during World War II and the film industry grew significantly during this time.

People would often see two films during a visit to the cinema. A news show was broadcast in between to keep the audience informed about the events of war. Some films and programmes were written specifically to help inform people on different aspects of war and to encourage them to behave (or not) in a certain way. This is called propaganda.



Wartime Entertainment: Cinema

There was a popular Saturday morning children's club. Films, serials and cartoons were shown and the children sang the National Anthem at each visit.

Some well-known films that were released during the war include:

- Fantasia;
- Pinocchio;
- Dumbo;
- Casablanca;
- Gone with the Wind.

Activity: Complete the Wartime Film Activity Sheet to research a wartime film of your choice.

Wartime Film

Name of Film:	
Synopsis:	

Design a poster for your film:

Wartime Entertainment: Music

Listening to music was a very popular form of entertainment during World War II and, of course, the main way to listen to music was on the radio.

Many famous singers volunteered to sing for free on the radio during the war. This really helped to boost the morale of both the soldiers and people at home.

New music styles, like jazz and swing became popular during the war.

Many songs were written to help boost the morale or to poke fun at the enemy. The lyrics from 'Run Rabbit Run' were changed to 'run Hitler run' during the war.



Wartime Entertainment: Music

One popular British wartime singer was Vera Lynn, who sang songs like 'We'll Meet Again' and 'The White Cliffs of Dover'.

Vera Lynn was especially popular with the troops and she made many overseas visits to sing live. As a result of this, she became known as 'The Forces' Sweetheart'. She also had her own wartime radio show called 'Sincerely Yours'. You can listen to some of Vera Lynn's songs and other wartime songs [here](#).

Activity: Complete the Wartime Music Activity Sheet to research and describe some popular wartime songs.



Vera Lynn in 1941

Wartime Entertainment: Dancing



As jazz and swing music became popular during World War II, new dance styles were also developed alongside traditional ballroom routines. Soldiers from America popularised the new lively dance styles, such as the Jive, Lindy Hop and Jitterbug. Dance halls were packed with young, enthusiastic dancers practising all the new dance crazes.

Would you like to learn more about the Lindy Hop?

Watch the Lindy Hop [here](#).

Learn some basic steps [here](#).

Activity: Complete the Dance Planning Activity Sheet to create a dance based on the Lindy Hop with your partner.



A dance hall

Wartime Entertainment: Toys and Games

Children played board games, cards games or with handmade toys during the war. Some children arranged toy swaps to exchange their toys with others to get the chance to play with different things.

Many toys had a wartime theme; toy tanks and aeroplanes were popular.

A wide range of outdoor games were also played. Some examples included:

- hopscotch;
- hide-and-seek;
- skipping;
- football;
- marbles.

Activity: Complete the Wartime Toys and Games Activity Sheet to research and write about a wartime toy or game.

Wartime Toys and Games

Using information books and/or the Internet, find images of wartime toys and children playing games. Use the images to draw your own to create a collage. You can use words and sentences in your presentation.



