



Supporting the World War II Effort

Overview

Students will examine how various government policies, such as rationing and limited wage increases, impacted Americans' daily lives during World War II. By examining various government agencies and their war time policies, students will gain insight into how and why the government encroached upon people's daily lives during the War. Students will apply what they have learned throughout the lesson by creating their own World War II advertising campaign informing Americans how they can contribute to the war effort.

Grade

8

Course

North Carolina: Creation and Development of the State

North Carolina Standard Course of Study for North Carolina: Creation and Development of the State

- Objective 6.04: Assess the impact of World War II on the economic, political, social, and military roles of different groups in North Carolina including women and minorities.

Materials

- "When You Ride Alone, You Ride With Hitler" poster (attached)
- "The Spirit of '43" video. Running time is 5:40:
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vdk5hF8K5Qg>
- "The Government Takes Control of the Economy: 1942 – 1945" chart (attached)
- "The Government Takes Control of the Economy" Worksheet (attached)
- "World War II on the Home Front: Rationing" slide show
 - <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/galleries/ww2-rationing>
- "Do Your Part to Defeat Hitler" activity handout (attached)
- "World War II on the Home Front: Rationing Information" handout (attached)
- Laptop with Internet Access
- Projector
- Poster Paper
- Pens, pencils, colored pencils, markers, crayons
- Prop microphone (optional)

Essential Questions:

- How did the individual contribute to the World War II effort?
- How did an increase in government control affect people's daily lives during World War II?
- What government agencies were created to help manage the War effort?

Duration

90 minutes

Procedure

Warm Up: How Does the Individual Contribute?

1. Project the attached image of the "When You Ride Alone, You Ride With Hitler" poster. Allow students to view the image silently for a few minutes. Next, play "The Spirit of '43" for the class to analyze. (The "Spirit of '43" video can be found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vdk5hF8K5Qg>; running time is 5:40. Since most school district's block YouTube on campus, teachers may want to consider downloading the video for showing.)

The video is a public service announcement reminding Americans to save money and to pay their income taxes to support the war effort, but do not alert students to this fact yet. Simply tell them that they are going to watch a short cartoon. While students are viewing the video ask them to think about how the poster and the video are related. Once the video has concluded, discuss:

- How are the poster and the video related?
 - *They both encourage individual Americans to contribute to the war effort.*
- How does the poster encourage individual Americans to contribute?

- *Encourages people to carpool to conserve fuel so there is more for the war effort.*
- According to the video, how does paying your taxes help the war effort?
 - *It allows the US government to purchase weapons from factories to fight the Axis powers*
- What do you think are some other ways that individuals could help the war effort?
- What are some other impressions or comments you have regarding the cartoon and/or poster?

The Federal Government, the Economy, and the Individual

2. Project or write the following definition of a “Total War” and choose a student to read it aloud:
 - Military conflict in which the contenders mobilize all of their civilian and military resources in order to obtain a complete victory.
 Discuss:
 - Based on what you already know about World War II, would you characterize it as a “Total War?” Why or why not?
 - How are the poster and video from the warm up related to the concept of “Total War?”
 - *They are both efforts to engage the civilian population to contribute to the war effort.*
3. Once you’ve established that World War II was a “Total War” that required full engagement civilian and military resources, explain to students that the government took control of many aspects of American’s lives in order to coordinate the war effort. As war production increased, there were fewer consumer products available for purchase. A majority of factory production was earmarked for the war. With demand increasing, and supply decreasing, prices seemed likely to rise rapidly. Many of these efforts the government took to combat these problems impacted American’s everyday lives.
4. Project the attached “The Government Takes Control of the Economy, 1942 – 1945” chart and pass out the attached “The Government Takes Control of the Economy,” worksheet. Have students fill in the information on the work sheet. While they are working ask them to think about how these new economic controls affected people’s daily lives.
5. After students complete their worksheets, discuss the first three questions as a class.
 - Besides taxes, what was another way the US Government raised money for the war effort?
 - *Selling bonds.*
 - *Explain that bonds are a form of loan where a citizen loans the government money with the promise that that money will be paid back with interest.*
 - What is rationing and how do you think it was accomplished?
 - *Rationing is the controlled distribution of scarce resources, goods, or services.*
 - Which one of these agencies do you think affected individual Americans the most during WWII? Why?
6. Explain to students that one of the most important actions individuals could take to support the war effort was to ration. Families were issued ration books and the stamps they contained were required to purchase certain goods. Project the following slideshow from Learn NC – *World War II on the Home Front: Rationing* – that describes the various items that were rationed:
<http://www.learnnc.org/lp/galleries/ww2-rationing>

Have students read each section aloud and then use the questions provided coupled with the presentation to facilitate discussion.

- Slide 4 – Why was gasoline rationed? Why was rubber scarce?
 - *To be used in the war effort to fuel tanks, planes, etc and to conserve rubber tires. Most of the rubber supply was in South East Asia which was under Japanese control.*
- Slide 6 – Why do you think the government used celebrities to urge people to help with the war effort?
- Slide 9 – How did rationing stamps work?
 - *You needed to provide a certain amount of ration stamps to buy a particular good. It did not matter if you could pay for the good, you still needed the stamps.*
- Slide 12 – Why did the government begin rationing?
- Slide 15 – Refer back to your worksheets, what government agency set the prices of goods?
 - *Office of Price Administration*
- Conclusion: What goods that you use frequently were rationed during World War II? If the government asked you to ration certain goods today, would you do it?

“Do Your Part to Help Defeat Hitler”

7. Tell students that they have been chosen by the one of the following agencies – the Department of the Treasury, the Office of Price Administration, or the War Production Board – to create an ad campaign to encourage individual Americans to support the war effort. It is their job to create a poster or radio ad campaign that will remind Americans how they can help.

8. Pass out the attached “Do Your Part to Help Defeat Hitler” and “World War II on the Home Front: Rationing Information” handouts. Review the assignment directions with the class. Teachers should determine whether to have students complete this individually or in partners.
9. Allow students approximately twenty minutes to create their posters or radio ads. Circulate throughout the room to ensure students are on task and to answer any questions.
10. After the allotted time, instruct the students who created posters to hang them around the room. Meanwhile, set up a prop microphone (if possible), desk, and chair at the front of the room for the radio ad presenters. Teachers can then give students time to rotate and view the various posters, then return to their seats and listen to the radio presentations. Afterwards, discuss:
 - Which poster or radio ad stood out most to you and why? (i.e. which was most entertaining, creative, realistic, etc.)
 - Which of the posters or radio ads succeeded in convincing you to contribute to the war effort and why?
 - Why do you think that Americans allowed the government this much intrusion into their daily lives?
 - If the government attempted these actions today, how do you think Americans would react? Why?
 - Can you think of ways the US government has asked individuals to help contribute to the war effort in Iraq and Afghanistan?
 - Can you think of commercials or internet ads that encourage Americans to support the war effort in Iraq and Afghanistan?
 - How can an individual contribute to the war effort in Iraq and Afghanistan?

Additional Activities

- Have students research salaries during World War II and then have them create a weekly grocery budget for a family of four.



Source: http://farm1.static.flickr.com/99/309856393_0b02b023d6.jpg

The Government Takes Control of the Economy, 1942 - 1945

Agencies and Laws	What the Regulations Did
Office of Price Administration (OPA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fought inflation by freezing wages, prices, and rents• Rationed foods, such as meat, butter cheese, vegetables, sugar, and coffee
National War Labor Board (NWLB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited wage increases• Allowed negotiated benefits, such as paid vacation, pensions, and medical insurance• Kept unions stable by forbidding workers to change unions
War Production Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rationed fuel and materials vital to the war effort, such as gasoline, heating oil, metals, rubber, and plastics
Department of the Treasury	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Issued war bonds to raise money for the war effort and to fight inflation
Revenue Act of 1942	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Raised the top personal-income tax to 88%• Added lower-and middle-income Americans to income-tax rolls
Smith-Connally Anti-Strike Act (1943)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited the right to strike in industries crucial to the war effort• Gave president power to take over striking plants

Name _____



“Do Your Part to Help Defeat Hitler”

Directions: You have been chosen by one of the following government agencies – the Department of the Treasury, the Office of Price Administration, or the War Production Board – to create a radio or poster campaign to encourage individual Americans to support the war effort.

1. Choose **one** of the following themes to touch upon in your poster and radio ad campaign. After you have chosen the theme, determine what government agency has hired you. Keep this agency's perspective in mind when creating your final poster or radio ad.

- Rationing food or fuel
- Discouraging people from buying on the black market
- Ration books/stamps
- Food canning
- Scrap Drives
- Victory Gardens
- Car-Sharing
- Salvaging Fat Waste
- Buying Bonds
- Paying taxes

2. Decide upon the slogan for your campaign.

- For example: “Do Your Part to Defeat Hitler: Buy War Bonds”
- The slogan must be included on your poster or within your radio ad
- Remember to consider your agency and what its perspective might be

3. Both the poster and the radio ad must explain how and why Americans can contribute to the World War II effort, should be realistic to the time period of World War II, and must meet the following requirements:

Poster Requirements:

- Must be historically accurate - use your textbook and notes for additional research.
- Is colorful and eye catching
- Images explain how Americans can contribute to the war effort
- Government agency should be mentioned
- Campaign slogan should be prominently displayed
- If working with a partner, both students should contribute original work to the final product

Radio Ad Requirements:

- Campaign slogan should be mentioned
- Government agency should be mentioned
- Information is accurate -- use your textbook and notes for additional research.
- Ad should be approximately 3 minutes long
- If working with a partner, both students should speak

4. Begin brainstorming ideas:

World War II on the Home Front: Rationing Information Sheet

Ask anyone who lived through the war on the U.S. "home front" about World War II and the conversation will quickly turn to rationing. America has always been -- and thought of itself as -- a land of abundance. Even in the depths of the Depression, there was enough to eat, if only you could afford to buy it. But as soon as the U.S. entered the war in the winter of 1941–42, shortages began. By 1943, it had become every citizen's duty to cut back on meat, sugar, coffee, canned foods, fuel, shoes, and consumer goods -- so "they'll have enough."

Most of the world's supply of natural rubber came from rubber tree plantations in Southeast Asia, which were quickly occupied by the Japanese in the first months of 1942. Factories converting to military production needed every scrap of rubber they could find, and citizens were asked to turn in old tires, raincoats, gloves, garden hoses, and rubber shoes for recycling. New tires became almost impossible to buy, and people tell stories of lining the insides of their tires with newspaper to make them last longer.

To save tires, the government asked Americans to cut back on their driving, to save gas by driving more slowly, and to share rides. (The term "carpooling" didn't exist yet.) These efforts continued throughout the war, as you can see in this 1943 poster. But Americans have never been eager to drive less or more slowly, and by the spring of 1942 it was clear that "voluntary rationing" was a failure.

Gasoline was rationed in 17 eastern states beginning in May 1942 and nationwide in December 1942 -- not so much to save fuel as to save tires and the rubber they were made of. A nationwide speed limit of 35 miles per hour was also enforced to save wear on tires. To ration gasoline, the government issued coupon stamps. These "A" stamps were worth three to five gallons of gasoline per week for essential activities such as shopping, attending church, and going to the doctor. The letter on the stamp would have matched a sticker on the car's windshield. People using their cars for work could buy more gasoline, and truckers could buy all they needed.

Although gasoline rationing had begun to conserve tires, by late 1942 other kinds of fuel were also in short supply. The military needed huge quantities of fuel for ships, tanks, and planes, and Americans at home had to make do with less. Fuel oil and kerosene were rationed beginning in 1942, and solid fuels followed in 1943. This poster warned citizens of the coming shortage and advised them to "winterize" their homes -- a term that most Americans were hearing for the first time.

To build tanks, ships, planes, and weapons required massive amounts of metal. A single tank needed 18 tons of metal, and one of the navy's biggest ships took 900 tons. Anything using metal -- from chicken wire to farm equipment -- was rationed. Americans were urged to turn in scrap metal for recycling, and schools and community groups across the country held scrap metal drives. Celebrities helped promote these efforts. In this publicity photo, actress Rita Hayworth announced that she was "harvesting a bumper crop for Uncle Sam." The caption added that "Besides setting an example by turning in unessential metal car parts, Miss Hayworth has been active in selling war bonds."

In Asheville, North Carolina, trolley tracks that had been buried beneath the streets were ripped up and used as scrap for military production. "It's no good under the ground," the caption read, "but it can be used to smash the Axis." Here, an inventor demonstrated his "railjerk" that pried the track loose.

Paper was needed for packing weapons and equipment before they were shipped overseas. The American Legion in Chillicothe, Missouri, set up this booth to collect scrap paper.

Sugar was the first food to be rationed, in the spring of 1942. The war with Japan cut off U.S. imports from the Philippines, and cargo ships from Hawaii were diverted to military purposes. The nation's supply of sugar was quickly reduced by more than a third. To prevent hoarding and skyrocketing prices, the Office of Price Administration issued 123 million copies of War Ration Book One, which contained stamps that could be used to purchase sugar. No sugar could legally be bought without stamps, and sugar rationing would continue until supplies returned to normal in 1947.

The military needed huge amounts of food, too, to feed soldiers, and by late 1942 food at home was running short. Grocery stores started rationing canned goods to customers to prevent hoarding. Meat was in especially short supply. The government limited the amounts shipped to grocers and restaurants and set a "voluntary ration" of two and a half pounds of red meat per adult per week. But stores often could not get even that much, and residents of some cities faced a meatless Christmas. Shoppers in San Diego crossed the border into Mexico in search of full shelves. Time magazine blamed the government's "blundering" for the shortages.

Again, the government turned to rationing. The idea wasn't entirely popular, and the Office of Price Administration -- which limited food prices as well as how much people could buy -- used posters like this to convince people that rationing was the best way for everyone to get his or her "fair share."

Not everyone accepted rationing with patriotic equanimity. Paul S. Willis, head of the Grocery Manufacturers of America, said: "The food predicament in this country is worse than terrifying. The Army is taking care of military food needs. The Agriculture Department is taking care of Lend-Lease. But no one is taking care of the 125 million home folks."

Asking civilians to conserve food didn't do enough, though, and a year into the war, the government began rationing. In early 1943, the Office of Price Administration introduced a system for rationing canned goods -- which were needed for troops overseas and also used scarce metals. Each person had 48 points' worth of ration stamps per month for canned, dried, and frozen foods.

New ration books covered all the foods now rationed, which included sugar, coffee, red meat, dairy products, and fats. Ration books were issued to individuals and could not be used by others. To make sure it was not borrowed or sold, each book included the name, age, sex, weight, and height of the person to whom it was issued. And to prevent hoarding, ration stamps had expiration dates.

Instructions on the back of each ration book reminded people not to lose it and asked them to "give your whole support to rationing and thereby conserve our vital goods... If you don't need it, don't buy it!"

During World War I, food shortages had pushed prices up and created hardships for people in the U.S. In World War II, the government combined rationing with price controls -- limits on what people could charge for various goods -- in hopes of keeping the cost of living reasonable. This poster urged people not to undermine price controls by paying premiums for black-market goods outside the rationing system.

Homemakers were asked to pledge their support for rationing: "I pay no more than top legal prices. I accept no rationed goods without giving up ration stamps." Buying only one's "fair share" became a patriotic duty.

People could avoid the limits imposed by rationing -- and save food for soldiers -- by planting "victory gardens." Some 20 million Americans planted gardens in their backyards, in empty lots, and on the rooftops of city buildings.

Home-canned goods were exempted from the limits imposed by rationing, and victory gardeners were urged to grow enough fruits and vegetables to put aside for winter. Government pamphlets and agents of state agricultural extension services taught them how to can produce at home. This photograph was part of an instructional booklet published by the U.S. Office of War Information in 1943.

But canning required sugar, and sugar, too, was rationed. Women who canned could receive additional sugar, but they had to complete a special application. Canners certified that they expected to can a given quantity of fruit in the coming year and would can four quarts of fruit per pound of sugar allotted.

Women were urged to save waste fat and greases and return them to butchers. The poster on the counter in this photograph announced that the butcher would pay for the fat and sell it to rendering plants so that it could be processed into explosives. Since meats, oils, and butter were all rationed, women had to re-use fat for frying as often as possible before collecting it in a can and turning it in.

Soldiers needed shoes, too, and with rubber for soles in short supply, shoes were rationed beginning in early 1943. This page from the 1943 Sears Roebuck catalog explained how people could buy rationed shoes via mail order.

Major purchases such as automobiles, bicycles, and kitchen appliances required special certificates and proof of need. Because the military needed so many typewriters for communication, even they were rationed.

