VE Day

Reading comprehension

What is VE Day about?



VE stands for Victory in Europe. It formally marks when Germany surrendered to the Allied Forces. VE Day is celebrated annually on 8th May. Allied Forces had been fighting Nazi Germany all over Europe for several years, but had finally beaten them. VE Day does not mark the end of World War Two as fighting was still taking place in Asia – it does, however, mark the end of fighting in Europe.

How was VE Day celebrated in the UK in 1945?



VE Day was a special day for the whole nation. There had been a lot of death and destruction across Great Britain, so people were very relieved when the fighting stopped. There were 1000s of celebrations and street parties all over the country that day. People lit bon-fires as they had not been allowed for the previous six years during the war. Church services were held across the country, so that people could thank God for the victory. St Paul's Cathedral in London held ten special services, which thousands of people attended. In London, tens of thousands of people gathered outside Buckingham Palace. They wore red, white and blue clothes to show their national pride. King George VI and his family (including Princess Elizabeth, who is now our queen) greeted the crowds to great excitement and applause. The Royal Family appeared on the balcony at Buckingham Palace eight times to join in the celebrations alongside the crowds. Winston Churchill also accompanied them on the balcony and later gave a national speech on the radio.

How is VE Day celebrated now?

Every year, the nation honours VE Day and remembers all those soldiers who fought for us to have the peace and freedom we still have today. This year (2020), we will celebrate the 75th anniversary of VE Day. As in other years, there will be a two minute silence at 11am to commemorate those who fought and lost their lives in the war. There are plans to replicate the street party mood from 1945 –people will join with their neighbours at a social distance and have picnics in their front gardens. There will be a televised address from the Queen at 9pm (the exact time her father gave a similar address 75 years prior). There will also be a national sing along of Dame Vera Lynn's 'We'll Meet Again'.

Did everything go back to normal after VE Day?

Life did not go back to normal for people in Great Britain when the war ended. Rationing of food and other essential goods carried on until 1954. The war had cost the country a lot of money - cities like London and Liverpool had been significantly ruined from bombing -so the rebuilding cost a lot of money and took time.

A moment of reflection

Despite all the celebrating on VE Day, there was much to reflect upon. Many people were very sad about their lost loved ones. Many soldiers were still abroad fighting or in prisoner of war camps. In Great Britain, many home and families had been destroyed due to bombing.

