



## Rationing During WWII: Lesson for Kids

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During World War II, many people were forced to do without things that they needed. Rationing became a part of everyday life. In this lesson, you will learn about rationing during WWII and why it was important.

### What Is Rationing?

Have you ever received a big bag of candy? Maybe you got a haul of treats from trick-or-treating or on your birthday. Did you eat all the candy at once or did you eat one or two pieces each day? If you ate a piece a day, you could make the bag of candy last a lot longer...and avoid a stomachache!

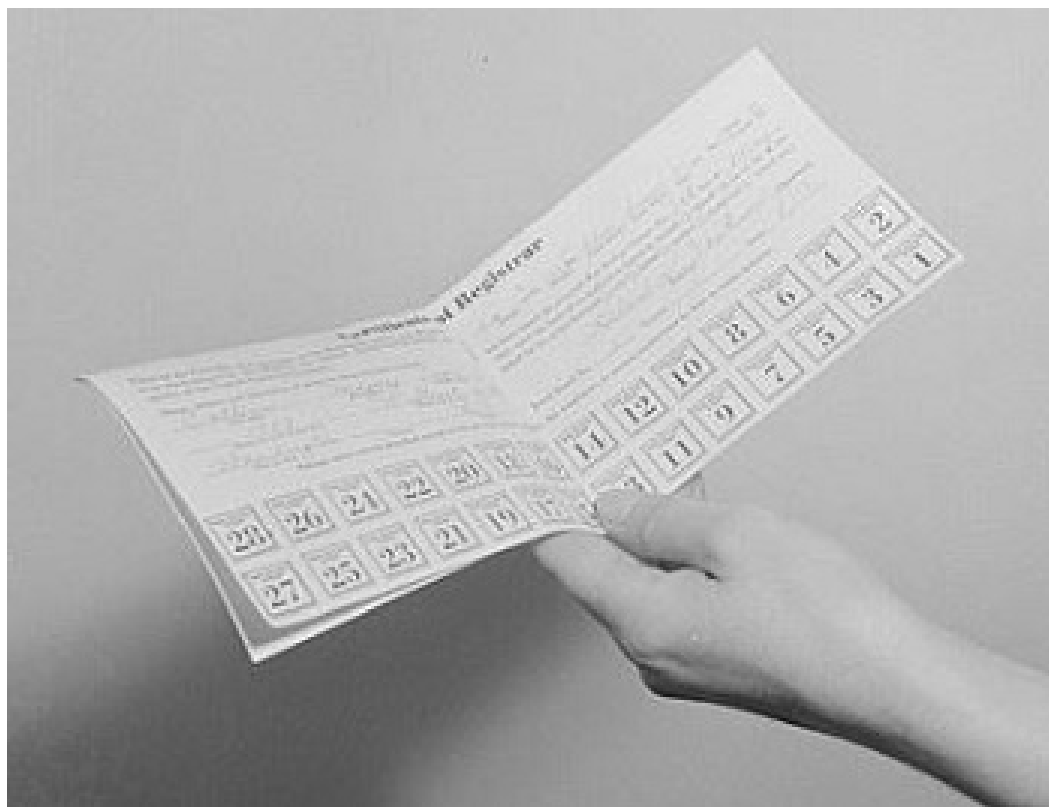
**Rationing** was used during World War II, and it was similar to you making a bag of candy last more than just one day. When someone rations an item, they take a certain amount of that item and divide it out over a period of time. Rationing is used for **consumables**, which are items that cannot be used forever such as food, gasoline, water, rubber, and cloth. The idea of rationing is to make the number of consumable items available last as long as possible.

For example, if you went on a long camping trip and had a small bottle of soap, you wouldn't want to use it all on your first day. If you did, you wouldn't have any soap for the rest of the trip..and you'd probably wind up being pretty stinky! By rationing your soap and using a small amount each time you washed, you'd have enough to last the entire trip.

So how did people use rationing in World War II and why was it important? Well, let's *consume* some knowledge and find out.

## How Was Rationing Used?

Have you ever seen your parents use gift cards to buy products when they are shopping? During World War II, people used a different type of card to purchase supplies called **ration cards**.



*Ration card*

Ration cards told people how much of a certain product they could get, and the amount of coupons a family received was based upon the size of their family. For example, you may have ration cards that allow you to buy 10 pounds of meat for your family one month. Once you used all your coupons for the month, then you could not buy any more meat.

Different items were rationed at different times during World War II. These included:

- sugar
- butter
- coffee
- meat
- cheese
- processed/canned food
- milk
- fuel/gasoline
- tires
- shoes



*People waiting in ration line*

## Why Were Items Rationed?

What do you need when you go to war? Many people think about guns, planes, and ammunition; but countries also have to provide their soldiers with food and shoes and their airplanes with rubber tires and fuel. When supplies were sent over to the troops, this meant that people couldn't use them for themselves.

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