

Evacuees



Morrison Shelter



Anderson Shelter

During the Second World War, British cities were targets for German bombing raids. The Government issued shelters for people to erect inside their houses or in their gardens. Everyone was issued with a gas mask in case poisonous gas bombs were dropped. Young children from the cities most at risk were evacuated. Sometimes they were sent to the country to stay with a family member or friend. Other children were taken to the country in class groups by their teacher and billeted with complete strangers. Some children were very unhappy and homesick; others thought the event was a big adventure. The children had to take their gas mask, identity card and a small suitcase of clothes. Some children only stayed away for a short time, others stayed for the duration of the war from 1939 to 1945.

Every child was issued with a gas mask and had to take it everywhere they went.



Memories of an Evacuee

“When our teacher informed us we were to be evacuated we were quite excited by the news. We had to carry our gas masks and a small case with our clothes. When we arrived the local nurse immediately checked our hair for nits!

We were sent to live on a farm with two other boy evacuees. It was quite different from home. There was no running water so we had to get washed outside by the well. The farmhouse had no electricity so we were sent to the town for paraffin to run the oil lamps. I remember people were very kind to us.

Our teacher set up a classroom in the hall of the local school. I was there for three years. One Easter, we went home to Belfast. The German planes came over and we had to hide under the stairs. A firebomb landed in our upstairs bedroom and I heard men running up the stairs to throw it out of the window. I didn't sleep at all that night.”

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Section A

Choose the best word or group of words to fit the passage and put a ring around your choice.

During the Second World War

1 **English** **Scottish** **Welsh** **British**

cities were targets for

2 **French** **German** **Italian** **Japanese**

bombing raids. The Government gave out shelters to go inside houses or in

3 **garages.** **sheds.** **gardens.** **basements.**

Young children from the cities most at risk were

4 **executed.** **excited.** **evaporated.** **evacuated.**

Some were sent to stay with a family member or

5 **cousin.** **friend.** **uncle.** **aunt.**

Some were taken to the country by their teacher to stay with

6 **farmers.** **villagers.** **strangers.** **landlords.**

Some stayed away from home for a short time, others stayed for the duration of the war.

Section B

1 Why were people given gas masks during World War II?

2 What items did the children take with them when they were evacuated?

3 How long did the Second World War last?

4 Which type of air raid shelter was used in a garden?

5 Why do you think some children were excited at the thought of being evacuated?

6 One evacuee reported 'It was quite different from home.' How was it different?

7 How did the evacuee feel he had been treated when he was living away from home?

8 The evacuee reported 'I didn't sleep at all that night.' Why do you think he didn't sleep well that night?

Section C

Imagine you are an evacuee sent away from home to live with strangers. Write a letter home describing how you are getting on.