

# Radio



Radio was very popular during World War II. Families would gather around the wireless to listen to special wartime programmes, news reports and songs.

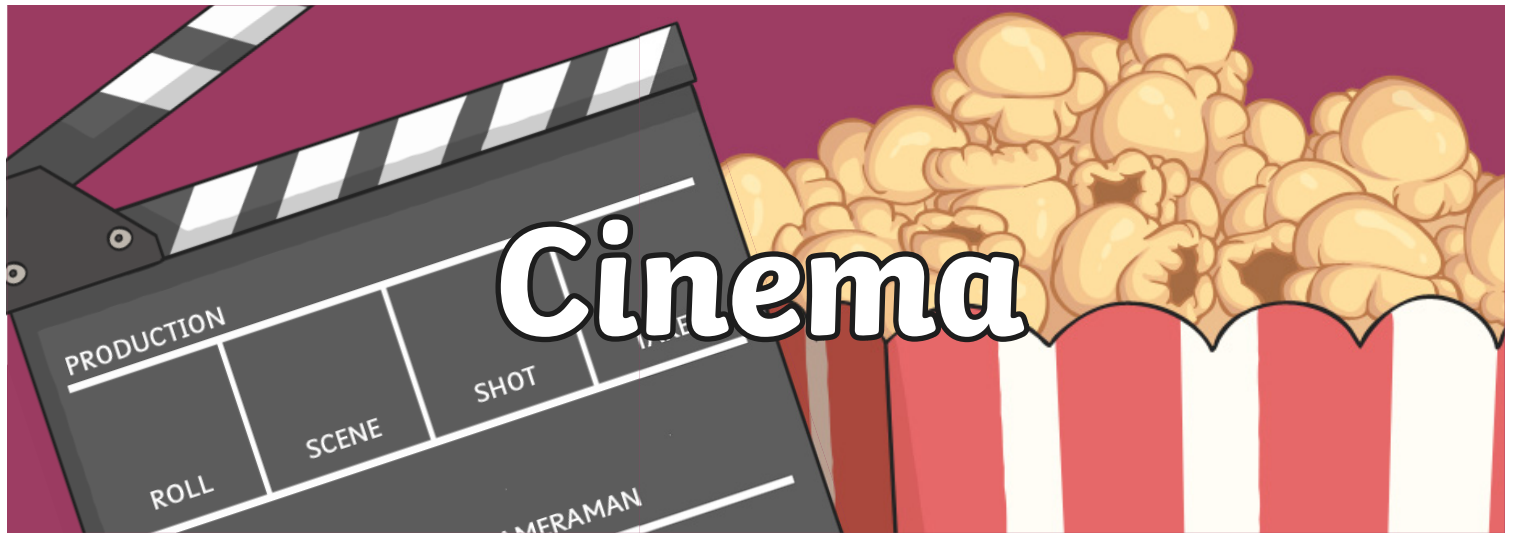
There were two stations during the war: 'The Home Service', which informed people about the progress of the war and 'The Light Programme', which provided entertainment to help boost people's spirits.

There were different programmes on the radio such as Children's Hour with Uncle Mac, which was created especially for children aged between five and fifteen, and 'Music While You Work', which played lively music to keep up the spirits of people working in the factories. Children's hour featured quizzes, stories, talks and music. Larry the Lamb was a popular radio story character and children loved to hear about his adventures in Toy Town.



## Evacuation

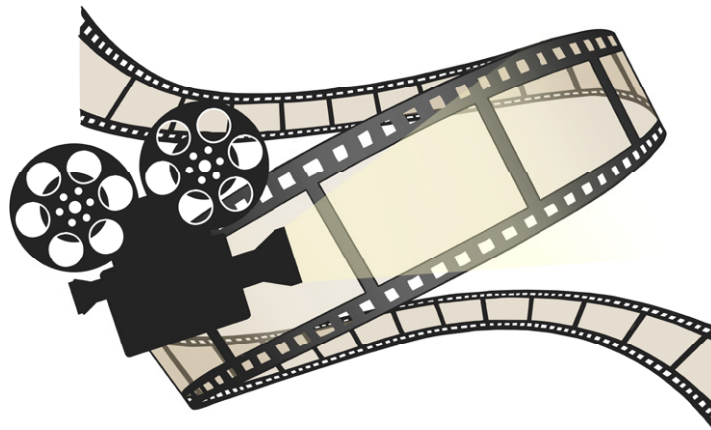
In 1940, Queen Elizabeth II (who was fourteen-year-old Princess Elizabeth at the time) spoke on 'Children's Hour'. She sent her regards and sympathy to those children who had been evacuated to the safety of the countryside or abroad, and she gave thanks to the host families who looked after them. In the broadcast, she also encouraged children to be cheerful and courageous, and assured them that in the future, the world would be a more peaceful place for them all.



During the War, the vast majority of people did not have televisions in their homes. Even those who did could not watch them as all broadcasts were stopped during the war. To see moving pictures, people would go to the cinema.

People would often see two films during a visit to the cinema. A news show was broadcast in between to keep them informed about the events of the war. Some films and programmes were written specifically to help inform people on different aspects of war and to encourage them to behave (or not) in a certain way. This is called propaganda.

There was a Saturday morning kids club for children to attend which was very popular. Films, serials and cartoons were shown and the children sang the National Anthem at each visit.



**Some well-known films that were made during the war include:**

- Fantasia;
- Pinocchio;
- Dumbo;
- Casablanca;
- Gone with the Wind.





Listening to music was a very popular form of entertainment during World War II and, of course, the main way to listen to music was on the radio.

Many famous singers volunteered to sing for free on the radio during the war. This really helped to boost the morale of both the soldiers and people at home.

New music styles, like jazz and swing became popular during the war.

Children made up their own little songs and ditties to keep them entertained and many of these are still sung today. The lyrics from 'Run Rabbit Run' were changed to 'run, Hitler run' during the war.

## Vera Lynn

- One popular British wartime singer was Vera Lynn, who sang songs like 'We'll Meet Again' and 'The White Cliffs of Dover'.
- Vera Lynn was especially popular with the troops and she made many visits to sing live to those posted overseas. As a result of this, she became known as 'The Forces' Sweetheart'.
- Vera Lynn also had her own wartime radio show called 'Sincerely Yours' in which she broadcast messages to servicemen and women from their loved ones and took requests for songs.

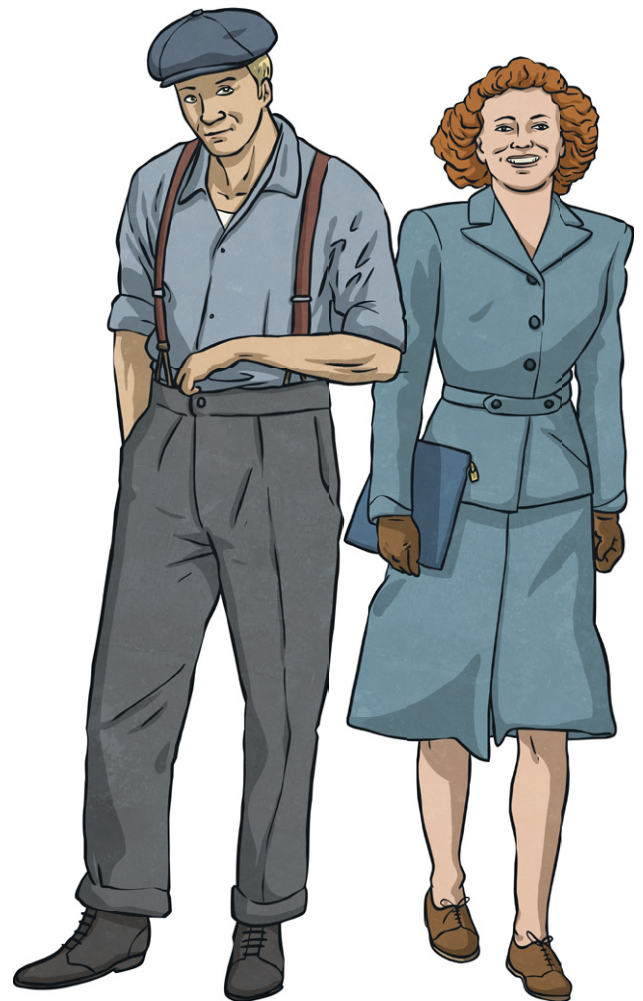




As jazz and swing music became popular during World War II, new dance styles were also developed alongside traditional ballroom routines. Soldiers from America popularised new lively dance styles, such as the jive, lindy hop and jitterbug and dance halls were packed with young, enthusiastic dancers practising all the new dance crazes.

At the start of the war, all theatres and live shows were suspended so dancing became one of the most popular ways for people to forget all their troubles and enjoy themselves. It was also a fantastic morale booster. During the war, every town or village had their own dance hall – even if it was just the village hall adapted for the purpose. In the bigger, purpose-built dance halls, a full orchestra would be employed to provide the music.

Despite the limitations of wartime rationing, people enjoyed the chance to show off the new clothes and hairstyle fashions of the day. They also enjoyed meeting new people, making friends and having fun.



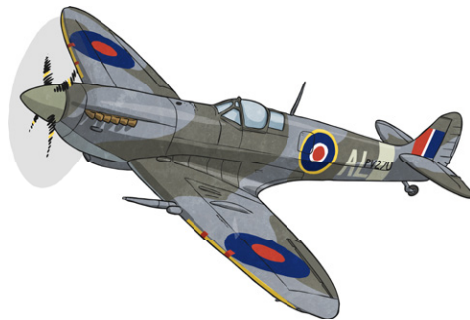
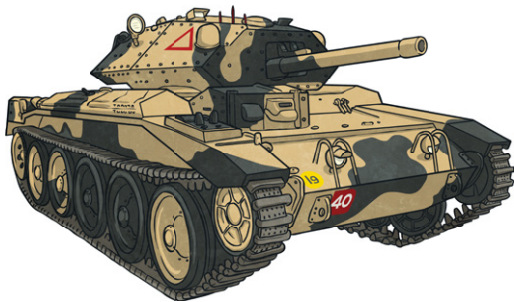




Children played board games, card games or with handmade toys during the war. Some children arranged toy swaps to exchange their toys with others to get the chance to play with different things.

Many toys had a wartime theme; toy tanks and aeroplanes were popular.

Because adults were so busy, children had to be more self-sufficient than they are today. Older children looked after the younger ones and used their imaginations to make up their own games to keep them out of the house and entertained.



**A wide range of outdoor games were enjoyed by children during the war.**

**Some examples included:**

- hop-scotch;
- hide-and-seek;
- skipping;
- football;
- cricket;
- rounders;
- marbles.