

Name: _____

THE AMERICAN HOMEFRONT DURING WORLD WAR II

Document #1: New Roles for Women during WWII

With so many men fighting overseas, the demand for women workers rose sharply. In 1940, before the United States got involved in WWII, about 14 million women worked – about 25% of the nation's labor force. By 1945, that number had climbed to more than 19 million – roughly 30% of the nation's labor force.

Women worked in munitions factories, shipyards, and offices. Much of the nation welcomed the growing numbers of women into the workplace. The country promoted "Rosie the Riveter" – an image of a strong woman hard at work at an arms factory – as its cherished symbol for its new group of wage earners.

ROSIE THE RIVETER

All day long,
Whether rain or shine,
She's part of the assembly line.
She's making history,
Working for victory,
Rosie the Riveter.
Keeps a sharp lookout for sabotage,
Sitting up there on the fuselage.
That little girl will do more than a male will do.
Rosie's got a friend, Charlie.
Charlie, he's a Marine.
Rosie is protecting Charlie,
Working overtime on the riveting machine.
When they gave her a production "IE,"
She was as proud as she could be.
There's something true about,
Red, white, and blue about,
Rosie the Riveter.

Song by: *Redd Evans & John Jacob Loeb (1942)*



DOCUMENT 1 QUESTIONS

1. Why was there a sharp increase in the number of women in the workforce in 1945?
2. What types of jobs did women have during World War II?
3. Who was "Rosie the Riveter"?
4. Looking at the picture above, describe what type of woman "Rosie the Riveter" seems to be.

5. In your own words, describe the image that the song lyrics paint about "Rosie the Riveter."



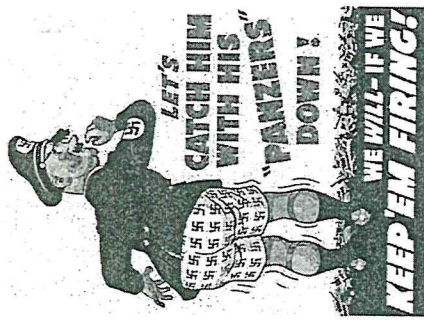
Document #2: The War Production Board (WPB)

The effort to defeat the Axis powers took more than just soldiers. American forces needed planes, tanks, weapons, parachutes, and other supplies. Under the guidance of the War Production Board, factories churned out materials around the clock. By 1945, the country had built about 300,000 aircraft and 75,000 ships.

Good news from home



The United States was producing 60% of the Allied ammunition. The War Production Board put up posters expressing the urgency of the war on the factory floor. Tacked up on bulletin boards, next to time clocks, on factory walls, and in break rooms, posters such as the one that follows served as constant reminders of the war and the need to increase production. Slogans such as *Every Minute Counts* were posted as well as instructions for effectiveness.



DOCUMENT 2 QUESTIONS

1. What was the WPB?
2. What was its purpose?
3. How did the WPB encourage workers to produce more goods?

Document #3: Rationing

Because the armed forces needed so many materials, some of the items Americans took for granted became scarce. For example, American auto-makers did not produce any cars between 1942 and 1945. Instead, they built tanks, jeeps, and airplanes. Items such as gasoline, tires, shoes, meat, and sugar were also in short supply. To divide these scarce goods among its citizens, the government established a system of *rationing*. Under this system, families received a fixed amount of a certain item.



DOCUMENT 3 QUESTIONS

1. What is the system of rationing?
2. Why was rationing necessary?
3. What types of goods were rationed during World War II?