



# How World War One Changed Life for British People

KS4 HISTORY

Ages 11-16 ⌚ 3 min read

## A War That Changed Everything

**World War One** (1914–1918) wasn't just something that happened far away on battlefields. It turned the lives of ordinary **British people** upside down. Millions of men left their jobs and families to fight as soldiers. But those left behind—children, women, and elderly people—had to cope with shortages, fear, and hard work they'd never experienced before.

## Rationing: Not Enough Food

By **1918**, Britain was running out of food. Ships bringing supplies across the ocean were being attacked by enemy submarines. The government introduced **food rationing**, which meant each person got only a small amount of meat, butter, sugar, and other essentials each week.

Think of it like sharing one pizza between a family of five—everyone gets a portion, but nobody gets as much as they'd like.

Families had to be creative, using vegetables they grew at home and making meals stretch further. Many people went hungry, especially children and people in cities.

## Women Take Over the Factories

With millions of men fighting in the war, women stepped in to do their jobs. Thousands worked in **munitions factories** (where weapons and explosives were made), in hospitals as nurses, and on farms. This was dangerous, exhausting work, but it proved women could do jobs people thought only men could do.

## Air Raids and Living in Fear

For the first time, ordinary civilians weren't safe at home. **German aeroplanes** dropped bombs on British cities, especially London. Families had to rush to **air raid**

**shelters**—underground rooms or cellars—when the alarm sounded. Many people died in these raids, and homes were destroyed.

Think of it like your whole school having to run to the safest room whenever a storm warning comes—except the danger was real, and it happened many times.

## **Grief and Loss**

Almost every British family lost someone in the war. Over **700,000 British soldiers** died. Parents lost sons, wives lost husbands, and children grew up without fathers. This grief affected the whole country.

## **A Changed Britain**

After the war ended, British society was different. Women had proven themselves, leading to many getting the right to vote. The economy was damaged, and people were tired. But the war had shown that ordinary people could endure incredible hardship and come together when they needed to.