

VE Day

VE Day is a historic day that marks the end of the Second World War. Short for 'Victory in Europe Day', the first VE Day was held on 8th May 1945, the day after Germany surrendered to the Allied forces. To surrender means to give up or agree to stop fighting. The Allies were made up of many countries, including America, Britain and France.

What Happened on the First VE Day?

Winston Churchill, the Prime Minister of Britain, officially announced the end of the war over the wireless, an old-fashioned type of radio, at 3 p.m. Millions of people were waiting for the fighting to stop and there were many celebrations. People held street parties across Britain where they shared food and danced in the streets. Large crowds gathered at Buckingham Palace with many people wearing red, white and blue. King George VI and his daughters Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret came out on the balcony to greet the crowds. It is believed that the Princesses were allowed to secretly leave the palace and celebrate with the people outside. Princess Elizabeth, now the current Queen, often says that VE Day 1945 was one of the "most memorable days of her life."

Did VE Day Mean the End of the War?

Although VE Day meant peace in Europe, it was not the end of the war. Fighting still continued in Japan until August, when Japan surrendered. This day is marked by VJ Day on 15th August in the UK.

How Do People Celebrate VE Day?

VE Day is an important celebration. On this day, we take the opportunity to remember the people that sacrificed their lives or were badly injured during the war. It is also a chance for us to celebrate the day that brought peace to Europe after a long and difficult six-year conflict. All over the country, people hang up red, white and blue bunting and hold street parties and parades to mark the event. VE Day is also celebrated in other countries, including Belgium and France, where it is recognised with church services.



What Can You Do This VE Day?

There are lots of things that you can do to celebrate VE Day while at home with your family. Decorate your house with Britain-themed bunting and flags – don't forget to use red, white and blue! Or, try to plan a VE Day party using the foods that people would have had after the war. It might be harder than you think!



Questions

1. Which year did the Second World War end? Tick one.

- ☐ 1960
- ☐ 1990
- ☐ 1945
- ☐ 1940

2. Who was the Prime Minister on the first VE Day? Tick one.

- ☐ Winston Churchill
- ☐ Boris Johnson
- ☐ Margaret Thatcher
- ☐ Tony Blair

3. Complete the following sentence, as written in the text.

VE Day is also celebrated in other countries, including Belgium and... Tick one.

- ☐ Germany
- ☐ France
- ☐ America
- ☐ England

4. Number the events below to show the order they appear in the text.

The first one has been done for you.

- ☐ Victory in Japan is marked by VJ day on 15th August in the UK.
- ☐ All over the country, people hang up red, white and blue bunting.
- ☒ 1 The first VE Day was held on 8th May 1945.
- ☐ Although VE Day meant peace in Europe, it was not the end of the war.
- ☐ Decorate your house with Britain-themed bunting and flags.

5. Look at the section titled **What Happened on the First VE Day?**

Find and copy one word that means the same as **unforgettable**.

6. Why were many people dressed in red, white and blue during the celebrations?
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7. Explain why VE Day is an important celebration.
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8. How could you celebrate VE Day at home this year? Give an idea **not** mentioned in the text.
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