

THE AMERICAN HOMEFRONT DURING WORLD WAR II

Document #1 | 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. 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.

Good news from home



DOCUMENT 1 QUESTIONS

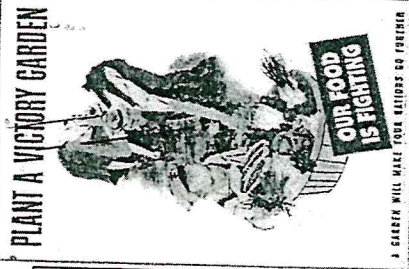
1. What was the WPB?
2. What was its purpose?
3. How did the WPB encourage workers to produce more goods?

Document #2 Victory Gardens

During World War II there was a campaign to encourage the use of homegrown foods. Because commercially canned goods were rationed, the *Victory Garden* became an indispensable source of food for the home front. The Victory Garden was a household activity during the war and one of the most well received of all home front chores. At its peak, it is estimated that nearly 20 million gardens were grown and about 40 percent of all vegetables produced in the U.S. came from Victory Gardens. Across the nation, home canning and preserving of farm produce flourished so that more supplies would be made available for our troops. The idea was simple in conception and inexpensive for the individual American at home to carry out. Of all the advertising techniques used to make Americans feel a part of the war effort, propaganda posters were perhaps the most successful.

DOCUMENT 2 QUESTIONS

1. What was a Victory Garden?
2. Why did people grow them during WWII?
3. About how much of the nation's vegetables were produced by Victory Gardens?
4. How did the government encourage people to grow these gardens?



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?