



WW2 pack: Wartime wardrobe challenge

Clothes rationing was introduced by the Government in June 1941. It happened overnight to prevent 'panic buying' of clothes.

People in Britain woke up one morning to find that clothes shops were closed, and coupons were the only way to buy new items!

Each person was given 66 coupons per year from the Government, but they were not allowed to spend them all at once.

The amount was reduced each year until people only had 36 coupons a year by 1945. Clothes rationing didn't end until 1952, so it lasted for 11 years!

Clothing coupons were needed to buy all clothes and shoes, even school uniform!

- 1) Take a look at your school website to find a uniform list. There may be separate lists for boys and girls.
- 2) Using the table below, work out how many coupons you would need to buy a complete set of uniform, including a PE kit. Remember that you will need more than one shirt / pair of trousers etc to last through the week.

Clothing item	Number of coupons needed
Raincoat	11
Coat or blazer	8
Jumper or cardigan	3
Trousers	6
Shorts	3
Shirt or blouse	4
Pants or knickers	2
Vest	2
Pair of socks	1
Scarf or pair of gloves	2
Pair of shoes	3
Dress	5
Skirt	5
Tie	1



3) How many coupons did you need to buy a set of school uniform?

Remember, you only have 66 coupons to last the year and you need other clothes too. What would happen if you grew and needed new shoes and more school uniform?

(Note: girls did not generally wear trousers or shorts in the 1930s/40s.)

4) Boys often wore shorts instead of trousers, even in the winter. Why do you think they did this?

5) In 1941 you would have had 66 clothing coupons, by 1945, you would only have 36 coupons to last the whole year! Can you try the exercise above again, this time with only 36 coupons to use. Would you make changes to your uniform?

6) What else would you do to make clothes last longer?

POSSIBLE ANSWERS: {a}Shorts took less coupons to buy than trousers b) If they fell over, boys would graze their knees instead of damaging their trousers c) It wasn't so obvious if a child had outgrown their shorts, trousers would start to rise above the ankle; d) old trousers could be cut down to make shorts}