

# Help on the Homefront

## 6th Grade Social Studies Lesson

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**Big Idea:** In times of U.S. involvement in wars throughout history, American civilians have worked hard to support our troops on the homefront.

### Essential Question:

What kind of support was shown by civilians on the U.S. homefront during WWII?  
How did these areas of support help us be successful in times of war?

### West Virginia Career and College Readiness Standards:

**SS.6.21:** Demonstrate an understanding of the causes, key events and outcomes of World War II.

- Illustrate the US civilian response on the home-front to the war (e.g., “Rosie the Riveters,” victory gardens, rationing, etc.).

**ELA.6.4:** Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the informational text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

**ELA.6.28:** Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

- Apply *Grade 6 Reading Standards* to nonfiction and other informational texts (e.g., “trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not”).

### Materials:

- Computer with speakers
- Projector and whiteboard or SmartBoard
- Handouts:
  - Rationing (Access at: <http://homefront.mrdonn.org/rationing.html>)
  - Reading for a Purpose (attached)

### Learning Plan

#### Introduction

1. Project and read letters from WV Archives and discuss briefly how people here in the U.S. who had loved ones fighting overseas must have felt helpless. How could they help?

*\*Those without access to technology can print off letters for each student\**

<https://archive.wvculture.org/history/warletters/everett.html>

Document Based Questions for the letter from William Everett

1. When was this letter written?
2. Who wrote this letter?
3. What is William asking for in the letter?
4. Who is William to the receiver of this letter?

*\*Additional letters can be accessed at: <https://archive.wvculture.org/history/warletters/wlindex.html>*

2. Play this radio broadcast:  
<https://www.history.com/speeches/world-war-ii-rationing-on-the-homefront#world-war-ii-rationing-on-the-homefront> (a roleplay to explain the canned food rationing of WWII). Explain that civilians at home did many things to help our troops as well as the allied troops and one of those things was rationing.

Questions for Discussion or For Listening Guide

1. Who is being interviewed in this broadcast?
  2. Why does Mrs. Hendrix want canned food?
  3. Why do the soldiers need canned food instead of fresh vegetables?
  4. What will be divided among the civilians on the homefront?
3. Students will work in partners or groups of 3 to read and complete the handout (<http://homefront.mrdonn.org/rationing.html>).

This could also be done as a teacher-led whole group session on SmartBoard. Use this as a time to practice using keywords, subtitles, and context clues to find information from a piece of nonfiction text. Read questions aloud as a whole group before independent work or before whole group session, to give purpose for the reading. Allow 15-20 minutes to complete activity in partners. Whole group may take longer due to teacher-guided discussions. Go over and check for understanding and correct answers and discuss.

### Extension Opportunities

- Visit the West Virginia State Museum and explore Discovery Room 20: West Virginians at War.
  - A ration book is displayed in this room and there are a number of other artifacts related to WWII to explore.
- Create ration books and have students spend a day or two spending them while providing for their families by driving to work, grocery shopping, etc.
  - This site would be useful for such an activity:  
<http://www.alumnibhs.com/old%20geezer%20photos/ww2%20ration%20stamps.htm>

### Modifications

For struggling readers or to meet IEP requirements, read the text aloud as a whole group and when working on comprehension skills to complete the worksheet.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Read For a Purpose

*Using the text provided, work with your partner or group to complete this study guide.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_ was a system that provided everyone with the same amount of scarce goods. The system was designed to keep prices low and to make sure people had what they needed.
2. Why were things like gas, oil, metal, and meat scarce during the war?
3. Why was there no Coca-Cola during the war?
4. Ration books were about the size of a \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Why did the directions on the ration book tell civilians not to throw the book away when it was empty? Why did they need to keep it?
6. Where were victory gardens planted? Why?
7. How did kids help with the Junk Rally effort?
8. Patricia Thomas writes a personal memory of rationing. What was one thing that she could not get with her stamps?