



**Playstage
Junior**

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THE HOME FRONT



**A collection of readings and short sketches
About World War II**



**Compiled
by Lynn
Brittney
Sketches by
Year 6
Pupils**

THE HOME FRONT.....

.....is a collection of memories, reminiscences, anecdotes and stories by real people about life in wartime Britain. They are taken from the following books :

CHILDREN OF THE BLITZ by Robert Westall, published by Penguin
THE HOME FRONT : USA WORLD WAR II by Ronald H.Bailey published by Time Life Books.

LONDON WAR NOTES by Mollie Panter-Downes published by Longman
THE COTSWOLDS AT WAR by June R.Lewis published by Alan Sutton Publishing

FOR HOME & COUNTRY compiled by Penny Kitchen published by the Ebury Press

Section 1 of the readings is devoted to children's memories of their time during the War years.

Section 2 of the readings is from adult memories, Government broadcasts, and pamphlets and from newspaper articles.

THE PLAYS....

....were written by Year 6 pupils and are their view of what the War was like for children at the time. The plays can be performed in any order, except the two evacuation sketches, which need to follow each other, with perhaps a relevant evacuation reading in between.

PRODUCTION NOTES

The most successful production done to date has been one that used a combination of the readings and the sketches. The children made their own props, such as gas masks boxes and replica 1940's radios, and copied WW2 posters of the time which were held up by one child, while another child read a relevant "memory" or newspaper article.

Another school even had a video player and TV set up on the stage and they played excerpts from WW2 documentaries, selecting the pieces which were Government information films.

Music of the period was used in one production and also some recordings of radio broadcasts. The Imperial War Museum has an extensive range of recordings of this period on sale through its shop or catalogue. Your local audio library may have some in stock or be able to order them from another library.

Your local audio library should also have or be able to order for you any of the BBC Sound Effects tapes or CD's, which contain a variety of explosive sounds (also V1 rockets).

It is sufficient, for the readings, for children to be dressed in school uniform. However, in the sketches, children preferred to assemble some sort of costume, when playing adults. Headscarves, flat caps, knitted waistcoats, collarless shirts with braces, flowery dresses, are all simple costume ideas which give enough of a flavour of the period.

In conclusion...

We hope you enjoy using The Home Front. It is our most popular piece, because of its relevance to the current National Curriculum. Teachers have said that it has proved to be a lively and informative exercise for their pupils.

THE HOME FRONT

Readings

Section 1

CHILDREN'S MEMORIES OF THE WAR

THE DAY WAR BROKE OUT

Mr Chamberlain's broadcast was not impressive. I remembered him from the newsreels, coming out of his aeroplane after Munich, waving his little piece of paper and promising 'peace in our time.' I thought he looked like a sheep, and now he bleated like a sheep. He talked about noted being sent and replies not being received. He regretted that a state of war existed between Great Britain and Germany. He sounded really hurt, like Hitler was some shiftless council tenant who had failed to pay his rent after faithfully promising to do so.

That wasn't the way to talk to Hitler; he should be threatening to kick his teeth in....I knew there'd be trouble....

There was. The sirens went immediately. We didn't know what to do. We had no shelters; nothing but little gas masks in cardboard boxes. We went to the front windows and stared out. Everything was peaceful and sunny. Old Charlie Harris, who hadn't worked for years with his bad chest, after being gassed on the Somme, was marching round the square sticking his chest out. Wearing his best suit and medals from the Last Lot. He looked determined but ridiculous. Mum said he had volunteered to be a warden yesterday, and obviously felt he should do something.

Dad said ' If he sounds his rattle, that means poison gas - put your gas mask on.'

I said 'But he hasn't got a rattle.'

There wasn't a cloud in the sky - let alone a German bomber. My old teddy bear was sitting in the corner. I hadn't spared him a glance in years, but now he looked at me appealingly. I put him under my bed for safety.

Then the all-clear sounded.

Charlie Brown headed straight home for a strong cup of tea.

UNREALITY

My father got a copy of the Daily Express war map, which we hung on the kitchen wall and decorated with little coloured flags representing the Allied and German forces. It was good fun, but quite unreal - as unreal as the popular songs on the wireless.

**We're going to hang out the washing on the Siegfried Line
Have you any dirty washing, Mother dear?
We're going to hang out the washing on the Siegfried Line
For the washing day is here.**

**Whether the weather may be wet or fine,
We will hang it out, without a care.
We're going to hang out the washing on the Siegfried Line
If the Siegfried Line's still there!**