

22.06.2020

History - World War 2

This week we are going to be learning about how the role of women changed during and after the war.

The Role of Women - Pre-World War 2.

Have a think about the answers to these questions. You don't need to write your answers down.

What do you think life was like before the war broke out in 1939?

What do you think the role of women was like?

What do you think the role of men was like?

How much do you think life in the 1930s differed from life today?



Life for most women before the war was quite different than it is today. Typically, most women stayed at home and did not go out to work. Some younger women did go out to work but if they married, they had to give up their job. Women were paid less than men and they were generally only employed to do 'women's jobs', such as nursing or working as a shop assistant. Men and women's roles were very stereotypical and even from a young age, boys and girls were brought up quite differently. Lessons in school taught girls how to cook, sew and look after the home while boys were taught woodwork and other practical skills to equip them for the workplace.

How do you think men and women felt about their roles?

Do you think this would be acceptable in today's society? Explain your reasons

When the war started in September 1939, the role of women was set to change.

Why do you think the role of women was set to change?

What do you think would be different and why?

What might women be required to do?

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With men called up for active service, there was a great need for women to undertake the jobs that the men had previously done. Suddenly, women became more than just homemakers and were given the opportunity to become patriotic heroines. They would contribute significantly to the war effort in a variety of ways.



Land girls working on a farm

During the war, women were employed in a wide range of jobs. Some became munition factory workers (making weapons); others joined the armed forces (army, navy and air force); many worked as Land Girls; some drove buses or trains; some worked on the canals; they worked as nurses or ambulance drivers; they built ships and worked in other engineering industries; they worked as searchlight operators and some became air raid wardens. The Women's Voluntary Service also employed women, who assisted with a wide range of duties. At the start of the war, the government relied on women to volunteer for work. However, by late 1941, it became necessary to introduce conscription (making working compulsory). Initially this only applied to single women between the ages of 20 and 30, but later in the war this was extended to women between the ages of 18 and 50.

Imagine you are a woman living during World War 2 who has just been given a job. Read the job offer letters below and choose one job you would like to do.

Once you have read the letter you will need to write me a job description for your job. I would also like you to create a poster encouraging other people to apply for the job you have chosen.

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A

Queen Anne's Chambers, 41 Tothill Street, London, England.

10th January, 1941

Thank you for volunteering to join the Women's Voluntary Service. I am pleased to confirm that you will be undertaking the running of a mobile canteen in London. You should attend the London WVS Rest Centre next week for training.

Your duties will include:

- *preparing food;*
- *promoting the health and well-being of ARP staff;*
- *ordering and organising stock;*
- *assisting as directed with the safe housing of those affected by bombing.*

You will be issued with a uniform consisting of a hat and overcoat that should be worn whenever you are on duty. Your hours of work will vary and more details will be communicated when you attend for training.

Thank you.

Yours Sincerely,

Mrs Enid Fitton (Centre Organiser)

B

ARP Centre, Rossendale Street, London, England.

11th November, 1940

Thank you for volunteering to join Air Raid Precautions. I am pleased to confirm that you have been appointed as an ARP warden in central London. You should attend the Rossendale Street ARP Centre next week for training. Your duties will include:

- *patrolling streets after nightfall to ensure blackout;*
- *directing civilians to the nearest air raid shelter in the event of the siren sounding;*
- *extinguishing fires and clearing debris.*

You will be issued with a metal hat and armband that should be worn whenever you are on duty. You will be expected to work three nights a week and in the case of any emergencies which may arise.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. James Falkirk Rossendale

ARP Centre Officer

Research more details about your new wartime job. Fill in the table to describe the different aspects of the job in as much detail as you can. You can use your knowledge and imagination to add in personal details such as whether or not you think you will enjoy the job.

Job title and location	
Uniform and pay	
Working conditions	
Key duties (give as much detail as possible)	
Do you think you will enjoy this job? Explain why/ why not	



During the war, propaganda posters were commissioned to encourage thousands of women to volunteer for work. The posters were designed to make working look glamorous and to appeal to women's sense of duty to their country. Look at each propaganda poster and have a think of the answers to the following questions.

What job is this poster encouraging women to volunteer for?

What features does it use to persuade them?

Would you like to volunteer for this job? Why/why not?

Now create your own poster for the job you had an offer for. Try to persuade people to volunteer for the job.